Fun Times for St. Joseph Parish
Festirama 2016

By Joseph Suwinski

On May 20-22, St. Joseph’s Parish held its annual parish festival, Festirama, on the east campus of St. Joseph Parish. This festival is a fundraiser for the parish. It also builds relationships among the church community. Countless volunteers and donations make this weekend event possible.

Many rides, games, and food vendors line the grounds of the east campus. “My favorite ride is the Roundup,” says first grader Aiden Britt. Ethan Little, a SJS fifth grader said, “I normally go with my family, and mostly on Saturday.”

Preparation for the festival begins months before it opens. Volunteer chairman and face painting co-chair, Mrs. Elaine Dickendasher, said, “We begin preparing as early as October to contact entertainment, gain raffle items, and set the planning calendar. I also help update documents, promote publicity, and assist the business manager.

This is the main fundraiser for the parish. The money goes into the general fund for the parish. The event is also to promote community among parishioners.”

Set up for the event begins early in the week. St. Joseph Pastor, Msgr. Dennis Metzger said, “When Festirama begins on Friday, many of the workers gather at the flagpole on the east campus, and I lead them in a prayer, asking God to bless our efforts and keep everyone safe,” he stated. “Then for the rest of the weekend, I walk the entire grounds, inside and out, and sell my 7-course dinner raffle tickets.” The amount of work put into this event is tremendous, however, it definitely pays off.

The tents and rides have all come down but mark your calendar — Festirama always takes place the 3rd weekend in May!

Break A Positive Direction Sweat!
PD Week Ends with the Best Foot Forward Challenge

By Katie Holmes

St. Joseph Middle School wrapped up the 2016 Positive Direction program May 11-13 with many special events. These events included a “God Opens Many Doors” spiritual retreat, the traditional “Day of Caring” community service effort, and the 3K/5K Best Foot Forward Challenge. Students have trained since February for the much-anticipated three/five-kilometer race!

Positive Direction began under the guidance of our own principal, Mrs. Sally Koppinger, about thirty years ago. First known as Positive Addiction, it’s name changed to Positive Direction in order to indicate the overall goal of the program—helping students live healthy, happy, and positive lives.

“Positive Direction has inspired me to reach for my goals,” says seventh graders, Grace Slomka and Melii Wahl. Seventh and eighth graders are anxious and determined to grasp hold of their future and enjoy the ride.

A Friday Fun Day carnival was the very last event of Positive Direction Week. After running the race, students were able to shower and come back to school for an afternoon of fun! Activities included a bounce house, photo booths, tug-of-war, and even a snow cone machine! It was a great way to bring students together for a final celebration of their success.
By Jayna Lonsway

Three teachers will be retiring this year from St. Joseph School. We wish a kind farewell to Mrs. Secrest, Mrs. Puffenberger, and Mrs. Wisniewski. They have shared with us their plans for retirement, and facts about their time here.

Mrs. Janet Secrest has taught at St. Joe’s for 33 years. She also taught at St. Clement for three years and St. Catherine of Siena for two years. She thought about retiring and her future plans for a while, and now she is looking forward to retirement. Mrs. Secrest says that preparing for retirement takes a lot of “soul searching.” During her retirement, she plans to spend time with her grandchildren, volunteer at her home parish, Blessed Sacrament, and be a substitute teacher at St. Joe’s. Mrs. Secrest describes what she will miss the most as “the many students I’ve taught, and the teachers and staff who have become like family.”

Mrs. Becky Puffenberger has taught at St. Joe’s for 18 years. She has been very gradually preparing for retirement, and she plans to spend more time with her grandchildren. She will also be volunteering in the community. Mrs. Puffenberger says she will miss all of the children at St. Joe’s the most.

Mrs. Wisniewski has been teaching for 30 years. Twenty five of those years have been as the SJS librarian. She says she will be upset in August when she doesn’t have to come back to school, and she won’t forget to take her name off the Honeywell Alert System! During her retirement she will also visit her grandchildren and read lots of books. She hopes to have more time to “read Arthur and Curious George!” She will dearly miss all the friends from St. Joe’s, and hopes to see students this year at the public library. She was glad to have the opportunity to instill a love for reading in students at St. Joseph.

