



SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY

Empowering Women for Leadership Since 1878

Parent Newsletter

From the Head of School

Dear SDA Parents,

Mother Nature has certainly been challenging us this winter, as we try to cope with extremely cold temperatures and snow-covered roads. As we get closer to March, we know that the partial closing of the Pulaski Skyway will create additional challenges for all of us traveling in and around Jersey City. We will all do our best to meet these challenges, stay calm, and try to get to our destination safely and on time.

Last year most schools in the country reviewed their safety and security measures after the terrible incident in Newtown. Here at St. Dominic Academy we did so, as well. Although we have never experienced any kind of violence like that, we wanted to ensure that we are doing everything possible to provide a safe and secure environment for your daughters. After reviewing our policies and procedures, we decided to make two changes this year. The first was to assign a teacher to supervise the door from the parking lot into what we call "the tunnel". The door is unlocked at 7 a.m. for the students, but now there is a teacher on duty inside the door until it is locked at 7:45 a.m. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that only SDA students enter the building. The second step we took this year was to install 22 security cameras throughout the campus, so that anyone entering the building through any door will be seen on tape. Additional cameras were installed in hallways on every floor to monitor all activity in the building. We will continue to evaluate our security measures and make adjustments as needed.

I want to thank those of you who responded to the survey sent out by the Parents' Association. Your feedback will help them plan activities and events that provide opportunities for our families to get to know each other and enjoy time together.

Our Advancement Office publishes a newsletter – *Pentimento* – which goes to all SDA alumnae, current parents, alumnae parents, and friends twice a year. The cost of producing and mailing this newsletter is expensive, but we are committed to staying in touch with these very important groups. Last year we started to accept ads on the back of the newsletter from interested individuals. If you have a business or professional practice that you would like to advertise to our readers (over 5,000) please contact the Director of Advancement at klillis@stdominicacad.com.

In the next week or so you will be receiving your tickets for the Parents' Association Calendar Raffle. This raffle raised over \$20,000 last year to help defray the costs of upgrading our technology infrastructure. This is the last fundraiser planned for this school year, and we do expect every family to support it. Once again, the funds generated by the raffle will go to our technology program, which continues to be a top priority.

Finally, as we look towards spring, it is time to start thinking about getting outside once again and getting in shape for summer fun. On March 15, 2014, SDA will be hosting its 17th Annual Spring Thaw at Liberty State Park. This fun day, with races for all ages and levels of ability, supports our entire athletic program, which involves almost half our student body. We need your support to make it a success, so get out those running shoes, and run (or walk) for SDA on March 15.

In the meantime let us try to enjoy the beauty of winter, even as we long for spring,

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Griffin
Head of School

Volume 2, Issue 3
February 2014

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Important Dates

- 3/5/14
Ash Wednesday
- 3/5&6/14, 3/10&11/14
Phonathon
- 3/8/14
SATs
- 3/17/14
No Classes

From the Academic Dean

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It feels like just yesterday I was writing the initial newsletter of the year and now we are in February. By now you should have signed your daughter's report card and sent it back to school. If this is not the case, I ask that you please call the school as soon as possible. Again, I encourage you to contact me with any questions regarding the academic program here at Saint Dominic Academy.

I would like to congratulate the following students who received college credit at Saint Peter's University this fall: Seniors – Phoebe Crego, Kaelyn Grado, Kristina Japay, Jendelly Veloz and Juniors – Melissa Alfonso, Genesis Placeres, and Natalie Torres. All are to be commended for their hard work and determination this past semester.

All eligible students will have the opportunity to enroll in the VHS program; however, please know that space is limited to ten total students for the year.

The end of the first semester also marked the completion of the first online courses ever taken at Saint Dominic Academy. Five Seniors –Kelechi Emelumba, Michaela Felix, Ava Hatiras, Alexis Mason, and Arianna Taite were the first students to take part in the Virtual High School Collaborative. All received excellent grades and the highest of praises from their teachers. For the second semester, there are currently two Seniors and three Juniors taking a VHS online course.

