



AWARDS

Prayer Service & Awards Ceremony
To Celebrate
Saint John Regional Catholic School
Being Named a
2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

November 6, 2009
10:00 a.m.

Opening Song & Processional
City of God

Presentation of Colors
(Color Guard, Fort Detrick)
Star-Spangled Banner

Opening Prayer
(Cearrah Sherman, Student Council President)

Welcome
(Mr. Paul Fer, Assistant Principal)

Opening Remarks
(Mrs. Karen Smith, Principal)

Introduction of Honored Guests
(Mrs. Jean Wright, Director of Development)

Presentation of Blue Ribbon Plaque
(Dr. Ronald Valenti,
Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Baltimore)

Presentation of Blue Ribbon Flag

(Bishop Mitch Rozanski)

Ms. Maureen Dowling, U.S. Department of Education

Office of Non-Public Schools

Ms. Jan H. Gardner, President, Frederick County

Board of Commissioners

Mr. Jeff Holtzinger, Mayor, City of Frederick

Song

(SJ RCS Chorus)

I am a Small Part of the World

Scripture Reading

(Michael Grus, NJHS President)

Song

(SJ RCS Chorus)

Lord, I Lift Your Name on High!

Presentation of Certificates to Faculty

(Mrs. Smith, Mr. Fer, and Father Jendrek)

Closing Prayer

(Father Michael Jendrek, Pastor,

St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, Ijamsville)

Colors Retire

(Color Guard, Fort Detrick)

Closing Song

It Shall Be

It Shall Be

- E. Swados

What you want, what you dream
It shall be, it shall be
You've got time, you've got hope
Hold on, hold on

You are strong, you are free
You've got life
You can be who you want
Just a dream, just a hope
Hold on, hold on

Troubles, they seem to have no end
Darkness, stormy days and sorrow
Hold on to your family and friends
Ev'rything that seems so bad
Won't be the same tomorrow

What you learn, what you share
It shall grow, it shall grow
And you'll live your own life
Hold on, hold on

Repeat 1st verse

Pianist: Mrs. Peggy Frazier

Cantors: Mrs. Mary Carroll, Cecilia Bracey, Will Bureau, Kate Daile
Coralie Jean-Philippe, Valeria Lopez, Theresa Wagner

Liturgical Dancers: Cheyanne Neuenschwander, Meaghan O'Neel
Natalie Wright, Colleen Crowley, Greta Dylus

Banner Bearer: Bobby Brennan

Ushers: Summer Seeley, Erin Gillespie
Thomas Murphy, Michael Amedeo

Banner Created by: Carolyn Wright, Class of 2006

Report CARD

*Here is our take on various issues locally
and around the state, nation and world.*

F

Turnout for Frederick primary election was dismal, with only 16.8 percent of registered voters casting ballots.

A

Local Eagle Scout Cody Evans earns all 121 possible Boy Scout merit badges in order to "show people anything is possible when others say it's impossible."

C

During Basketball Hall of Fame induction, Michael Jordan airs petty grievances against those he felt hadn't treated him in a kingly enough fashion during his career.

A

St. John's Regional Catholic School receives honored designation as a National Blue Ribbon School, one of only 10 in Maryland and 314 nationwide.

F

Candid camera video reveals corrupt employees and disgraceful behavior at ACORN offices in Maryland, California and elsewhere.



In recognition of our 2009 National Blue Ribbon School Award

We cordially invite you to a Prayer Service and Ceremony

Friday, November 6, 2009

at 10:00 a.m.

McElroy Hall

8414 Opossumtown Pike

School tours to follow service

Luncheon Reception at 1 p.m.

Lystra Hall, St. Timothy Catholic Church

8651 Biggs Ford Road, Walkersville

RSVP by October 26, 2009

301-695-9358

ST. JOHN REGIONAL CATHOLIC | EVERYBODY CHEER



Staff photo by Bill Green

St. John Regional Catholic School students cheer Tuesday when principal Karen Smith announces their new status as a National Blue Ribbon School. But the gift of no homework for the evening brought deafening screams. Smith delivered the surprise announcement to 572 students who didn't know why they were gathered for an end-of-day assembly.

Schools celebrate Blue Ribbons

By MATT PALMER

mpalmer@CatholicReview.org

Karen Smith and Karen Murphy shared a hug Nov. 6 inside the parish hall of St. Timothy in Walkersville.

The best friends had spent several days being toasted by the country's educational leaders. Finally, they had a moment together.

Smith and Murphy, principals of Frederick's St. John Regional Catholic School and Ellicott City's Resurrection-St. Paul School, respectively, had represented their schools in Washington Nov. 3, when they received National Blue Ribbon School awards from the U.S. Department of Education.

The honor recognized the schools' academic superiority. Only 50 non-public institutions were honored, while more than 300 public schools were designated Blue Ribbon Schools this year.

Murphy supported Smith by attending part of St. John's Nov. 6 celebration, which featured a ceremony at the school and a reception at St. Timothy.

St. John received citations from national, state and local leaders, as well as archdiocesan officials.

When people arrived at the school, they were greeted by blue pinwheels. Students displayed many of the things they had learned at the school, including American Sign Language, dance and song during the ceremony.

"This Blue Ribbon is shared by the students, faculty, staff and parents who all contribute to making our school faith-filled and academically excellent year after year," Smith told attendees. "It is appropriate that we reach this goal during this school year when we have chosen 'dreams' as our theme."

Resurrection-St. Paul had 11 straight days of celebrations. It was awash in blue objects, even fortune cookies that included quotes about success.

St. John serves seven parishes: Frederick's St. John the Evangelist and



Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski presents Karen Smith, principal of St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick, a flag to honor its being named a 2009 Blue Ribbon School. (CR Staff/Owen Sweeney III)

St. Katharine Drexel; Buckeystown's St. Josephon Carrollton Manor; Ijamsville's St. Ignatius of Loyola; Libertytown's St. Peter the Apostle; Middletown's Holy Family and St. Timothy.

The school, a sparkling structure which shares a campus with St. Katharine Drexel, was completed in 2005.

"We put in a lot of effort to build it," said Father Keith W. Boisvert, pastor of St. Katharine Drexel. "That was a big collaborative effort among all the parishes. This is confirmation that it was worth all of that."

Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools, presented a Blue Ribbon School plaque. Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski presented a flag that will be flown outside St. John.

"These schools serve as models for other schools throughout our nation," Bishop Rozanski told students. "So, a great responsibility, as well as a great grace, is placed upon you this day."

Resurrection-St. Paul serves two Ellicott City parishes, Church of the Resurrection and St. Paul.

Students at the latter raised more than \$2,000 in a walk for the homeless Nov. 6. Father Matthew T. Buening, pastor

of St. Paul, was presented a check for the parish's homeless outreach. Murphy thanked parishioners and handed out Blue Ribbon bookmarks.

"The school would not have been possible without the spiritual and financial contributions of St. Paul parishioners these last 86 years," said, Murphy, who visited Resurrection the week before.

Both Smith and Murphy reminded students that there is room to improve.

"We continue to do what we do every day, we pray and work together," Smith said. "We work hard. We reach out a helping hand to others and above all, we thank God every day for all that he has bestowed upon us."

Although she was humbled to receive the Blue Ribbon award, Murphy said she learned something in Washington.

She said public school leaders were told about various stimulus programs. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan could not answer how much money, if any, will go toward private institutions.

"It definitely spurred me personally to realize, 'We've got to get everything we can,' and fight with the department of education to make sure (we receive support)," Murphy said.



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Students at St. John Regional Catholic School sing along with the school's choir in American Sign Language during a celebration Friday for the school being given the 2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award.

RHAPSODY IN BLUE

ST. JOHN REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL CELEBRATES EARNING TOP ACADEMIC DISTINCTION

BY MARGE NEAL

NEWS-POST STAFF

MNEAL@FREDERICKNEWSPOST.COM

The color of the day Friday at St. John Regional Catholic School was blue.

Visitors to the Opossumtown Pike campus — who traveled under a bright blue sky — were greeted by rows of blue pinwheels spinning wildly in the wind.

Inside the school, flower arrangements included blue ribbons and bows. Many staff members wore shades of blue. Students wore blue ribbon pins on their uniforms.

The not-so-subtle use of the color was in recognition of St. John receiving a National Blue Ribbon School award from the U.S. Department of Education.

Each year since 1982, the Education Department has sought out and celebrated public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals.

Honored schools have placed in the top 10 percent on state or national assessments, or have shown dramatic improvement in student performance. St. John was awarded for being in the top 10 percent of assessments.

Although Principal Karen Smith and Assistant Principal Paul Fer officially received the award Tuesday in Washington, the presentation was repeated Friday for students, staff members and invited guests.

Smith told the audience that out of more than 132,000 schools are across the country, just 320 of them won the Blue Ribbon designation.

"That's less than one-half of 1 percent," Smith said.

Ronald Valenti, schools superintendent for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, presented the Blue Ribbon plaque to Smith and Fer. Afterward, Maureen Dowling of the U.S. Department of Education, Frederick County Commissioners President Jan Gardner and Frederick Mayor Jeff Holtzinger presented proclamations and certificates.

(See BLUE A-7)

(Continued from A-5)

After the ceremony, Smith said a new showcase might be needed for all the Blue Ribbon accolades the school has received. In addition to the certificates presented Friday, St. John has also received certificates from other government leaders, the National Catholic Education Association and an accreditation organization.

"I have a scrapbook that I'm going to put together eventually," she said. "And I hope to be able to display all the awards and recognition all in one place."

Throughout the ceremony,

care was taken to give credit for the success of the school to all parties: administrators, teachers, staff members, students and parents.

Bishop Mitch Rozanski told students that Blue Ribbon schools serve as models for other schools across the country. At St. John, students strive to meet high expectations, but do so with the support of parents, teachers and the community at large, he said.

As children streamed out of the gym when the program ended, parent David Hook served as a one-man greeting line. He chatted and said hi to students as

they filed out, and congratulated teachers as they walked by.

The father of a third- and a sixth-grader — as well as a graduate — Hood said parental involvement at St. John is key to its success.

"This is such a great community," he said. "And from the principal on down, everyone is important and everyone is recognized."

St. John will not rest on its laurels, Smith said during the program.

