



# St. Agnes Academy News

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Headmaster – James Stankiewicz

## Headmaster Headlines...

### By Serving Others, Students Rise Above Culture of Indifference

It goes without saying that Catholic school students participate in daily religion classes, rooted in Scripture and tradition. This provides a strong foundation in faith knowledge. It is not only a book-centered class, but also a real world and service-oriented class, which provides support, growth, and maturity of that faith. Through this service, students carry out their responsibilities to build a world of justice, peace, and love.

Pope Francis has called on Catholics “to open their hearts to God and to overcome a globalization of indifference... One of the most urgent challenges which I would like to address is precisely the globalization of indifference. Indifference to our neighbor and to God represents a real temptation for us Christians. Each year during Lent, we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience,... it is a time of grace. God does not ask of us anything that He, Himself, has not first given us. ‘We love because He first has loved us’ (1 Jn 4:19). Usually, when we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (something God the Father never does). We are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure. Our heart grows cold. As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don’t think about those less well off. Today, this selfish attitude of indifference has taken on global proportions, to the extent that we can speak of a globalization of indifference. It is a problem which we, as Christians, need to confront.”

Through service, students at St. Agnes and at other Catholic schools are given opportunities to rise above this “indifference” by using their gifts and talents to serve others.

As students grow and mature, it is our hope that their involvement in the recognition of need and commitment to service will

deepen. St. Agnes student participation in these activities shows them that to truly live one’s faith is to respond to God’s call to serve others and not become part of the “globalization of indifference.”

May God bless you and your families,

-Jim Stankiewicz



## Calendar of Events:

- December 2 – First Sunday of Advent
- December 7 – First Friday Mass at 9 a.m.
- December 7 – In-service release day
- December 7 – Mary Verdi Christmas concert – 7 p.m.
- December 8 – Feast of Immaculate Conception
- December 24 - Jan. 1 – Christmas vacation

## NEWS BITS...

### Academy Reaches Out With Community Projects

“Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours, yours are the eyes through which he looks compassionately on this world!” This quote of St. Teresa of Avila has always been a favorite of mine. As we reflect on each school year, it is our belief and our hope that we have been Christ to each other. It is the very root of Catholic education to teach the message of Jesus and to be Christ to others through kindness and service.

One of the distinguishing features of St. Agnes Academy is the opportunity for service. At a Catholic school we are able to connect helping others directly to the teachings of Jesus and the Church. In this way, students not only learn what it means to be a Catholic Christian, but also practice the faith through liturgies, traditions, and real-world service.

This year, our students have already completed the following service projects:

- Box of Joy shoebox collection for children worldwide
- Bake sale for the benefit of the Ziembra family in Adams, who suffered losses



*Thanks to an Academy fundraising effort, the Ziembra family in Adams is rebuilding their dairy barn after a fire.*

### Contents:

Headmaster Headlines . . . .	1
Calendar of Events . . . . .	1
News Bits . . . . .	1-2
What’s Up in the Classroom: . . . . .	1-5
Student Notebook . . . . .	5-6
Academy Artwork . . . . .	6
Letter from Sr. Linda . . . . .	7

to their farm as a result of a fire (raised \$1000)

- Raised funds to purchase gloves, hats, etc. for local veterans

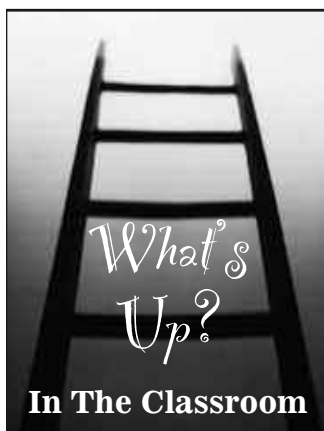
Current service projects include:

- School-wide food collection for Thanksgiving distribution
- Adopt-a-Family (Christmas program in conjunction with the Department of Children and Families)
- Making Christmas cards for the homebound

We are so proud of our students for their enthusiasm to help others and for putting the teachings of Jesus into action.