We hope everyone has a chance to say goodbye to these teachers who have been a big part of St. Joseph School. We also wish them a comfortable and happy retirement.

The Reality of Student Bullying

By Jayna Lonsway

Many students are bullied each year at every school for countless reasons. This can all be easily prevented. The truth is that bullying happens in every school, whether it is seen or unseen. Bullying can be prevented with few easy steps.

Some people like to think that bullying doesn’t exist, but the worst thing to do is ignore it. There are many trained people at St. Joseph School to help students who are being bullied. Mrs. Kelly O’Brien and Monsignor Dennis Metzger, as well as the faculty members are trained to help any students in distress. If any student has problems with bullying at SJS, it is recommended to go directly to the homeroom teacher. Some students may feel uncomfortable talking to adults, and they may confide in friends or other students. It is best to report any case of bullying directly to an adult, because chances are they will help the best.

It is important for parents to be aware of what is going on in their student’s school life. Many children are too afraid to tell their parents. Children think that parents will pass on the conversation, and only make the situation worse. Bullying
By Madelyn Piscopo

St. Joseph School’s Class of 2016 is preparing to graduate on Friday, June 3. The eighth grade year is full of exciting experiences. The favorites among students are the Cedar Point trip, as well as Positive Direction. However, eighth grader, Sage Gibson, said, “Hanging out and being with my friends is what I’m going to miss most.” Gibson also stated that the Mime Stations of the Cross was one of the most “moving” experiences this year.

As the middle school journey comes to a close for eighth grade students, the teachers and staff at SJS will never forget this group. “They are a very well behaved group, as well as kind and funny,” said eighth grade teacher, Miss Lynn Heintschel. As for advice for their high school journey, Heintschel advised, “Take one day at a time, make good choices, and always look into the future.”

Graduation day has almost arrived, and the entire SJS community hopes that graduating students have been taught lifelong lessons so that in high school perspective sometimes!” said Ms. Marianne Lazar, kindergarten teacher. Many students have fond memories of their kindergarten year. Some of the older students’ favorites included Gust Brother’s Farm and the family picnic. This year’s kindergartners were asked to create mementos to give to their moms. One of the most coveted creations is the fused glass flower pin that each student made especially for his/her mom. Seventh grade student Katie Holmes remembers the program and picnic fondly, “It was a way for us to give back to our moms for the day.”

By Madison Bell

The kindergartners at St. Joseph School have been busy working all year. On Friday, June 3, the youngest students of the school will graduate. A celebration of a successful year will follow in the Banquet Hall. Prior to graduation, a family picnic was planned at Secor Metropark, celebrating their first year of important work in the SJS community. “I love seeing the ‘light’ that goes on when a student ‘gets it’. That never gets old for me; teaching the little ones to read is always exciting. I also love the things they say - they help me look at life with a different perspective sometimes!” said Ms.

By Mollie Malone, Katie Holmes and Natalie Suwinski

On April 27 fifth grade students graduated from the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. Offered by the Sylvania Police Department, the program teaches students how to resist drugs and alcohol. Fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Janice Korhumel, said, “I am very proud of all the fifth grade. They loved the D.A.R.E. Program.” The officers showed the fifth graders examples of what it was like to be intoxicated, or severely affected by drugs. Students were asked to throw a ball into a bin while wearing the “drunk” goggles. They also learned of the importance of staying away of drugs and alcohol — even when there is temptation from peers.

As part of the graduation ceremony, one student from each classroom was awarded for the most inspiring essay about D.A.R.E. The winners were Ethan Little (5K), Heidi Forgach (5H), and Samantha Koesters (5P). The essay winners were added to official D.A.R.E. plaque that is on display in the school office on the west campus.

