



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

May 2021

From the Principal's Office



As we head into the home stretch of the 2020-2021 school year, I am as thankful as ever for the St. Sebastian Parish School community. Thank you to every single one of you for everything you have done to make this school year great despite the

obstacles presented by the pandemic. We are truly blessed to be a part of this school community that continues to thrive.

It Takes a Terrier Village

Many thanks to all the teachers who have been overseeing our many extracurricular activities, including Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Meghan Ritchie (MathCOUNTS); Autumn Gaskins and Jennifer Smee (Literature at Lunch); Debra Landis and Megan Ritchie (Genius Project); Maggi Blischak and Sally Weakland (Power of the Pen); Robert Dedinsky (Soap Box Derby Club); and the Socials Committee (Spring Family Scavenger Hunt). Thank you also to the many people who pitched in to help with all of our Catholic Schools Week events in January, including Jennifer Bradley and Jennifer Smee (spelling bee); all of our classroom teachers (Terrier Trivia), the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation (doughnut treats), and our Student Ambassadors (open house tour guides).

Special thanks to Lori Krohn and Carrie Pozsgay for their work as chairs of the St. Sebastian Spectacular. We very much appreciate all their efforts to plan and replan this major event in the midst of the pandemic. Thank you to Michelle Huber, the parish director of marketing and public relations, for her essential guidance and work on the event. Thanks to the efforts and support of many, this "non-event event" brought us together in spirit and in support of our school, even if we couldn't celebrate in person. Many thanks also to Natalie Griffin-Kinney for coordinating all the wonderful student art projects for the silent auction. What a great showcase of our students' talents!

Friendzy Survey/Update

As this year comes to a close, all teachers and students (grades 3-8) will be completing a post-program survey on the Friendzy program. The

results, which we will receive over the summer, will provide us with a snapshot of teacher and student perceptions of the climate and culture of our school as well as highlight how our students and teachers are applying the key SEL (social emotional learning) skills and lessons they have been learning. We will use the feedback and analysis provided by the survey to help us plan our SEL goals and activities for next year.



As I write this letter, we are finishing with the Friendzy theme of "I am Chosen," and moving on to the theme "Friendship is a Gift." Together these themes remind me of the verse from Matthew 5:16: "Your light must shine before others." We are called to follow Christ's example, to let our love shine for others, including our friends who are gifts from God. Even given the pandemic and how things have been different for friendships as much as everything else, we hope you have been seeing a difference in the friendships in the life of your child. We hope all our students will live out the theme of celebrating their friends as gifts from God.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation

I hope you will join me in celebrating our amazing teachers, aides, tutors, administrative staff and all other staff members who have truly risen to meet the many challenges we faced this year and exceeded

all expectations. Thank you to the school groups and parents who organized daily celebrations during Teacher Appreciation Week: On Monday, HASA supplied a breakfast of bagels, cream cheese, and coffee. On Tuesday, Lori Krohn and Carrie Pozsgay, our Spectacular co-chairs, provided tasty appetizers. On Wednesday, the Socials Committee served up a wonderful lunch. On Thursday, I restocked the teacher's lounge with snacks, drinks, and special treats, and on Friday, HASA offered up a fantastic assortment of snacks and treats. I want to offer special recognition to our school office staff, Diana McGee and Teresa Schleier, who not only run an efficient and organized office, but also handle all of the unexpected issues and events that arise nearly every day. We are so blessed to have them as valued members of our staff. If you haven't already, I encourage all of our parents to send a note or email to our faculty and staff to let them know how truly appreciated they are.

School Advisory Committee

I'm pleased to welcome the following school parents as new members of the School Advisory Committee: Tina Davenport, Ashley Woodford-Lawson, and Laura Nedelk Stallings. They join current parents on the board Ana Borges, Mary Kinkelaar, Katie Pirie, Carrie Rea, and Tricia Rothkopf, as well as Sharon Fournier (former St. Sebastian teacher, alumni parent), Lois Gerstenmaier (alumni parent), and Jennifer Smee (St. Sebastian 4th-grade teacher). I am looking forward to working with this great team as we prepare for the 2021-22 school year and beyond. On a related note, registration for next year looks very strong, and we are on track to start next year just as we are finishing this year: "Terrier Strong!"

Yours in Christ,

Anthony Rohr
Principal

Questions or Suggestions?

Questions or suggestions for the newsletter? Please email Anne Dennée, Newsletter Editor, at Anne@DenneeFamily.com.