"Where do we go from here?" she said. "We do what we do every day — pray and work hard ... and thank God for everything he has bestowed upon us."

EDUCATION AWARDS

14 Schools in Md., Va. and D.C. Earn Blue Ribbon Status

By NELSON HERNANDEZ
Washington Post Staff Writer

More than a dozen public and private schools in Maryland, Virginia and the District earned one of the highest distinctions in American education Tuesday, as Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced the 314 winners of the National Blue Ribbon School awards.

Duncan made the announcement at Highland Elementary School in Silver Spring, the only public school to win the award in Montgomery County this year, and a remarkable turnaround story that Duncan said he hoped would inspire similar success elsewhere.

"When I talk about turning around schools, this school is turning around," Duncan said. "It just

put the lie in any myth about what children can't do."

The award goes to public schools in the top 10 percent of academic performance in their state — private schools are judged by a national exam — and to schools where at least 40 percent of the students are from disadvantaged backgrounds and demonstrate dramatic improvement.

Highland — where most students qualify for free- and reduced-price meals and many speak English as a second language — has managed to excel by any standard. Five years ago, barely half the school's fifth-graders could pass a state reading test. Last year, all 66 fifth-graders passed the test, and nearly all exhibited advanced skill.

Duncan and other officials said

the school showed that with capable leadership, skilled teachers and parental support, any school can turn around, regardless of the socioeconomic disadvantages its students face.

Much of the credit for Highland's success went to principal A. Raymond Myrtle, a longtime educator who left a more affluent school for Highland, rebuilding the staff and getting the students to toe the line. Duncan said more leaders like him are needed.

"The best thing I could do would be to clone Mr. Myrtle," Duncan said. "Then my job would be done."

At winner Corpus Christi School in Falls Church, a Catholic school where 90 percent of students' families receive some form of financial aid, Principal Laura Zybrick said

that the school's diverse parent community helps support teaching. They recently purchased eight computers for the school's lab. The 445-student preschool-through-eighth-grade school is the most racially diverse in the Diocese of Arlington, with large Latino and Vietnamese populations.

Zybrick noted that in the Washington area, more private schools won the award than public schools, possibly partly because private schools tend to be smaller.

"You get to know everybody and their parents, and if you lay out what the expectations are, kids rise to that expectation. When you have a faculty of 200 people, sometimes that's a little hard to do," she said.

The local public schools to re-

ceive the award also included Hammond Middle School in Laurel, Southern High School in Anne Arundel County, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Fairfax, and the Noyes Education Campus in the District.

Other private schools receiving the award were Holy Redeemer School in Kensington, Our Lady of Mercy School in Potomac, St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick, Resurrection-St. Paul School in Ellicott City, All Saints Catholic School in Manassas, St. Agnes Catholic in Arlington County, St. Mary's School in Alexandria and the Trinity School at Meadow View in Falls Church.

Staff writer Michael Birnbaum contributed to this report.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009 | THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST | A-9

LOCAL

ST. JOHN REGIONAL CATHOLIC EARNS NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL STATUS

By MARGE NEAL

News-Post Staff
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St. John Regional Catholic School students cheered Tuesday when principal Karen Smith announced their new status as a National Blue Ribbon School.

But the gift of no homework for the evening brought deafening screams.

Smith delivered the surprise announcement to 572 students who didn't know why they were gathered for an end-of-day assembly.

Smith set the stage by asking the children how many of them had ever been to the Great Frederick Fair. After nearly every hand went up, she explained that people enter competitions at the fair. Winners of those events get ribbons of a variety of colors,

■ ST. JOHN IS ONE OF 10 MARYLAND SCHOOLS OUT OF 314 NATIONWIDE TO RECEIVE THE BLUE RIBBON DESIGNATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. IT IS FREDERICK COUNTY'S ONLY WINNER THIS YEAR.

with the first-place winners receiving blue ribbons.

"About a year ago, Mr. Fer and I decided to enter a contest to name the best schools," she said, referring to Assistant Principal Paul Fer. "We found out today we won the blue ribbon."

The honor goes to everyone at the school, she said, as teachers distributed blue bead necklaces. A blue ribbon attached to the beads had a small blue card with a poem about St. John being named a Blue Ribbon School.

The students' scores on standardized tests played a big role in winning the award, Smith said, and it was important to her that

they all receive a small gift to remember the event.

"Winning the Blue Ribbon award is a big deal for this school," school board President Frank Lipscomb told students.

Teachers and staff members weren't left out; each received a blue helium-filled balloon.

St. John is one of 10 Maryland schools out of 314 nationwide to receive the Blue Ribbon designation from the U.S. Department of Education. It is Frederick County's only winner this year.

Each year since 1982, the education department has sought out and celebrated public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students attain and

maintain high academic goals.

Honored schools have placed in the top 10 percent on state or national assessments, or have shown dramatic improvement in student performance. St. John was awarded for being in the top 10 percent of assessments.

Under the No Child Left behind Act, schools must achieve adequate yearly progress for the past two years, including the award year.

A total of 413 schools nationwide can be nominated, based on the number of K-12 students and the number of schools in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, according to a press release from the Depart-

ment of Education. In addition, the Council for American Private Education can nominate 50 schools.

"We submitted the scores for our highest grade taking the tests," said Jean Wright, director of development and admissions. "Much of this award is thanks to the eighth-graders of the class of 2008."

This year, representatives from 264 public schools and 50 private schools will be honored at an awards ceremony Nov. 3 in Washington.

"I'm beyond being proud," Smith said after she dismissed students for the day. "This application process started more than

a year ago and we've been wading through all the steps since then."

Smith said it was a relief to finally get the official announcement. Winning schools are notified they might want to plan a celebration, but that notice stops short of spilling the beans.

"I just wanted to finally see it in print and that happened today," Smith said.

The application process was arduous and many people helped with it, she said. Much research was required to fill out the 72 pages of paperwork. But Smith said it was important to apply because it recognizes every member of the St. John family.

"When you know you're doing good things, you want to get that word out to the community," Smith said. "What better way to get that word out than by being a Blue Ribbon School?"

Ellicott City, Frederick schools earn national Blue Ribbon distinction

By Matt Palmer
mpalmer@catholicreview.org

Two elementary Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been named Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

Resurrection-St. Paul School in Ellicott City and St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick were notified Sept. 15 of their selections. It is the first time since 1988-89 that two schools in the archdiocese were named Blue Ribbon institutions.

Only 50 private schools in the nation were chosen, while 264 public schools were named.

"Two in one year is a good one," said Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools. "That's a biggie."

St. John the Evangelist School in Severna Park was named a Blue Ribbon school in 2008, becoming the first in the archdiocese to earn the designation since Trinity School in Ellicott City in 1998-99.

"It's noteworthy that when you get such recognition from the Department of Education, it's from the federal government," Dr. Valenti said. "There's a very rigorous approach and protocol schools must go through to meet those demands. This is a national kind of assessment. To get that kind of recognition speaks well of what teachers and administrators do and what we do as system."

St. John Regional serves seven parishes: Frederick's St. John the Evangelist and St. Katharine Drexel; Buckeystown's St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor; Ijamsville's St. Ignatius of Loyola; Libertytown's St. Peter the Apostle; Middletown's Holy Family and Walkersville's St. Timothy.

The school also partners with the parish family of St. Mary, Petersville/St. Francis of Assisi, Brunswick and serves Fort Detrick Catholic Community as well.

"It's really a community effort," said Karen Smith, St. John Regional's principal. "We want our students to excel and we want the best for all our students."

The other Blue Ribbon winner is the parish school of two Ellicott City parishes, Church of the Resurrection and St. Paul.

"That's the most beautiful thing about this place," said Karen Murphy, Resurrection-St. Paul's principal. "The pastors and the parishes have been very supportive."

Smith and Murphy, close friends, talked regularly during the Blue Ribbon process. Each school began the application process a year ago, encouraged to pursue the honor after Severna Park's St. John the Evangelist earned the designation.

"I thought we could be a Blue Ribbon School," said Smith, who became principal of the Frederick school in 2005. "I always thought we had that potential."

To be nominated, a private school's students must achieve in the top 10 percent of the nation on "nationally-normed" tests. To move forward in the process, The Council for American Private Education must nominate the schools, which must provide a thorough explanation of their programs.

Murphy, a board member at St. John the Evangelist in Severna Park, saw similar strengths at Resurrection-St. Paul. She said that surrounding competition from the Howard County Public School System forces Resurrection-St. Paul to hone its strengths.

Like St. John Regional, Catholic identity is at the core of the curriculum.

"We know we have to provide an excellent education," Murphy said. "The children grow in their faith here."



Resurrection-St. Paul has 516 students this fall, up from last year's 466. St. John Regional has an enrollment of 570.

An awards luncheon for the Blue Ribbon Schools will be held Nov. 3 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. Both schools plan celebrations throughout the year.

"Our Catholic schools succeed in providing an academically-excellent education to the children of our Archdiocese because of the dedicated teachers, hard-working students, and because of the parents and grandparents who make heroic sacrifices on behalf of their children," Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien said. "This recognition is an affirmation of their efforts and is an attainable goal for many of our Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore."

"These Blue Ribbon Schools have shown that all children can learn with the appropriate supports," said Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education in a statement.

"They are producing outstanding results for their students. They are places where improved teaching and learning benefits every student, and where students are challenged to meet high expectations with the active support of teachers, parents and the community."

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Two Archdiocesan Schools Named National Blue Ribbon Schools

09/15/2009

Two Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. John Regional School in Frederick and Resurrection-St. Paul School in Ellicott City, were named National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education earlier today, becoming the 12th and 13th Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to receive the honor. The designation is the highest academic honor bestowed upon a school by the U.S. Department of Education.

"Our Catholic schools succeed in providing an academically-excellent education to the children of our Archdiocese because of the dedicated teachers, hard-working students, and because of the parents and grandparents who make heroic sacrifices on behalf of their children," Archbishop O'Brien said. "This recognition is an affirmation of their efforts and is an attainable goal for many of our Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore."

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high school that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels. The schools will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC, later this year and will receive a plaque and flag signifying their status.

St. John and Resurrection-St. Paul join the following Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to be named Blue Ribbon schools.

