

December 30, 2014
Principal's Newsletter

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:11

As we take this time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let us continue to cherish peaceful times with family and friends, to spread goodwill to those less fortunate, and to treat each other with respect. At St. Francis Prep, we feel very fortunate and thankful for the achievement of our students, the passionate dedication of our faculty and staff, and the wonderful support of our parents and guardians. Our alumni and Board have played an integral role in helping us develop a long range vision for SFP, the next 150 years. During the month of December our students, staff, and faculty have been involved with wonderful activities that promote our Franciscan ideals. On behalf of the entire school administration, I wish everyone in our community a very Merry Christmas and a hopeful and healthy New Year!

Warm Regards,
Mr. McLaughlin

From the desk of Mr. Castellano:

PSAT RESULTS

Our sophomore and junior students took the PSAT in October. The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT, a major college admission test. About 2% of the students in the nation receive recognition from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation based on their PSAT results.

Each year, we have between 10 and 15 students who are so recognized. For the vast majority of students, however, the PSAT serves as practice and preparation for the SAT.

PSAT scores are not seen by colleges and do not influence college acceptance.

During the week of 15 December, sophomore and junior students received their score reports and the question booklet from the PSAT. Each level attended an assembly during which Mr. Castellano explained the results and the score report and discussed how to prepare for the SAT. We encourage students to go over the score report with parents and guardians and to review the entire test on their own. In January, English and Math teachers will take 1 class to go over some of the questions. Students with questions about the PSAT should speak with their guidance counselor.

All juniors should take the SAT or the ACT (another major college admission test) sometime in the Spring semester. Colleges accept either SAT or ACT scores for applications. SAT and

ACT scores are important because they influence college acceptance and can qualify students for various scholarships. Juniors should discuss the time of the test with their parents and guardians and their guidance counselors. We strongly recommend that all students do some type of explicit test preparation. This preparation may be a course, individual tutoring, or using a test preparation book or on-line program. That is a family decision. Please feel free to call your child's guidance counselor to discuss this decision.

Sophomores will take the PSAT again in the Fall of junior year. The College Board is in the process of revising the SAT; the PSAT sophomores will take next year will reflect the new SAT. There is some information available on the College Board web site:

www.collegeboard.org. As we get more information about the new format of the SAT, we will pass this information along to you.

SAT scores are important, but they are 1 piece of the application package students will send to colleges in the Fall of senior year. Colleges also look at the following items: overall average; classes taken; level of difficulty of classes; extra-curricular activities; service; recommendations; student essay. Receiving the PSAT is a good opportunity for students to re-dedicate themselves to their school work. Good grades in good classes are as important as good SAT scores, and good work in school will result in improved SAT scores.

COURSE SELECTION

During the first week of January, we will begin the process of course selection for the 2015-2016 school year. Students will attend assemblies to hear about the process, and guidance counselors will visit a class on every level to discuss course selection. Students will have until **4 February** to discuss courses with teachers, counselors, and parents and guardians.

Please encourage your child to take full advantage of this time in order to make the best choices for the next school year. We do make some changes in June, but often classes are closed; changes also cost \$40. Students are best served to make wise choices now. The entire course book is posted on the school web site now. Students may choose to take an extra credit or an H period class if they are in good academic standing and have good attendance and punctuality. There is no application form. Students who do not meet the criteria for H period or extra credits may be removed from these extra classes.

Pre-registration for certain classes will begin on Sunday, 25 January. There is information about pre-registration on the web site, and students will get more information at assemblies and during class visits.

Please contact your child's guidance counselor or Mr. Castellano (ext. 209) with questions about course selection.

Campus Ministry:

Students volunteered for the breakfast run on 11/15/2014. The students traveled into Manhattan and served donations of food, clothing, and hygiene products



9th-Grade Reconciliation Service:

On Friday, December 12, Campus Ministry held a special Reconciliation Service for all ninth-graders. Father Bill presided at the service and explained to the students the importance of the Sacrament and how it works. To show the students how a typical exchange between a student and priest at Confession might go, Ms. De Matteo and Mr. Leone (both of our Religion department) performed a skit. In the situation, Ms. De Matteo acted as a typical student who hadn't been to Confession recently but wanted to receive the Sacrament. Mr. Leone played the role of the priest and tried to show the students that priests are meant to help guide people through Reconciliation in a supportive and encouraging way.

