



# St. Agnes Academy News

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Headmaster – James Stankiewicz

## Headmaster Headlines...

### Special Events and Activities Highlight Catholic Schools Week

We have just concluded Catholic Schools Week and what a week it was!

The week began with the traditional “Snowball” family dance on Saturday evening - a fun time with food, friendship, and of course, dancing! Our Academy Mass was held the following morning at 10 a.m. with many students and families present. Our students did a phenomenal job as servers, greeters, gift bearers, readers, and musicians.

The other days of the week featured dress-up days, pajama, and dance days and other activities such as a school-wide scavenger hunt. Scavenger Hunt team winners were the following:

- Grade 2 - Katrina Fiske, Brooke Lange
- Grade 3 - Santiago Galvez, Karl LaPointe
- Grade 4 - Griffin Kotelnicki, Gavin Lynch
- Grade 5 - Ben Barry, Cooper Calvert
- Grade 6 - Thomas Celentano, Keeley McKenney
- Grade 7 - Belen Galvez, Catherine Moriarty
- Grade 8 - Ainsleigh Sullivan, Viola Quiles

With the frigid temperatures, we had a school cancellation on Thursday and a delay on Friday. The Friday delay caused problems with bus schedules and forced us to miss travelling to St. Mary’s School in Lee. This annual get together has become a tradition and we hope to host them at St. Agnes next year!

Despite missing our visit to St. Mary’s, we were able to close out the week with a Mass and school-wide ice cream sundae party here at the school. It was a crazy, but fun week and a wonderful way for students and staff to show great spirit for our school!

-Jim Stankiewicz

## Calendar of Events:

- Feb. 9 – Valentine’s Day dance – 6 p.m.
- Feb. 11 – School board - 6 p.m. in library
- Feb. 13 – Girl Scouts - 6 p.m.
- Feb. 18-22 – Winter vacation
- March 1 – First Friday Mass - 9 a.m.
- March 6 – Ash Wednesday
- March 8 – In-service release day - Half day



## NEWS BITS...

### Nationally-Known Motivational Speaker Gives Inspiring Message

On Tuesday, January 22, well-known motivational speaker Richie Contartesi spoke to our middle school students about how to achieve success. His message was about setting goals, staying focused, and not being discouraged by failure. You can view some short videos of him working with students across the country on YouTube.

In February, Richie will SKYPE in to the school to “check in” with students to see if they have focused on goals and developed a plan to achieve them. Students will also be able to ask questions about their progress. Thanks to our PTO for sponsoring this opportunity for our students!



Motivational speaker Richie Contartesi speaks to middle school students about setting and achieving goals.

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## **Eighth Grader Julie Alsmann Earns Recognition for Poetry**

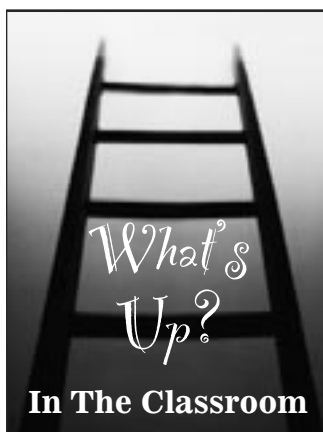
Eighth grader Julie Alsmann recently submitted a poem to Appelley Publishing for their annual poetry contest. Although division winners have not been chosen yet, Julie's poem has been selected to be published as part of the Appelley Publishing 2019 Rising Stars Collection. Congratulations, Julie!

### *Love*

It is... unpredictable; it is powerful  
It is something we all have inside us  
It is something that God himself cannot control, yet he practically invented it  
It is incredible, wonderful, and gorgeous in many ways  
Yet it makes us do rash things  
What is this force that even our God cannot control?  
Love  
Love is a force not understood by man, a force so amazing and yet mysterious in many ways; we all want it, yet we don't understand it; we are afraid of it  
And yet it's something all our hearts desire; it is uncontrollable  
Eros can make us fall in love for the best or for the worst  
He is fearsome, yet loved as a god of love should be  
He is misleading, yet makes our hearts lead us  
Love  
A force no one can truly explain yet something we all know  
Maybe not in the mind, but in the heart  
Where love will always sit  
Guiding our hearts against our minds.

## **Eighth Annual Middle School Science Fair Slated April 10**

The 8th annual St. Agnes Academy Middle School Science Fair will be held on Wednesday, April 10. It will be open to families and the public from 6-7:30 pm. Students are currently in the experiment phase of the project, which is the most exciting aspect for most of the students. They have analyzed their results to this point and are making adjustments to improve their projects prior to the final results being due at the end of February. Please be sure to join us on April 10 to celebrate all of their hard work.