- ◆ Mercy High School, Baltimore, 1984-85
- ◆ Notre Dame Preparatory School, Towson, 1984-85
- ◆ Calvert Hall College High School, Towson, 1984-85 and 1988-89
- ◆ Loyola Blakefield, Towson, 1986-87
- ◆ St. Rita, Dundalk, 1986-87
- ◆ Archbishop Keough High School, 1987-88
- ◆ Mount St. Joseph High School, Irvington, 1988-89
- ◆ Trinity School, Ellicott City, 1989-90 and 1998-99
- ◆ Archbishop Spalding High School, Severn, 1992-93
- ◆ The John Carroll School, Bel Air, 1995-96
- ◆ St. John the Evangelist, Severna Park, 2008-09

St. John Regional School in Frederick has a current enrollment of 572 students. Resurrection-St. Paul School in Ellicott City has a current enrollment of 539 students. In both schools, students in grades three through eight far exceeded the national average on standardized tests taken last fall.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 18, 2009

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42 Catholic Schools Receive National Blue Ribbon School Awards

42 Catholic Schools Receive National Blue Ribbon School Awards

Washington, DC -- The National Blue Ribbon School Awards were announced September 15, 2009. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan named 314 schools as recipients of the award – 264 public schools and 50 private schools. Of the 50 private schools receiving this national recognition, 42 were Catholic schools. Congratulations to these outstanding schools!

The U.S. Department of Education names the Blue Ribbons Schools each year. The Department of Education program recognizes schools that are academically superior or that have demonstrated dramatic gains in student achievement.

In 2008, 43 Catholic schools were named Blue Ribbon Schools.

The schools will be invited November 3 to Washington, D.C., to receive an award signifying the school's accomplishment. The event will take place at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. The NCEA will host a reception for representatives from Catholic schools at its headquarters in the Georgetown neighborhood of the capital city.

The NCEA, founded in 1904, is a professional membership organization that provides leadership, direction and service to fulfill the mission of the church. NCEA member religious education programs and s

baltimoresun.com

Eight Maryland schools receive Blue Ribbon honor

City's Western High and Arundel's Southern High among those chosen

By Liz Bowie | liz.bowie@baltsun.com

12:13 PM EDT, September 15, 2009

Eight Maryland schools were awarded the National Blue Ribbon School status today by the U.S. Department of Education, a distinction that is given to schools whose students who have a high level of achievement.

The eight schools include two Catholic schools, two public high schools, two public middle and two public elementary schools.

The schools include Western High School in Baltimore City, the nation's oldest public girls school, which serves a large population of poor students but has a 100 percent acceptance rate to four-year colleges. Southern High School in Anne Arundel County, which has made significant progress in enrolling students in Advanced Placement classes in the past several years and has significantly improved its scores on the Maryland High School Assessments was also chosen.

Seventh District Elementary School in Baltimore County, Hammond Middle School in Howard County, Highland Elementary in Montgomery County and Stephen Decator Middle School in Worcester County also were selected.

The two Catholic Schools to receive the distinction were St. John Regional School in Frederick and Resurrection-St. Paul School in Ellicott City. Over the years, 11 other Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been selected.

St. John administrator came for an education, stayed for a career

Originally published September 05, 2009

By Marge Neal

As the child of a career U.S. Air Force officer, Paul Fer took a circuitous route to his role as assistant principal at St. John Regional Catholic School.

Thanks to a father who was a career U.S. Air Force officer, Paul Fer came from South Carolina -- by way of several states, Germany and Holland -- to attend Mount St. Mary's University.

"I was brought up Catholic and was looking for a Catholic university," he said Friday. "A friend of mine had gone to the Mount a year ahead of me. I came up and fell in love -- it was everything I was looking for."

After earning his elementary education degree in 2001, he decided he wanted to stay in the area. He applied to the Archdiocese of Baltimore for a teaching job after deciding he would prefer to teach in a Catholic School.

St. John Regional Catholic School was the first school to offer an interview, and that's where he's been since the 2001-02 school year.

"Teaching in a Catholic school is a more complete experience for me as a Catholic," he said Friday. "I get to talk about my faith and show my faith -- there are no boundaries."

Fer, 30, taught math, science and religion until his promotion to assistant principal in December 2005. He knows he's been fast-tracked to the school's administration and said that he gets a few stares when people see how young he is.

"It's a nice fit for me, I've found," Fer said of the administrative position. "I enjoy pre-K through eighth grade, and I get to spend time with all of our students -- and not just for disciplinary reasons."

Continuing to teach an eighth-grade pre-algebra class means he stays connected to the classroom and his fellow teachers.

"Because I still teach, I get to say 'we' instead of 'you' when talking to our teachers about something," he said. "Teaching a class is something I hope I can continue to do for some time to come."

During his tenure, St. John has established a professional development relationship with the Mount. Fer was quick to point out the credit is not all his. He believes the program would have happened eventually, with or without him.

While the Mount has always enjoyed a relationship with Frederick County Public Schools, St. John is now the only Catholic school that places student teachers from the Mount.

"We have three students in the building right now," Fer said. "It adds a wonderful element to our school and allows us to continue our good relationship with the Mount."

He's continued his own relationship with the Mount, having completed his master's degree in education in 2007.

The school community is also excited about its nomination as a National Blue Ribbon School. Winners should be

announced later this week, and Fer said he and Principal Karen Smith are hopeful St. John will get the nod.

The Blue Ribbon designation is awarded to public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are academically superior, or demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement, according to the U.S. Department of Education website.

Fer is married to "a brilliant, brilliant lady," a scientist at the National Cancer Institute-Frederick.

No children yet, Fer said, but they have three cats.



Photo by Graham Cullen

As the child of a career U.S. Air Force officer, Paul Fer took a circuitous route to his role as assistant principal at St. John Regional Catholic School.



NEW ST. JOHN PROGRAM EXPOSES STUDENTS TO NEW LANGUAGES

By MARGE NEAL

News-Post Staff
mneal@fredericknewspost.com

St. John Regional Catholic School prided itself in its foreign language program, Principal Karen Smith said. And a change in the program, implemented this year, makes it better than ever.

In the past, students in grades one through eight studied Spanish. But over the summer, Smith said school staff members assessed the program to see how they could make it more worthwhile. They discovered research that showed if less than 5 percent of

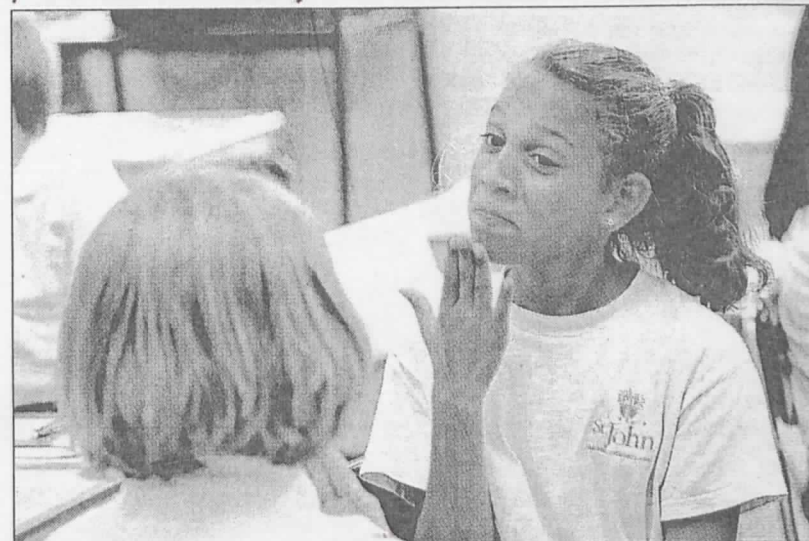
weekly class time was being spent on foreign language instruction, a sampler program that provided an introduction to several languages would be more meaningful.

"When you're only getting 42 minutes a week to teach a language, how much can you do?" Smith said last month. "We've been devoting about 3 percent of our class time to Spanish instruction."

With students studying Spanish for eight years, Smith said that many, instead of being excited about more intense instruction at the high school

(See LANGUAGES A-9)

FNP 9/4/09



A new foreign language program at St. John Regional Catholic School will let students sample four different languages, including American Sign Language. Fifth-grade students Molly O'Neel, left, and Amirah Louketis practice their skills during the second day of classes. Staff photo by Bill Green

(Continued from A-1)

level, were bored and dropped the subject.

The new FLEX (Foreign Language Experience) program will give the students a taste of four different languages over their last four years at St. John. The hope, Smith said, is that students will find one language that intrigues them enough to enroll in more advanced study.

This year, fifth-graders will learn sign language. Smith said an understanding of sign language is particularly important in Frederick, home to the Maryland School for the Deaf and a sizable deaf community. Sixth-graders are learning Greek and Latin root words, seventh-graders are studying Italian and eighth-graders are exposed to Chinese.

The classes will offer more than just the spoken language, Smith said.

"They will be doing much more than conjugating verbs," Smith said. "They will be learning about the culture and customs, the

music and art, the foods and geography of the countries."

If anyone is disappointed with the new program, it is younger students who won't be studying a foreign language. But those students will continue to be exposed to a variety of cultures through literature, social studies, art and music, Smith said. Multicultural events and activities will be held for all students. Teachers, at their own choosing, can introduce foreign words and phrases to their students.

The new program also puts students on an even keel, Smith said. Everyone is fresh and at the same level each new school year. In the past, a student transferring to St. John may not have had Spanish instruction at his former school, and would be behind his classmates from the beginning of the year. Several years of instruction is hard to make up, and may result in the student becoming frustrated, Smith said.

"We believe this program will fix that," Smith said.



Staff photo by Bill Green

St. John Regional Catholic School students now have an opportunity to learn additional foreign languages this year, including sign language, which is taught by teacher Rosanna Rensberger. Fifth-grade students Molly O'Neel, left, and Amirah Louketis practice their skills during the second day of classes.

FrederickNewsPost.com**Language program opens door to world**

Originally published September 05, 2009

By **Marge Neal**

St. John Regional Catholic School's new foreign language program provides a unique learning experience for middle schoolers.

When Rosanna Rensberger's seventh-grade Italian class at St. John Regional Catholic School ended Thursday afternoon, her students erupted in spontaneous applause.