## Update on Service Project For Fire-Destroyed Barn

Many of you may remember that our first community service project of the school year was a bake sale to benefit the Ziemba family of Adams, whose dairy barn was destroyed by a fire. Good news! Through an amazing show of support, the local community has raised enough money so that the Ziembas have been able to begin construction on a new barn to house their herd! We are so proud that our donation helped with that accomplishment!



In Mrs. Leja's and Mrs. Kulpa's pre-Kindergarten, a very successful Halloween parade through the school and a pizza party were held on October 30. The pre-K and pre-school have now begun to learn about the history of Thanksgiving. Both classes are reading stories about the very first Thanksgiving and doing projects that help enhance their un-

derstanding of this holiday. We are also learning about the importance of being thankful for our family and friends.

During the last week of November, the pre-K class will be learning about hibernation, while the preschool



*The pre-K is hard at work on a fun project.*

will be having fun reading and doing projects with these children's books: *The Kissing Hand*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*.



*Pre-K 4-year-olds have a great time playing a Halloween game.*

In Mrs. Patti's kindergarten, we say goodbye to October and realize what a busy month it was! We celebrated National Fire Safety Week, and we were lucky to have volunteers from the Dalton Fire Department come to the school and talk to both the kindergarten and pre-school classes about fire safety. They also brought the fire truck and ambulance and the children were able to go through and get a close-up look into each vehicle. The children were able to see what a fireman looks and sounds like when they are all dressed in their uniform. Thanks so much to our volunteer fire department!

We also spent several weeks enjoying the arrival of fall. We read many books about the season and looked for signs of autumn all around us.

With the beginning of November, we find ourselves getting ready for Thanksgiving. We have been reading about the very first Thanksgiving, while learning about the pilgrims and Native Americans. We have also been writing about what we are most thankful for and sharing our own Thanksgiving traditions.

We have finished unit 1 in our Reading Street Series and are moving right along in unit 2, which will focus on plants and animals, and how they are unique. We find ourselves beginning chapter 4 in math, which is teaching numbers through 10, and in religion we are learning that God gave us many teachers in our lives and that we can be teachers to others.

In Mrs. Shapiro's first grade, the community service project at the Dalton Public Library is in full swing. Lauren, Brielle, Josslyn, Beatrice, Thomas, and Gemma were guest readers for October/November. The class has just begun a new unit on Reading Street. The name of this unit is Animals, Tame, and Wild. Over the next several weeks, our class will be reading about and discussing the concept of tame and wild animals. Throughout this unit, we will get to know pets, people who help animals, animals that help people, and wild animals. The Big question for this unit is "How are people and animals important to one another?"

In math, students started Chapter 3: Subtraction Strategies and Facts to 12. The children also enjoyed playing "Math Around the World" to practice their addition and subtraction facts.

We just finished Chapter 7 in *Blest Are We* in which we learned about Creation. Students played a Creation Guessing Game and read a Creation poem. I also read *And If The Moon Could Talk* by Kate Banks about the wonders of Creation.

In science class, we learned about animals and their habitats. As part of our study, we learned the life cycle of the butterfly. The children made their own books and butterfly wristbands. After reading *Squirrels* by Brian Wildsmith, the children made paper squirrels using phragmites for tails. They also completed books about owls and enjoyed listening to *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell and *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. As a part of our science focus in October, we also read several books about pumpkins and did a paper bag project showing the life cycle of the pumpkin.

Lastly, we had a class party to celebrate finishing our first chapter book: *James and the Giant Peach*. We enjoyed the movie while having refreshments. All had a good time!

**In Mrs. Belfari's second grade,** October was a busy month. We've been working very hard in all areas. In reading, the children have been working on reading fluency. We're trying to sound more like children and less like robots! We're working on inflection, and using punctuation to remind us how the author wants us to read his work. It's a slow process that we will be working on all year. But we're off to a great start. We've also started working on parts of speech - mainly nouns so far. The children are working on telling the difference between proper and common nouns. We are also writing in our journals regularly now. Lots of good things are happening.

In math, we have just finished our chapter on addition and subtraction strategies. We are now moving on to place value and rounding to the nearest ten, which will ultimately lead us to the addition and subtraction of two- and three-digit numbers. First grade review is over and we're heading for the big stuff now!

