

## Principal's Newsletter

November 30, 2014

"Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but life itself." John Dewey

**SFP Modernization Project:** When you hear the phrase "World Class Educational Facilities", Harvard, Yale, or MIT normally come to mind. But in the little slice of the world known as Fresh Meadows, Queens stands St. Francis Preparatory High School. For the last six months St. Francis Prep has been quietly undergoing a monumental transformation of its science facilities. When the planned construction of a 3 story addition threatened to break the bank, the Leadership decided to get creative and think outside the box. What could have been a stumble in the original 5-year capital improvement plan ended up being a transformational journey of learning about construction in a dynamic environment, and the effective use of funds so very precious to a private parochial school.



At the reins of this 150+ year old institution are its President, Brother Leonard Conway OSF, who has been at the helm for 30 plus years, and its Principal, Patrick McLaughlin. Together they operate the largest private Catholic high school in the country, effectively manage the high cost of construction in New York City and maintain the highest of educational standards for 2700 fortunate students. "We've been doing construction for a few years now and we've really learned what works best for us", says Brother Leonard. "We've learned to maximize every penny by staying within the existing walls and not sinking dollar after dollar into the earth with steel and concrete additions. We have a solid team in place. We're all on the same page and working toward the same goals. It is an exciting time and the wave of energy resonates through these hallowed halls".



Currently the focus toward capitol improvement is trifold. Principal McLaughlin explains: "We have three goals in mind; minimize disruption to students and staff, maximize our construction dollars, and add technology – tons of technology. Currently every new student at St. Francis Prep. receives an iPad that has been neatly integrated into the rigorous curriculum. Of course all this must take place in an environment where safety is paramount for our students, staff, and visitors."

Construction has been in the hands of Eddie Slampiak, a 1990 alumni and 20 year veteran high-end builder. "I always dreamed that one day I'd return to my alma mater and help transform the school. I remember sitting in these seats, some of them the actual same seats, so long ago." Says Eddie with a smile. "When I got involved in this project I felt like I was working in my home – the stars aligned and the end result is what you see here. It has been a very rewarding project and one which I value deeply on both a personal and professional level."

Important Message from Dr. Castellano's Office:

**WEB SITE POSTINGS:** The administration and chairpersons recently discussed the school policy regarding assignments posted on the school web site. These guidelines are listed below.

1. Faculty members will use the school web site and their Power School grade book to post upcoming assignments.
2. When teachers post an assignment after the school day ends, this posting must be completed by 4:00 p.m. Assignments due on Monday must be posted by 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Students will be told in class that the teacher will post an assignment later that day.
3. When teachers use the forum feature of the web site, they will inform their students during class that they will have a forum posting that evening. Teachers will provide a reasonable amount of time for the posting, 2-3 hours. In fairness to students who may have a previous commitment that evening, teachers will establish a policy for students to complete a certain number of forum postings per quarter (for example, 3 of 4).

Please contact your child's teacher with any questions about this policy. Please follow the normal protocol when concerns arise.

**GRADE POINT AVERAGES QUARTERLY GPA:** At the end of each marking period, we calculate averages and post a quarterly honor roll. The quarterly average is not listed on the student's transcript.

This is the method by which we calculate the quarterly Grade Point Average (GPA):

- The grade for every class is included in the GPA.
- We add the grade for every class and divide by the number of classes. Every course carries the same weight; quality points for honors or A.P. courses are not included. YEARLY GPA At the end of the school year, we calculate a final average for that year that is listed on the student's transcript. This is the method by which we calculate the final GPA.
- The grade for every class is included in the GPA.
- Each grade is weighted by the number of credits it carries. For example, English 9 is a 1-credit class, so the grade for that class carries its full weight:

$90 \times 1.0 = 90$ . Physical Education 9 is a half-credit class, so that grade is counted half:  $90 \times 0.5 = 45$ .

- Every honors class receives 4 quality points added to the average for that class; each A.P. class receives 6 quality points. These extra points are reflected in the GPA but do not appear in the final grade on the report card or transcript. For example, a student who earns 92% in English 9 honors will have 96% added into the calculation for his or her GPA; 92% will appear as the final grade for English 9 honors.
- All these numbers are added together. This number is divided by the total number of credits (not courses).
- The quotient is the student's GPA. Students with 90.0-94.9% GPAs are included in the Optimate Society. Students with GPAs 95.0% and higher are included on the Principal's List.

**Athletics:** On Monday, November 3, Sal Fischetti was inducted to the Catholic High School Football League Board of Governors as a recognition for all of his hard work and accomplishments over the years. Congratulations!

Marty Schaetzle from the class of '79 was named the PSAC Football Coach of the Year. Mercyhurst lost their first 4 games and then he won his final 8 and won the championship. We are still up at Mercyhurst University in Pennsylvania. Things are going well. I just wanted to let you know about an award Joe Spano '84, head baseball coach at Mercyhurst College, was named the winner of the Chuck Tanner college coach of the year by the Pittsburgh rotary club. It's a prestigious award in this area. Chuck Tanner played and managed the Pirates when they won their last world series.

The Sophomore girls team cross country team won the Brooklyn-Queens and City championships and placed second in the intersectional championship.



Senior captain Kelly Licul signed her letter of intent to play softball at the University of Rhode Island. Kelly is a four year varsity player at Saint Francis Prep.



Stephanie Bogda signed with the University of New Orleans for Volleyball.



