

# The Catholic Education Community Newsletter

In this Issue... **CATHOLIC EDUCATION ALUMNI AND VIPs**

## St. Gregory the Great Catholic School

What makes our catholic school special? Knowing that our teachers, who are so passionate about their calling to work at Saint Gregory's, choose this school for their own child's education. Even better, these children grow up and come back to teach at Saint Gregory the Great themselves!

Kathleen Griffin started working at SGGs in 1994 and is presently a first grade teacher's aide. She sent her three children to the school. Her daughter Lorri, class of 1981, is now a PE teacher. As well, eighth grade social studies and religion teacher, Carol Shewell, class of 1986, has been at SGGs for 14 years. She now sends her own children, twins Alyssa and Sean, class of 2020, to Saint Gregory the Great.

"I love my job to the point I dream about lessons. I thrive on laughs and sweat! If a child isn't laughing or sweating, maybe I haven't done my job!" says PE teacher Miss Lorri. She adds, "This school is much more advanced than when I attended. There are so many more clubs, sports, teachers and specials than when I attended. It really gives me a sense of pride to see how far SGGs has come."

Carol Shewell comments, "I don't think I truly realized at the time what it meant to be a student in catholic school. I loved St. Gregory's as a child, and I remember begging my parents to let me attend Norfolk Catholic (now Bishop Sullivan Catholic HS). My classmates were like family."

"Our children are very polite, seem more interested in school, and really enjoy being with their classmates. Bullying situations are unusual here and that's what a safe school is all about," says Miss Lorri.

"I know that catholic schools will continue to give the best education possible to the students. As society changes, I believe we will become even more sought after. Catholic schools are viewed as safe environments for children. We have always had an excellent reputation, and so I think we will be around for a long time....this is why I chose to send my children here!" beams Mrs. Shewell.



## Peninsula Catholic High School

Peninsula Catholic High School epitomizes love of God and love of neighbor through its Morality, Social Justice, and Interreligious curriculum. Respect for human dignity is at the heart of all classes. Teachers Eva Hinojosa and Billy Gargaro are past participants of the Bearing Witness Program sponsored by the Anti-defamation League in conjunction with the USCCB, NCEA, and the United States Holocaust Museum. Both teachers have benefitted greatly from lessons on genocide, tolerance, and anti-Semitism. Hinojosa participated in the Advanced Bearing Witness Program this past July which included 8 days in Israel. Hinojosa along with fifteen other Catholic educators nationwide was exposed to a variety of experiences, including meetings with Jewish, Palestinian, Christian, and Druze leaders and visits to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, an Israeli Arab village, and key sites in early Christian and Jewish history. The educators also met with Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco, the Vatican's diplomatic representative to Israel. Hinojosa's experience made her better equipped to teach the next generation of Catholic students having been to many of the sacred sites they learn about. She also developed a better understanding of the Jewish culture and the program's major focus on the Holocaust helps her connect in her daily lessons what hate and prejudice could lead to.



Christian service is a huge part of life at PCHS. The St. Vincent de Paul Religion Club raised \$1400.00 for the Wounded Warriors' Program last year and hopes to surpass that amount this year. Their current service project is raising monies for Edesia Global Nutrition Solutions which aids severely malnourished children in Africa. The Stand Up for Life Club is currently launching 40 Days for Life which raises monies for pregnancy care centers. The Interact Club contributes annually to the American Cancer Society through their support of Relay for Life.

# St. John the Apostle's Catholic School



Mrs. Cunningham, SJA Middle School English teacher, became part of our SJA staff in 2007. After an extensive career as a figure skating coach, Mary decided to pursue a lifelong dream to be a classroom teacher. She entered the classroom in 2004, and was nominated for New Teacher of the Year. But, Mary really wanted to teach at St. John the Apostle Catholic School. In 2007, the opportunity presented itself, and without any hesitation she took the job as the middle school Language Arts teacher. Teaching in a Catholic school has given her the opportunity to share her faith with her students, to witness to them daily, with every opportunity that presents itself. "I knew after my first day at St. John's that I was right where God wanted me to be." It is a calling, a ministry that goes far beyond teaching as just a profession. Mary is the sponsor of the school newspaper, *The Stingray Scoop*, the middle school coordinator, and the chair of the English department. She has also served on the Master Curriculum Counsel for the Diocese. Married to Mike Balog, she has two grown daughter, Virginia and Brennan.