We hope the service helped students to gain a greater understanding of Reconciliation and inspired them to be open to going to Confession to strengthen their faith.

Christmas Party for Our Friends With Special Needs:

In 1980, Sister Joseph Agnes Hohmann asked volunteers to assist some "very precious men and women" at what is now known as St. Francis Prep's Annual Christmas Party for Our Friends with Special Needs. Sister Jo passed away in 2005, but the Prep's students, alumni, faculty, and staff continue to work together to keep the party alive in her memory.

We would like to thank everyone that donated a gift, money, or their time to help make the December 6th Christmas Party for Our Friends with Special Needs a wonderful event for our guests.

Your generosity made a difference this Holiday season in their lives and we are forever grateful for all you have done.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
AnnMarie Rich and Suzanne Camus



[Facebook Photos here](#)

Franciscan Youth Movement (FYM):

Brother James McVeigh, OSF, and a group of Franciscan Youth Movement (FYM) students brought some Christmas spirit to the elderly and infirm residents at Queen of Peace Residence in Queens Village. (The facility is run by the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Sisters are always so delighted and welcoming to our students.) It's all part of an FYM project called "PROJECT JOY", and it was a great success once again.

Prep students chatted with the residents, delivered Christmas cards, and presented them with gifts. Each resident was delighted and moved by the personal attention and the joy our students brought them. They sang Christmas carols (accompanied by one very talented student musician playing the violin) in the resident's rooms and in the hallways. At one point, tears of joy and gratitude were visible on the faces of a couple of the residents. Their "ministry of presence" truly brings peace and joy to the residents each year.

At the end of the visit, Brother James led the students in prayer. They prayed for the health and peace of the residents, for the Sisters and their ministry, and for their fellow students and families. Before leaving, Brother James presented each student a pocket Baby Jesus for

them to carry with them or place in some significant place to remind them to always LOOK TO JESUS, especially in the coming week!

A different group of students will visit another Nursing Home, St. Joseph's, which is run by the Benedictine Sisters. Many thanks to our wonderful students, Brother James, and Tim Quinn, SFP Class of 2008, who was a founding member of FYM and joined the students. The spirit of St. Francis is alive and well at Prep!



[Facebook Photos here](#)

Presentation Soup Kitchen:

Brother Joseph Bach, O.S.F., from our Religion Department, coordinated a festive meal to serve the homeless on Thursday, December 18th, at the Presentation Soup kitchen. Faculty, staff, and students signed up to prepare food or to volunteer their time and talents.

We thank everyone for their kindness and generosity. Peace and all good!

Student Council:

On Friday, December 12th, the student council, under the direction of Mr. Ganci, held the winter Pep Rally, which all sophomores attended. Varsity athletes were introduced and wonderful performances filled the gym with excitement.

Also on December 12th, the first SFP Christmas Tree lighting ceremony took place in our Library. The balcony was decorated with beautiful Christmas wreaths. Cookies and hot chocolate were served by the student council. Families lined up to take photos with Santa, the Elf, and the Terrier. Bro. Joe and Bro. James led us in prayer before Bro. Leonard and Bro. Robert threw the switch to light the tree. At that moment, the beautiful voices of our