From the STEM Coordinators

Grades K-3, by Susan Vernon

The primary grades have been busy with STEM activities! Here is a sampling of what's been happening in our classes! Mrs. Kidder's kindergarten class challenged themselves to a Cat in the Hat cup stacking STEM activity. They built towers out of red cups and white index cards for Dr. Seuss Day! The 1st-graders welcomed spring with bird-watching activities and recorded their observations in their bird journals.



Our 2nd-graders love STEM activities, especially around the holidays. On St. Patrick's Day, they learned how rainbows are formed and then made

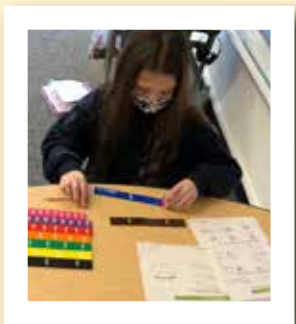
candy rainbows! They also used the candy for a graphing activity, and the day ended with a special craft that recalled St. Patrick's message about the Trinity. During the Easter season, the 3rd-graders learned about making a stable base, then engineered a tall tower using plastic eggs. The real challenge was using all of the eggs! Afterward, they made patterned towers and explored different color combinations.

Our 3rd-graders completed several hands-on STEM activities related to their studies

of math concepts such as measurement and fractions. They used rulers to determine the perimeter of their new desks. They also learned about unit and equivalent fractions using fraction tiles.

Grades 4-6, by Jennifer Slegus

The 4th-grade students were busy with many STEM-based activities during the third and fourth quarters. The students, through many cross-curricular activities, learned about the Underground Railroad, concluding in an escape room activity that incorporated math, reading, and problem-solving skills. The students learned about the importance of Earth Day by first learning about the Apollo 8 mission that orbited the moon and the astronauts who took this journey. The students watched the video "Earthrise," which was told from the perspective of the astronauts and taught students about the importance of the astronauts taking the very first photograph of planet Earth. The students then continued learning about the impact of human technology on the environment. Through a simulation lab, they were then given the task of cleaning up their own oil spill and determining the best method to clean up oil in the environment. The students will also be making their own polymer bounce balls to learn about thermoplastics and thermosets. To finalize this project, they will compare the coefficient of restitution, or the "bounciness," of different balls and then graph their results.



The 5th-grade class has been active with many STEM lessons while mastering a unit on electricity. The students created a working traffic light or lamp using paper circuits, where they used copper tape and colored LED lights. In addition, they completed a lab in which they identified several objects as conductors or insulators. Recently math and social studies "collided" as the students spent a few weeks using rulers and maps while learning how to read and use a map scale. Finally, the 5th-grade class participated in the MacGyver Wind Lift Challenge through the Ohio Energy Project (OEP). OEP collaborates with many companies to educate students about energy conservation through STEM activities. The students created wind turbines that were used to lift weight (pennies) by using the engineering design process. We have five students who are finalists in this challenge!

The 6th-grade participated in a Zoom call with the STVM High School Rocket Team in which the rocket team guided our students through how to build a rocket out of paper and other ordinary materials. While students were building rockets, the rocket team talked about concepts related to rockets and explained how rockets work. The STVM rocket team came to St. Sebastian in April to launch the rockets that our students made. For English/language arts, the students completed a "breakout" activity in which they worked together to complete different challenges and solved riddles about poems, prose, and dramas.

Grades 7-8, by Megan Ritchie

In religion, our 7th-grade students are using their imagination and artistic skills to create social/emotional learning posters based on their Friendly lessons. In health classes, these students studied the dangers of vaping and created a persuasive anti-vaping poster showing the science behind the risks of vaping. In science classes, 7th-graders used Oreo cookies to show the lunar phases of the moon and to study the lunar cycle. This lab also taught them how the moon must be positioned in order for a solar or lunar eclipse to occur and, also, what would happen if the moon's revolution speed was twice as fast or half as fast as it is now.



In the 8th grade, students studied the laws of heredity and genetics and made their own genetic children using a given set of alleles. The 8th-graders participated in a "Biology and Genetics of the Eye" program from the Ohio Optometric Association for which they watched videos and completed hands-on activities to learn about the eye. We had several virtual guest speakers this quarter. Dr. Anjali Misra is a plant molecular biologist by training with a doctorate in molecular and environmental plant science. She spoke with the students regarding heredity and genetic engineering. Wendy Bohon, from Research Institutions for Seismology, spoke with the students about what it is like to be an earthquake scientist. High school students from the STVM NASA Student Launch Educational Outreach program presented to students in grades 6-8 about rockets. Our students made their own rockets and will get an opportunity this spring to have the STVM students help them with a launch.

