

PTA News & More

St. Paul Parish to Hold Benefit Concert

Carnegie Hall and Broadway star Ciaran Sheehan, former lead in the "Phantom of the Opera" and "Les Miserables," is performing a one-night concert "Peace and Joy" at St. Paul Church, at 8:00 pm on Saturday, December 17.

He will be accompanied by singer Gae Willis, harpist Aideen O'Donnell, and the late Frank Patterson's widow, pianist Eily O'Grady. Sheehan comes to St. Paul Church at the invitation of Monsignor Walter Nolan, pastor of St. Paul Parish, who is a close friend of the tenor.

The Ciaran Sheehan Benefit Concert will benefit the Catholic Relief Hurricane Katrina Fund. Concert tickets are \$25.00 for advance purchase, \$20.00 for seniors and \$15.00 for children. Pre-concert buffet dinner tickets in the St. Paul Church Hall are an additional cost of \$20.00. Tickets purchased at the door are \$30.00. Patron tickets, which include concert ticket, buffet dinner ticket and Ciaran Sheehan CD are available for \$100 per ticket. All tickets are general seating and the church doors will open at 7:30 pm. For tickets, call the St. Paul Rectory at 924-1743.

We invite you to become involved in your child's education by taking part in the PTA. Here are the many ways you can get involved and the key people to contact.

FUNDRAISERS

BOOK FAIR	March 5-8 2006	Lydia Elliott Dianne Lamb Hetty Waskin	(609) 688-1784 (908) 874-0966 (908) 281-4582
SECRET SANTA WORKSHOP	Nov. 29-Dec.1	Jennine DeSilets Bridget Brennan	(732) 422-4643 (609) 688-0225
SHAMROCK AUCTION	Mar 18, 2006	Jennine DeSilets	(732) 422-4643
POCKET CALENDARS	May/June, 2006	Sue Maloney	(732) 438-1260
BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION	Ongoing	Chris Gallarani	(908) 874-6608
MCCAFFREY'S RECEIPTS	Ongoing	Kelly Clark	(609) 924-5184

FAMILY EVENTS

Pasta Night	Feb 10, 2006	Francine King	(609) 443-8106
Father/Daughter Dinner Dance	Feb 2006	Linda Daly	(609) 371-9359
Mother/Son Outing	Feb/Mar 2006	Linda Daly	(609) 371-9359

Please contact Laura Okupski or Francine King if you would like to volunteer for a fundraiser or if you have questions, comments or new ideas! This document can also be found on St. Paul's website: www.spsprinceton.org

DR. SCIENCE



Dr. Science performed fun science experiments for the 4th through 7th grade classes, such as smoke rings and filling a bag with hot air from a hair dryer and watching the bag float.

8th GRADE BREAKFAST



The 7th grade class held a breakfast for our 8th graders to celebrate their Confirmation, made on November 4 in St. Paul Church.

December 2005

SPS Writing Program Off to a Winning Start

It is with great pleasure that the SPS family welcomed back Mrs. Pat Bourdette this school year to head the implementation of our new and comprehensive writing program: The Collins Writing Program. Mrs. Bourdette was the Language Arts coordinator for the middles grades and 6th grade teacher at St. Paul School from 1997 - 2004. Based on feedback from parents/guardians, academic findings from our St. Paul School 5-year Strategic Plan and increased focus on writing in SSATs and SATs, Mrs. Barrella was committed to introducing a new focus on writing for all students. "The Collins Writing Program is used by thousands of teachers in hundreds of schools around the country. Its success over the last sixteen years is due to its solid, best-practice methodology, the kind that research shows makes the greatest impact on students," said Mrs. Barrella.

And Mrs. Bourdette couldn't be happier to be back! "I was so thrilled about the prospect of coming back to St. Paul School. I missed teaching and found The Collins Writing Program to be a wonderful opportunity to really make a difference for the students because it is a school wide program that is all encompassing and integrates writing from grade to grade," according to Mrs. Bourdette. The program is already off to a solid start in its design to stimulate and improve students' thinking and writing skills.

Prior to the launch of this nationally renowned program at St. Paul School, several teachers attended a Collins workshop in the Princeton area, and others will attend in the spring. The goal of the workshop is to help teachers understand how to make the program work as a model for writing across the curriculum. Mrs. Bourdette believes that students need as much opportunity as possible to write since it is difficult for many to put their thoughts on paper. The Collins Writing Program simplifies the process for students and teachers with more writing in manageable bites -- with the ultimate goal of writing becoming more second nature and not as daunting to students.