In Mrs. Leja's and Mrs. Kulpa's pre-Kindergarten, the frigid and icy weather has prevented pre-school and pre-K from enjoying the fun of winter snow but we did manage to have fun in our classrooms. From reading stories about winter to decorating our classrooms with snowmen and snowflakes, we were able to

stay warm while we enjoyed all the beauty of the winter season.

Both classes are looking forward to an eventful February. First, our "Hundredth Day" of school popcorn party is just around the corner. We have projects planned, books to read, and games to play to celebrate this day. Valentine's Day is another special day for both classes. Our rooms will once again be decorated with many heart-themed projects done by the children. There also will be a Valentine's Day party where the children will get to exchange Valentines with their classmates.

After our vacation week, we will begin a unit on dinosaurs. We will be learning about paleontologists, fossils, and carnivorous and herbivorous dinosaurs. We have plenty of dinosaurs to play with, along with games and projects to make with both classes.

In Mrs. Patti's kindergarten, everyone had a wonderful and restful Christmas break and the children have returned ready to jump back into the New Year. January was an exciting time as the children have grown so much in the last few months and it is exciting to see such growth in their reading and writing. We are moving along in our Reading Street Series and have just finished Unit Three and are ready to begin Unit 4 the theme being Let's Go Exploring. In math, we just finished Chapter 5: Numbers to 31 and started Chapter 6: Graphs and Fractions.

In religion, we are starting Chapter 18. In this chapter, we will be learning that Jesus lives God's love. The children will learn that Jesus celebrates life and shows love and compassion to others. We will learn that we have much to celebrate and give thanks for just as Jesus did.

We have finished our unit on Arctic and polar animals and their habitats. We read many books and learned many interesting facts about, penguins, polar bears and other animals that live in the Arctic. The class also celebrated Martin Luther King Jr., by reading about how he envisioned the world and wanted peace for all. With the help of their Big Buddies, the children wrote about the dreams and how they can make the world a better place.

We had a fun and exciting Catholic Schools Week.



*Kindergarten students with their eighth grade Big Buddies on pajama/dance day.*



There were many activities planned for the school, including pajama day, get up and dance, crazy hat/hair day, and silly socks or tie day. The children really enjoyed showing off their creativity and silly side.

The kindergarten also wrote about why they love St. Agnes and what makes this school a special place.

**In Mrs. Shapiro's first grade**, it's an exciting time as we watch the children grow in so many new directions. It is wonderful to see their reading take off. The children just finished the midpoint of their reading curriculum. They have come a long way in reading and are working very hard every day. In literature, we recently finished our chapter book, *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. A classic of American humor, this house painter and his high-stepping penguins have delighted children for generations.

In math, the children are learning about place value. They will have many opportunities to model, count, read, write, and group numbers to 100. In science, we are beginning to learn about the weather. The children have been exposed to a wide variety of wonderful children's literature. We learned about snow first and read *Willie "Snowflake" Bentley*. In social studies, students learned how Dr. King, Jr. used peaceful means to change our country. The children enjoyed listening to books about this great man.

In religion, we just finished Chapter 11, *Blest Are We*. In this chapter, the students learned the importance of saying they are sorry when they have chosen to do wrong. They also learned that God is always ready to forgive them. They also visited The Dalton Public Library to help out with the story hour project. January guest readers were Mila and Jacoby. We had a lot of fun celebrating Catholic Schools Week. Crazy hats, socks/ties, and comfy pajamas with periodic dancing brought giggles to the class and made us realize how



*An ice cream party wraps up Catholic Schools Week.*

week. Crazy hats and hairdos, socks, pajama day, and a scavenger hunt brought giggles to the class. Although the weather cut some of our activities short, we all felt thankful to be part of the St. Agnes family.

In reading, some have finished the first of two reading textbooks for this year. Some of the rest are nearly there and will be taking the third benchmark soon. We are working on concepts such as sequencing, inferences and parts of speech, as well as continuing our efforts in phonemic awareness. All in all, the children continue to work as diligently as they can every day.

In math, we continue our work in regrouping. Most have mastered adding two-digit numbers, now we are working on subtracting two-digit numbers. Although this is a bit tricky, most of the children are grasping this process very well. Next, we move on to geometry.

We have started a new reading incentive program this month. The children are given three short books to read each week and write a journal entry sharing their favorite books. The parents also get to join in the fun by also writing in the journals. This really helps the children to understand the importance of the written word and, as their child's best teacher, really models for the child how to get thoughts down on paper. Most responses from parents and children have been very positive.

