



# SAINT DOMINIC ACADEMY

*Empowering Women for Leadership Since 1878*

## Parent Newsletter

### From the Head of School

Dear SDA Parents,

This will be the final issue of the parent newsletter for the 2013-14 school year. I hope you have found it helpful to you in your role as parents.

The school year always seems to speed up as we get to the end of the year. While we were in the throes of a very cold and snowy winter, it seemed endless, but now, at last we are beginning to enjoy a long-awaited spring. I can always tell when spring has arrived in school, when I walk around the building in the late afternoon and there are no students waiting for rides home.

I want to thank all of you for the support you give to your daughters and the Academy. A strong partnership between home and school makes a big difference in the success of high school students. They know that all the adults in their lives want only the best for them, even when we expect them to do things they would rather not do.

The Parents' Association Calendar Raffle is still going on for a few more weeks. It raised over \$20,000 again this year to support the Academy's ongoing technology upgrades. This summer we are planning to expand our wireless network so that teachers and students can access the Internet in every area of the building. Our goal is to increase the use of technology in our curriculum, so that our students will be well-prepared for the next phase of their education.

This year was a very special one for St. Dominic Academy as we celebrated our first 135 years. It was a time to look back and reflect on the important role our school has played in the education of young women. We invited a new Archbishop and a new Mayor to visit so they could see firsthand an outstanding school "Where Girls Come First!" We delighted in the arrival of our new 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, who quickly became part of the school and made an impressive debut in the Hudson County Science Fair, the Hudson Catholic Forensics Competition and the Marist Scholastic Olympics.

As our school year comes to a close, I hope you plan to take advantage of the slower pace of summer, and a break from the sometimes hectic days of a school year filled with activities. All of us here are grateful to you for the trust you place in us by sending your precious daughters to the Academy. We are encouraged by your cooperation and support and look forward to working with you again in the fall.

In the meantime, may God keep you in His care until we meet again.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Griffin  
Head of School

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May 2014

#### Inside this issue:

From the Academic Dean	2
Summer Reading	3
Applause	4-5
Recent Visitors	6
Rome Trip	7
7th/8th Grades	8-9
International Students	10

#### Important Dates

- 5/23/14  
No School
- 5/26/14  
No School
- 5/28/14  
Baccalaureate Mass & Dinner
- 6/1/14  
Graduation

## ***From the Academic Dean***

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you know by now June will mark the end of my tenure at Saint Dominic Academy. It is with a very heavy heart that I leave the school that has given me so much. I have been here for 14 years and I often joke with the students that I feel like SDA is my alma mater.

Please let me take this opportunity to thank all of you for entrusting your daughter's education to me as Academic Dean. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the students of SDA as both their teacher and academic advisor. It has also been a pleasure working with all of you to ensure that your daughters are getting all they can out of their time here at The Academy.

As we approach the end of the school year, I would just like to remind you of a few things. The underclass final exam schedule is as follows (seniors will be provided with their schedule in advance of May 19th):

Friday, May 30 <sup>th</sup>	8:30-10:00 – Period 7 exam 10:30 – 12:00 – Period 8 exam
Monday, June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	No exams – Student Reading Day
Tuesday, June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	8:30-10:00 – Period 5 exam 10:30 – 12:00 – Period 6 exam
Wednesday, June 4 <sup>th</sup>	8:30-10:00 – Period 3 exam 10:30 – 12:00 – Period 4 exam
Thursday, June 5 <sup>th</sup>	8:30-10:00 – Period 1 exam 10:30 – 12:00 – Period 2 exam

Please remember that the second semester average is calculated using the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marking Period (20%), 4<sup>th</sup> Marking Period (20%), and final exam (10%). Honor roll cards and final report cards will be mailed home the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>.

We are in the middle of a very busy awards season and I would like to congratulate everyone on the wonderful honors that have been bestowed on several members of the SDA community. Whether it was the induction of new National Honor Society members, achievements that were recognized at the sports awards dinner, or different scholarships awarded to seniors, you should all be very proud of the hard work and dedication your daughters have demonstrated time and time again here at SDA.

Students will be given their summer reading/assignments at the end of the year from their current teachers, but that information will also be made available on the school website by the middle of June.

We have started working on the schedule for next year and hope to have it completed by the end of June. Students will be notified during the summer when their schedules will be available via Edline.

In closing, I wish all of you and your daughters continued success during your time here at SDA and well beyond. This is a very special place and it is one I am very proud to say I was a small part of. I wish you and your families a very happy and safe summer vacation.