As discussed by Mrs. Bourdette in her letter to parents and guardians earlier this year, the teachers are responsible for providing students with broad topics or types of writing for exploration, such as persuasive essays for 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Mrs. Bourdette conferences on

a regular basis with middle school students, reviews their work based on Collins Writing Program principles and areas upon which they need to focus such as writing to the defined audience or sentence structure and correct use of punctuation.



Through these regular meetings with students, Mrs. Bourdette keeps a log of student progress. "The greatest accomplishment thus far is to see the reaction of the students. They like to share their work and hear it read aloud. And they are especially proud when they have worked so hard and are certain that I won't find anything to correct in their work," according to Mrs. Bourdette.

Within the next few weeks, middle school students will receive details on writing their first research paper for the year. The Collins Writing Program also provides a form for a research paper and this important learning initiative will be a team effort involving the Language Arts teachers who will teach the process, Mrs. Heitzman who will provide a research package of materials to the students, and Mrs. Bourdette as writing coach. According to Mrs. Bourdette, the Collins Program provides opportunity for a more thoughtful research paper with a higher level of analytical thinking.

In closing, Mrs. Bourdette believes that St. Paul School is off to a strong start with this new writing program and hopes to see our students develop a real love of writing as they progress with the program throughout the year.

For more information on The Collins Writing Program, see www.collinseducationassociates.com.

CURRICULUM CORNER

PRINCIPAL'S POST

Dear Parents/Guardians

December is the month during which we celebrate the birth of Christ and are grateful for all our blessings. As such, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who helped make September, October and November such wonderful months – you are all blessings to St. Paul School.

I love Christmas because it causes me to become introspective and to reflect on the wonderful gifts I have. I'm grateful for the many graces and blessings God has given me. Naturally, the first things that come to mind are the children and the families we serve. How blessed are we!

I am especially grateful to all of you for your support of St. Paul School which is evident in so many ways. The PTA, Advisory Board, Endowment Committee, Marketing Committee, Room parents, Cafeteria and playground assistants and all of you who support these activities are a part of my Christmas prayer.

All of us here at St. Paul School wish all of you a very blessed Christmas filled with health, happiness and peace.

Elizabeth A. Barrella

Principal

Chores for Charity

SPS students raised \$740.22 in the recent Chores for Charity effort for hurricane relief! With the PTAs offer to match this amount, our school will donate \$1480.44 to "Child to Child: A Catholic Campaign to Aid Education," a fund set up by the National Catholic Education Association. The money will be earmarked for educational aid to victims of Hurricane Katrina. To all students who contributed to this effort, we extend our thanks. Your hard work is greatly appreciated!



The fifth graders have completed their banking project. The students each opened their own school checking account. The students first designed their own checks and deposit slips on the computer. The checks could be used at the supply closet, cafeteria, book fair and for contributions to the missions. The children were responsible for keeping a register for their account which will be part of their Math grade for work with decimals. The children will be extending the bank project later this year by using their spending data to make different types of graphs. Special thanks for all their help and cooperation in this learning experience to Mrs. Schramke, Sister Jane, the cafeteria workers, Mrs. Elliott and the book fair volunteers, and Ms. Rutkowski.

Seventh-Grade Integrated Language Arts

Most parents know that children can be very persuasive, especially during adolescence. Lately, the adept seventh-graders in Mrs. Chrisman's Integrated Language Arts class have been harnessing their persuasion talents in writing the perfect persuasive essay. Students have expounded passionately on the need to have All Saints Day as a school holiday: "I really do not think that it is fair that we should have to wake up early and then go to school after trick-or-treating, eating candy, and going to parties! It's just not fair! If students had the day off, they could sleep later, go to Mass for the Holy Day and just recuperate from Halloween activities of the previous day!"

They have also examined more serious topics, like the need to fund cancer research, support unwed mothers, and protect the environment: "Deforestation causes the destruction of our oxygen generators, the trees. Why continue to cut down trees by the thousands when recycling cannot only save our lives, but the lives of our descendants?"

Now that your seventh-graders are expert persuasive essayists, let them try their persuasion arts on you, in writing.

ST. PAUL PARENTS WILL HAVE A BLAST

As promised, we are fulfilling our commitment to reduce our dependence on the weekly communication folders per your comments in the Parent Survey. Effective January 24, 2006, most communications from administration, faculty, the PTA, and religious education will reach you through the e-mail addresses you have provided to us. The folders will still come home each Tuesday, but their use will be limited to progress reports; report cards; invitations, and forms that require information, signature, and/or a check. Moreover, these forms and alerts will also be posted on the SPS website, where you can download them, fill them out and return in the weekly folder.