We are making good strides in Reconciliation. We have been saying the Act of Contrition daily. Some of the children have already committed this prayer to memory. If your child still has not, I would respectfully ask for your assistance. The children really should know this prayer by heart by the time they make their First Reconciliation. We have been working daily on the parts of the Rite of Reconciliation, what is a sin, types of sins, etc. Although this is a difficult concept for children so young, they continue to do their best. Please keep them in your prayers as we continue their journey to Christ.

Finally, the children are beginning to make the transition from manuscript to cursive writing and, boy, are they excited! We started off with their names. We have now moved on to the lower case letters. Working on this



*First graders show off their best during crazy hair/crazy hat day.*

special are school really is!

**In Mrs. Blefari's second grade**, class work has begun with a flourish! We are quickly moving onto many new and exciting concepts and the children are ready and raring to go.

We have had lots of fun celebrating Catholic Schools

daily, the children are doing very well. Now if we can only get them to be able to read cursive, we'll be good to go! They are so funny! They are still having difficulties recognizing the cursive alphabet. But the more they see it, the easier it will get.

We will be having a Valentine's Day party on Feb. 14. The children will be making their own Valentine buckets, and as soon as they are finished, the children are free to bring in their valentines. I would ask that each child bring in a valentine for every child, to avoid hurt feelings. The addition of pencils, candy etc. is fine, but entirely optional. I'm hoping to have a decorate-your-own cookie party to accompany the Valentines. Our room mother, Mrs. Lange, may be contacting you for do-



*Third graders listen to a project about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

nations. Thank you in advance!

In Mrs. Todriff's third grade, the class finished Unit 3 in reading, exploring the question, "How are people and nature connected?" Students read myths and stories about stars, whales, and desert life. At the same time, they practiced comprehension skills: drawing conclusions, generalize, cause and effect, identifying the characters, setting, and plot. As a culminating activity, students combined their "friendly letter writing" skills and new knowledge about constellations to write a letter to their parents! They addressed their own envelopes too!

In math, students had some fun learning times tables by singing multiplication songs. Then we tried division with dried beans. We will continue these skills into the next chapter and review time, using a ruler, and geometric shapes.

In science, we continue to learn about all energy forms. Students are relating potential and kinetic energy to their winter activities, such as skiing and snowboarding.

While reading stories in our religion book, we are learning that Jesus' power to forgive and heal comes from God. We are reviewing our faith words, compassion and mercy. In the month of February, we will read *Have You Filled A Bucket Today?* We will spread kindness among our classmates and others using kind, thoughtful words and actions. Hopefully, all students will experi-

ence the pride and joy of filling buckets!

In Mrs. Adams' fourth grade, another busy month flew by! In religion, the focus this month has been on the Holy Spirit as our guide; to learn about Pentecost and the Trinity; and to explore ways to lead lives that reflect God's goodness. The students have had truly thoughtful discussions on kindness and forgiving.

ELA: We have finished another unit of Reading Street (common core): Patterns in Nature and we have begun a unit on puzzles and mysteries. We continue to work on Reading Street: comprehension, fluency, literary terms and genre.

Writing Strand: we are focused on writing mini lessons, organization, and text evidence. Speaking and Listening Strand: building oral language, research and inquiry. Language Strand: vocabulary, conventions and spelling. We are anxiously awaiting the delivery of our publication.

Math: problem solving; multiplying three digits; division rules; finding missing numbers; number patterns; estimation in division; one-digit quotients with remainders, and divisibility rules for 2, 3, 5, and 10. Social Studies: We continue to explore the different regions of the U.S. while researching our individual states project.

In Ms. Young's fifth grade, the class has been learning about Bible stories such as the boy Jesus in the Temple and the journey to Emmaus. The class has discussed how Jesus was a child just as they are right now, and how his parents worried about him when it seemed he was lost. They've discussed saints such as Saint Jerome translating the Bible into Latin, Saint John Bosco helping the poor children of Italy, as well as the many terms used to describe the Eucharist.

In math, the students have been learning about addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers as well as the conversion of improper fractions to mixed numbers. They will move on to multiplication and division of fractions and mixed numbers before continuing to geometry.

In reading, the class has been focusing on comprehension strategies to help them analyze various texts. The recent stories they have read in class have provided the opportunity to experience a play adaption of *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* and delving into drama with *The Perpetual Motion Machine*. These stories have really taken the interest of the students, and they have enjoyed working on props and practicing to perform for



*Fifth graders take a bow after acting out their version of Paul Revere's ride.*





*Fifth grade diligently works on a project.*

their peers.

