

St. Mary School Summer Newsletter

AUGUST 2016 • FOR ALUMNI, DONORS, FRIENDS AND PARENTS

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Friends of St. Mary School,

We are very pleased to bring you the third issue of our newsletter for our alumni, donors, friends, parents and grandparents of St. Mary School. Educating students in Gilroy and our neighboring communities in the Catholic tradition for 145 years, we challenge our students to fulfill their individual potential and be active learners, people of faith and responsible citizens. Spiritually, our students embraced and honored Pope Francis' Year of Mercy with their many varied acts of service, and through the celebration of their own chosen theme, "Be the Word," they demonstrated their understanding of what it means to live and act like Jesus. Academically, St. Mary School students continue to perform well above national

averages, and all our 8th grade students were accepted into their first choices for high school, many with all honors courses! These outstanding accomplishments and wonderful activities would not be possible without the numerous donations of time, treasure and talent from all in our community.



We thank you for your continued support of St. Mary School and our mission to educate the next generation of community leaders.

God bless you,
Pamela Greteman

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ST. MARY SCHOOL

As a member of our St. Mary School community, you have a standing invitation to join us at the many events we host through the year, or just to stop by and chat. We would love to hear from you, especially our alumni!

Help us to spread the word about our wonderful school and "Like" St. Mary School on Facebook, and visit the website at www.stmarygilroy.org for school information.

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STUDENTS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Following a long-time tradition, SMS students gave of their time and talents to support a remarkable number of community service events this year.

- **LORD'S TABLE** – During the school year, 4th through 8th grades rotated each month and served hot meals at the Lord's Table, a program that serves meals to the homeless and low-income families in our community. While too young to serve, Kinders through 3rd grade also contributed by collecting new socks, making hygiene bags, creating Valentine cards, and many other contributions to support the clients who attend the Lord's Table.
- **THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE** – Students very generously donated 918 pounds of food and collected \$797 for the purchase of hams and turkeys for the families served by St. Joseph's Family Center.
- **CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE** – For the SMS annual Advent project, students donated 450 toys and \$220, and the junior high students helped to deliver 2,365 toys collected from the community for St. Joseph's Family Center to help brighten Christmas for local children.
- **PENNIES FOR PATIENTS** – To support Catholic Schools Week with a service project, SMS teamed up with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, which supports blood cancer research and patient services. The school set a goal of collecting \$1,000 but surpassed the goal by 120% and instead collected \$2,240!
- **GILROY SENIOR CENTER** – For its Catholic Schools Week community outreach, the 6th grade served cake for the monthly birthday celebrations at the Gilroy Senior Center.
- **SUPERKIDS+SUPER SHARING** – This year, SMS students had a unique opportunity to team up with the National Football League (NFL), San Francisco 49ers and the San Francisco Bay Area Super Bowl 50 organization to support kids in need by collecting and donating used sports equipment, new and used books, and school supplies.
- **HEIFER INTERNATIONAL** – For the SMS annual Lenten Mission project, the rummage sale generated \$1,020 that was donated to Heifer International, a global organization that helps families achieve self-reliance. Students also raised \$1,595 by selling tickets for an "unfree" free dress day, and the semi-annual used uniform sale earned \$132 for a total of \$2,747 donated to Heifer International. Quite an outstanding accomplishment by our service-minded students and families!
- **SAN MARTIN ANIMAL SHELTER** – Also contributing to the Lenten project, the Kinders and 1st grade collected towels, blankets and food for the San Martin Animal Shelter to help care for local pets in need.
- **RELAY FOR LIFE** – Students collected more than 500 cans of food, which were used in the luminaries for the Relay for Life event to support cancer, and at the end of the event, the cans were donated to St. Joseph's Family Center.

And our junior high students continued to put in many service hours within the SMS and Gilroy communities working toward their service block for graduation.



STUDENTS AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

As a Catholic school, we are committed to providing the best learning experience possible for our students in an active Christ-centered Catholic community. In addition to religion taught in the classroom and participation in special Masses, SMS also offers numerous events throughout the year for students to share and experience their faith.