**Campus Ministry:** The office of Campus Ministry was very busy in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. The culmination of which was on Wednesday, November 26th when the St. Francis Prep community gathered for a special Thanksgiving mass. This event is an annual capstone to a season of giving. The event reaches all of the St. Francis Prep family, moving beyond the student body to the faculty, staff, and administration. All are asked to participate and the community's response this year was an outpouring of generosity.



Prep's Campus Ministry Team organized and marshaled each Cor plus the academic and administrative offices to collect donations of food products, household goods and baby supplies. At the liturgy, representatives from seven different community partners were present to receive the donations. The focus of this year's drive was on a line from the Prayer of Saint Francis, "It is in giving that we receive", meant to be a reminder that there is great joy in generosity and in gratitude. The drive this year saw unprecedented success. As a community we surpassed the amount of donations from last year's drive in only one day and continued well beyond that amount in the following days. Thank you for your support in this endeavor.

Outside of the Donations drive, you may have recently seen St. Francis Prep students participating in a number of service activities. Six students each week have been serving meals at the Presentation Parish Soup Kitchen. Additionally, both students and parents have collected and distributed many donations to those living in the streets of Manhattan through our partnership with MidnightRun.org. Finally, our students have taken their call to stewardship seriously and have run four separate Cunningham Park Clean-ups. This work is on-going and we urge you to visit the Campus Ministry Office if you would like to participate.

**Art Department:** This month The Art Department toured Parsons School of Design in Manhattan. They had the opportunity to visit the campus, tour the fashion building, meet with instructors, have portfolio reviews and have lunch in their brand new state of the art cafe. The Department also visited the Saint Johns University Art Department, speaking with artists and current art students. They had their portfolios reviewed by the Chair of the Saint Johns Art Department. Stylist and Alumni, Andrew Biondolillo and Alumni Kaitlyn Weinberger, a current Fashion Business major, visited art classes and spoke to students about careers.



**Music Department:** 2014 has started off as yet another busy year for Prep's Music Department. Our Jazz Band and Percussion Ensemble helped musically cheer on our school community for our 4th Annual Walk-A-Thon, and our Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, and Jazz Band performed at Open House, showcasing the talent that Prep has to offer with potential students and their families. Chamber Orchestra also performed for administrators and educators from our feeder school at a reception hosted by Prep. We've also started up our beginner string classes at P.S. 115 and St. Kevin Catholic Academy. These programs have grown to now include a Youth Orchestra at P.S. 115! To help kick things off, Chamber Orchestra presented assemblies at both of these schools.

# Christmas Concerts

**Christmas Concert I**  
Friday, December 12, 2014  
Admission \$5.00  
Doors Open 7:15 Concert 7:45 PM

Chamber Orchestra  
Honors Orchestra  
String Orchestra  
Concert Chorus  
Percussion Ensemble  
Honors Percussion Ensemble

**Christmas Concert II**  
Saturday, December 13, 2014  
Admission \$5.00  
Doors Open 7:15 Concert 7:45 PM

Prep Chorus  
Junior Band  
Concert Band  
Jazz Ensemble  
Chamber Choir

We are very much looking forward to our annual Christmas Concerts on December 12th and 13th. In addition to featuring all 11 of Prep's ensembles (over 550 students, or roughly 20% of the school), we will be welcoming special guests from P.S. 115, M.S. 74, I.S. 77, St. Andrew Avellino School, St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish, and the Center for Preparatory Studies in Music Musical Theater Summer Workshop, who will be performing along with our Concert Band and Prep Chorus in Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," on Saturday's concert. Both concerts are in the Brother Ralph Clifford Memorial Auditorium, and begin at 7:45. General admission tickets are \$5, and are available at the door. Please join us!

**Fordham University Competition:** On Wednesday, November 12, 2014, Saint Francis Prep traveled to Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business. A select fifteen students were given the opportunity to participate in the New York City Catholic Interscholastic Business Competition. Students were allowed to choose from three different business topics to give presentations on. Students could choose entrepreneurship, ethics, or marketing to create a ten-minute PowerPoint presentation. In the first round, students were able to present their PowerPoint presentations to current Gabelli School of Business freshmen and sophomores. If granted the second round, then they would present to Fordham faculty. Ethics topics ranged from pro-athlete salaries to teen pregnancy to equality of opportunity; entrepreneurship from food waste programs to increasing voter turnout to an app that scans documents; and marketing from a Gabelli Twitter feed to a new website to a new social media site. The day claimed a winner in each of the three topics, as well as a winner for student speaker. The entire group was able to get insight into business and a tour of a college campus.



**Speech, Debate, and Student Congress:** The photo below is of the Speech, Debate, and Student Congress team who competed at the Interleague Tournament on November 15th at Kellenberg. Three of our students took home trophies: Jillian Spence and Cassiady Perard (both juniors) won 2nd place for their Duo piece and Yasmeen Qureshi (sophomore) took 3rd in Declamation - out of more than 70 students! We are so proud of all the entire team for their great work at this highly competitive tournament.



**Service Retreat at Queen of Peace:**



**Model UN:** The St. Francis Preparatory's delegation of 12, participated in the Patchogue-Medford High Schools Model United Nations conference on Friday and Saturday, November 14 and 15th, respectively. The conference consisted of about 200 delegates from over 9 high schools. Our teams exemplary performance resulted in two awards. Rohan Shah '17 won "Best Position Paper" and Donna Episcopio '16 won Honorable Mention. Congratulations to all those who participated.