Sincerely,

  
John Seborowski  
Academic Dean

*You should all be very proud of the hard work and dedication your daughters have demonstrated time and time again here at SDA.*

# Summer Reading Assignments

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

English: *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin

Religion: *Preparing for Adolescence* by Dr. James Dobson

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

English: *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Religion: *Be Beautiful, Be You* by Lizzie Velaquez

Students, please note: You will not be required to prepare a written report about your summer reading. However you will be asked to participate in a multi-week book discussion during September about the assigned title, and it is expected you will have completed the reading by the first day of school. Please purchase your own copy of the book and plan to bring with you to school on the first full day of classes. Any edition is acceptable.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

English: *Star Girl* by Jerry Spinelli & *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier

English Honors: *Star Girl* by Jerry Spinelli, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Religion: *Saint Gianna Beretta Molta: A Woman's Life 1922-1962* by Guiliana Pelucchi

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

English: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* by Mary Ann Schafer and Annie Barrows

English Honors: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* by Mary Ann Schafer and Annie Barrows and *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Religion: *Kisses from Katie* by Katie J. Davis

U.S. History One: *Incidents in the Life of the Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

English: *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger and *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King

English Honors: *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King, *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen

Religion: *My Rock and My Salvation* by Zip Rzeppa

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

English: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint Exupery

AP English: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, *The Dante Club* by Matthew Pearl

Religion: *The Shack* by Paul Young

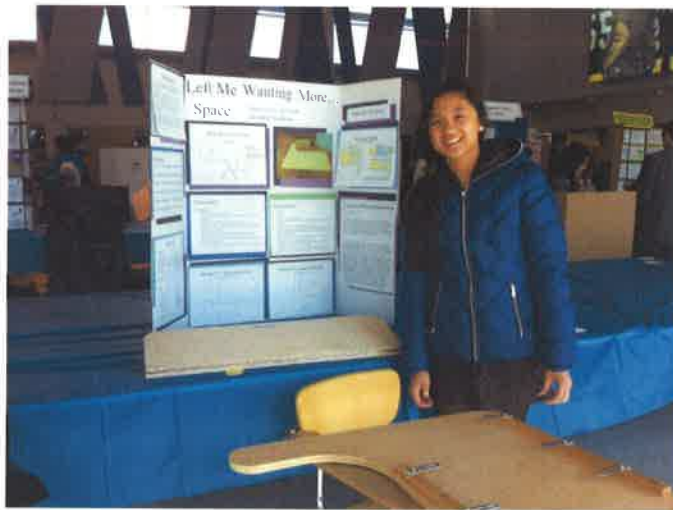


## Applause, Applause

### Congratulations to....

The **SDA Class of 2014** who have *so far* received almost **\$9 million** in college scholarship awards, with more awards being recorded every day.

Senior **Roxanne Casio** who won a Bronze Medal in the Physics and Astronomy division, at The Jersey Journal's Hudson County Science Fair.



**Senior Scholar-Athletes:** **Arianna Taite** acknowledged by The Scholarship Fund for Inner City Children, **Victoria Rediger** and **Melissa Winters** honored by the Hudson County Interscholastic Athletic League, **Brianna Encarnacion** recognized by the NJSIAA and **Cara Keating** receiving the prestigious SDA award for 2014.

**The SDA Dance** team for becoming the New Jersey State Champions, for the second time in the past three years. In addition to their first place victory in Varsity Variety, the Dance Team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for the second year in a row in the very competitive Varsity POM division. In Orlando, Florida for the National Dance Alliance National Championships, they took 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the POM Category and won the 2014 Unleashed Routine Award.

Sophomore **Dana DeCastro** who writes regularly for BLD ( Bukas Loob sa Diyos) Open Your Heart To The Lord prayer community of the Newark Archdiocese. The prayer meetings/praise and worship takes place at the Divine Mercy Church in Rahway.

The **25 Saint Dominic Academy students** recently inducted into the following World Language Honor Societies: Sociedad Honoraria Hispanica, Societe Honoraire de Francais and Chinese Honor Society.

The **14 SDA students** recently inducted into the Siena Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Incoming freshman **Simran Kaur** who received First place in a Knights of Columbus Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest.



To rising seniors (l-r) **Anamaria Carrasco, Elizabeth Boyle, Sarah Marks** and **Casey McIntyre** recently elected as the Student Council Executive Board for 2014-2015.