Father Rob Cole is the Pastor at SJA and is a big supporter of Catholic Education. Father Rob quotes *The Holy Sees Teaching on Catholic Schools*, "Catholic schools participate in the Church's evangelizing mission of bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth" (vii). Father Rob has been with SJA for three years and his enthusiasm for Catholic education is evident in all the ways he supports SJA: Father Rob teaches the 8th grade religion class once a month, attends school events, such as; the Golf Classic, Gala, Harvest Fest, and at the 5k Stingray Run he is the lead car (motorcycle). He also says Mass for the students every Wednesday and leads our staff retreat. Father Rob sits on the Diocesan school recertification Board for schools accreditation, is class chaplain at Bishop Sullivan Catholic School and is an Eagle Scout. "I know what an important mission this is for our faith and hope to provide the spiritual support and guidance for the staff and students to develop their relationship with God and with one another".

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## St. Matthew's Catholic School

Did you know that St. Matthew's Catholic School has staff, parents and faculty that attended the school as children? Our Catholic faith is founded on traditions that date back a thousand years. Our faith and its traditions are taught each day in our Catholic schools along with academics in order to hand on our faith to each new generation. St. Matthew's is very fortunate to have a 48-year history that finds students who attended and/or graduated from our school entrusting their children to us for their education in academics and faith. We also have the ultimate validation that time spent at our school is highly regarded because children who graduated have come back to teach or join our staff.

Michelle Wicker works in the cafeteria. Katie Drewiske and Leigh Dewberry are teachers. Amy Folkes, who is a parent volunteer, is the Chairperson of Santa Shop. All were students at St. Matthew's. They returned to serve in helping our school grow students who achieve academic excellence and will continue as stewards of the Catholic faith. Mrs. Dewberry and Mrs. Folkes have children currently attending St. Matthew's along with nine other alumni. Mrs. Dewberry said, "I believe in Catholic education. Returning to St. Matthew's as a teacher is a ministry, but it is also a way to give back to my faith. Sending my daughter, Maggie and my son, Matthew, to St. Matthew's is because I truly believe in the moral and academic education taught here and that it will help them make good choices in the future."

Principal, Mr. Goldberg said, "Our hope for the future is that our former students, as adults, will want to come back to help us continue providing a great academic experience and to pass along our traditions and faith."

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## Star of the Sea Catholic School

Star of the Sea Catholic School Alumnus Tommy Smith '84 is proud that his children, Annabelle (5th) and Tom (3rd), are second generation shining stars at his alma mater, located at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Tommy counts many accomplishments in his life: graduating from Virginia Tech where he met his wife, Diane; reading for and passing the bar sans law school; and establishing a successful career alongside his father at the Law Offices of Tom C. Smith. But it is his grade school years at Star of the Sea that he treasures most. "Some people reminisce about high school, and for others it's college," he said. "But how many people do you know who hold their elementary school in a place above all other academia in their lives?"



Today, Tommy gives back by serving on the Star of the Sea school board and helping to coach basketball, while Diane, serves as a volunteer coordinator, room mom, cafeteria helper and Girl Scout leader for their daughter's troop. Like other Star of the Sea parents, Tommy believes the quality of education, Catholic values and discipline he received at Star of the Sea were a tremendous help to his personal and professional life. He wanted that same experience for his children – right down to the uniforms. "I was never as proud as I was six years ago when I saw my daughter wearing that beautiful blue, kilt-like, plaid jumper for the first time. I felt a sense of accomplishment – like I knew I had set my daughter on the right track and there was nothing that could stop her now..."

And for the Smiths – right down to Luke, the family dog, who also enjoys sporting the school colors – there is no doubt they belong to the Star of the Sea family.