Students in the News

MathCOUNTS

St. Sebastian's MathCOUNTS team has excelled this year.

On Feb. 6, MathCOUNTS team members Sebastian Blaser, Jude Rothkopf, Owen Schlueter, and Timothy Sullivan participated in the MathCOUNTS chapter competition. Congratulations to Owen Schlueter, who advanced to the Feb. 25 Chapter Invitational round. Owen was one of 22 students from our area and the first student from St. Sebastian to move on to this invitational round of the competition, where he finished in 20th place.



Three groups of MathCOUNTS members submitted videos to the MathCOUNTS Video Challenge. Congratulations to team "Detective Distribute," 7th-graders Sebastian Blaser, Peter de Boer, Jude Rothkopf, and Timothy Sullivan, who won the judges' choice award for best set design/scenery after advancing to the quarterfinals in this competition.

And finally, congratulations to MathCOUNTS moderators Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Megan Ritchie as well as the entire MathCOUNTS team for achieving silver and then gold status with the National Math Club! St. Sebastian's MathCOUNTS team is included on the Gold Level Schools list on the National Math Club website, and the team will receive a Gold Level banner and pencils in June. Congratulations on this fantastic achievement!



Genius Project

The Northeast Ohio Genius Project is a nine-week program that presents student teams with a challenge designed to help them develop their skills in problem-solving, creative thinking, project management, and teamwork. This year our Genius Project participants were tasked with creating a Rube Goldberg machine that would successfully lower a sign into a light source. A

Rube Goldberg machine is a chain reaction machine intentionally designed to perform a simple task in an indirect and overly complicated way. St. Sebastian had six teams that designed their own contraptions using the provided materials. This year's top project from our school was created by 8th-graders Lily Hanchin, Sophia Magee, Isabelle Mastromatteo, Teagan McCafferty, Gianna Pillitiere, and Reese Kelly. Great work, team! A video of their winning project was entered into the final Northeast Ohio Genius Competition.

Terrier Trivia

During Catholic Schools Week, our students engaged in a lively competition of religious trivia in the annual Terrier Trivia contest. Congratulations to the following students for their top place finishes: Grades 1-3: Ellie Wurgler (first place), Gavin Redovian (second place), and Skylar Goodrum (third place); grades 4-6: Julia Rea (first place), Isaac Sullivan (second place), and Grace Keso (third place); and grades 7-8: Payton Kidder (first place), Susie Thomas (second place), and Rowan Kelly (third place).

Spelling Bee

Congratulations to this year's spelling bee winners who competed in January during Catholic Schools Week. Grades 1-3: Mia Byard (first place), Liam Merzweiler (second place), and Alexander Frank (third place); grades 4-6: Sebastian Bitecofer (first place), Hunter Jopperi (second place), and Frances Knauer (third place); grades 7-8: Susie Thomas (first place), Max Sinsley (second place), and Sebastian Blaser (third place). Susie moved on to the virtual district competition but did not advance further. Great job, super spellers!



Power of the Pen

St. Sebastian's Power of the Pen team had a great year despite all the changes due to the pandemic, including switching to all virtual versus in-person

competitions. This year's team includes 8th-graders Lola Hall and Sophia Magee and 7th-graders Catie Bordenkircher, Suzana Borges, Sophia Burgoyne, Isabelle Incorvia, Madelyn Kastelic, Alex Krohn, Grace Mahaney, and Susie Thomas. After placing first at districts in January, the 7th-grade team placed third in the regional tournament in February. Individual awards were earned by Suzana Borges (second place overall and two "best of round"



awards), Susie Thomas (third place overall) and Alex Krohn (11th place overall), and the remaining 7th-grade writers all placed in the top 20! Based on their individual performances, Suzana Borges, Sophia Burgoyne, Catie Bordenkircher, Alex Krohn, and Susie Thomas qualified to compete in the state competition in May. Great job, team!!!

Scholarship Winners for 2021-2022

Congratulations to the following winners of scholarships for the 2021-22 school year! These students earned a total of 30 scholarships worth a combined \$18,500. The scholarship winners were recognized at the annual Foundation Scholarship Mass on March 25. A special recognition ceremony was held at the end of the Mass, which was watched by the entire student body on a livestream feed. Additional scholarship awards given by the high schools to our 8th-grade students will be recognized at the June 3 graduation ceremony.