If you would like more information regarding this program, please feel free to contact me. As course selections for the 2014-2015 school year begin in early March, all eligible students will have the opportunity to enroll in the VHS program; however, please know that space is limited to ten total students for the year.

Course selection sheets will be made available to all rising Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors by the end of February. Students will then make appointments with their guidance counselors to officially select courses for the 2014-2015 school year. These appointments will begin in early March and last until the middle of the month.

In the meantime, please remind your daughters that we still have a full second semester left in this school year with plenty of time to improve grades and continue to do exceptional work. Best wishes to everyone this semester!

Sincerely,



John Seborowski
Academic Dean

Dominoes Perform at Saint Malachy's Church in Manhattan

Members of the Saint Dominic Academy Dominoes will be making their Broadway debuts when they sing at Saint Malachy's Church - The Actor's Chapel - during an upcoming performance as part of a National High School Choral Festival sponsored by American Federation *Pueri Cantores*, the Official Student Choral Organization of the Catholic Church.

Pueri Cantores was sanctioned as such by Pope John Paul II. In an address to *Pueri Cantores International*, the former Pope said, "Dear "young singers", may your singing help you to make your life a song of praise to God.....With your voices, your youth, with your lives, you proclaim Jesus, the Saviour.....You are the little messengers of beauty. The world needs your singing, for the language of beauty moves hearts and contributes to the encounter with God."

"I am very proud that the Dominoes are now members of *Pueri Cantores*", said director Joseph P. Napoli. *Pueri Cantores* is an official organization of children and youth within the Catholic Church, that brings together youth choirs to raise the profile of choral music in church, school, community, and artistic venues. *Pueri Cantores* currently includes choirs throughout the United States.

The Dominoes (officially called The Saint Dominic Academy Chamber Choir) will perform three selections at Saint Malachy's; *Lift*

Thine Eyes, Psalm 23 and *I Thank You God*. The festival will conclude when the combined choirs sing *With a Voice of Triumph* and *O God, Beyond All Praising*.

Saint Malachy's Church is located in the heart of the theater district at 239 West 49th Street in Manhattan. The church is known as "The Actor's Chapel" because of the many Broadway stars who have attended Mass there.

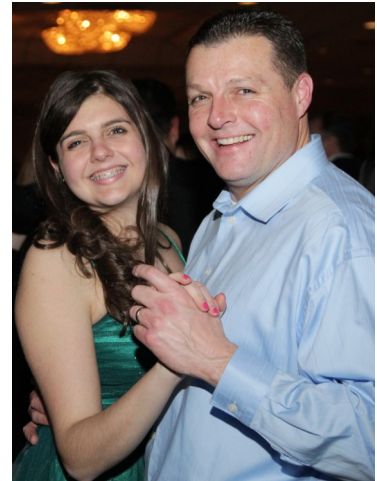


Members of the SDA Dominoes will be making their Broadway debuts.



@SaintDomAcademy

2014 Father & Daughter Dinner Ball



SDA Announces Class of 2018 Scholarship Recipients

Saint Dominic Academy is pleased to acknowledge an alumna, who wishes to remain anonymous, for her generous donation of a full, 4-year scholarship awarded to an incoming member of the Class of 2018. The scholarship has been named in honor of **Sister M. Victorine** (now addressed as Sister Barbara Krug.)

The benefactor said, “I have had a very successful career, which I attribute to God’s grace, my inspirational mother and Saint Dominic Academy. At SDA, I learned that women can lead. I learned that I had a right to speak my mind and to think my own thoughts in an era when women were just emerging from their traditional roles. I learned all these things from the passionate Sisters of Saint Dominic and the young women who sat next to me in those desks. I was inspired to be thoughtful, contemplative and considerate by Sister Victorine, and those traits have proven to be among the most valuable I’ve ever learned (although also the

most difficult for me to practice!). I fervently believe in the value of an SDA education, and I know that it is out of reach for many young women. I might have been one of those for whom it was out of reach had it not been for a full scholarship that I was awarded. Someone opened a door for me; I think that may have been a sponsor paying it forward. Now it is my turn to pay it back. I do so gladly with the gifts God has given me.”