In science, the class has been reviewing the water cycle and various factors that attribute to the types of weather we experience. The girls and boys have done a great job remembering concepts from last year's class.

**In Mr. Lange's sixth grade:**

**Math:** Sixth graders are currently working on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions and mixed numbers. They are also solving algebraic equations involving fractions across all four operations. This class does a great job of recalling what they learned in previous years and applying that knowledge to some of the newer concepts they are learning. Our fraction unit leads right into the next unit on rates, ratios, and proportions.

**Science:** Sixth graders are finishing up their Earth science unit by learning about plate tectonics and how this phenomenon changes the surface of the Earth. Many of the students seem interested and intrigued by the idea that the continents used to be combined in one landmass and are now always moving. The next science unit focuses on biology, more specifically what defines life and living things, and how they are categorized.

**Literature:** Students recently read a compilation of fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen. Their final assignment was to write their own version of the tale, *The Ugly Duckling* with hilarious results!

**Social Studies:** We have just started our study of the culture and achievements of ancient China. During this unit, we will discuss the geography that shaped this amazing culture as well as their achievements.

**In Mrs. Dudziak's seventh grade:**

**Math:** Seventh graders have been continuing their work on rational numbers, but with a focus on positive and negative fractions. This includes solving algebraic equations with both positive and negative decimals and fractions. It can be tricky, but they are getting the hang of the different methods to keep their work organized and check in order to compute accurately. The next unit will focus on rates, ratios, proportions, percents, and

consumer math (discounts, taxes, etc.).

**Science:** Students in grade 7 are finishing up their unit on water as a natural resource. They were surprised to learn that even though the world is made up of approximately 70% water, only a small portion of that (about 1%) is available for use by living things. The next unit is on biology, with a focus on ecology, reproduction, and habitats.

**Language Arts:** We continue to expand our vocabulary and improve our writing. We recently completed stories in which we created our own characters, setting, and point of view.

**Literature:** We completed our unit on drama and have begun reading non-fiction.

**Social Studies:** We have just started our study of the culture and achievements of ancient China. During this unit, we will discuss the geography that shaped this amazing culture as well as their achievements.

**In Mrs. Jamros' eighth grade:**

**Math:** We completed our unit on expressions and equations and have begun working with inequalities.

**Science:** The class is wrapping up their weather and climate unit by learning about the different types of climates and climate change. This will include viewing *An Inconvenient Truth* and also seeking some more current research in order to prepare for a larger discussion/debate around the topic of climate change. Afterwards, the eighth grade will learn about biology, including photosynthesis, cellular respiration, genetics, and heredity.

**Religion:** We defined vocation, and discussed being servants of God through the Sacrament of Matrimony and the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

**Language Arts:** We are refining our writing skills and learning to write essays with a strong thesis statement and more paragraph cohesiveness.

**Literature:** We wrapped up our unit on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Next, we will begin our unit on drama.

**Social Studies:** We are very near the end of our unit on the Middle Ages. We have already discussed the Crusades and their effects on European life and culture. We will now learn about the increase in trade and wealth that led to increased population in towns and villages across Europe.



*Eighth graders gather together at the recent annual Snowball.*





*Eighth graders participate during crazy hair/crazy hat day.*

# Music Notes



Music students are busy with work on music literacy skills. Pre-k and K are playing with rhythm and steady beat, grades 1 and 2 are working on note reading, lines and spaces and patriotic songs.

Grade 4 students have their new recorders and are learning to make practice time every day so the class can move forward. Grade 5-7 students are flying through their recorder work and learning some songs for a future first Friday Mass. Grade 8 students will spend third quarter on the ukulele!

Note to parents: your child is learning to play an instrument! They need encouragement to practice a little bit every day. They will not always sound very good while they're working but please let them know you appreciate their efforts. Ten minutes a day is a good begin-

## Academy Artwork





## Letter from Burkina Faso

*Sr. Linda Answers the Call*

February 2019



### *New Church Building Spreads the Gospel*

For five years, one of our local pastors has been traveling weekly to a neighboring village about an hour away to evangelize and hold Bible studies for new believers. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, many people have responded to the Gospel and have asked Jesus into their hearts.

The believers started meeting under a tree and then when the rainy season came, they built themselves a small mud-brick house where they continued to meet and were sheltered from the rain.

This summer, we were able to hire a contractor to build a new church building out of cement bricks for this new congregation of about 50 believers. They now have a student pastor who is in his second year of Bible school assigned to their village. Their pastor will be in the village from mid-April until October when he returns to school. After he graduates, he will be permanently placed in the village.

Please pray with us for this new church plant, for the new believers, and that the Gospel will spread far and wide in our region.