## Recent Visitors to SDA

### Archbishop Bernard Hebda

On Wednesday, April 9, Saint Dominic Academy hosted a visit from Archbishop Bernard Anthony Hebda, the Coadjutor Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark. Archbishop Hebda will assist and eventually succeed Archbishop John J. Myers. Formerly, he served as the fourth Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gaylord, Michigan.

The Archbishop was invited to the Academy by Head of School, Mrs. Barbara Griffin. His visit included a chance to meet with the school's administration and the Student Council executive board. Student Ambassadors took him on a tour of the school building where he had the opportunity to visit classes and meet other students and teachers. Upon the conclusion of his tour, the Archbishop told Mrs. Griffin, "You should be very proud."

At the Archbishop's request, his visit concluded with him celebrating a school-wide Mass held at St. Aloysius Church on West Side Avenue. The Mass began with a beautiful rendition of "Lift Thine Eyes" by the Saint Dominic Academy Dominoes, to which the Archbishop responded, "I am delighted to be here and you sing like angels."

In his homily, Archbishop Hebda went on to say that he was so impressed by the many service activities that the SDA community had completed over Lent, which included raising money for the missions, walking in the Crop Walk and collecting items for the St. Lucy's shelter.



*"I am delighted to be here and you sing like angels."*

- Archbishop Hebda.

"Girls," he said, "you have great gifts and are very articulate. You will go into the world to teach with your words and your example. I don't doubt that you will do all of that well."

### Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop

On Monday, February 24, SDA faculty, students and staff were honored to welcome Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop to his first visit to the Academy. The Mayor was greeted by SDA Head of School Mrs. Barbara Griffin along with the Student Council Executive Board members. After brief introductions, two student ambassadors, along with SDA Alumnae and Advancement Director, Ms. Kate Lillis-Magnus, accompanied Mayor Fulop on a tour of the school building. The tour culminated in a visit to the Academy's newly established 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and was followed by a visit to Madonna Hall where he was treated to a performance by the Saint Dominic Academy Chamber Choir, also known as the Dominoes.

The Dominoes sang the SDA Alma Mater and when finished were asked by the Mayor to sing a second song. They followed with their ever popular rendition of "Going to the Chapel."

According to Ms. Lillis-Magnus, "The mayor seemed very impressed by his visit."

## SDA Glee Club Heading to Rome

Saint Dominic Academy is excited to announce that the members of the Academy's nationally award-winning Glee Club will sing in a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis, in the Vatican under the auspices of the 40<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Pueri Cantores. The performance will take place on January 1, 2016. The trip is sponsored by the official tour operator of the American Federation, Classic Performances by Corporate Travel. Anyone interested in participating in the trip should contact **Mr. Joseph Napoli** at [jnapoli@stdominicacad.com](mailto:jnapoli@stdominicacad.com).

Saint Dominic Academy is a member of Pueri Cantores, the Official Student Choral Organization of the Catholic Church which 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."

As a member of Pueri Cantores, the SDA Dominoes (Chamber Choir) participated in the New York Regional National Catholic High School Inaugural Season Choral Festival held on Saturday, April 5 at St. Malachy's – The Actor's Chapel located in Times Square, New York. They were one of five Catholic high schools to participate in this event.

Later in April, the Glee Club attended Fiestaval, a national music festival in Myrtle Beach. They were acknowledged by Judge Mike Alverson, formally the Director of the United States Naval Academy Band, as "among the most

professional high school choirs he had ever heard, comparing favorably with most college women's choirs."

Their participation in the festival was strictly for adjudication. The Glee Club achieved a rating of 95 out of 100; the Dominoes (Chamber Choir) achieved a rating of 98 out of 100. The combined scores of 193 out of 200 are the highest the choir has achieved since 1993 and would have virtually guaranteed a Grand Championship had competition been present. These scores are in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile of all groups that attend vocal competitions.

Outstanding achievement awards for vocal solos were given to seniors **Alexis Mason** and **Rebecca Lopez**. Sophomore **Jennifer Valencia** received an award for outstanding piano accompanist.

*The Glee Club will sing in a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis, in the Vatican under the auspices of the 40th International Congress of Pueri Cantores.*

*A new athletic program at SDA will give 7th and 8th grade students an opportunity to explore particular sports while learning the benefits of teamwork and sportsmanship.*



## News from the 7th and 8th Grades

### Athletic Program

As Saint Dominic Academy is a member of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are unable to compete against other school teams on an Interscholastic level. However, a new athletic program at SDA will give these students an opportunity to explore particular sports while learning the benefits of **teamwork and sportsmanship**.