In science, we have completed a unit on pumpkins. After plenty of discussion, we did various experiments on our classroom pumpkin. We tried to cut a piece of string that would extend around the circumference of the pumpkin. We estimated its weight but only to find out that it weighed 13 lbs! Each student made a hypothesis about whether it would sink or float in the set tub in the kitchen. They watched in wonderment as the water rose and the pumpkin began to float! Finally, we carved it as a Jack-o-Lantern and counted the seeds by 10's. The children enjoyed the jack-o-lantern as we read the spooky stories that we wrote for our Halloween party. Thank-you goes out to Mrs. Lange who sent in tricks and treats for our festivities!

In social studies, we've been discussing Thanksgiving and the story of the Pilgrims. We've also discussed elections and the process of voting. It's been a fun, productive month. With the holidays approaching, we'll be swinging into high gear. Second grade is a fun place to be!

**In Mrs. Todriff's third grade,** students completed another unit in reading, which involved a variety of genres, such as expository, realistic fiction, and fantasy. While reading *Tops & Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens, each student made a "comprehension booklet" where they practiced predicting, visualizing, asking questions, making connections, and summarizing. Hopefully they will use these important strategies in their future readings!

In math, students were busy subtracting tens, hundreds, and thousands; sometimes regrouping once, twice, or three times. Then we jumped into multiplication!

In science, we had fun playing with a variety of objects and magnets. Students learned that magnetism and gravity are both a non-contact force that can cause an object to move or change position. In the next chapter, we will review different forms of energy. We will also



*The third grade class hones their vocabulary skills.*

learn how light and matter interact through reflection, refraction, and absorption.

Diving back into social studies, we are learning map skills, and discovering the features of a map as well as natural resources in our area. We will be able to locate and name major rivers, lakes, and cities in Massachusetts.

Third grade students were excited to learn the responsibilities of being an altar server. Father Chris took our class to the church to explain and let the students practice the roles of being an altar server. It was a very interesting experience for all of us. In class, we continue to read passages that remind us to welcome the poor and do our best to accept everyone.

**In Mrs. Adams' fourth grade,** it is hard to believe that the first quarter is over already. I was so grateful to meet all parents during conferences. Thank you so much for your support and insights. The students continue to work hard and be nice. In religion, we have studied the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Our focus this month has been on Jesus as our role model. Jesus shows us how to love others as God loves us.

In English/Language Arts, we have just completed the second unit in the Reading Street program, TEAMWORK. The guiding question was, "What is the value of teamwork?" The selections integrated the social studies and science curricula with stories on U.S. history, U.S. government, and U.S. geography.

In math, we are working on multiplication properties, models, special factors, and multiplying by one-digit numbers (with and without regrouping). The class has just received materials from Scholastic Book Club, as we will be publishing a class book on December 13. We will become authors and illustrators.



*Fourth graders are ready to start a new project – writing a book. Stay tuned to see how it turns out.*

In Ms. Young’s fifth grade, November has been a very busy month. The students have stepped up, once again, to lead the way with the Box of Joy project. Between the school and parish, 350 boxes were collected. The class had a packing party on November 6, and a blessing of the boxes ceremony that Friday. They should be very proud of the work they have accomplished! In addition to the work done with Box of Joy, the class has been learning about the Beatitudes and sacramentals being integrated into everyday life, as well as the importance of the Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic faith.

The class also led Mass on All Saints Day and dressed up as a familiar Saint for a procession. In math, the class has recently finished their chapter on division with ten and larger divisors as well as the division of money. The students have begun using Khan Academy in math class on a regular basis, and have been doing well with the additional resource. The boys and girls have been working on comprehension of informational texts in reading class. Science content included discussion of adaptations of plants and animals and the technology of prosthetic limbs.



*The fifth grade oversaw a successful Box of Joy with 350 boxes collected for needy children throughout the world.*

**In Mr. Lange’s sixth grade:**

**Math:** Sixth graders recently finished a unit on dividing decimals. They are beginning to delve more deeply into expressions and equations so that they can really appreciate the joys of algebra!

