

St. John's Parish Day School Parent Newsletter

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www.stjohnspds.org

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Please call or email when your child is absent.

**Absentee Phone and Email
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Archived copies of the newsletter can be found at www.stjohnspds.org in the For Our Families section.

All School News

Thanks for a Wonderful Year!

My first year at St. John's Parish Day School is rapidly coming to a satisfying close. It seems like just yesterday that I was arriving on campus to begin my official duties here. One aspect of working in schools is that there are definite rhythms to the year that seem to have a life of their own. The drum beat of my first few months here was slow but very steady as I worked through last summer, learning about this area and the school, meeting people regularly but only in small numbers, and getting accustomed to life at St. John's. The beat accelerated steadily as the summer drew to a close and faculty and staff returned to begin their preparations for the new year. The tempo spiked as beginning of school activities geared up, steadied down to a more regularized yet still rapid pulse throughout the fall as students and faculty hit their stride in the classroom, and hit a rapid increase as we neared Christmas. The extended rest for Christmas Break is a welcome and often necessary respite – an intermission of sorts. The steady quick-beat of winter and spring was interrupted this year unexpectedly by snow and as planned by Spring Break, only to be followed by a rather frenzied staccato of post-Spring Break activities. It has taken me while to learn the overall patterns of St. John's, but I am getting there with the help of so many people along the way.

The students have been wonderfully patient with me as I have gotten to know them better. I truly appreciate the high quality of our students – they are our pride! Daily I am grateful for a talented and dedicated faculty who regularly go above and beyond for our students, providing experiences of exceptional value in and out of the classroom. I thank my lucky stars for all of our gifted administrators with whom I work each day, especially our division directors Judy Robbins and Tiffany Rath, who mostly work behind the scenes to enable our faculty and staff to do their incredible work with children. A group that often gets overlooked a bit but that supports me in phenomenal ways is the Board of Trustees. Kevin McGill as President and Chris Richardson as VP have provided inspired leadership this year as the Board has moved the school forward in so many ways – I couldn't be more pleased with the quality of leadership that we enjoy in the Board. This has also been true of our parents and especially our Parents' Association, led by Colleen Rives. This group has gifted us all with wonderful, fun, low-cost events and community-building activities as well as significantly-increased funding to support our school and our faculty. Lastly, I feel blessed to have partners in our overall ministry like Reverend Carol Pinkham Oak and Chaplain Jenni Ovenstone Smith, as well as the rest of the St. John's Church community, who have been so gracious to us.

St. John's continues to thrive and grow in so many ways, and I feel privileged to be a part of the leadership team here. While each generation encounters unique challenges, I believe that this group of children will need to be particularly well-equipped to overcome the specific difficulties that our world is sending their way; therefore our responsibility is perhaps greater than ever before. It is rewarding to be a part of developing children to be academically prepared but also intellectually curious, emotionally stable but also with strength of character and conviction. The quality of what we do here is not duplicated anywhere else in this region, and I am thankful and proud to be the Headmaster of St. John's Parish Day School. Thank you all for this opportunity!

Steve Harrison
Headmaster

Watch for the New Website and New Logo this Summer!!!

Exciting happenings are in the air! This summer the school will be introducing two new features designed to provide greater accessibility to the

school both on the web and in our marketing efforts. We have been working all year on projects to identify the essential elements of the school to promote SJPDS to the broader Howard County (and beyond) region. In the course of our work with many constituent groups, the following two ideas became clear:

- 1) Our school operated in a manner that was too separated by divisions or wings – there was too little of a sense of having one unified school.
- 2) The perception persisted in the broader (outside) community that St. John’s was still a pre-school for “younger” students; this was due primarily to three factors: our long history as a pre-school, the continuity of our pre-school logo as our main marketing image, and the lack of a comprehensive marketing/ communications effort to change this perception.