Students who performed at the highest level on the Cooperative Admissions (COOP) exam who also had exemplary academic records were invited in to the Academy to take a special Scholarship Examination. In addition, the students were asked to submit three letters of recommendation specifically addressing the scholarship, from their Pastor, their school Principal and one from a moderator of an outside of school activity, i.e. a coach, dance instructor, scout leader. The six top scoring students on the

scholarship exam were then invited in for an interview with Head of School, Mrs. Barbara Griffin.

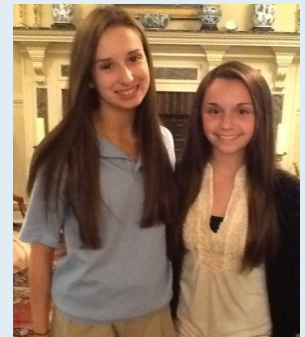
Saint Dominic Academy is proud to announce that the recipient of the Sister M. Victorine Scholarship is **Amanda Ros** of Union City. Amanda currently attends Saint Francis Academy in Union City.

Other scholarship recipients include **Emily Gill** of Bayonne who received the St. Thomas Aquinas Scholarship, awarded at the discretion of the Head of School. **Jennifer Chandy** of Secaucus received the St. Thomas the Apostle Grant awarded specifically to Jennifer in recognition of her commitment to her Catholic faith as a member of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church.

Each of these girls will be part of the Sienna Scholars program along with several other members of the Class of 2018 identified for their outstanding performance on the COOP exam and their excellent academic records.



Amanda Ross with her Freshman for a Day hostess Marissa Pinto



Emily Gill with her FFD hostess Rachel DeVoursney



Jennifer Chandy with her hostess Alexis Jimenea



Spread
the Word

Spread the Word

Saint Dominic Academy parents are reminded about our **Word of Mouth Referral Program** that has benefits for our current families as well as families of incoming students.

Please help spread the word about SDA's value centered, faith based community, our outstanding academic, athletic and extra-curricular programs, our college-prep success rate and our strong and empowered student body. Direct your friends and family to our webpage and ask them to follow us on Facebook ® and Twitter ®.

Complete a referral card and give it to a prospective student(s). The card **must be attached to the student's Application for Admission.** Cards must be submitted at time of **application, not registration.** Any referral cards given out now, can only be used for 7/8 grade applicants or any student who applies for the Class of 2019. The program for the Class of 2018 is closed, unless the student is a late **applicant.**

In the meantime, please help spread the word about:

- **Freshman for a Day** program for 7th graders beginning in March.
- **Open House** – Tuesday, May 6, 6-8 p.m.
- **Rising Leaders Summer Program** for girls entering 5th – 8th grade in September 2014

Information about all of these events can be found on our webpage or by contacting Andrea Apruzzese, Director of Admissions at 201-434-5938, ext. 14 or at aapruzzese@stdominicacad.com.

SDA Students Making Headlines

Sophomore **Alexis Jimenea** was recently awarded an Honorable Mention for her participation in the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools Tenth National Class Essay Contest. Alexis competed in the Beginner Division for students who started learning Chinese as a beginner in high school. She was entered in a Category for students who are non-native speakers of Chinese in a regular foreign-language program. The theme of the essay was "Chinese and I." The rules stated that the "essay must be drafted and written by the individual student author.

No online translator is allowed for creating any part of the text. No parental or teacher assistance/editing is allowed." She was scored on original work, comprehensibility, ideas and content, word choice and discourse, syntax and accuracy and presentation and characters.

Senior **Sabrina Paula** was nominated to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders in Washington, DC held on February 14-16, 2014. The Congress is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields. Sabrina was

nominated by Dr. Connie Mariano, the Medical Director of the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists to represent New Jersey based on her academic achievement, leadership potential and determination to serve humanity in the field of medicine.

Sophomore **Natalie Rodriguez** has been selected by the National Society of High School Scholars to become a member of the esteemed organization. The NSHSS recognizes students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship and community commitment.

Senior Sabrina Paula was nominated to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders in Washington, DC.

