

## **Catholic Schools: An Excellent Investment!**

In today's economic climate and stock market ups and downs, many people are looking to invest their hard earned money for a solid return. Catholic schools are a perfect answer to this quest! Our St. Joseph School's students, faculty and staff are grateful for your weekly offertory to our parish. Part of that offertory goes to offset tuition costs for our school families. That is why our school families have also strongly supported our parish offertory giving over a quarter of a million dollars last year.

As we kick off our celebration of Catholic Schools Week, we would like to share with you a little of why your "investment" in our school is a worthy one. At St. Joseph School, our main focus is the development of our Catholic faith in our students. Not only are they educated every day in this area, but they support their faith by good works. Our junior high students visit urban schools to spend time with those children and support their educational efforts. They have held bake sales to raise money for book bags and school supplies. Using their own money, they purchase books for these children and then volunteer to read to them. It demonstrates to our children how truly blessed they are. Even our youngest students participate in efforts that range from collecting socks for the homeless to a recent fundraiser for the Haitian earthquake victims (almost \$1300 raised!). Service is a focal point in our school and those giving habits will remain as they develop into caring adults.

Academically, our students continue to excel in Math, Power of the Pen (writing) and new this year, Robotics' competitions. This academic excellence is demonstrated by our 8<sup>th</sup> grade class's outstanding performance on the area's Catholic high school placement exams. Our students consistently score at the highest levels on these exams and earn academic scholarships for their achievements. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who received this recognition and offers of high school scholarships this year are: Michael Cuva, Daniel McCormick and Kevin Sullivan to St. Edward High School; Manny Livchak to Elyria Catholic High School; Lauren Bakaitis and Julie Sfiligoj to Magnificat High School and Molly Laska to Holy Name High School. St. Joseph School graduates continue to excel in high school where a majority attend Advanced Placement classes and receive top academic honors, making the honor rolls at all the area Catholic high schools and Avon Lake High School.

The arts are not left out of the arena, as proven by our students recent success in the Scholastic Art Fair: Silver Key (2<sup>nd</sup> place) Winners: Lauren Bakaitis, Lea Bastulli, Heidi Danckers, Rachel Drapcho, Ashleigh Koenig and Katie Viancourt.

Honorable Mentions: Lorenzo Constanzo, Michael Cuva, Roisin Gibbons, Daniel McCormick, Courtney Rogers and Melissa Schuerger. Their winning entries will be on display at LCC's Stocker Center through Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>.

Even with these honors and achievements, we are, however, most proud of our students' abilities to show compassion and friendship to each other in our school family. Housing kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade affords us a wonderful opportunity to foster special relationships between our younger and older students. Our younger students look up to and follow the examples set by the junior high students, and in turn, our junior high students take great pride in helping the students in younger grades with service projects, shopping at our Kris Kringle event each year and serving as prayer buddies during Holy Week. They look out for each other and help each other every day of the week. These special relationships are central to the nurturing environment we strive to achieve to help these young girls and boys grow to be successful, committed, Catholic adults.

Our school's success is the result of a dedicated group of teachers, staff and parents, along with the continued commitment of Father O'Connor and the entire parish. Because of your support, we are able to remain academically competitive in today's environment and prepare our students for the life challenges that lie ahead. We hope you will continue to support all of our efforts – we believe your investment reaps great rewards!

**The St. Joseph School Families, Faculty and Staff**