Games and matches will be arranged against teams from other schools (girls and also co-ed) in the area. The following sports will be offered in the following seasons. SDA is also seeking parent volunteer coaches. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Mclean at [mmclean@stdominicacad.com](mailto:mmclean@stdominicacad.com) by June 30.

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Soccer	Basketball	Softball
Cross Country	Dance Team	Outdoor Track

Congratulations to incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grader, **Jailene Morales** who has already made the SDA Dance Team!

### Congratulations are in order!

SDA's five-member team from 7<sup>th</sup> grade competed for the first time in Marist HighSchool's Olympics on Tuesday, May 13 in two categories: Math and General Skills.

**Kayla Baquiran** won First Place in Math and the General Skills team of **Paraskevi (Evi) Iordamlis**, **Cassidy LoCascio**, and **Gabriella Swope** won third place.

A seven-member forensics team from Saint Dominic Academy's 7<sup>th</sup> grade won a Third-place Team Trophy at the Forensics Tournament held at Hudson Catholic Regional High School in Jersey City on Saturday, April 12. It was the first time the Academy entered a team into the competition. In addition to the third-place team trophy, **Kayla Baquiran** captured a second-place individual trophy in Oral Interpretation. **Skye Archibald** was named a finalist in that same category. In the category of Original Oratory, **Cassidy LoCascio** was also named a finalist. Other team members included **Caitlin Aristizabal**, **Paraskevi Iordamlis**, **Yahyness Berry** and **Courtney Malden**.



## 7th and 8th Grades (continued)

It has been announced that 7<sup>th</sup> grader, **Kayla Baquiran** has been recognized by the New Jersey Association of School Librarians with a 2014 Enthusiastic Reader Award! Kayla was honored at a special ceremony that took place during the NJASL Spring Event at the Robert Wood Johnson Conference Center on Saturday, May 17.

SDA's four 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, **Francesca Guido, Grace Patrick, Isabella Nerio** and **Eva Reid** will celebrate their "moving up" ceremony with their teachers and parents on Friday, June 6 with a Mass in the chapel followed by a luncheon in Madonna Hall.

### Welcome Special Guest – NJ Library Champion **Cara McCollum**, Miss New Jersey 2013

On Wednesday, May 7, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students welcomed New Jersey Library Champion **Cara McCollum**, Miss New Jersey 2013. McCollum, a Princeton University senior, was invited to speak to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Book Club members. According to the New Jersey Library Champions website, Ms. McCollum is a strong advocate for youth literacy. Her platform was "Giving the Gift of Reading." She has said, "I believe in the power of books, each one has opened my mind and my horizons just a little bit more."

She was invited to speak to the Book Club by their moderator **Susan Wengler**, MLIS, the Academy's Library and Media Specialist. With Ms. McCollum's platform and her education, Ms. Wengler thought she would be an interesting speaker for the students. Additionally, she noted that Cara McCollum is an English major with a journalism minor with hopes to become an author/journalist.

The format for Ms. McCollum's presentation was interview style. Ms. Wengler asked questions for 20-30 minutes about books, her educational experience, professional aspirations and pageant experience. The students then asked their own questions for another 20-30 minutes. After the presentation, SDA student ambassadors escorted Ms. McCollum on a tour of the Academy followed by a photo session, during which she tweeted "Talking to the girls at St. Dominic Academy about the importance of education and literacy."

Ms. Wengler was so pleased with the day. She said, "It was beyond amazing. Cara McCollum is a terrific role model. She is intelligent, inspiring, FUN and so pro reading." She went on to say that Cara is writing a book about her pageant experience .



*"I believe in the power of books."*

- Cara McCollum

## SDA International Program

Saint Dominic Academy is pleased to offer admissions to International Students who are encouraged to experience an outstanding college preparatory experience at one of the oldest private secondary schools in New Jersey. International students coming from China and Korea must work through our partner, **The Cambridge Institute of International Education**. Saint Dominic Academy has partnered with Cambridge to help Chinese students through the admissions process and placement.



Saint Dominic Academy has further partnered with the **gphomestay program**, and we are searching for caring families in the area who would be interested in hosting an international student for the academic year. Grow your family and expand your children's cultural awareness while showing an international student your version of American culture!

Visit [www.gphomestay.com](http://www.gphomestay.com) or contact [info@gphomestay.com](mailto:info@gphomestay.com) for more



The Cambridge Institute  
of International Education

**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 Apruzzese-Editor  
Susan Wengler—Design & Layout**