With the help of an interactive computer program, students had just completed a pre-assessment quiz on their knowledge of Italian history and culture. They responded by using hand-held remote control devices that automatically recorded their answers. After each question, Rensberger could show percentages of students who chose each of the possible answers.

The final question asked the kids if they were excited or disappointed to be learning Italian this school year.

The result: 100 percent excited.

Rensberger flashed a big smile at her new students before dismissing them.

New beginning

St. John's foreign language program has changed significantly this year. Instead of offering Spanish to students in first through eighth grades, those in grades five through eight will receive a sampler program with an introduction to a different language in each grade.

Rensberger, who grew up in a family home where Italian was spoken, has been tapped to teach sign language to fifth-graders and Italian to eighth-graders. Principal Karen Smith is teaching Greek and Latin root words to sixth-graders, and Elizabeth Chung, founder of Frederick's Life and Discovery Center, is teaching Chinese to eighth-graders.

Just before the school year began, Rensberger was busy decorating a bulletin board in the room she'll share with all the language instructors.

Rensberger has personal roots in the two languages she's going to share with her students.

"I grew up in a bilingual family," she said while preparing her room. "My grandparents didn't speak any English, and my mother was fully bilingual."

The family read newspapers written in Italian and listed to radio programs broadcast in the language. All meals were made fresh, from scratch, and largely from produce grown in the garden.

"I think I was the only kid in America whose first trip to McDonald's was during a play date while I was in middle school," she said with a laugh. "I grew up in the 1950s, only it was during the 1980s."

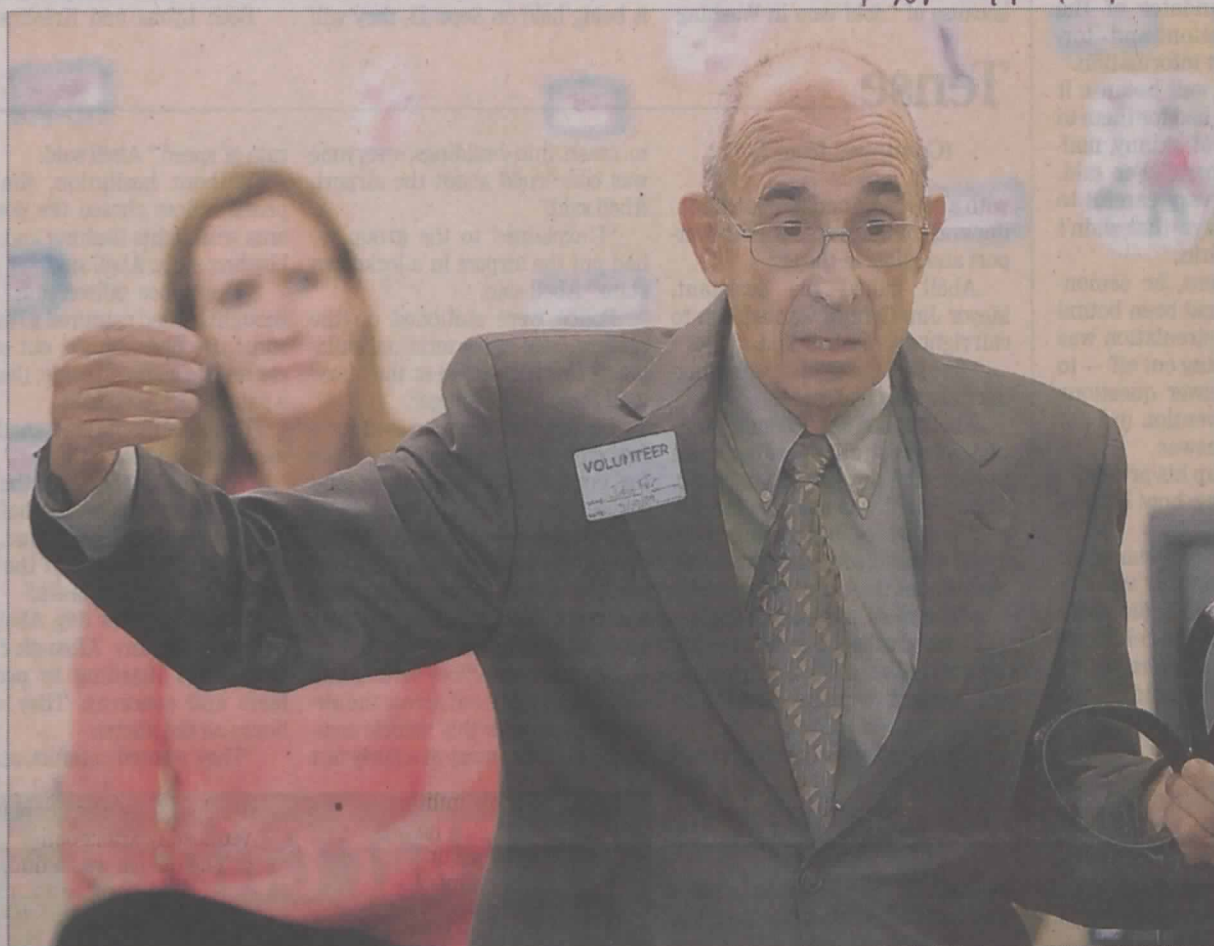
Both she and her husband, Joel, have deafness in their families. Joel's grandparents were deaf, and sign language was used in their home. Rosanna's family is predisposed to a hereditary condition that causes adult onset deafness.



Photo by Bill Green

St. John Regional Catholic School's new foreign language program provides a unique learning experience for middle schoolers.

FNP 9/11/09



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

John Fer, a U.S. Air Force veteran and former prisoner of war in Vietnam, relates his experience of being captured by Vietnamese and his subsequent treatment as a POW to eighth-graders at St. John Regional Catholic School.

AN IN-PERSON HISTORY LESSON

By MARGE NEAL

News-Post Staff
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St. John Regional Catholic School eighth-graders heard a different kind of history lesson Thursday.

Instead of reading a dry recap of an American soldier's experience in the Vietnam War, they got a firsthand narrative.

Retired U.S. Air Force Col. John Fer talked about being a prisoner of war after his plane was shot down on Feb. 4, 1967. He was a "guest" at the Hanoi Hilton, as the prison was known, until March 4, 1973.

Toward the end of his one-hour presentation, Fer, 71, drew a chart of the alphabet on a whiteboard and explained the code the prisoners devel-

oped to communicate with each other. "You all think you invented texting," he said, tapping on the board. "Well, this was the first texting."

Fer, the father of St. John Regional assistant principal Paul Fer, lives in California. He was on the East Coast for a somber occasion.

After 42 years, the wreckage of Fer's plane, in which three crew members died, was recently found. Fer came east to attend a burial ceremony. The remains of one airman were identified and the names of all three were included on the plaque at a grave at Arlington National Cemetery, Fer said.

As the pilot of an EB-66C, Fer's job had been to jam Vietnamese radar signals.

On these missions, Fer said, he

would fly the plane alternately in an oval pattern and then a figure eight.

"We flew that kind of a pattern, mixing it up, to confuse the radio operators on the ground so they could not predict where we would be in the next few minutes," he said.

The day his plane was shot down, he and his crew were mapping coordinates because they thought they saw something suspicious.

Fer was preparing to turn so he didn't enter a no-fly zone — which could have caused an international incident, he said — when one of his crew members asked him to not turn yet.

As soon as he could turn, missiles came hurtling toward the craft. Several narrowly missed before the plane

(See LESSON A-6)

Lesson

(Continued from A-5)

took a direct hit in its underbelly, where four crewmen were sitting.

One of them was able to eject, as were Fer and his navigator. The plane exploded and broke into two pieces.

After finding he couldn't control where he landed, Fer hit the ground dangerously close to a village. He buried his equipment and tried to escape on foot in the dense jungle, but he was captured. His captors stripped him down to his underwear and socks, and took his wallet, which contained his military identification card, Geneva Convention card and \$5.

Fer shared some time as a POW with U.S. Sen. John McCain of Arizona, the Republican nominee for president last year. The two men were in the second large group of prisoners released on March 4, 1973.

The prisoners ate well, Fer

said, but the Vietnamese ignored the mandates of the Geneva Convention and tortured them to get information.

"They fed us well because it would have been bad for them to release a bunch of skinny, malnourished prisoners," Fer said. "And they were very careful to torture us in ways that didn't leave obvious marks."

Using a student, he demonstrated how he had been bound — so tightly his circulation was at the point of being cut off — to force him to answer questions the Geneva Convention did not require him to answer.

Fer wrapped up his presentation by describing how he was able to survive.

"I prayed a lot and leaned on my faith in God," he said. "I physically exercised — did push-ups and sit-ups in the cell block — and did mental exercises as well. In my mind, I would build a house, tear it down, redesign it and build it again."

Teacher brings out the creativity in all students

Originally published October 17, 2009

By Marge Neal

Students who enter Lisa Cutchin's art room at St. John Regional Catholic School do so through a door splashed with the message "Creativity takes courage."

"Henri Matisse said that," Cutchin said when asked about the message. "I want my students to know more about the artists, what they went through, and how they thought."

Her undergraduate degree in art history comes in handy when she wants to fill her students in on the background of artists and what made them tick.

But she is just as handy when it comes to creative assignments for her budding artists in pre-K through eighth grade.

Her own specialty is clay, and she takes full advantage of the commercial-sized kiln in her large, airy art room. Glazed, fired clay projects from past students dot a classroom busy with displays, art supplies and projects in various stages of completion.



Photo by Skip Lawrence

Art teacher Lisa Cutchin is pictured on Thursday at Saint John Regional Catholic School in Frederick.

Cutchin, 54, is a late bloomer in the field of education. She started teaching at St. John six years ago after a 25-year career in corporate human resources, including 17 years with Lockheed Martin. Between the two careers, she took a short detour as a children's librarian.

Frederick County Public Libraries first hired her as a substitute. She had to be prepared to cover any job in the building. Her training as a children's librarian, telling stories and reading books to small children, made her aware how much she loved working with youngsters.

Just as she was offered a full-time children's librarian position, she was told of a long-term substitute teacher slot at St. John, where she volunteered. She said no to St. John, citing her need for the benefits provided by the library job.

She still believes God played a role in St. John crafting a full-time position: four days of teaching each week and one day working with QUEST, the school's enrichment program.