SDA Reaches Out to Community

The students at Saint Dominic Academy were quite busy over the past several months extending a helping hand to neighboring communities.

In November, the Dominican Youth In Action Club sponsored their annual Thanksgiving food drive. Through a school-wide collection, enough food was amassed to provide two-three baskets of food, complete with turkeys for 17 families. The baskets were brought to Sacred Heart Parish in Jersey City where

they were distributed to families in need.

The service club then completed their Giving Tree drive for Christmas. Members and non-members of the club made 40 ornaments for the tree that was put on display on December 6. Written on each ornament was the gender and age of a child who would receive the gift. Saint Dominic Academy students were encouraged to take an ornament from the tree and bring in their gift by December 18. The gifts were delivered to Sacred

Heart Parish for distribution among its Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

In early February, the club conducted their annual Souper Bowl, collecting canned goods and winter clothing items to, once again, help the less fortunate in the Jersey City community. All items were donated to the Our Lady of Sorrows Emergency Food Pantry in Jersey City.



The annual DYAC Thanksgiving drive collected baskets of food for 17 families - complete with turkeys!



SDA Giving Tree

Academic Dean's List-First Honors for Semester I

Grade 7

Skye Archibald
Kayla Baquiran
Yahyness Berry
Paraskevi Iordamlis
Cassidy LoCascio

Grade 9

Erin Bailey
Aolanie Vargas

Grade 10

Sara Angrosina
Francesca Dell'Acqua
Amanda Gaccione
Melissa Jaikissoon

Chelsea Ramdat
Christina Trinidad
Jennifer Valencia

Grade 11

Brittany Angrosina
Elizabeth Boyle
Vergne Khloe Cabalfin
Anamaria Carrasco
Maira Choudhary
Toni Giacchi
Shannon Hester
Mira Ibrahim
Shannon Kelley
Sarah Marks
Casey McIntyre

Emily Mernar
Alexis O'Callahan
Toniann Seals
Jasmine Watkins

Grade 12

Catherine Banach
Roxanne Casio
Enakshi Das
Briana Encarcion
Anaïs Gonzalez
Ava Hatiras
Cara Keating
Christina Lee
Nikita Pandya
Andrea Sapal
Melissa Winters

Academic Dean's List-Second Honors for Semester I

Grade 7

Caitlin Aristizabal
Gabriella Swope

Grade 8

Isabella Nerio
Grace Patrick

Grade 9

Alexandra Duran
Maegan Duran
Marina Ghobrial
Lauren Kelley
Molly Long
Purnima Prasad
Maria Rivera
Emily Torres

Grade 10

Taylor Brzozowski
Jianna Bustamante
Teresa Cartagena
Carolina Creamer
Dana De Castro
Enelisse Hernandez
Alexis Jimenea
Anjali Kumar
Daniella Magcalas
Barbara Jean McNutt
Elinor Mokaya
Olivia Pease

Grade 11

Jade Perez
Alyssa Roaquin
Mariel Santos
Christine Valbuena

Grade 12

Angie Abdelbaky
Melissa Alfonso
Rhea Ansay
Precious Braswell
Shannon DeLuco
Lea Di Pietro
Elizabeth Doody
Vanessa Esposito
Monica Feijoo
Arianna Howard
Rachel Japay
Gillian Johnson
Michelle Kwok
Camille Llewellyn
Estefany Loaiza
Emily Lugo
Tara Mc Donough
Nicole Metro
Miquelle Montalvo
Genesis Placeres
Kaitlyn Quinn
Dana Reynolds
Onjasne Rodgers
Falak Shahid
Beatriz Simbulan

Sabrina Stampe
Natalie Torres
Shannon Ward

Grade 12

Natalie Belvin
Kayla Bermeo
Gabriela Casco
Lauren Cicchetti
Victoria Drasheff
Kelechi Emelumba
Tabitha Evangelista
Michaela Felix
Kelly Garcia
Angela Goldsack
Kaelyn Grado
Kristina Japay
Jeanne Laurel
Rebecca Lopez
Jessie Martinez
Thalia Ortega
Shivangi Patel
Victoria Rediger
Diana Reinoso
Shania Singh
Arianna Taite
Celia Vasquez
Jendelly Veloz
Tiffany Vera Tudela
Danielle Wilbert



Congratulations to Two SDA Staff Members

Congratulations are extended to SDA Faculty Member **Isagani Tubera** who was recently selected by the College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) and Educational Testing Service to serve as an AP Reader at this year's annual AP Reading. Mr. Tubera was chosen to read the Calculus AP AB/BC Exam.