**Science:** Sixth graders are working on a unit including the history of Earth and geologic time, and plate tectonics and how Earth’s appearance has changed over millions of years. They have enjoyed working on activities involving radioactive dating. Soon after, they will be focusing on biology, more specifically what defines life and living things, and how they are categorized.

**Literature:** We had a fabulous time with our most recent literature assignment, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, by Washington Irving. After reading the short story, students created a play which we presented to grades 2 and 3. Students wrote the script themselves and put some very unusual and funny twists on the classic story. Audience reviews were a rousing “two thumbs up”! The activity was so successful that our sixth grade playwrights will be using their skills again after the holidays. Stay tuned for more details.

**Social Studies:** We are currently learning all about the earliest civilizations in the Near East, such as Sumer and Babylon. Part of this unit includes a discussion of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, which is always a favorite topic. We will be examining the details of those engineering marvels through a hands-on unit that will culminate in a project.



*Each year the fifth grade takes the lead, spearheading the Box of Joy project which is supported by the school and the parish.*

**In Mrs. Dudziak’s seventh grade:**

**Language Arts:** We are learning how to write more effective sentences and how to use more precise language in our writing. We are expanding our vocabulary, and have mastered 1,018 new words since September.

**Literature:** We have discussed plot, character, setting, theme and point of view for many short stories. During our next unit we will be studying myths, legends and folk tales.

**Science:** Students in grade 7 are exploring fossil fuels and energy resources. This also helps to prepare them for the unit in eighth grade on climate change. The next unit is about another important resource, water. This may even include a special guest speaker.

**Math:** Seventh graders have begun their work on inequalities. They see how it is similar to working with equations, and they enjoy the logic behind finding in-

equality solutions. The next unit focuses on decimals and fractions, with a new twist of including negative numbers.

**Social Studies:** We are currently learning all about the earliest civilizations in the Near East, such as Sumer and Babylon. Part of this unit includes a discussion of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, which is always a favorite topic. We will be examining the details of those engineering marvels through a hands-on unit which will culminate in a project.

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

**Math:** We have completed our unit on rational numbers, and have begun working with the Real Number System.

**In Mr. Lange's math class,** we are finishing up chapter 2, which has been focusing on irrational numbers and square roots. They have particularly enjoyed working with the Pythagorean theorem to find the missing sides of right triangles. The next unit will focus on equations and inequalities, preparing them for a following unit on polynomials and linear functions.

**Science:** Students began the unit on the atmosphere, weather, and climate. Discussions of and documentaries on climate change will be a major focus of the unit. Afterwards, the eighth grade will learn about biology, including photosynthesis, cellular respiration, genetics, and heredity.

**Religion:** We continued our study of the life of Jesus by learning more about our conscience and prayer. We also studied the lives of saints such as Saint Josephine Bakhita and Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini.

**Language Arts:** We are learning about sentence structure and variety. We continue to learn new vocabulary words, and have mastered 2,218 new words since September.

**Literature:** We finished our unit on short stories and enjoyed reading and discussing stories by authors such as Pearl S. Buck, Ray Bradbury, Langston Hughes and Edgar Allan Poe.

**Social Studies** Students recently finished major projects that explored the construction and architecture of Roman cities. This is always a fun project that requires students to only use recyclable materials. Now that the unit on Ancient Rome is finished, we will be working to learn more about life in Medieval Europe.



*The Middle School had an enjoyable trip to the 911 Museum in NYC.*

## ST. AGNES MUSIC NEWS - MRS. DESAUELLE

Wow! What a warm welcome I've had from the staff and students. I'm very happy to be a part of such a wonderful school!

We have been asked to participate in the Mary Verdi Christmas Show, an important fundraiser for our school. I cannot stress enough the importance of all our students participating. Like in any team activity or sport, we are working towards a common goal and every person matters.

All the classes have been practicing their Christmas songs, which will be featured in the show. All the music classes are also working on some basic music reading skills, incorporating the recorders for grades 4-8. After the holidays, the middle school will do a ukulele unit and spend some time in the computer lab exploring digital music and composition!