"The principal who was here then said, 'We're opening a new school and we're going to have a kiln -- do you know anything about clay?'" she said.

As an undergraduate student at American University, Cutchin won a fellowship to study with a clay artist.

"I looked up and knew God was smiling down upon me that day," she said.

Today, she encourages the creativity that exists in all her students, she said. She also incorporates math and science in her projects -- a way to do her part in areas where American students are falling behind their global counterparts.

Recognizing an abundance of spatial learners among her students, she has introduced them to Sonobe cubes. The cube is built from six pieces of folded paper, using origami techniques.

"Figuring them out really involves advanced geometry," Cutchin said. "I tell the kids that if they really enjoy this

kind of activity, they should think about being engineers, architects or computer programmers."

She teaches photography to her seventh-grade students and runs an after-school stock market club.

"Many kids don't think they're creative, but I tell them there are many different kinds of creativity," she said. "And I tell them yes, they are creative."

She works hard to ensure that some project, some outlet, proves that true for every student.

Please send comments to [webmaster](mailto:webmaster@fredericknews.com) or contact us at 301-662-1177.

EDUCATION

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK KICKS OFF WITH CELEBRATION SATURDAY AT FSK MALL

Area Catholic schools are gearing up for Catholic Schools Week, which kicks off Saturday with an information and performance fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Francis Scot Key Mall.

Participating schools will have booths staffed by folks ready and willing to extol the virtues of their respective schools.

School groups will offer musical performances beginning at 11 a.m.

The schools will also collect book donations to benefit local literacy efforts.

This year's CSW celebration is special for **Mother Seton School**, which is getting ready to celebrate its bicentennial.

On Feb. 22, 1810, Elizabeth Ann Seton, who will become the first American-born person to be canonized, opened the Free School and Academy in Emmitsburg. Today's Mother Seton School, 110 Creamery Road, is a direct descendant of Seton's Free School.

The school has a variety of activities planned in recognition of Catholic Schools Week, which will also lead up to a special bicentennial Mass.

On Saturday, the school will be represented at the display booth area at FSK Mall. The school's band will perform at 11

the McSherry Gymnasium on the school's campus at 889 Butterfly Lane.

St. John Regional Catholic School, 8414 Opossumtown Pike, will also participate in the kickoff at FSK Mall. The school's band, chorus and cheerleaders will perform, and information about the school will be available.

On Jan. 31, the school will celebrate "Catholic Schools in Our Parishes." Students, wearing their school uniforms, will participate in regional parish Masses.

Students in each grade will participate in service projects benefiting the community on Community Service Day on Feb. 1. Local business leaders are invited to an open house and reception from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Students will appreciate an out-of-uniform day Feb. 2 to mark Student Appreciation Day. Students will be honored with activities and surprises, including an interactive assembly.

Bishop Mitch Rozanski will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. Feb. 3. An ecumenical event for Frederick leaders of faith will be held from noon to 2 p.m.

An open house for prospective students and families will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 4. Later in the day, from 5 to 8 p.m., all friends of the school are invited to SJRCS Family

FNP 2/23/10

Bragging rights at St. John Regional

Domenica Iocco, an eighth-grader at St. John Regional Catholic School, recently won first place in the Daughters of the American Revolution essay contest.

Her essay about the Transcontinental Railroad will be forwarded to the regional competition in the grades six through eight category.

Fourth-graders Alyssa Roskowsinski and Arden Ireland placed fourth in an Internet safety video contest sponsored by the Maryland Verizon Pioneers and the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Their video, which tells kids how to be safe while using the Internet, was done with the help of computer teacher Lisa Giacco.

Their efforts won an Ultra Flip video camera and tripod for the school.

2/18/10

The Catholic Review

Wii Fit can be good supplement to regular exercise

By GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.
gmatysek@CatholicReview.org

"Wii Fit" puts a lot of "wee!" into exercise, but it's only a first step toward establishing a healthy fitness regimen.

Jennifer Zeltwanger, a physical education teacher at St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick, exercised with the Nintendo wireless video game system several times a week before having a baby in December.

"It can be a lot of fun," she said. "It has little Wii characters that you can make look like you and it talks to you and has the characters dance around."

Zeltwanger is fond of a Wii Fit running program that has users "run" through a park on their television screens as they are jogging in place in the comfort of their homes.

"It's basically like playing an active video game," said the parishioner of the Holy Family Catholic Community in Middletown.

Wii Fit comes with a sturdy balance board that helps track a player's progress. A person's weight and body mass index can be measured and tracked over time. The Wii Fit system, which costs about \$100, can also calculate calories burned in every workout and remind users of the last time they used it.

There are many exercise options on Wii Fit, including yoga, aerobics, running, strength-training and balance games. Some gaming options include boxing and step dancing.

"One of the big advantages is that you don't have to join a gym or go anywhere for it," Zeltwanger said. "I think it also provides something

that may limit some of the potential for injury because you are right in your own home. If you're running, you're not on the road where you could be hit by a car or step on something and turn your ankle."

Zeltwanger said Wii Fit is ideal for those who are just getting started in a fitness program. She recommended consulting a doctor before attempting Wii Fit or any other form of exercise.

"I would not rely on it as the only thing you do," Zeltwanger cautioned. "It's a good way to supplement an exercise program, but I don't think it provides enough physical activity to be the only thing you do."

Wii Fit and other video systems can also be useful in consultation with medical professionals for those recovering from injuries. To help in physical therapy, Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore uses a system called "Cybex Trazer" that hospital physical therapist Kelly Short described as a "full-body Wii."

Patients of all levels use a sensor attached to their belt that allows them to be part of the virtual game, Short said.

"If I have someone older, they can do simple things and can react in spontaneous ways, and that's good work for them," Short said.

Dr. John T. Campbell, of The Institute for Foot and Ankle Reconstruction at Mercy, said the system is a "nice way to keep patients energized and engaged."

"Patients love it," he said. "They're much more willing to participate in therapy, and there are features of it that let them do a better job."

AROUND TOWN | CATHOLIC SCHOOL WEEK



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Members of the St. John Regional Catholic School Chorus perform Saturday during the Catholic School Week Fair event at Francis Scott Key Mall. The chorus is composed of students from fourth- through eighth-grade and directed by Peggy Frazier.

FNP 2/17/10



Courtesy photo

Supplies for Rescue Mission

As part of its Catholic Schools Week schoolwide community service project, students in sixth through eighth grades at St. John Regional Catholic School collected and packed 25 boxes of family food supplies for the Frederick Rescue Mission. Pictured, from left, front row, are Joey Cheli, Aditya Pradhan, Michael Bealmear, Tim Johnson and Brent McCollough; back row, are Beth Wright, Ann Brown and Dianne Gamble, parent coordinators; and Nicholas Soares, Ryan Filyo and Brennan Wight.



12/27/09

Courtesy photo

Rotary donation

The Rotary Club of Frederick recently delivered dictionaries to all third-graders at St. John Regional Catholic School. Pictured, from left, are Colleen Manchester, third-grade teacher; Patrick Hogan, Rotary representative; and students Claire O'Neel, Brady Drawbaugh and Trevor Hickman.

EVENTS

2/26/10



Courtesy photo

Funds for Haiti

Students at St. John Regional Catholic School collected more than \$1,000 for relief efforts in Haiti. The students attended a prayer service at the school and were asked to bring in their spare change to help those who suffered from the earthquake. Pictured, with Karen Smith, principal, from left, are M.J. Harden, Margaret Gouker, Nick Churilla and Anna Whelan. The collection was part of a campaign called Hearts for Haiti, which will continue through February with additional fundraisers at the school.

EVENTS

FNP



Courtesy photo

Contest held

The Frederick Optimist Club recently conducted its Oratorical Contest with Frederick County students presenting speeches on the topic "Cyber Communication — Progress or Problem?" First-place boy and girl were awarded a medallion and a \$100 savings bond. Second- and third-place winners were awarded a medallion and a \$50 savings bond. The Zone 2 contest will be coordinated by the Frederick Optimist Club on April 17 at the Urbana Public Library. Representing the Frederick Optimist Club in the competition will be Veronica Clements and Bryce Iapicca. Winners at the Zone 2 competition will receive an expense-paid trip to Ocean City to compete in the district competition, with a prize of a \$1,500 scholarship. Pictured, from left, are Jack Evans, club president; Meaghan O'Neel, third-place girl; Cheyanne Neuvenschwander, second-place girl; Iapicca, first-place boy; Mark Moehrle, third-place boy; Brennan Wight, second-place boy; and Clements, first-place girl.

FNP 3/25/10

LocalBriefs

from staff reports

Teacher honored by archdiocese

Karen Roskowsky, a St. John Regional Catholic School math and religion teacher, received the Archbishop's Award for Teaching Excellence at the Archdiocese of Baltimore's annual teachers awards banquet earlier this month.

Four other St. John employees received awards for their years of service to Catholic education.

Teacher Ethel Brauer was honored for 20 years of service. Teachers Sue Mallak and Karen Gawinske were honored for 10 years of service, as was administrative assistant Betty Whitney.

EVENTS



Celebration

Students at St. John Regional Catholic School were treated to a blue-plate special lunch from Roy Rogers Restaurants. Third-grade students, from left, Jeremy DiMartino, Kaitlyn Steigner, Rose Ruziska, Alex Hoffman and Shelby Platner thank Jim Plamondon, of the Plamondon Cos. and Roy Rogers, for their lunch. The students were celebrating the school's designation as a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Courtesy photo

FNP 4/11/10

EVENTS



Courtesy photo

Kiwanis program

At a recent meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Suburban Frederick, Paul Fer, right, assistant principal at St. John Regional Catholic School, reported on the success his school is having. The school is celebrating 180 years of academic excellence in Frederick County and has been recognized as a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. At left is Peter Brehm, club member.



Courtesy photo

Shown at the recent Friends of Catholic Education Teacher Appreciation Dinner, from left, are Carol Hinds, president of the board, FOCE; Peggy Burrier, Visitation Academy; Beth Smith, St. John Regional Catholic School; Edward Krumpotich, St. John's Catholic Prep; Margaret Harp, St. Thomas More Academy; Elizabeth Ann Warthen, Mother Seton School; and Caroline Pugh, executive director, FOCE.