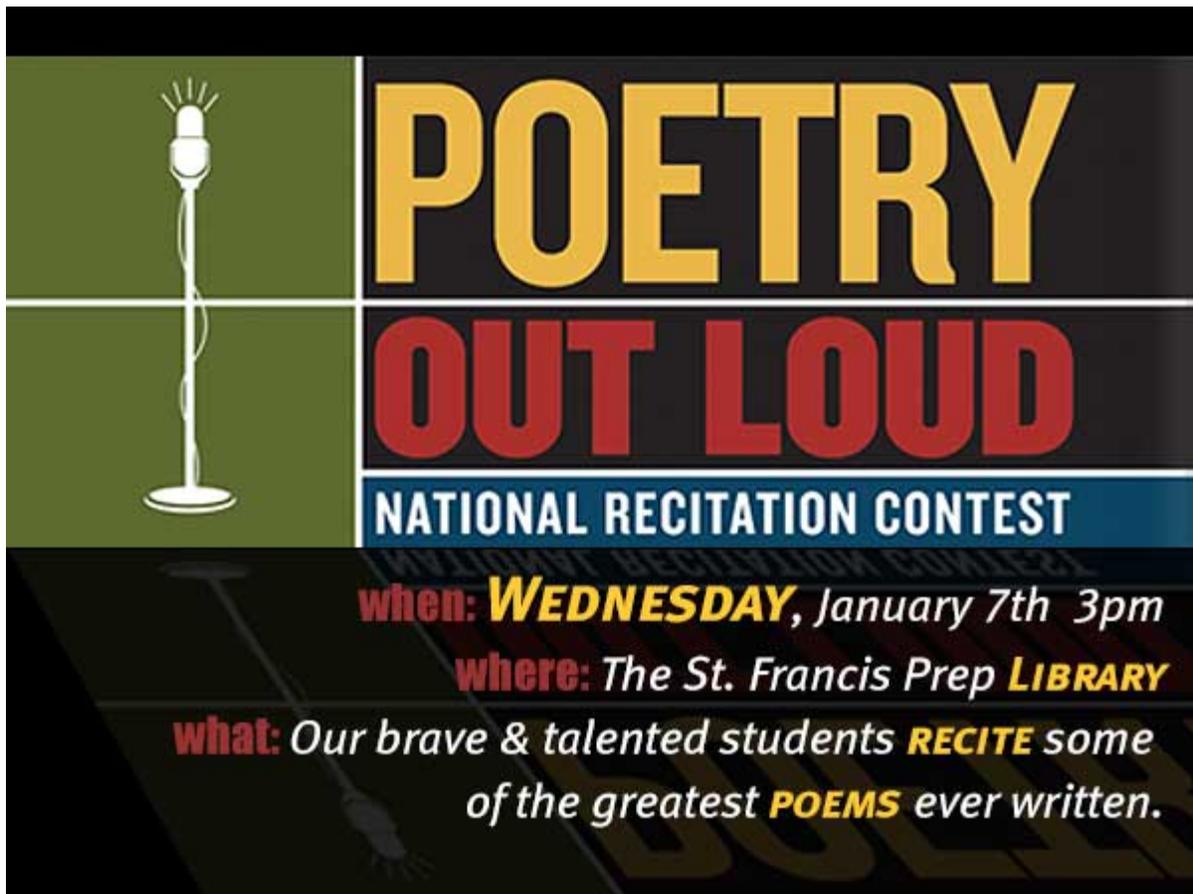
Chamber Choir melted everyone's heart singing beautiful Christmas Carols. The 1st Prep Family Christmas Celebration was a complete success!

Poetry Out Loud:

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation support Poetry Out Loud, a contest that encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation. Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure that starts at the classroom level. Winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to a regional or state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals. St. Francis Prep is the only Catholic high school in New York City to participate in this prestigious national competition.

The English Department is proud to announce the winners of this year's Poetry Out Loud classroom competitions: Rebeca Oliveira, Margaret Connor, Alec Dukas, Samantha Palermo, Lindsay Sayour, Andre Brierre, Angel Ryan, Cindy Gao, Anthony Dinardo, Shweta Kapoor, Ariyuna Jorge, Alexandra Scala, Victoria Moore, Sarika Arora, Marcel Avril, Amanda Capasso, Renee Grasso, Ajeta Mujaj, Ana Jimenez, Maggie Capozzoli-Cavota, Fotini Mamos, Eric Wagler, Tomislav Demo, John Bacile, Monique Legaspi, Jordan Ban, and Jennifer Batilo.

Mr. Hafker and Dr. Marino invite all students, faculty, staff, family, and friends to attend our school-wide competition on Wednesday, January 7th, at 3:00 p.m. in the St. Francis Prep Library.



The poster features a green background on the left with a white microphone on a stand. The right side has a black background with yellow and red text. The text reads: "POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST". Below this, it says "when: WEDNESDAY, January 7th 3pm", "where: The St. Francis Prep LIBRARY", and "what: Our brave & talented students RECITE some of the greatest POEMS ever written."

POETRY
OUT LOUD
NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST

when: WEDNESDAY, January 7th 3pm
where: The St. Francis Prep LIBRARY
what: Our brave & talented students RECITE some of the greatest POEMS ever written.