Here's a recap of information on the Mary Verdi Christmas Show:

### What: Mary Verdi Christmas Show

**Where: St. Agnes Church**

**When: Friday, Dec 7, at 7 p.m.**

What to Wear: FESTIVE!

Girls: Anything happy, no jeans or yoga pants.

Boys: Shirt w/tie (holiday themed or colored) trousers, no jeans please.

There is one rehearsal Mrs. Verdi has requested for grades 3-8 on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2 from 1-2 pm at the church. Please make every effort to have your child attend.

*Thank you for your support as we head into this busy Christmas season!*

## Student Notebook

### The Wonders of the Peer Leadership Program

*By Julie Alsmaan, Eighth Grade*

My classmates and I had the joy and opportunity to learn from the Peer Leadership Program presented by the District Attorney's office. We were honored to have been selected to be taught by our excellent instructors, Mrs. Mulcahy and Mrs. Penna. This program has taught us so much. Let's see what we have learned.

What I think I really appreciated about this program, and I think I am speaking for my peers as well, is that we didn't just get told, "don't do drugs, they're bad" or "have courage to be a leader." Nope. At the Peer Leadership Program they explained things to us. Each week, we were given a different lesson. Of course, we were taught the basics like substance abuse and bullying, but instead of telling us "don't do this" or "don't do that," they taught us the reasons and answered all of our "whys." Take substance abuse. How many times have you heard people telling kids, or even each other, "that's bad," but not elaborate or explain? The answer is probably a lot. This is not a good way to teach. Everyone has questions,

and you need people willing to answer them. That's what the program did. Another example is bullying. I always wondered why people did this, or if I got bullied, if it was something about me. After the program, I can safely say I can list multiple reasons why bullies do what they do.

Those weren't the only topics. Stereotyping, peer pressure, social media. What do all three of these have in common? They are all big topics of discussion! As a class, we thoroughly discussed each topic and actively learned. Loads of kids across the world have social media. Some (read most) are underage. Kids need support and guidance when it comes to social media, especially if they are underage. Even if they are at the age requirement, knowledge doesn't hurt anyone.

Social media is a source of peer pressure and stereotypes. Peer pressure can come from lots of people on social media, some not always nice. Lots of kids are pressured everyday, doing things they might not think is right, on social media. To add to that, stereotypes are not always purposeful (though of course they can be). Someone can say something accidentally that others consider to be wrong. Someone can use labels. People don't even realize when this happens. Carefulness on social media is crucial. My class and I have obviously learned a lot about this from the program. Well, I guess I should stop here, before I start full on ranting.

Conflict resolution, discrimination, and healthy relationships. Now I know what you're thinking. Discrimination doesn't fit into this list. Well, if that is what you're thinking, sometimes things need deeper thinking. Dis-

crimination comes in many different forms. Social, religious, and political discrimination are just a few types of discrimination. We learned about all types of discrimination. We've learned that these are all wrong for different reasons. One, everyone has been created equal and no one deserves this treatment. Two, treating others like that could come back to bite you! Three, discrimination is simply wrong, and there is no other way to put it.

Conflict resolution and healthy relationships counter-balance this. We've learned that being able to fix a problem like this is easier than letting it go. Conflict resolution is a crucial skill in life, especially when faced with certain challenges. Healthy relationships play into it as well. When you build healthy relationships with people, you are helping them against discrimination. Healthy relationships also form from conflict resolution. An important thing to remember is that the best way to make an enemy disappear is to make a friend!