In light of these findings, we have worked specifically to unify the school and to develop text and symbolic messages to address these concerns. In this vein we created a set of “Five Gifts” that describe the distinctive elements that we offer our children at St. John’s; in addition we have been working on a new logo for the school to relay those messages in a fresh, symbolic way. The new logo will be a significant element in a more user-friendly website that will be on-line this summer. The new website will feature more interactivity, many more pictures of our campus and children, teacher pages for classroom information, information and links for our children, and much more! A RFP bidding process was used to select the design and web-architecture firms for the site with Bates Creative Group getting the nod for the design elements of the website and Lattice Group selected as the architecture creation firm.

Regarding the new logo, some parents have asked whether we will be changing the uniform design next year. Please note that all current uniforms will be allowed next year as a transition year. The new logo should also be available for uniforms later this summer.

The descriptions of the symbols on the new logo are listed below. The actual design is still being finalized and will be available for viewing soon.

Logo Symbol Descriptions:

❖ **Flame**

The flame is a symbol of illumination – the torch/flame of knowledge is a powerful educational symbol and sits atop the Library of Congress as a national symbol for the value of preserving and disseminating ideas. The flame is also a symbol of fervor and passion – in our case toward education and faith. This is a flame lighting the path of St. John’s for the future.

❖ **Heart**

The heart is a strong symbol tied to our earliest notions of love, care, and support, especially in childhood. It points toward an open, friendly conceptualization of community at St. John’s, but it also speaks to the passion we have for knowledge and community.

❖ **Leaf**

The budding green leaf is a universal symbol for growth

and prosperity. It represents the tremendous academic, personal, and spiritual growth and development of students at St. John’s. It also reflects our status as a Maryland Green School dedicated to environmental sustainability.

❖ **Acorn**

The acorn symbolizes possibility - the tiniest acorn can grow to be the tallest, mightiest oak. Paired with the green leaf, the acorn points toward a trajectory of growth with students being nurtured and developed into strong, stalwart thinkers and people of character. This also ties into our green status.

❖ **Cross**

This central Christian symbol fills the empty space between the symbols. The cross not only represents salvation in our religious faith, but it is also an intersection where people and ideas can meet.

Lower School News

Dear Families –

Thank you all for an absolutely wonderful year. I cannot tell you how supported the staff feels by all of you. The team we make allows for the best education possible for your children. On the last day of school, Friday, June 11th, children will have their final report card in their backpack. Please contact me in the office over the summer with any questions concerning report cards. While all administrative staff will be working over the summer, the office hours will be from 9:00 – 1:00 Monday through Friday. If your children are expected to do summer reading for their upcoming school year, emails will be sent next week in lieu of the newsletter. You will also be able to see the summer reading titles on the website over the summer.

We had a wonderful graduation ceremony for the now sixth graders last Sunday. Each student received a character stone, which was selected as that student’s greatest gift during their years here. Mr. Hiken, our fifth grade teacher, also wrote heartfelt pieces for each student, sharing his thoughts about their individuality and success. These new character stones will be displayed on the alumni board next fall. Our graduates are giving back to the school this week through community service and are happy to be

Dates to remember



Friday, June 11

- LS Joyful Noise in ASH, 11:15 am
- LS Early Dismissal, 12:00 pm
- PA End of the Year Celebration on the Upper Field and Playground, immediately following dismissal

Saturday, July 17

- Used Uniform Sale in the Lower Commons, 8:30 – 10:00 am

sharing all they have learned here with our younger students by leading Chapel.

Congratulations to all our graduates! All our graduates are listed below, along with the schools they will be attending in the Fall.