Friends of Catholic Education Inc. presents outstanding teaching awards

FOR THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST

Friends of Catholic Education Inc. hosted its 12th annual Teacher Appreciation Dinner recently at Dutch's Daughter restaurant in Frederick. The event honored the dedication and accomplishments of Frederick County's Catholic school teachers.

More than 200 teachers and administrators from the area's Catholic schools, as well as clergy and Archdiocesan guests, attended the event.

Highlighting the evening was the keynote address by John Fer, a Vietnam War veteran, former prisoner of war and former Catholic school principal.

Capping off the evening's program was the presentation of the outstanding teacher award for each school. This year's recipients of the FOCE

Teaching Award for Excellence were Beth Smith, St. John Regional Catholic School; Edward Krumpotich, St. John's Catholic Prep; Peggy Burrier, The Visitation Academy; Elizabeth Ann Warthen, Mother Seton School; and Margaret Harp, St. Thomas More Academy.

Friends of Catholic Education Inc. is a local nonprofit organization that supports Catholic School Education at the elementary and secondary levels in Frederick County.

Since its inception in 1989, the organization has provided more than \$3.3 million in financial assistance through scholarships, tuition assistance grants, capital improvement grants and tuition credits through its Grocery Card Program.

For information about FOCE, call 301-846-7804, or write to FOCE, 53 E. Patrick St., Frederick, MD 21701.

STUDENTS SHOW WHAT THEY KNOW

By MARGE NEAL

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The strategies and preparation vary from school to school, but the goal remains the same each year: to claim the FNP History Bee title.

This year, Urbana Elementary School won the bragging rights thanks to fifth-grader Rishub Nahar, who finished first in the history challenge sponsored by *The Frederick News-Post* and its Newspapers in Education program.

The event, held at the Frederick Community College fieldhouse, attracted about 150 contestants and more than 500 spectators.

Rishub read Frederick trivia books and other local history books as he prepared for the contest. His parents, Jai and Anita Nahar, also helped him study.

(See HISTORY A-2)

The Frederick News-Post



Brendan Kelly, left, of St. John Regional Catholic School, ponders a question.

MARGE NEAL

School Notes
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Just getting to History Bee an achievement

IT ALWAYS SADDENS ME when I witness an organized event that leaves a child in tears.

The former recreation and parks supervisor in me questions the stress we put on children and the demands we place — subtle or otherwise — on them to be the best.

For the second year, I saw plenty of tears Friday at the History Bee sponsored by *The Frederick News-Post* at Frederick Community College.

One little girl, upon incorrectly answering her first question in the final round, burst into tears and ran to the bleachers and crawled into a woman's lap where she received hugs and consolation.

Nothing I can ever say will stop tears at the History Bee or any other stressful competition. But I will say every child in the Bee had already won a school contest and earned the right to represent classmates at the event.

Just stepping up to the microphone and taking the chance of getting an answer wrong in front of all those people takes bravery and builds character.

Whether you finished first or didn't make it out of the first round, you should be proud of your accomplishments.

Hats off to all 12 finalists: Jill Rice, Visitation Academy; Hana Munsu, Centerville Elementary; Rishub Nahar, who won the event, and Carter Gipson, Urbana Elementary; Madelyn Hurwitz, second-place winner, and Sam Melcher, Parkway Elementary; Matthew Thomas, Yellow Springs Elementary; Michael Flegel and Erin Kopit, Walkersville Elementary; Zachary Kasica, St. John Regional Catholic School; Ashley Gildersleeve, Ballenger Creek Elementary; and Camilo Toro, third-place winner, Trinity School of Frederick.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2010

FROM PAGE ONE

History

(Continued from A-1)

The event has become a family affair for the Nahars, whose 15-year-old son Bobby participated when he was in elementary school.

"He worked really hard, and my wife helped him a lot," Jai Nahar said of Rishub.

"We all helped," Anita Nahar said. "He educated us — we all learned new things."

All Frederick County public and private elementary schools are invited to participate in the contest. Students from third, fourth and fifth grades are eligible. Schools can send two students from each grade, plus one alternate from each.

At Trinity School of Frederick, parent coaches Cindy Morrison and Lisa Hall worked with nine students twice a week during lunch.

They also studied local history books as well as a book on Frederick's German heritage written by Margaret "Peg" Denton, a retired Frederick County Public Schools teacher, Morrison said. They visited local historical sites and planned school field trips that would help with research.

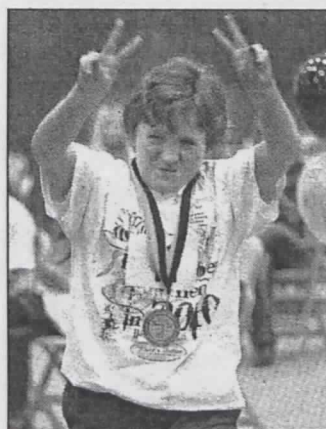
Their hard work paid off with the best showing yet for a Trinity student. Camilo Toro, a fourth-grader, took third place.

Parkway Elementary School fifth-grader Madelyn Hurwitz, who won the championship as a third-grader, came in second.

In the final round, she was stumped by a question about the original use of what is now known as the Weinberg Center for the Arts.

Madelyn answered that the original use was as a school.

The ring of a bell from the



Staff photo by Bill Green

Camilo Toro, a fourth-grader at the Trinity School of Frederick, reacts to a correct answer in the final round of competition.

judges table let her know her answer was incorrect.

After the awards ceremony

was over, she discussed her answer. Because the facility is currently a theater, she said she thought the original use would have been something different. She was surprised to find the theater actually started as a movie theater.

"It was a trick question, kind of," she said.

Parkway Elementary School fourth-grader Sam Melcher achieved the goal he set for himself when he started preparing for the contest.

"My goal was to make it to the finals, and I made it," he said. "And I still have next year, so I can do better."

A separate competition of two rounds of questions was held for alternates in each grade level.

Those winners were Mathias Yost (third grade, Deer Crossing Elementary); Liam McGann

(fourth grade, St. John Regional Catholic School); and Katherine Li (fifth grade, Urbana Elementary).

Serving as judges for the 11th FNP History Bee were senior judge Frances A. Randall, local historian and author and chairman of the board, Randall Family LLC; Denton, the retired teacher mentioned previously; George Lewis, member of the Federal C&O Canal National Historic Park Advisory Commission and president of the Catocin Aqueduct Restoration Fund; Elizabeth "Liz" Shatto, coordinator of the Frederick Historic Sites Consortium and Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area for the Tourism Council of Frederick County; and Heidi Campbell-Shoaf, director of the Historical Society of Frederick County.



Courtesy photo

Donates to troops

Students, parents and staff at St. John Regional Catholic School donated care packages to four soldiers who are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. The soldiers are relatives of school staff members, pictured, from left, Lonnie Burrier, Cindy Kaarid, Jim Ulmer and Liz O'Donoghue, as well as former staff member Mona Crawford. Corporate donations were also made by Color Impressions and Top Quality Janitorial Services.

EDUCATION

FNP 3/27/10



Staff photo by Sam Yu

Frederick Mayor Randy McClement talks about his job Friday morning with Melissa Gallagher's fourth-grade class at St. John Regional Catholic School.

Students get inside scoop for essay contest

By MARGE NEAL

News-Post Staff
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Students in Melissa Gallagher's fourth-grade class at St. John Regional Catholic School are getting ready to write essays for a contest sponsored by the Maryland Municipal League.

The organization holds its "If I Were Mayor ..." essay contest for fourth-graders each year.

On Friday, Gallagher's students got a little inside information to use as they prepare to write their essays.

They got a visit from City of Frederick Mayor Randy McClement.

With no restrictions from Gallagher on the types of questions they could ask, students inquired about everything from

(See MAYOR A-6)

Receives recognition



Courtesy photo

St. John Regional Catholic School recently received a Frederick County Chamber of Commerce proclamation in recognition of its 2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award. Presenting the award to Principal Karen Smith, center, and Assistant Principal Paul Fer, left, is Lori Friedman, membership director of the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce. The school received the Blue Ribbon designation by the U.S. Department of Education and has been a chamber member for six years.

FNP 5/9/10

Mayor

(Continued from A-5)

the mayor's favorite color (green) to Frederick County's failed attempt to secede from the state of Maryland.

"That was different, huh?" McClement said in response to Matthew Wilson's question.

McClement explained that in a democratic government, anyone can bring up an idea for discussion. County Commissioner John L. Thompson Jr. proposed that Frederick County break off from the state and put the idea on an agenda for discussion with his colleagues. They didn't agree with the proposal, so it died.

The mayor told the students about the kind of work he does and the issues he deals with — like looming budget deficits and a 23-inch snowstorm 10 days after he took office.

Municipal education

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of MML's essay contest.

"In that time, we've educated 20,000 students on municipal government and the role of mayor, specifically," said Linda Burrell, manager of member relations and education for MML. "Nothing about municipal government is taught in our schools."

The contest is open to all Maryland fourth-graders in public, private or home schools. Each year, 11 district winners receive a \$250 savings bond, a plaque and a citation from the governor.

This year, to celebrate the program's 10th anniversary, a grand-prize winner will receive a trip to MML's annual conference in Ocean City. The winner will

read the winning essay to a dinner crowd of more than 800 elected officials and other guests, Burrell said.

"The contest is a fun way to introduce municipal government to our students, but is not labor-intensive for teachers," Burrell said.

A guide can be downloaded from the organization's website, and the essays can be written in class or as an extracurricular activity.

At St. John Regional Catholic, Gallagher said her students would write their first drafts in class. After offering suggestions for fine-tuning, the fourth-graders will probably craft their final essays at home. Gallagher will then submit them to the contest.

With more than 2,000 entries each year, reading them all is a

huge task, Burrell said.

"We have about 15 or 20 of our members who volunteer to read them," she said.

Five finalists are chosen for each district. At that stage, all references to a student's name, school and local municipality are redacted, and the final judging is done by a mayor in that district.

"It's amazing how sharp these kids are," Burrell said. "And some of the ideas are pretty good — I've seen mayors jot down some of them."

McClement said he knew of at least eight other mayors across Maryland who plan to meet with local students as part of the essay contest.

"I love doing this sort of thing," he said. "The kids are great — they asked great questions."