Mr. Tubera will be one of 12,500 college faculty and AP teachers from around the world who will gather in one of several locations throughout the United States, to evaluate and score about 18 million free-response answers on the AP examination.

As a participating reader, Mr. Tubera will receive training in consistent application of the scoring standards and use those standards to score student responses. He will interact with members of the AP Development Committee responsible for revising the AP Course description and developing the exam, giving and receiving information about the current state of teaching and learning in the discipline. He will discuss achievement, assessment and teaching strategies with

college faculty and other AP teachers.

According to Trevor Packer, Senior Vice President, AP and Instruction for The College Board, "The AP Program's acknowledged success is due to an evaluation and scoring process that reflects the high standards of faculty members, who by virtue of their experience and expertise, have the appropriate student performance expectations within their respective disciplines."

The Academy also wishes to acknowledge veteran Athletic Director **John Nagel** on some outstanding accomplishments.

Nagel also serves as the Academy's longtime Track and Field Head Coach. In the fall of 2013, the Saint Dominic Academy Cross Country Team won the Jersey City championship for the 5th time in six years and the 31st time in the past 33 years. They also won a 6th straight South Hudson championship which SDA has won 30 times in the meet's 33 year history.

Powered by one first-place finish and five second-place finishes, the SDA Indoor

Track team captured its 11th straight Hudson County Indoor Relay Championship on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at the Jersey City Armory.

Two weeks later on January 21, the Indoor Track Team won its 19th straight Jersey City Indoor Track Championship, thanks in part to seven, 1st place finishes.

Louis Maini, former SDA parent had this to say in a letter he wrote recently to the editor of *The Star Ledger*, "Nagel's longevity, dedication and commitment to the young women of St. Dom's are an accomplishment matched by few. He's served generations of athletes and their families.... without the fanfare, acclaim and media attention given (deservedly) to peers such as Bob Hurley. I know my daughter benefited immensely in every way from her track days at St. Dominic Academy, and she's only one of a great many to have done so. When legacies are measured, that's not a bad yardstick to go by."

Congratulations to both Mr. Tubera and Coach Nagel!

"I know my daughter benefited immensely in every way from her track days at St. Dominic Academy, and she's only one of a great many to have done so."

*Louis Maini,
Former SDA Parent*

7th and 8th Grade Students Enjoy Busy, Exciting Winter

The 7th and 8th grade girls Skype chatted with Margi Preus, author of "Shadow on the Mountain," a book they have been reading and discussing at weekly book club meetings.

The students in Saint Dominic Academy's inaugural 7th and 8th grade classes have been enjoying a busy and exciting winter. Upon their return to school after the Christmas holidays, the girls experimented with eating insects. It was the continuation of an assignment that had the girls writing essays supporting the idea of adding insect dishes to restaurant menus. According to Maryann Mclean, SDA 7th and 8th grade coordinator, "They had done research that led them to understand both the abundance and nutritional value of insects. Additionally, they learned that using insects in menus is both economical and Earth friendly."

Of course, not every student was convinced she would enjoy eating a meal featuring an insect as a main course. The students were surprised to learn that one of their classmates enjoys eating insects. She offered to bring samples for the class to try, and several students quickly accepted her offer. The students tasted such edibles as meal worm and scorpion lollipops, larva and crickets in Mexican spice, barbeque sauce, or cheddar cheese, crickets in either salt and vinegar or sour cream and onion, and insects coated with dark or white chocolate.

The student said, "The reason I brought insects for the class to

try was because I have had a wonderful experience eating them and I thought the class would too. I had a great time seeing my classmates eating insects for the first time. Hopefully, they will see how delicious they are and this experience will change the way they look at insects."