Scholarships Funded Through the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation

The Mary Ley Burke Scholarship: Louisa Dennée, Luca Hall, Frances Knauer, John Finn Rafferty; *The Christopher James Consilio Memorial Scholarship:* Reid Armstead, Jacob Dennée, Luke Kindbom, Gianna Pillitiere, Angelo Puglia, Jackson Vesco; *The Denise Maroon Finley Memorial Scholarship:* Luke Saus; *The Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship:* Lily Hanchin, Isabelle Mastromatteo; *GOAL Scholarship (Graves O'Neill Academic Leaders):* Sadie Borges, Nevaeh Brunson, Lydia Chivers, Aubrey Coates, Caitlin Horning, Christian Trenor, Jude Rothkopf; *Frances L. Sharp Scholarship:* Isabella Incorvia; *The John A. Trecaso Scholarship:* Claire Kinkelaar, Matthew Large

Scholarships Funded Through St. Sebastian Parish School/Parish Related Groups

HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship: Isabelle Mastromatteo, Niklas Reeder; *The Knights of Columbus Council #14255 Deacon Terry Peacock Memorial Scholarship:* Claire Kinkelaar, Niklas Reeder; *The Sanctuary Society Service Scholarship:* Luke Kindbom; *The St. Irene Principal's Scholarship:* Lily Hanchin, Isabella Incorvia

News and Notes

Spring Social: Family Photo Scavenger Hunt

The Socials Committee organized another great scavenger hunt for the whole family March 26-27. Like the very successful fall scavenger hunt, the spring event challenged family teams to submit pictures showing their completion of a wide variety of activities, from creating a spring-themed greeting card, hunting for Easter eggs and hopping around like Easter bunnies, to enjoying some spa relaxation and visiting local historical sites, pizza joints and libraries! And of course, a picture of the best school in Akron: St. Sebastian Parish School!



Many thanks to the families who hosted and planned this social, including the Chuba, Dagnall, Horning, Huckabee, Knauer, Kormushoff, Long, Marino, and Schaffner families. Thanks as well to the many sponsors who donated prizes for this event. All of the money raised goes toward the Teacher Appreciation and Wellness Fund, which supports our wonderful teachers. Congratulations to the teams who won prizes for being among the first seven teams/families to complete the scavenger hunt: the "For the Love of Guinness" team, the Schnurr Family, the Kormkrew team, Team Incorvia, the Kilker Family, the Gilbride Girls and the "Son of John" team. Congratulations also to the winners in the most creative picture category: the Whitney Boys and the Raita Family. All participants were rewarded with a good time — and an Easter treat bag after the contest was over!



Spring in the School Garden

In early April, our students worked to finish preparing the school garden for spring planting by adding a fresh layer of soil to the raised beds. Then they started planting! Peas, radishes and carrots were the first seeds to be planted by our 7th graders. Other grades will join in the effort with plenty of hands-on learning in the garden — planting seeds and weeding the beds — as warmer weather arrives. Happy Spring!

First-Grade Student Leads Earth Day Activities

Our students pitched in to help take care of our planet on Earth Day, April 22, by picking up trash on the grounds of the school, church, and gym as well as Forest Lodge. This service project was led this year by 1st-grader Gavin Redovian. Gavin expressed his enthusiasm for Earth Day one day when he was talking to Principal Rohr, who then invited Gavin to be the school's official 2021 Earth Day Ambassador and share his message and enthusiasm with the whole school. With the help of Theresa Schleier, one of our fantastic school office administrative assistants, Gavin contacted Keep Akron Beautiful and enrolled the school in their Clean Up Akron program, which supplied Gavin with enough trash bags and disposable gloves for the whole school to use.



Gavin made videos that showed the importance of cleaning up our school and keeping our grounds beautiful as well as where to get the supplies needed to pick up trash. The rest of the school viewed the videos on Earth Day, and the school shared one of Gavin's videos on Facebook, where it was viewed more than 100 times! He also gave Earth Day fun facts to the whole school over the PA throughout the day.

His teacher, Molly Karg, says students who saw him in the halls were stopping to tell him he did a great job. When asked what he thought about the whole experience, Gavin said, "it seems like I'm famous!" Great job, Gavin! We are proud of you and inspired by your passion and enthusiasm.



2021 St. Sebastian Spectacular

SPECTACULAR A NON-EVENT EVENT



Thank you to everyone who supported the 2021 St. Sebastian Spectacular! Rather than a one-night event, this year's Spectacular was an online event that spanned 12 days, from April 12 to 24. The 2021 event featured two big raffles. One was the tuition raffle, which has been a feature of Spectacular in years past, but this year it included three winners. Congratulations to our first-place winner of free tuition for next year: Verlaine Blaser! Second place, half-price tuition, was won by Ashley Woodford-Lawson, and third place, one-fourth off of tuition, was won by Roxanne Marie Burke.