- Students celebrated the 5th grade at a Mass to bless their new **Bibles**, an annual tradition at St. Mary School.
- Always a popular event, Fr. Robert Brocato blessed our students' furry, feathered and scaly friends during the traditional **Blessing of the Animals** in celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals.
- Students performed the annual **Advent Program** for families and guests with a play by the 8th grade reflecting the story of the Nativity supported by the rest of the grades in song.
- **Catholic Schools Week**, where we celebrated our Catholic faith in the community and throughout the nation with our faculty, staff, parents, students and volunteer groups, kicked off with a family Mass followed by activities throughout the week. The week culminated with the **18th Annual Grandparents Day** where students honored their grandparents with a Mass, brunch and class performances. This year, the format of the day changed from individual activities with students and grandparents in the classrooms to student performances by each grade in the gym while our guests enjoyed brunch.
- During **Lent**, in commemoration of Jesus' last day on Earth as a man, students acted out the Stations of the Cross each week, and the 8th grade performed the Passion Play on Holy Thursday.
- After preparing all year, our 2nd grade received the **Sacraments of First Reconciliation** and **First Holy Communion**. The class had a wonderful retreat in celebration, and the school held a beautiful Mass to celebrate the 2nd grade students' new status in the church.
- To honor the Blessed Mary, St. Mary School students brought flowers from home and had a procession to honor her in the annual **May Crowning**.



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR 2015-2016 DONORS AND SPONSORS!!

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FACULTY RETIREMENTS

At the end of the school year, we said farewell to Joan Miller, Mary Johnson and Debbie Ellis who retired from teaching. Joan worked for SMS as the second grade teacher for 15 years and most recently served as vice principal. Mary was with the Diocese for 38 years, nine of which were spent at SMS teaching 5th and 6th grades. Teacher's aide, Debbie Ellis, also retired after 12 years at SMS. We will miss them and appreciate everything these amazing women did for St. Mary School and wish them all the best!



What's New In 2015-2016?

- This year, we welcomed to the St. Mary School community Principal Pam Greteman; Kelly Ramirez, 4th grade teacher; Melissa Remmick, 2nd grade teacher; and Lourdes Morante-Mises, art teacher. They joined an excellent team of SMS teachers, and we enjoyed seeing them interact with their students in the classrooms.
- Teachers continued to strengthen their work in the Common Core Standard with more project-based and collaborative work for students while also meeting the educational requirements of the Diocese.
- Collaborative learning and research opportunities were greatly increased this year when students used their new Chromebooks purchased with the proceeds of the 2014-2015 Blue & White Auction.
- Also funded from Auction proceeds, furniture in the middle school classrooms was updated and configured so students could sit in an arrangement for more effective learning and peer collaboration.
- The Walk-a-Thon was revamped to include a carnival to reward students for their hard work after they walked (and ran!) their laps.
- A Technology Committee and a Safety Committee were formed this year to assist school administration in addressing current and future needs in these areas.
- Parents toured St. Joseph's Family Center to learn more about our St. Mary community neighbor and its mission.

OUR 2015-2016 DONORS AND SPONSORS!!

Continued

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San Jose Police Officers Association
St. Joseph's Family Center
St. Mary Catholic Ladies
St. Mary School Men's Club
St. Mary School Mothers' Guild
Stubby's Sports Bar
Taylor Farms
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Z-Best Products

SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS

A long-standing tradition, St. Mary School continued to offer a robust sports program for students in 5th through 8th grades made possible by our tireless volunteer coaches and funded by the Spaghetti Dinner proceeds. As in previous years, the 2015-2016 school year saw outstanding achievements by our student athletes.

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|------------|--|
| Volleyball | 8th grade girls - Undefeated Champions |
| | 5th grade girls - Undefeated Champions |
| Basketball | 8th grade girls – First Place |
| | 7th grade boys – Undefeated Champions |
| | 5th grade girls – First Place |
| | 5th grade boys – First Place |
| Track | 5 school records broken |
| | 32 medalists from 1st place to 5th place |



Congratulations Class of 2016



Exemplifying the high-quality education students receive at St. Mary School, our 8th grade students were accepted to 100% of their first choices for Catholic and private high schools to which they applied. In the most competitive application pool to date, this class found themselves with multiple acceptances and many were admitted with honors to their new schools. For those students moving on to public schools, they also were placed in honors and advanced placement programs. The 8th grade also completed their Student Learning Portfolios, which

provided them with the opportunity for reflection and self-assessment. After creating a comprehensive binder of their school work accompanied by a display board to showcase their personal achievements and interests, students interviewed with business professionals, community leaders, alumni and parishioners to review their projects and future goals. We were proud of all 34 students in our Class of 2016 and wish them much success in their high school careers!