On the cutting edge in Frederick St. John Regional offers new language program

By Matt Palmer

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FREDERICK – Rosanna Rensberger couldn't help but tear up Nov. 6, 2009.

The first-year American Sign Language teacher at St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick spent the previous three months teaching the language to fifth-grade students, but wasn't sure she was successful.

Principal Karen Smith was addressing hundreds of people – including Archdiocese of Baltimore officials, political leaders, supporters, families and students – as the school was celebrating its designation as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

After Smith talked about the school's successes and dedicated faculty, the fifth-graders broke into sign language applause.

"We only had six classes or so at that point," Rensberger said. "When you're a new teacher and you're not sure how kids are responding to it, and then they put it into action, it's amazing."

It was also satisfying for Smith, who launched the Foreign Language Experience (FLEX) program last fall.

Fifth grade takes sign language, while sixth studies Latin. Seventhgraders are immersed in Italian, while the eighth grade learns Chinese.

The multi-language approach was borne out of research. After years of offering Spanish in first through eighth grade one period a week, students were still not emerging fluent.

The idea is that from fifth through eighth grade, students will study a different language each year. The start of the program meant the end of Spanish at the school.

While Smith said some parents questioned the move, they're now

seeing dividends.

"A little light bulb went off in my head because I actually taught in a school in New Jersey where they had a FLEX program," Smith said. "One year they took French, another they took Spanish or German. They only got it for a year. This way, everybody starts out fresh."

The goal is to create interest in the languages for high school and beyond.

Rensberger is also teaching the language of her ancestors, Italian. Like in sign language, students are relishing the new class.

"It's helped me with my grammar," seventh grader Cheyanne Nevenschwander said of Italian. "It's even helped me through my school work." Smith teaches Latin, and students have learned the Sign of the Cross in her class.

Because of time limitations, it took three years to teach one book of Spanish previously. Some public schools offer it daily. Smith's research found that if a school was dedicating less than five percent of class time to a foreign language, the children wouldn't be fluent.

Compounding the issue was that the school receives 12 to 15 new students in the sixth grade each year. They were on different learning curves each fall.

Nevenschwander said of the transition from Spanish: "I've learned more in Italian than I have in Spanish and I've only taken this for a couple of months."

Smith said the program allows for new approaches each year.

"It gives us flexibility because if we lost a teacher or if we had the opportunity to hire another teacher who could offer another language ... we can change out any language for a year," Smith said.

One of the major components of the program is to teach the culture of the language. Students eat native foods and hear from guest speakers. The fifth grade even saw a deaf stage performance.

>> PAGE 9



Sierra Steigner practices Chinese calligraphy as classmates celebrate class at St. John Regional Catholic School.



Amirah Louketis (right) uses sign language to answer a question.



Students use flashcards during Italian language class. Other languages and sign language. (All photos by CR Staff/Owen Sweeney III)



John Fearnow displays his knowledge of sign language to Rosanna Rensberger, media specialist and FLEX teacher at St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick.

<< PAGE 8

Eighth grader Gregory Eash enjoys the Chinese class taught by Dong Li and Elizabeth Chung. They're learning about Chinese characters, the importance of Chinese New Year and the country's customs.

"It's fun to have a change of pace," Eash said. "It's challenging because it's new."

With the increase of Chinese-U.S. relations and St. John's proximity to the Washington area, the addition of the language and culture class could give students a major leg up in the future.

Chung, who works through a local agency and part-time at the school, said St. John is the only private or Catholic school in the region to offer the language.

"It is forward-thinking and keeps up with a trend," Chung said of the FLEX program. "We Americans have to compete globally, so we're preparing them to be global citizens."

For a video of the FLEX program in action, visit www.CatholicReview.org.

EVENTS



Courtesy photo

Greentree Homes donation

Greentree Homes at Tuscarora Creek, a local home developer, donated one year's tuition for a student at St. John Regional Catholic School. The tuition was auctioned at the school's recent annual gala fundraiser, the Diamonds to Denim Ball at St. Peter's Church in Libertytown. Shawn Kelly, vice president, sales and marketing for Greentree Homes, presented the check to the highest bidders, Darby Bolt-Fedorczyk, the parent of kindergartener Christian Bolt, and Mark Fedorczyk. This is the fourth consecutive year Greentree Homes has provided a full tuition donation to the St. John auction fundraiser. Pictured, from left, are Hanna Benedict, Amber Cummings, Margie Amedeo, auction committee members; Fedorczyk and Bolt-Fedorczyk; Kelly of Greentree Homes; and auction committee members Annette Celestina and Sherill Stitz.

Lazette 6/3/10

Mayor issues proclamation for 'St. John Fair Week'

St. John Regional Catholic School celebrates its 20th annual Spring Fair, beginning this week-end.

Frederick Mayor **Randy McClement** presented fair co-chair **Cindy Kaarid** with the official proclamation for St. John Regional Catholic School Fair Week in the City of Frederick last week.

The fair is set for 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday, and will include games, rides and crafts. Food and entertainment will continue until dusk. Fireworks are planned "at first darkness."

On Sunday, the fair will be open from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., with entertainment, games, rides and crafts. A silent auction will be held from 12:30 to 3:30, and a live auction at 4. At 5 p.m., a \$10,000 raffle will be awarded.

The fair will be held at the school, 8414



Courtesy photo

Essay contest

St. John Regional Catholic School seventh grade students placed in the top three spots in the 2010 American Legion Auxiliary Americanism Essay Contest sponsored by Francis Scott Key Unit 11. Contest winners were, from left, William Bureau, first place; Nadia Maduschke, second place; and Yvanna Haddad, third place. Bureau was also awarded second place in the Western Maryland District competition. St. John Regional is a 2009 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

FNP 5/26/10

FNP 6/3/10



Courtesy photo

St. John Fair Week proclaimed

St. John Regional Catholic School — a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence — will celebrate its annual Spring Fair on Saturday and Sunday at the school, on Opossumtown Pike, Frederick. Mayor **Randy McClement** presented fair co-chairwoman **Cindy Kaarid** with the proclamation for St. John Regional Catholic School Fair Week in the City of Frederick. Pictured, from left, are Tracey Breen and Kristina Kaarid, students; Karen Breen, co-chairwoman; Kaarid; Joe Breen, student; and McClement. For information, visit www.sjracs.org.

St. John Regional's foreign language program a success

By MARGE NEAL

News-Post Staff

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As St. John Regional Catholic School wraps up the first year of its new foreign language program, school officials are calling it a success.

The school, which has offered Spanish to all students beginning in first grade, switched this year to a program called Foreign Language Experience, or FLEX.

Students are exposed to a different language in grades five through eight. This year, fifth-graders studied sign language, sixth-graders learned Latin and Greek root words, seventh-graders studied Italian and eighth-graders got a taste of Chinese.

School administrators changed their approach to foreign language after studying research that showed if less than 5 percent of

(See LANGUAGE A-2)

Ashley Tolino, 13, who has yet to perfect her chopstick technique, samples Chinese noodles during a Chinese language class at St. John Regional Catholic School.

Staff photo by Graham Cullen

INSIDE

■ FCPS to host Chinese Language immersion program this summer
A-5



FNP
6/1/10

Language

(Continued from A-1)

weekly class time was being spent on foreign language instruction, a sampler program that provided an introduction to several languages would be more meaningful.

St. John had been devoting about 3 percent of class time to foreign languages, Principal Karen Smith said. Instructors were finding that eighth-graders, rather than being excited about pursuing Spanish with more intensity at the high school level, were instead burned out and dropped the subject altogether, she said.

Smith hopes the FLEX program will introduce students to a language they could continue studying in high school and even college.

The FLEX program combines language instruction with lessons about geography, customs and culture of the language's speakers.

In a recent Chinese class, eighth-graders learned how to make Chinese dumplings from scratch. Instructor Elizabeth Chung shared the history of the dumpling and its place in the Chinese culture. The use of dumplings and noodles is more common in northern China, while rice is more a staple in the country's south, Chung said.

"In China, it is a rite of passage to perfect your dumpling before you get married," she said. "A young man will want his bride to make a perfect dumpling."

Though the FLEX program is exploratory in nature, it

incorporates international standards, Chung said.

"In teaching language, it isn't just about words, it's about the five Cs — communication, comparison, communities, cultures and connections," she said. "And we integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening."

Before eating their work, the students learned how to say, "I like to eat dumplings," and learned proper chopstick use.

Chung said she teaches her students about the different eating habits in China and the U.S. "Americans eat lots of protein," she said. "In China, one pork chop could be for the whole family instead of for one person."

Incorporating activities like the dumpling making helps stu-

dents learn, she said. And she wants to spread the message that Chinese isn't a hard language to pick up.

"Writing the language can be hard to learn, but not so much learning to speak," she said. "It is a fun language to learn."

Assistant Principal Paul Fer said he and Smith are pleased with the first year's results.

"And the parents are thrilled to know their child will have a different language experience each year," he said.

Parents were initially hesitant to embrace the new program when they learned younger students would be excluded, Fer said. But more informal programs, including "learning lunches," are held to give those students some exposure.

And, Smith said, younger students learn songs in other languages and are exposed to other cultures through social studies, art and other programs.

Parents' feedback about the language classes has been positive.

"And I've been impressed with what the students have been able to learn in just one year," Smith said.

FNP 7/9/10



Courtesy photo

Dr. James P. Ganley, Class of '51, receives the Distinguished Graduate Award from Jean Wright, director of Institutional Advancement, St. John Regional Catholic School.

Distinguished Graduate Award presented

FOR THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST

Each year, the National Catholic Educational Association provides St. John Regional Catholic School the opportunity to honor one of its distinguished graduates.

This award provides recognition to Catholic elementary school alumni who have demonstrated personal and professional achievements in their adult lives. This year, the award was presented to St. John graduate James P. Ganley.

Ganley completed eighth grade at the school in 1951 and then graduated from St. John's Literary Institute in 1955. He received a bachelor's degree from Mount St. Mary's College, a medical degree from Georgetown University, followed by master's and doctorate degrees in public health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and postgraduate training as Senior Staff Fellow at the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

Ganley was appointed professor and chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport and is retired. He is past president of the Shreveport Medical Society, the Louisiana Association for the Blind, the International Eye Foundation and the International Society of Geographic and Epidemiologic Ophthalmology.