Mrs. Ashkenazy's Biotechnology Class Trip:

On Tuesday, December 9th, the Biotechnology class visited the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Lake Success, NY. Students took part in a lab and were taken on a clinical tour at Lake Success. The objective of the lab was for the students to better understand their own ancestry by extracting their own DNA from their cheeks and cells present in saliva. The students then had the chance to see their own results by using the latest technology, including a Chip Analyzer, which analyzed the student's DNA and compared individual results. The Clinical Core Lab Tour brought students to an actual clinical lab where the students got to see how and where blood samples from hospitals are taken and how they are analyzed. This tour gave the students career ideas they can pursue in the future and ideas about colleges that have specific programs for those fields.



An Act of Kindness:

Ng, senior, made and donated "cancer caps" for patients at Mercy Hospital. Lily also knits scarves for campus ministry midnight run. Great Job Lily!

Karen Radwin, Executive Director of the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge Program (NY and NJ) reports that on December 3, 2014, Christopher Mecir, Charles Taibi, Marc Pavich, and Bryan Reinah, under the supervision of Dorian Mecir and three other mothers, dedicated several hours of their time helping to set up the space, provide beverage and dessert service, and clean up following dinner service for approximately 50 cancer patients and their caregivers who are staying here at Hope Lodge while they receive treatment. The students started their visits at Hope Lodge while attending St. Mel's Elementary School and plan to continue their good work through their years at St. Francis Prep.

Hope Lodge NYC is located in Manhattan and provides all services and lodging completely free of charge to guests. Ms. Radwin reports that Hope Lodge is fortunate to have groups

such as these young men and their mothers donate food and their time to cheer the guests who stay with us while away from home receiving their cancer treatments.



Girls' Varsity Soccer:

Congratulations to the following players from the Girls' Varsity Soccer team who were All League selections: AUTUMN BROWN, ANGELA CARREOU, MARISA PIZZUTO, SAMANTHA COBOTIC, TAYLOR SCHULTZ, SOPHIA DELEON.

Model UN:

Mr. Jardines reports that the Model United Nations did an extraordinary job at a recent conference at Plainview-Old Bethpage John F Kennedy High School. Our delegation of 11 participated in this 2-day event with over 250 students from 16 high schools. Special recognition should be paid to 4 particular "Honorable Mention" award recipients: Nicole O'Connor 113, Donna Episcopio 306, Ana Jimenez 308, and Isabella Loarte-Ciudad 310.



Music Department:

December is traditionally a busy month for Prep's Music department, and this year was no exception. On December 12th, we presented the first of two Christmas Concerts, featuring our String and Percussion programs and our Concert Chorus. Highlights of the night included special guest J.P. Devesin, from our Social Studies department, narrating a setting of Clement Clark Moore's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* with our Honors Orchestra. The Concert Chorus' performance of *All I Want for Christmas Is You* was a crowd favorite, and the night was punctuated by a spectacular performance by our Chamber Orchestra.

Our second concert that Saturday night was extra special and featured our Band program, Prep Chorus, and Chamber Choir. Prep Chorus gave an incredibly fun performance of P.D.Q. Bach's *Good King Kong Looked Out*, kazoos and all, and our Jazz Band, as always, gave a rousing performance! But the highlight of the night was a performance of Georg Frederic Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* from *Messiah*. A Prep tradition, this year it was made extra special, as we were joined by guest choruses 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 Summer Musical Theater Workshop, well over 120 extra singers. Many of these choruses had a Prep connection: two different principals and two chorus directors are Prep alumni. This was perhaps the best-attended Prep concert ever, as there was only standing room left not long after the doors opened.

But if that wasn't enough, Sunday found our Chamber Choir and Chamber Orchestra performing at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Brooklyn. This beautiful church is the

setting for the parish's annual Christmas Tree and Angel lighting concert and ceremony. The concert included a joint performance of another work from Handel's *Messiah*, *And the Glory of the Lord*, by our Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, and the Music Ministry of the parish. The concert was a homecoming of sorts for our own Brother James McVeigh, who grew up in the parish.

January will be a special month for Chamber Choir, Chamber Orchestra, and Jazz Band, as they have been invited to perform at Brooklyn Borough Hall and St. Francis College for special events connected with the Franciscan documents that are here in New York City...more to come!

SFP Volunteers:

We are very proud of all of the SFP volunteers who provide a great service to our students, staff, and faculty. Thank you for all your good work.



Alumni:

We wish Tim Caffrey well as he enters the New York City Fire Department starting on Dec.29,2014. We also take this time to thank him for his dedicated years of service in our Medical Office.