ALUMNI

In May, the St. Mary Class of 2012 returned for a reunion with their classmates before going off to college in the fall. Out of a class of 28 students, 25 alumni attended for an evening of laughter and reminiscing, reconnecting with classmates, and visiting with their teachers again. Congratulations to SMS alumni as they move on to Biola University, Cal Poly SLO, Chico State, Creighton University, Gavilan College, Gonzaga University, Harvey Mudd College, Montana State, San Diego State, San Francisco State, Seattle University, Sonoma State, Syracuse University, University of New Mexico, University of Portland, University of Redlands, West Valley College, and one alumni will be entering the United States Marine Corp. The SMS community wishes the Class of 2012 much success!

For our younger graduates still in high school, St. Mary School received numerous reports about our students who have taken on leadership roles, are excelling academically, and have won academic awards for their performance. Our students stepped up as ASB leaders,

peer ministry leaders, captains of sports teams, and club officers, sometimes creating clubs where none existed.

We want to hear from our alumni about what they are doing in their personal, professional and academic lives and invite ALL alumni to keep us updated on your news and achievements!

**Save the date:
Class of 2013
Alumni Reunion
May 3, 2017**



Thank You For Your Gifts!

St. Mary School was blessed this year to receive an abundance of gifts that greatly benefited student programs and the school. We gratefully thank our donors and supporters for your generosity and look forward to your continued support.

- Our **7th Annual Walk-A-Thon** was a tremendous success due to the energetic efforts of our volunteers, and students and faculty who walked a total of 8,050 laps or 765 miles! The proceeds generously supported student academic programs.
- Our Annual **Fall and Spring Spaghetti Dinners** were again a remarkable success thanks to the support of the St. Mary School and Gilroy communities. With the funds raised at these events, SMS continued to offer a strong sports program in volleyball, basketball, track and flag football for students in 5th through 8th grades.
- The generous gifts St. Mary School received through the **Annual Appeal** helped to close the gap between tuition costs and the cost of providing a Catholic education.
- St. Mary School had the unique and wonderful opportunity to host the **McDonalds McTeacher Night** at the First Street McDonalds. Principal Greteman worked the drive-through window, and teachers staffed the registers with parents and students helping out, too. We are most grateful for the proceeds we received and look forward to hosting this event again in the future!
- Participants at this year's **29th Annual Blue & White Auction** enjoyed a fun, game-night theme held at the lovely Gilroy Lodge on the Hill. St. Mary School's largest fundraiser of the year, the event offered silent and live auctions, dinner and dancing, followed by an online auction. This year's outstanding event helped to pay for furniture in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classrooms and new carpeting in the Kinder Year 2 classroom.



The annual newsletter is published once a year for alumni, donors, friends, parents, grandparents and sponsors of St. Mary School. Contact Denise Garibaldi, Development Director, at dgaribaldi@dsj.org or (408) 842-2827 for additional copies of the newsletter or find it on the SMS website.

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- SMS teamed up for a third year with the Gilroy Foundation for **Silicon Valley Gives**, a 24-hour online day of giving in the Bay Area. The generous gifts received from this event went toward the St. Mary School Development Fund to help fund tuition assistance.
- St. Mary School was the grateful recipient of four **Gilroy Foundation** grants to help fund technology, class projects and library needs in addition to a generous grant from the **Gilroy Assistance League** to bring a performance of the *Theater of All Possibilities* to the students.
- The **General Mills Box Tops for Education** program continued to pay off for St. Mary School! We are grateful for the support of friends and families who diligently clipped those little pink tops so SMS received funds for the purchase of library books and materials.



COMING UP IN 2016-2017

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| August 18 | First Day of School |
| September 23 | Walk-a-Thon |
| October 7 | Fall Spaghetti Dinner |
| November 2 | Open House |
| December 15 | Advent Program |
| January 29 | Catholic Schools Week Mass |
| January 30 | Catholic Schools Week |
| January 31 | Open House |
| February 3 | Grandparents Day Mass & Brunch |
| March 16 | St. Joseph Day Mass & Brunch
(honoring SMS past and present fathers) |
| March 25 | Blue & White Auction |
| May 5 | Spring Spaghetti Dinner |
| May 12 | Mothers' Day Mass & Brunch
(honoring SMS past and present mothers) |