For five years he was co-director of a mobile eye unit that provided eye services in remote areas of Arizona and Indian reservations. He has studied River blindness, a major scourge of sub-Saharan Africa in Chad, Ghana and Liberia. He was the founding editor of an international journal, Ophthalmic Epidemiology, dedicated to publication of scientific research into causes and prevention of worldwide blindness.

Ganley retired in 2004 and lives on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay with his wife, where he continues his ophthalmic interests.



E-cycling event a success

St. John Regional Catholic School, in partnership with e-End, a Frederick-based electronics recycling company, collected 6.4 tons of electronics during its recent electronics recycling fundraising event. E-end also donated a laptop computer to the school for the student whose name was mentioned most often during drop-off. Pictured, from left, are Assistant Principal Paul Fer, seventh-grade student and laptop winner Tim Johnson, and Pat Doyle of e-End. Doyle presented Fer a check for \$600, which represented a portion of the fees collected for the fundraiser. This is the third year the school has conducted the e-cycling fundraiser with e-End, resulting in more than 18 tons of electronics being saved from the landfills.

Courtesy photo

FNP 7/7/10

EVENTS



Courtesy photo

St. John Regional Catholic School graduates 60 students

Sixty eighth grade students graduated from St. John Regional Catholic School on June 4. A baccalaureate Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Dan Goulet, associate pastor, St. John the Evangelist Church, assisted by Fr. Andy Aaron, pastor, St. Timothy's; Fr. Michael Jendrek, pastor, St. Ignatius of Loyola; Fr. Lawrence Frazier, pastor, St. Joseph-on-Carrollton-Manor; Fr. Keith Boisvert, pastor, St. Katharine Drexel, and Deacon Jeff Sutterman. Following the Mass, Karen Smith, principal, and Paul Fer, assistant principal, presented awards and certificates to the students. The valedictorian was Kathryn Tighe and the salutatorian was Domenica Iocco. Caroline Florenzo received the principal's Spirit Award. Fourteen students were members of the National Junior Honor Society. The 2010 Distinguished Graduate honoree was James P. Ganley, class of 1951. Pictured, from left, front row, Chase Tyler, Conor Snyder, Laura Lucas, Teresa Eade, Amanda Yates, Kinye Watson, Andrew Riley, Jonathon Mahalchick, Karen Leahy, Maria Rector, Nicholas Pollak, Maciah Thomas, Kalley Rhone, Connor Hebrank; second row, John Curtin, Mary-Charlotte Wasserbach, Kathryn Tighe, Eliza Funk, Ashley Tollino, Caroline Florenzo, Sade Reeves, Nicole Cederdahl, Domenica Iocco, Sierra Steigner, Joseph Falco, Gregory Eash, Summer Seeley, Myles Cooper, Amanda Hanley; third row, Madison Payne, Adam Kreimer, Nicholas Krammer, Jozef Kulis, Robert Brennan, John Wohlfarth, Michael Amedeo, Stephanie Gamble, Timothy Motherway, Caroline Fearnow, Erin Gillespie, Cearrah Sherman, Michael Scire, Hee Yeon Chang, Beth Ann Pierce; back row, Michael Grus, Connor Gallagher, Christian Villarosa, Layton Wilson, Thomas Murphy, Matthew St. Croix, Kelsey Bealmear, Timothy Morrill, Sean English, Matthew McNeill, John Ballantyne, Caroline Brown, Florian Cotera, Nathaniel Bowman, Julian Young.

SJPCS Alum!



Staff photo by Graham Cullen

St. John's Catholic Prep High School student Kathleen Morrill is one of 30 finalists in the Lucerne The Art of Dairy contest, put on by Safeway. If Morrill wins the grand prize she and her art teacher will each receive \$5,000, and the art program at St. John's Catholic Prep would receive \$20,000.

THE ARTS, SNACKS AND COWS

Local teen a national finalist in \$30,000 dairy competition

By IKE WILSON

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Kathleen Morrill, a junior at St. John's Catholic Prep High School, is a finalist in Safeway supermarkets' \$30,000 national dairy competition.

The daughter of Ken and Laura Morrill of Frederick, Kathleen is one of 30 national finalists in the fifth

annual Safeway Lucerne Art of Dairy Competition, which is intended to promote art and music in schools; academic excellence and healthy living.

She is one of only three finalists in the eastern United States.

To promote dairy products as healthy snack alternatives for kids, Safeway and Lucerne asked high school students in grades nine to 12 to submit designs using an outline of a

cow as the canvas. This year marks the second time entrants were asked to translate the art of music into visual art.

Students from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii visualized a range of music genres, performances and events, from Pied Piper cows to a bovine rhythm and blues band.

(See FINALIST B-8)

Finalist

(Continued from B-7)

More than 9,600 students submitted entries and 30 finalists were selected to paint their patterns on a life-size cow sculpture. The contest theme this year is "The Taste of Moosic."

"The cow I painted is set in a musical lounge/club, with little cows singing, playing instruments and dancing," Kathleen said.

Kathleen's art work will be on display at Safeway on Seventh Street in Frederick during the final judging phase. During this time, a panel of judges will review the entries to select winners. The grand prize winner will be announced in early May.

Kathleen plans to major in biology or genetics and minor in visual art in college. At St. John's, she is involved in the art club, literary magazine and National Honor Society. She also plays flute, baby-sits and volunteers at church.

"I'm really excited," Kathleen said Thursday. And if she's the top winner, the money will be helpful for St. John's art department, she said.

The grand prize winner will receive \$20,000 for their school's art department, plus \$5,000 each for the winner and their art teacher. The first prize winner will receive \$5,000 for their school's art department, plus \$2,500 each for the student and teacher. In addition,

three honorable achievement winners and their teachers will receive \$1,000 each. The remaining 25 finalists will receive \$500 U.S. Savings Bonds.

But winning art competitions is nothing new for the teenager.

Last year, Kathleen took first place at the Downtown Frederick Partnership sidewalk art competition and she will put her talent up against other local art stu-

dents Saturday on North Market Street in a sidewalk chalk art contest.

Kathleen exhibited a talent for art at a young age, said her father, Ken Morrill.

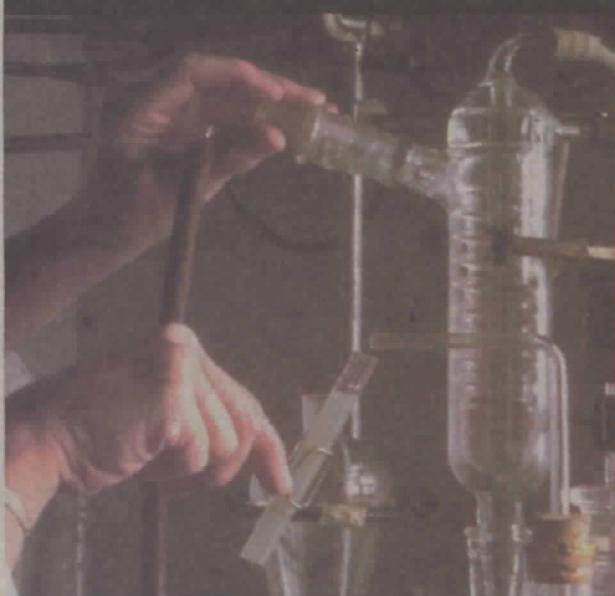
"She taught herself oil painting and she learned how to paint using 3-D and flash computer programs," Morrill said. "She can learn and execute in any medium and it's nice that Frederick is a

town that embraces the arts. It's a beautiful place to bring up a family."

Kathleen has won several scholarships, which has helped with the cost of her tuition at the private school, Morrill said.

A website, www.safeway.com/lucerne, has been created to showcase past winners and contest information and share healthy recipes.

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No matter what your perspective, it all points to Frederick County, MD

RETIRE

MENT MATH TEACHER TUTORS AT NONPROFIT

By NICHOLAS C. STERN

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At the age of 13, Nick Diaz left his native Cuba with his mother in 1960 for the promise of a new life in the United States.

He arrived in Miami, soon accompanied by thousands of other Cuban children fleeing in exile. He found that relying on his foreign compatriots for advice and aid in adapting to life in a new country was key to success.

So when Elizabeth Chung, executive director of LIFE and Discovery, asked him to tutor young students, many of whom are immigrants, he said he could not refuse. Diaz teaches the math classes year-round at the educational nonprofit's offices in Frederick.

"We think of it as an investment in the future," he said.

Indeed, Chung often finds scholarships for some children who cannot afford the classes and works with families to encourage children's development. She tries to point the way to the wealth of opportunities available for ambitious

and hardworking people in the United States, Diaz said.

"These people are so lucky to have her," he said.

Diaz taught middle school math in Frederick County Public Schools for 30 years until he retired in 2003. He spent 22 of those years at Gov. Thomas Johnson Middle School.

He has been a member of the Board of Trustees for Frederick Community College since

(See SLICE A-6)



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Nick Diaz has worked as a middle school math teacher for Frederick County Public Schools, chairman of the board of trustees for Frederick Community College and as a math tutor.

(Continued from A-5)

2006, and the board's chairman for two years.

On Tuesday, Diaz accepted a job at St. John Regional Catholic School to teach seventh- and eighth-grade math.

Among his proudest achievements, Diaz mentioned coaching a team of math students to take part in the local, state and national competition called MATHCOUNTS. His team fin-

ished second in the state nine times. The tricks, shortcuts and skills he provided to the MATHCOUNTS team to win competitions, he also gives to elementary to beginning high school students at LIFE and Discovery to help them excel on standardized tests such as the SAT.

Diaz said he focuses these students on problem solving, and reviewing middle school level problems most of them likely

never encountered during their official time in school because their teachers were too busy teaching to tests.

Learning about bases, prime numbers, perfect squares and the precise use of vocabulary in mathematics help them combat the confusions and trickery of tests including the SAT, he said.

"I've developed a healthy respect for language and its nuances," he said.

For himself, as well as some of his Asian or Latin American students at LIFE and Discovery, mastering those nuances in English has led to a more precise and exact understanding of math.

"I teach them how to approach a problem in a totally different way than they're used to," Diaz said. "I build up their confidence by showing them how easy and unmysterious it is once they know the relationships."