# Portsmouth Catholic Elementary School



Kathy Noblin's roots to Catholic education in Portsmouth go back to the early 1900s when her grandfather attended St. Paul's Male Academy. Since his graduating in 1918, her mother, brothers, sister, daughters as well as numerous aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins, have attended the school over the years. Kathy herself graduated in 1981. After attending college she proudly returned with a degree in Elementary Education to begin her teaching career at the very school that had become such an integral part of her family's history. This year begins her 27th year of commitment to Catholic education. She has seen many changes to Portsmouth Catholic over the years, but the one constant has been the school's mission to provide a quality Catholic education which instills gospel values. She is thankful to have been given the opportunity to provide so many years of dedication to such a meaningful profession and to be able to help young children grow in their faith, while instilling a solid educational foundation which instills a lifelong love of learning.

PCRS has been a part of Donna Henry's whole life. Originally, PCRS was the location for the Church of St. Therese and its school, the Little Flower. She was baptized in what is now the PCRS Media Center. In 1970, as a seventh grader at Little Flower, the local Catholic schools were consolidated into Portsmouth Catholic Regional School. From there, she attended Portsmouth Catholic High School. Donna felt the blessing of her education continue as she successfully completed a B.S. in Elementary Education from William and Mary and an M.S. Ed in Early Childhood Education from Old Dominion University. She began her teaching career at PCRS and now enters her 26th year. Donna thanks God for the opportunity to be at a place she loves, with people she loves, doing what she loves. As a teacher, assistant principal, and outreach coordinator, she enjoys serving in a wonderful school that strives to live and give as Jesus did.

In addition, Donna is a proud mother of three children, who attended PCRS and Peninsula Catholic High School. Her girls often speak of their Catholic education with love and gratitude. They have developed a solid knowledge base, effective study habits, a deep sense of morals and love for the Lord. What an answer to this mother's prayer.

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## St. Pius X Catholic School



Each year St. Pius X School holds an Honors Convocation to honor outstanding achievers in grades 4 through 7. At this event, we invite an alumnus to share their "Pius experiences" as well as their continued successes as adults.

St. Pius X School began recognizing our distinguished graduates in 2000. Our first distinguished graduate honoree was Sr. Brenda Query, a Sister, Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose most recent mission was Director of Religious Education at Little Creek Amphibious Base in Norfolk. Over the years, our distinguished graduates have included Larry Sabato, John Langlois, Susan Fentress, Lyons and Joseph Query, Marybeth and Christine Ryan, Ronnie Ciampoli, James Cornetta, and Corey Castelow. Our most recent 2011 distinguished graduate is Dr. Amy Hilty who is currently a psychiatrist in the Tidewater Area.

St. Pius X School has a rich tradition of successful graduates. All of our distinguished graduate honorees have their picture displayed in our Sabato Wing "Hall of Fame". They are truly living representations of the St. Pius X School motto "Proud Tradition, Future Promise".

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## Saint Patrick's Catholic School

Since Saint Patrick Catholic School has been in existence six years and has had only four graduating classes, we are spotlighting our founding Chairman, Charles McPhillips.

Mr. McPhillips is a native of Norfolk and attended Blessed Sacrament Elementary School and Norfolk Academy. He earned his undergraduate degree from Hampden-Sydney College and his law degree from the University of Virginia. He is a partner in the legal firm of Kaufman and Canoles.

Many consider Mr. McPhillips to be the father of Saint Patrick Catholic School. It was his vision and determination as Chairman of the James Barry Robinson Trust, along with other members of the Trust, that brought the school into being. He has been a member of the Trust since the mid 90's and has served as Chairman of the Trust since 2001. He also served as founding Chairman of the Saint Patrick Catholic School Board of Directors from the incorporation of the school through the first four years of school operations.

Mr. McPhillips has served on numerous Boards and service groups. He is an active member of the McMahan/ Prater Foundation which raises funds to support Catholic education throughout the Diocese of Richmond.

In recognition of his years of service to the Catholic community, Mr. McPhillips was honored with the Bishop's Humanitarian Award sponsored by the Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia at a luncheon on October 20th.