Anna Bailey – St. Paul’s School for Girls
Grace Bentivenga – Trinity School
Isabella Dutra – Patapsco Middle School
Allison Green – Patapsco Middle School
Anna Harrington – St. John’s Episcopal School-Olney or Dunloggin Middle School
Calvin Hong – Chapelgate Christian Academy
Lily Nisbet – Garrison Forest School
Wil Orlando – Chapelgate Christian Academy
Sarah Ridley – Resurrection-St. Paul School
Jason Tucker - Loyola Blakefield
Alyssa Wildman – Patapsco Middle School
Mitch Wingert – Resurrection-St. Paul School

Tiffany Rath
Lower School Director

A note from Mrs. Green

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who helped with PE throughout the year. The phrase, "It takes a village", is so true. From helping on a regular weekly basis with PE classes to helping in the Fall and Spring with Presidential Fitness testing, and volunteering at Field Day, I could've never had such a successful PE year without you all! Words cannot express my gratitude! Thank you!

Note from the Nurse: Medication Pick-Up

If your child has medicine stored in the health room, it should be picked up before or after closing exercises in Mrs. Morgan's office on the last day of school. We cannot send home medicines in a child's bag. Medicines may be stored if your child is attending summer camp. Please email Ms. Morgan at lmorgan@stjohnsec.org if you have any questions.

Joyful Noise

Joyful Noise was born three years ago in order to send all of the children off to a happy summer as well as to send the fifth graders off to their new schools. We are continuing this special tradition on the last day of school - June 11th. Our students will parade throughout the school to say goodbye to friends, teachers, and familiar faces. As the students pass by, everyone will make "joyful noise" by clapping, cheering and playing instruments. The students are invited to bring in their own small instruments with which to make "joyful noise". To honor our graduates we invite you to join us for the cheerful, noisy festivities. Please assemble in ASH at 11:15 AM to greet the students at the end of their parade. Please stand around the edge of ASH against the wall to greet the students as they enter ASH. When the parade is over the children will go back to the classrooms with their teacher to collect their things. You may collect your child from the classroom and begin your summer vacation. Please also take note that June 11th's dismissal is at noon.

Special note to fifth grade parents – Please gather in

the lobby at 11:15 instead of ASH. You will have the opportunity to make a bridge, which the fifth graders will join for the whole school to walk under. You will then be able to walk up to ASH with your children.

Parents' Association

End of the Year BBQ

Come enjoy the End of School BBQ on Friday June 11th at 12pm, immediately following dismissal on the Upper Field. Parents, students & siblings welcome. Teachers will be present for the first 20 minutes to allow for individual class gatherings in designated areas. Afterwards, the PA will provide the hamburgers, hotdogs & watermelon. Please bring your own beverages, blankets and chairs. Each class has been assigned an item to bring, to sign up visit Volunteer Spot at <http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/117-62408870873>. Our celebration will be held Rain or Shine!

Many, many thanks to Eggspectation who has generously donated the hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers!

Used Uniform Sale

Our summer used uniform sale will be held on Saturday, July 17, 2010 from 8:30 – 10:00 am in the Lower Commons of the school. If you have clean, gently used uniforms you would like to donate for the sale, please deliver them to the Lower School Office by July 9th. All proceeds from the Used Uniform Sales go to support PA programs and events.

In Our Community

Summer Worship at St. John's, June 19/20 through September 11/12, 2010

Sundays

Worship in the historic church: 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m.

All Saints Hall worship will resume September 26, 2010.

Saturdays

5 p.m., Worship on the lawn, followed by cook out. (If there is inclement weather, worship will move to All Saints Hall.) Please join us for worship, fellowship, and food. Each Saturday, a cook out will follow in the Labyrinth Grove by Rose Hill. Please bring your own grill items, other food, and beverages. St. John's provides grill, charcoal, cooking implements, plates, utensils, and napkins.

Weekdays

Noon Prayer, Monday - Friday, 12 noon, Resurrection Chapel, Parish Life Center

Morning Prayer, Tue., 8:30 a.m., Resurrection Chapel, Parish Life Center

Centering Evening Prayer, Wed., 6 p.m., Historic Church
Holy Eucharist, Thu., 7 a.m., Resurrection Chapel, Parish Life Center

The Rev. Nick Szobota
Associate Rector