By Natalie Suwinski

The third grade students of St. Joseph School performed many songs honoring their moms for Mother’s Day on Friday, May 6. A special “Mom and Me” picnic followed the program. The students practiced these songs in their classrooms as well as during music. Not only did the third graders prepare for the performance, they also created a number of mementos to give to their moms. One of the most coveted creations is the fused glass flower pin that each student made especially for his/her mom. Seventh grade student Katie Holmes remembers the program and picnic fondly, “It was a way for us to give back to our moms for the day.”
Second Graders Receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist

By Mollie Malone

After months of preparation, St. Joseph School second graders received the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time the weekend of April 22. Second grader, Zachary Hoffman, was “excited to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.” Hoffman felt closer to God after receiving his First Communion. Mrs. Joan Zunk has been teaching 2nd grade since 2011. Zunk’s favorite part of the school year is preparing her students to for the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Practices began in March and continued through all of April. The second graders also participated in a retreat on March 19. Receiving First Communion as a class is a long standing tradition at SJS. The students are forever bonded because of this special day.

Mrs. Zunk’s First Communicants

Mrs. Secrest’s First Communicants

Penny Wars for a Great Cause

By Dina Angel

The week of April 25 St. Joseph School participated in a penny war to benefit the Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund (NOSF). NOSF is an organization that provides tuition assistance for qualifying K-8 students throughout Northwest Ohio who wish to attend a Catholic school. Founded in 1999, NOSF empowers families with the ability to choose schools that best meet the needs of their children regardless of their income or residence. This is the first year NOSF has asked SJS to participate in Pennies to Dollars for Scholars. It was a friendly penny war between grades 3 - 8 that raised over $2,000! Grades K - 2 had fun just collecting as much change as possible. Eighth grader, Mara Macy, said, “I loved the competition against the other grades.” According Director of Marketing Mrs. Juli Snyder, “It was a very successful student fundraiser that all students could participate in -- and the money goes to a great cause.”

Students counted money during their lunch period

Summer Running

By Angelique Douglas

Summer Running Club (SRC), is a run-conditioning program created by former SJS parent Mr. Sean Savage many years ago. SRC has been a Jaguar running tradition for many years. The club is open to all members of the parish. Savage wanted to see the cross country program become more than just a CYO sport. He wanted to foster students’ love for running. Coach Dave McGranahan took over the Cross Country program in 2005. At the time, only about 30 to 50 kids joined all summer, but participation increased when the t-shirt contest began. To earn a SRC t-shirt, a runner must attend a minimum of eight SRC sessions. Last year, SJS had over 140 runners in the running club and about 100 runners earned a shirt.

The summer program is modeled after many high school programs which prepare runners for the season. The SJS cross country program has produced many outstanding high school runners! In fact, one of McGranahan’s former runners, Stephanie Sherman, invited him to her signing to run for the University of Toledo. Current eighth grader and Coach McGranahans’ son, Jack McGranahan, has participated in SRC for nine years. Jack said, “The program helped me run better during the running season. The coaches have taught me that hard work pays off if you try and they have taught me to keep trying, and never give up.”

A 7th grader, Elizabeth Newsom, has also been in the summer running club for five years. She joined the program to stay in shape for the fall cross country season. Her coaches and family inspire her to keep running and the SRC has taught her that a small amount of extra effort can go a long way.

Summer Running Club 2016 begins in early June. A schedule will be posted online very soon. All are welcome to attend!

A Race Against Time

By Jessica Alvarez

Minute-To-Win-It (MTWI) is a fun activity that started this year at St. Joseph Middle School to bring 6th, 7th and 8th grade students together for some friendly competition. MTWI are challenge competitions to be completed under a minute. Challenges are scheduled once a month during lunch time because that’s when the whole school is together. On MTWI days, students get to wear a St. Joe’s shirt to show our school spirit. Mrs. Shelly Perna, St. Joseph’s middle school secretary, had the idea to start this fun activity because her own kids did it in high school. Mrs. Perna thought SJS students would enjoy it too!

Some challenges that the students have faced include the Hungry-Hungry Hippos, Free Throw Contest, Oreo Face, Tissue Challenge, Cup Stacking and Jelly Bean Toss. A survey was taken and the students voted that Hungry Hungry Hippos was their favorite activity this year. In the survey, students also recommended activities that they would like to see happen next year like Tug-A-War and an Egg-Spoon Race.

This year’s MTWI has been very successful and the students really enjoy it. St. Joe’s hopes to continue this fun activity and make it something that the elementary kids can look forward to as they transition to the middle school. Leaving the west campus is a big change and it helps that there’s an activity at school to bring students closer together and make students feel welcomed and included.