We asked for you to fill out the e-mail form sent home on November 15 and to return it by November 22, 2005. If you haven't done so already, please fill out the form with the three e-mail addresses you want to include for your family. Remember, there is no need to repeat the addresses we already have on file for your family. We expect to be able to electronically advise you of emergencies, snow closings, early dismissals, and last minute announcements as soon as the database is updated, and we would like this to be in place before the inclement weather begins.

We hope that the use of new technologies available to us will help us to achieve our Strategic Planning goal to make the SPS website "a complete, interactive communication tool." Should a problem occur or if you are not receiving your emails, please contact our Webmaster www.spsprinceton.org.

TEACHER TALK

Sally Chrisman, seventh-grade Integrated Language Arts teacher, is also a soprano with Princeton Pro Musica, which will be singing at Princeton's Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday, November 25th, on Palmer Square. She will also be singing at Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University, on Friday, December 16, at 8:00. The program, Carols for Chorus, Harp, and Percussion, will include works by Britten and Susa.

AROUND THE PARISH

ST. PAUL PARISH ATHLETICS



The boys varsity basketball team has just begun its season and is off to a 2 – 1 start in the Mercer County CYO League. After losing to Incarnation in its opener, the team rebounded the next week and defeated St. Raphael's Gold and St. Raphael's White. The team will play 16 league games which are held on Saturdays and Sundays from November through February. In addition to the CYO league, the team has competed in the Notre Dame High School Sending School Challenge Tournament and will play other tournaments throughout the season.

This year's squad is lead by five 8th graders, Joseph Convery, Brandon Gagliardo, Sean Hudgins, Kyle Mariboe and Robbie Michel. The rest of the team consists of a solid group of 7th graders, Ryan Bruvik, Kevin Corrigan, Patrick Daly, John Hall, Kevin Link, Joseph Mendoza, Patrick O'Connell and Sean O'Connell.

Along with competing on the basketball court this season, the boys will also be involved in a community service project for the Children's Home Society of Trenton.

The coaches Michael Link, Martin Hudgins and John Hall look forward to a great and enjoyable season with the boys.



Mrs. Britschge and Ms. Rutkowski showed their annual support of the St. Paul Parish basketball teams by attending a CYO Thursday night game to cheer on the 5th and 6th grade girls St. Paul Teams. Shown in the photo are Mrs. Britschge and Ms. Rutkowski with the team.



Ryan Bruvik (25), Joey Convery (50), Robbie Michel (40) and Sean O'Connell (45) discuss strategy.

LION PRIDE YEARBOOK NEWS

Can you believe it is already time to begin working on the 2006 Lion Pride Yearbook. If you are interested in placing a business ad, congratulatory ad to a student, or simply a family page ad, please send in the ad information and the payment in an envelope marked "Yearbook Ad" by November 30, 2005. The cost of the ads are: Full Page \$70; Half Page \$55; 1/4Page \$50; 1/8 Page \$40. Please know that your ad placement offsets the printing costs of the yearbook and helps to keep the yearbook cost more affordable for our families. We have been very fortunate to have our local business neighbors, parish families and school families support our yearbook with ads and we hope you will consider including your family's special message in Lion Pride 2006. If you have any questions about the yearbook or placing an ad, please contact Mrs. Britschge in 5A or send her an e-mail note at abritschge@spsprinceton.org. And if you do send Mrs. Britschge an e-mail, please be sure to thank her for the many, many volunteer hours she contributes each year as editor of "Lion Pride." Thank you Mrs. Britschge and thank you St. Paul Parents for your continued support.

ST. PAUL STUDENTS COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

On Wednesday October 5, St Paul's Girls Scout Troop 664 did a community service project at the Special Olympics complex in Lawrenceville. The girls wrapped over 1,000 tea sets that were distributed at the American Girl fashion show on October 23rd in the Westin Hotel in Princeton. Troop 664 also helped at the event. Pictured is Troop 664: (bottom row) Kimberly King, Caroline Keimig, Samantha Both, Nina Milizzo, Abigail Buckley, Abigail Pitarresi and Catie Toomey. The top row: Meg Dalrymple, Victoria Fierko, Mariah Meehan, Emily Okupski, Emily Motola, Alexandra Rego, Courtney Hess, Caroline Scott, Gabrielle Lazzara and Alexa Fares.

The troop leaders are Roberta Hess and Janine Pitarresi; assistant leaders are Antoinette Buckley and Jeanne Fares. Great job girls!