# Saint Mary Star of the Sea School



Don Roberts has been a staple in the local community for over 20 years working for WAVY TV 10. He attended Saint Francis Xavier School in Baltimore, Maryland as a child and his grandchildren now attend Saint Mary Star of the Sea School where he currently serves as the Marketing chair on the Saint Mary Star of the Sea School Board. When asked about why he had such a strong relationship with Catholic education Mr. Roberts responded, "The look in the eyes of my grandchildren, the excitement with which they're ready to talk about their 'day' and the knowledge they're gaining about the catholic faith everyday have made their parents' sacrifices well worth it. Leila -age 10, and Christian, who's 7, are now in their 3rd year at Saint Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School in Hampton. They are challenged every day, academically and also spiritually. Leila and Christian are becoming very knowledgeable of the faith- and it shows- not just in an academic sense but also in life. They sometimes teach us adults a thing or two. I'm very glad they've had this early grounding in the faith. It will last a lifetime.

It's also a pleasure to serve on the school board. There - I get to see firsthand what goes on at school, while also having a hand in its future."



Jessica Hamilton is starting her 4th year as a teacher at Saint Mary Star of the Sea School. After attending Portsmouth Catholic as a child, she went on to the Air Force Academy. After her career in the Air Force she went back to Old Dominion University and became licensed to teach in Virginia. Mrs. Hamilton has two children who also attend Saint Mary Star of the Sea School. Asked why she chose to both teach and have her children attend a Catholic School she said, "First of all, a Catholic education is a truly challenging, first-rate education. However, it is not just the quality of education that sets a Catholic education apart; it is the well-rounded curriculum that focuses on the growth of each individual child intellectually, physically, and spiritually that defines the success of Catholic education. Catholic Education builds a person's mind, character, and faith. As a parent, I can honestly and emphatically say that our family is stronger and more loving because of our children's Catholic education. As a teacher, I believe in the unique potential of every child. I know there is a

world of opportunities awaiting each child, and it is my aim to build upon each individual's knowledge, character and confidence to help open the door to those possibilities. I recognize what a tremendous and precious privilege and responsibility it is to teach in a Catholic School, and it is my deepest hope that my students and their families will experience the true blessing of Catholic Education that has graced my family and me."

## Bon Secours

### Concussions: A Widespread Problem in Athletics

A concussion is a prevalent athletic injury that any age athlete may experience during practice or competition. Although there is not a universally accepted definition for a concussion, for this article we will define it as a traumatic brain injury caused by a blow or jolt to the head, face, or neck and results in altered functioning of the brain. It is estimated that over one million individuals who participate in athletics or recreational activities are treated for traumatic brain injuries in the emergency department. Sixty-five percent of these injuries relate to the 5-18 year old age group.

Concussions can present individuals with many different types of symptoms and can develop right away, hours after, or even days after the injury. Physical symptoms can include but are not limited to: headaches, blurry vision, nausea or vomiting, sensitivity to noise or light, balance problems, slowed reaction time, and fatigue. Irregular sleeping patterns, difficulty with concentration, amnesia, irritability, sadness, anxiety, nervousness, and emotional irregularities can also be symptoms of a concussion.

Long term side effects from concussions are not completely known at this time, but the generally accepted conclusion is that they could include long-term memory loss, psychiatric disorders, and other neurological disorders. Early return to competition or recreation can be very detrimental and life threatening. Suffering another traumatic brain trauma before being completely recovered from the initial concussion is known as second-impact syndrome and can be avoided by being cleared by a medical professional to return to activity. There are certain strategies that can be implemented to reduce the risk of suffering traumatic brain injuries and they can be carried out by the athletes, parents, and coaches. One of the first steps is to know the signs and symptoms of a concussion and seek immediate medical care when the individual expresses them. Coaches can make sure to implement proper sport techniques and take the time for the athletes to become proficient in the techniques. Parents, athletes, and coaches should all encourage sportsmanship and insist that safety measures be taken at all times. Proper protective equipment should always be worn and regularly checked for defects.

Competitive athletes that engage in a contact sport are encouraged to undergo pre-season ImPact Neurocognitive Testing. It is used by many professional sports and universities to test many aspects of brain function. After a concussion, a re-test can help determine when it is safe for the athlete to return to competition. Bon Secours In Motion Physical Therapy and Sports Performance is here to help you with ImPact Testing and help you determine when it is safe to continue your activity.