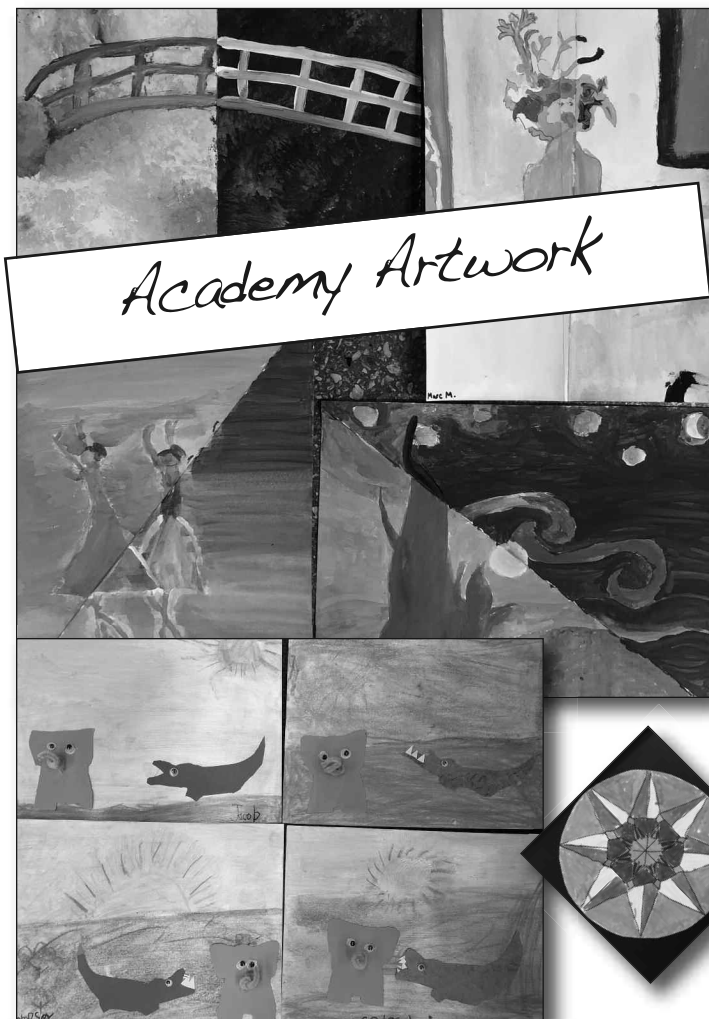
In conclusion, my classmates and I were delighted to take part in this wonderful program. Thank you so much to our wonderful educators for the information they have given us. The world will be a better place because of it. Being educated about these topics at a young age will allow young people to become mindful adults.

### Top Student Sellers for Cash Calendar Fundraiser



The cash calendars were a huge success once again with three top student sellers that exceeded all expectations! Top seller was Thomas Celentano in sixth grade with 74 calendars sold. Second place went to Evan Von Richthofen in kindergarten with 46 calendars, and third place went to seventh grader Catherine Moriarty who sold 45 calendars. Thank you so much to all families who helped sell calendars and keep the activities going for another year.

The Halloween party was another success and is always the most popular event we have during the year. The costumes never disappoint and this year the students did a great job. Most original/creative costume was Lauren Lange in fifth grade as a jack-in-the-box, scariest went to Aryanna Bouchard in third grade as the grim reaper, funniest went to Ava Gianacopoulos and Alexis Gero in 6th grade as an elderly couple, and cutest went to Noah and Natalie Aldrich as elves on the shelf. Congratulations to all! We hope everyone has a restful and Happy Thanksgiving! Looking forward to the upcoming Christmas season.





## Letter from Burkina Faso

*Sr. Linda Answers the Call*

October 30, 2018



### *Gifts of Rice and Backpacks*

Sponsored children and families come together twice a year for a distribution of rice and back to school supplies. It is a time to meet parents and guardians and share the generous gifts our sponsors provide to each child.

This week we gathered together to update information on each child and check on how each one is doing. It gives us a chance to praise their efforts and encourage those who may be struggling. We record family contact info, grades students are in, school progress, and inquire about health and general pertinent information. It's not unlike "Meet the Parents Night" at our schools back home.



It is a time to greet parents and guardians and share the generous gifts our sponsors provide to each child. It is a very rewarding experience. Children and families are so grateful that school fees are paid, books and school supplies are provided, uniforms are purchased when required and that rice is provided to each sponsored child. You too, can be a part of this worthwhile program. So many children are still waiting for a sponsor.

If you would like to sponsor Sadolba, please contact me or Ruth Cox. For the price of a daily cup of coffee, this boy can receive an education and have enough to eat.

