



Trailblazers

Congratulations! Duke TIP's Seventh Grade Talent Search has identified these seventh grade students as academically talented based on standardized test scores. These students are invited to take the SAT or the ACT as seventh graders, which allows them greater insight into their academic abilities.

- Garrett Blinkhorn
- Meghan Carr
- Nick Casaburri
- Erin Hagebusch
- Regan Hattersley
- Megan Hill
- Emily Hollingworth
- Joseph Merendino
- John Moloney
- Alex Morley
- Lauren Nagel
- Nicolette Paglioni
- Arynne Tanner

SCS Middle School: A New Tradition

In May, SCS will witness its third graduation as the Class of 2010 sets out to blaze the trail ahead. These students, and their predecessors, are an integral part of the formation of **the SCS Middle School.** "Our students have caused the evolution of the middle school to be what it is-vibrant, young, **hopeful, and successful,**" explains SCS Middle School Religion teacher, Sister Dominic, O.P. With 95 students enrolled in 6th through 8th, the halls are filled with the spirit each exudes.

Principal, Sister Mary Jacinta, O.P. describes, "Our vision for our Middle School is that it continues to grow to be an environment in which our students receive opportunities to

live their faith to the full, take ownership for their academic studies, and engage in meaningful services to our school, **parish, and larger community."** As part of this vision, SCS implements the *whole child* approach-forming every aspect of the student: academic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual.

Besides this holistic approach in core subjects, programs are being added to advance the **Middle School's vision.** The faculty is training in *Differentiated Instruction*, a course designed by SCS Curriculum Coordinator, Ms. Gallinari, which provides strategies tailored to learning styles, abilities and interests. Enrichment Electives extend the core and specials

subjects with a variety of offerings. Robotics, Band, Team Sports, and CPR are just a sampling of available choices. The newly-formed Middle School Activities Committee provides social experiences, such as the Mardi Gras Social, for students.

An issue that all middle schools encounter is bullying. When asked how SCS meets this challenge, Sister Mary Jacinta responds, "**St. Catherine's uses the *Second Steps* and *Virtue Education* programs to address appropriate use of social media as well as the negative issue of **bullying.**" Other methods include mini-retreats to build fellowship, Guidance Counseling classes, and parent education through guest speakers. "We do recognize that only**



SCS Gets SMART!

Recently, SCS got SMART! The school installed cutting-edge technology, known as the SMART Board, in four classrooms: two 1st Grade, one 5th Grade, and one 8th Grade. "The SMART Board has everything needed to create an engaging and interactive learning environment within my classroom," explains 5th Grade teacher,

Mrs. Stacy. The easy-to-use boards accommodate many learning and teaching styles, providing teachers with an interactive component to their **lesson plans.** "Students are very much in tune to technology and SMART Boards provide that 'cool' technology that the student's love," informs Mrs. Stacy.

These technology upgrades and six additional LCD projectors were made possible by the funds raised by students during the annual *Fun Run* last September. The school also upgraded the servers to ensure longevity and reliability of the software systems and data.

By Lisa D'Arienzo

From Principal Sister Mary Jacinta, O.P.



Dear Families and Friends,

As we approach the final stretch of our 2009-2010 academic year, we are pleased to share with you some highlights of events and reflections from our parents and students.

We are grateful to all our students, parents, families, friends, and benefactors who have contributed and continue to contribute to our school and parish in many and various ways. In particular, as we celebrate this Year for Priests, we wish to thank our pastor Father John Matejek for his love and support of our students. Our weekly school Mass with Father

John has been a wonderful celebration of praise and **worship of God's goodness** to us. We also wish to thank Father Manuel Rivas for his priestly presence; our students have been blessed to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation from him at different times throughout this year.

As we prepare to bid our eighth grade students farewell, we wish to thank them for their leadership and good example during their time at St. Catherine's. **They have inspired** us through the good use of their gifts and talents on many occasions, especially at the Christmas Pageant and Living Stations of the

Cross. As they journey onto high school, we promise them our support of prayers and ask the same from them in return. We rejoice with them at their many accomplishments and we are confident they will continue to grow as strong followers of Christ.

Let us continue to pray for one another as we strive to follow in the footsteps of St. Catherine of Siena, our patroness: setting the world ablaze with the love of Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

Sister Mary Jacinta, O.P.

SCS Middle School Stats:

Among the Class of 2008-2009 who attend Blessed Trinity Catholic High School:

- 50% qualified for placement in honors/advanced/AP classes
- The cumulative GPA for all of these students is 91.8
- 71% of them qualified for the honor roll for the first semester
- The performance of our alumni in all core subject areas exceeds the BT freshman class as a whole.

SCS Middle School: A New Tradition continued from cover

students who feel safe, physically and emotionally, are free to learn, says Sister **Dominic**, "Because of this, disciplinary measures are administered for disrespect shown through bullying or **through hurtful teasing.**"

The SCS Middle School is young, growing and evolving. As students blaze their way through the halls and out into the larger commu-

nity, they will take with **them a new tradition.** "I want for them to grow into true leaders, both of the Catholic Church, and of the **human race," Sister Dominic** shares, "Leaders are rarely found in the crowd, with the crowd, and going the same direction as the crowd. They are individuals who must be strong enough to change the **direction of the crowd.**" She

believes it is God's plan to have *these* students at *this* Middle School.