The other big raffle was a bourbon basket, featuring over \$600 worth of fine spirits in a handmade crate. The winner of this popular item was Jen Yori. The winning raffle tickets were drawn April 24 during an afternoon Facebook Live session by Fr. Valencheck and Principal Rohr, with an inquisitive Chester, the rectory dog, looking on. The remaining auction items were on sale until that evening.



As always, one of the highlights of the auction was the student artwork. Each class worked on creative and unique projects that showcased our students' talents. Many thanks to Natalie Griffin-Kinney for coordinating all of these projects — and thanks to her husband, Mike, and children who assisted her with some of the construction and final touches! The projects were wonderful and brought out a real sense of school pride in our students and parents alike.

This year's paddle raise brought in over \$45,000 for our school's safety and security initiative, which includes plans to update the school's main entrance, upgrade and add security cameras throughout campus, update the school's PA system, and install new locking mechanisms on all classroom doors. Thank you to the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation for the fantastic \$10,000 matching gift for the paddle raise!



In addition to providing funding for this safety and security initiative, the event's proceeds (which were still being calculated when this newsletter went to print) will go toward reducing tuition for all students, upgrading technology, and growing our school's endowment.

Since we could not gather to share a meal in person due to the pandemic, this year's Spectacular included a special option to buy a family dinner from Vaccaro's Trattoria. The menu was specially prepared for St. Sebastian families

by chef/owner and current St. Sebastian parent Rafael Vaccaro. The meal included lasagna, chicken marsala, salad, wedding soup, and even a very special dessert: Fr. Valencheck's "Terrier" Rocky Road Chocolate Gelato! Rafael also generously donated gelato samples for our students to enjoy at school to kick off the 2021 Spectacular.

Thank you to the 2021 Spectacular Co-chairs Lori Krohn and Carrie Pozsgay for organizing an event that brought our community together in support of our school even though we could not celebrate in person. Many thanks to everyone who supported this event by donating auction items, buying auction packages, being sponsors, buying and selling raffle tickets, buying the family meal deal from Vaccaro's, or donating to the paddle raise. We are so thankful for the spirit and generosity of this community!



Camp Invention: June 14-18



Camp Invention returns to St. Sebastian this summer. This nationally acclaimed program for students in K-6 explores connections between science, technology, engineering, and innovation. St. Sebastian 4th-grade teacher Jennifer Smee is the director of our school's program, which is coordinated in partnership with the National Inventors Hall of Fame. This one week (M-F, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) summer adventure provides students with the opportunity to explore, discover, and achieve while having fun. Enrollment is limited to students from St. Sebastian Parish School, and both in-person and online options are available. Visit www.invent.org/camp for registration information.

Vacation Bible School: July 26-30

Please mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School this summer at St. Sebastian! It will run from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday-Friday. VBS is for children ages 4 through entering 5th grade. The theme this year is "Cathletics," which is an Olympics-themed program that will inspire our young people to set goals and aim for a commitment to excellence in their Catholic faith. Registration materials will soon be available on the parish website.



SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES

SAVE THE DATE

Vacation Bible School	July 26-30
Junior High Summer Camp	August 9-13
New Family Picnic	August 19, 5:30 p.m.
Welcome Back Open House	August 22
First Day of School 2021-22	August 24
Christmas Break	Dec. 20-Dec. 31
(classes resume Jan. 3)	
Easter Break	April 15-22
Last Day of School 2021-22	June 2

MAY

8th-Grade Trip	May 6-7 (Thursday-Friday)
May Crowning Mass	May 13 (Thursday)
Pass-it-On Mass	May 27 (Thursday)
Last Day of Preschool	May 28 (Friday)
Spectacular Coupon Book Dress Down Day	May 28 (Friday)
No School, Memorial Day	May 31 (Monday)

JUNE

Last All School Mass	June 2 (Wednesday)
Clap Out for 8th-Graders	June 3 (Thursday), 11 a.m.
End of 4th Quarter/Last Day of Classes	June 3 (Thursday)
Graduation, St. Sebastian Church	June 3 (Thursday), 7 p.m.
5th-Grade Café Arnone Social, Forest Lodge	June 3 (Thursday), 3-6 p.m.
4th-Grade Café Arnone Social, Forest Lodge	June 4 (Friday), 6-9 p.m.
3rd-Grade Café Arnone Social, Forest Lodge	June 5 (Saturday), 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Camp Invention	June 14-18 (Monday-Friday)

Have a Wonderful Summer!