The reaction of the students to this experience was very favorable. One student said, "In the beginning, I was a little nervous about eating the bugs, but after I tried the first one, the feeling went away. The bugs tasted very delicious and the variety of flavors added to the wonderful taste. It was a great experience and I am glad I had the opportunity to try it."

On Thursday, January 16, the 7th and 8th grade girls had another great experience when they Skype chatted with Margi Preus, author of "Shadow on the Mountain," a book they have been reading and discussing at weekly book club meetings held since mid-November. Saint Dominic Academy Librarian Ms. Susan Wengler, MLIS, is the moderator of the book club. She said, "The students have done a terrific job and are to be commended for their careful readings and thoughtful discussions."

When Ms. Preus first came up on the screen, the students excitedly introduced themselves providing her with a little fact or two about their likes and interests. In addition, each student prepared two questions to ask Ms. Preus during the 45-minute visit. These questions were in reference to "Shadow on the Mountain" (the characters, the plot, her research, her ideas) as well as her writing career (her education, her writing process, her plans for the future).

One student asked, "Can I see outside your window, and how does your environment influence your writing?" With that, Ms. Preus held up her laptop to show a very snowy backyard framing what she called her "writing house," a small structure built by her son and husband which allows her to write without distractions.

When one student asked if she would ever consider writing a sequel to the book, they were all excited to learn that an epilogue to the story will be included in the paperback edition of the book due out in the spring.

According to Wengler, the Skype event was very successful. "I was excited that our students had an opportunity to interact directly with Ms. Preus, the author of a book which they read and enjoyed!"



Winter 2014 Sports Update

Basketball - Led by junior **Hannah Johnson** (who is on the threshold of 1,000 career points), the team has a winning record in their division of the H.C.I.A.L. SDA will qualify for the Parochial A North state tournament and likely get a home game. The vastly improved **Amanda Lewis** has played well as has **Shannon Hester** and **Toni Giacchi**.

Dance – SDA's highly acclaimed dancers coached by alumnae **Marie Maffia** and **Amanda Herring** are enjoying their best season in years. The team, buoyed by two former Holy Family students, **Rachel DeVoursney** and **Barbara Jean McNutt**, has been on quite a roll finishing in the top five in a challenging state wide schedule. Over the February 8th weekend, the team won at Pascack Valley. **Taylor Siebel** and **Sabrina Paula** were hon-

ored by the state for their achievements as dancers and were honored at a gala luncheon. For the 23rd year in a row, the team will travel to Orlando for the Nationals.

Indoor Track & Field -

The team has a month left in a season that will culminate at the Indoor Nationals the weekend of March 14, 2014. The annual early season ventures to Brown (Rhode Island Invitational), Dartmouth and Yale resulted in medals, bonding and high quality competition that prepared the team for Hudson County and State action. SDA girls medaled in four events at the State Relays where the Academy competed as the smallest Parochial A team. The team won the Hudson County Relays for the 11th year in a row and the Jersey City meet for the 26th straight year. On Friday, February 7, SDA won its 18th

Indoor County title since 1990 and has only finished out of the top three in the meet twice since 1981. There are too many standouts to name but the coaches including alumnae **Kristina Jimenez'09** and **Madeleine Feeney'11** are extremely proud of the work ethic and day to day commitment of the 29 member team.

Swimming- The team has completed their dual meet schedule with a 5-4 record. The team has been led by **Amanda Gaccione, Keely Armitage, Estefany Loaiza** and **Catherine Banach**. The swimmers practice at St. Peter's University and are working hard for the upcoming season ending League/County championships which will be held in Bayonne February 25-26-27. Among the coaches for the team is alumna **Ashley Salazar**.

*Led by junior **Hannah Johnson** (who is on the threshold of 1,000 career points), the basketball team has a winning record in their division of the H.C.I.A.L.*

Saint Dominic Academy
2572 J.F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, NJ 07304

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2572 J.F. Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, NJ 07304

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Andrea Apnuzzese-Editor
Susan Wengler—Design & Layout