Sister Mary Jacinta relates, "**My interactions with many** parents and our teachers tell me that they take very seriously their responsibility to guide our young people to respond to their ultimate vocation to become **saints.**"

By Lisa D'Arienzo

Juliana Suswal, Teacher of the Year

At the Third Annual **Archbishop's Banquet** for Catholic Education, Kindergarten teacher Juliana Suswal received recognition for her outstanding commitment to education while nurturing her students spiritually. Mrs. Suswal, with her more than twenty-two years of teaching experience, believes that bringing faith and education together fosters an atmos-

phere crucial to the success and formation of the whole **child.** The **Archbishop's Banquet** was the culminating event of the annual Catholic Schools Week celebrations. Other activities included attendance by the class of 2010 at the 8th grade Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gregory. Students sent teachers flowers and special words of praise for their leadership in faith and

education. St. Catherine's **ended the week's celebrations** with an unforgettable basketball game: the 8th Grade vs. Teachers. The game was most intense, with the teachers winning by a close margin! Congratulations to our teachers for the win and to Ms. Suswal!

By Susan Walker



Mrs. Suswal with some students from her KB class.

Reflections from Our Alumni



After opening in 2002 with 77 students in grades K – 3rd, St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School (SCS) grew rapidly, adding a grade each year and graduating its first class of twenty-eight eighth-graders in 2008. Our smallest class (but nonetheless very special!) of fourteen students graduated in 2009.

As the school year winds down and the third graduating class prepares to say goodbye to St. Catherine's, *Trailblazers* decided to follow up with three alumni about their transition to high school. Paco DeAlba, a member of the first graduating class of SCS, is a sophomore at Kennesaw Mountain High School in the math and science magnet program. Danielle Nagel, a graduate of the class of 2009, is a freshman at Blessed Trinity Catholic School. Vincent "Vinnie" Paglioni, class of 2008, is a sophomore at The Walker School.

SCS: How did your experience at St. Catherine's prepare you for high school?

PACO: The math and science courses really prepared me for high school. I feel I got an advantage when SCS introduced the new math curriculum.

DANIELLE: Language arts, particularly the vocabulary program. Throughout the year, we had vocabulary assignments every other week. That really helped strengthen my English and reading skills.

VINNIE: The overall emphasis on maintaining a positive outlook. I feel I am a very optimistic person and I definitely attribute that to St. Catherine's.

SCS: What do you miss most about St. Catherine's?

PACO: Attending weekly Mass. The week seems empty without it.

DANIELLE: The slower pace of the school day.

VINNIE: The relationships I made with my classmates and teachers.

SCS: What is the most important lesson you learned at St. Catherine's?

PACO: No matter how tough things get, your true friends will always stick with you and you should also stick with them.

DANIELLE: **Do what you want to do and what you know to be right. Don't let your friends influence your decisions.** Take advantage of good opportunities that come your way.

VINNIE: How to defend and keep my faith, even in a school that is not Catholic. Also, teachers can be your friends and often teach you as much outside of the classroom as they do inside.

SCS: What activities are you involved in?

PACO: I am the third chair clarinet in the Kennesaw Mountain High School Wind Symphony, the top band at my school. I am also a member of the National Honors Music Society.

DANIELLE: I am a member of the Latin Club, Habitat for Humanity and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

VINNIE: I participate on both the varsity Cross Country and Track and Field teams. I am the sophomore representative on the Honor Council. Also, I am a member of the Rock and Roll Organization, the Science Olympiad, the Math Team and the Catholic Club.

SCS: Any honors?

PACO: Last year, I was awarded the Math Academic Achievement Award and the Spanish Academic Achievement Award for highest grades, respectively. Just last month, I was named the Fine Arts Band Student of the Month.

DANIELLE: Not just yet but stay tuned!

VINNIE: In my freshman year, I received a Silver Medal in my Latin I class, a Gold Medal (Summa Cum Laude) on the **National Latin Exam**, the **Dean's Award for all A's** and the **Patricia H. Mozley Award**, given to the incoming student who best exemplifies the Spirit of Walker. I also received fourth place for environmental chemistry in the Georgia State Science Olympiad Competition and varsity letters in Cross Country and Track and Field. **So far this year, I have been selected for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership weekend and received a varsity letter for Cross Country.**

SCS: What advice would you give to the Class of 2010?

PACO: I have two pieces of advice: **First, don't worry about the transition to high school. Even though it is bigger and a different atmosphere, remember that there will be other new kids and you will make friends easily. Second, make sure you become efficient with your time management skills. Good time management is very important!**

DANIELLE: **Don't procrastinate! Pay attention to your time and take your grades seriously, even as a freshman in high school.**

VINNIE: **First, don't throw away any notebooks from SCS. You will definitely see some of that material again once you get to high school. Second, no matter where you go, be prepared to defend your faith. Finally, don't neglect your grades but take advantage of the high school experience. Get out there and have fun!**

By Keia Benefield



Paco DeAlba
Class of 2008



Danielle Nagel
Class of 2009



Vinnie Paglioni
Class of 2008



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Gala Auction - a Night of Celebration



St. Catherine's 8th Annual Gala Auction was held at The Marietta Country Club on Saturday, March 13. Thanks to all our volunteers who have been working since

September to make this the best event yet, with over 270 guests in attendance. "Our annual Gala was an awesome event!" comments Principal Sister Mary Jacinta, "The many happy faces and humorous exchanges were such a beautiful testimony to the goodness of our St. Catherine's school and parish family. Let us

offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His blessings on us." The silent and live auction event included 178 fabulous packages for bid including the favorite class project items. Some class projects included a porch swing, game tables, and a glass tile mosaic of St. Catherine of Siena made by the class of 2010. There was much excitement and celebration at the gala earning more than \$50,000! All proceeds go to St. Catherine's



Thank you to Gala Auction Co-Chairs Lisa Parodi and Maria Champagne (far left) and the many volunteers that made this evening a brilliant success.