



Principal's Newsletter

December 30, 2016

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"Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success." Pablo Picasso

Merry Christmas

In this holy season, we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we celebrate this Christmas season, we continue to live out our school mission. We are a community that seeks to develop the whole child and values our Franciscan beliefs where peace, love, and respect are lived out and modeled every day.

We are very proud of our students, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni who walk the walk and talk the talk of the SFP mission every day. This December Newsletter points to some of the great things happening in our community this past month. Thank you for all the contributions!

Merry Christmas – Mr. McLaughlin

From the desk of Mr. Castellano:
COURSE SELECTION

During the first week of January, we will begin the process of course selection for the 2017-2018 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 5 February to discuss courses with teachers, counselors, and parents and guardians: course selection must be completed by **5 February**. Please encourage your child to take full advantage of this time in order to make the best choices for the next school year. We make some changes in June, but many classes are closed, and changes cost \$40. Students are best served to make wise choices now. The entire course book is posted on the school web site and [HERE](#).

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 will be removed from these extra classes. Pre-registration for certain classes will begin on Sunday, 29 January. There will be information about pre-registration on the web site, and students will get more information at assemblies and during class visits.

We encourage students to take the most appropriately challenging classes for which they are eligible. This selection is unique for each student. Please encourage your child to speak with his or her teachers and guidance counselor to make the best decision. Each department has its own criteria for honors and A.P. classes and its own process for receiving approval. Classrooms teachers are the best source of information about how to proceed.

Once your child has selected and submitted the choices for classes, please have him or her print out the sheet with classes. You will sign this and have your child return it to school on Monday, 6 February. Thank you for your guidance with this process and for encouraging your child to meet with counselors and keep with all deadlines.



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

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.

Students should have received an e-mail from the College Board (the organization that oversees the PSAT) saying that their scores are now available on-line. This e-mail provided them with the information so they can view their PSAT results. In January, we will have assemblies about how to understand the results, interpret the score report, and prepare for the SAT. At that time, we will also return to students their test booklet. We encourage students to go over the score report with parents and guardians and to review their entire test on their own. 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 timing of their 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. There is more information available on the College Board web site: www.collegeboard.org.

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.

SAT REGISTRATION

The College Board offers the SAT at many locations on different dates throughout the Spring. Students may check this information at www.collegeboard.org. Registration is done through the College Board web site. This Spring, St. Francis Prep is offering the SAT on Saturday, 6 May. We encourage students who want to take the SAT at St. Francis Prep to register early: there are a limited number of seats available, and these seats fill up early. St. Francis Prep does not control who gets to take the test at the school. Please encourage your child to register early. Students should do explicit test preparation. We wish students all the best on this phase on college preparation.

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From the desk of Mr. Mendolia:

As many of you know, this year's Spring Faculty Fundraiser will benefit The St. Baldrick's Foundation. St. Baldrick's is an organization that raises money for pediatric cancer research and supports families of children fighting cancer. This year's event will take place in two different ways and at two different times. The regular May event will take place as it has in the past with some kind of viewable event. We have done a number of different things in the past, including Faculty Dodgeball, Sumo Wrestling, Big Glove Boxing, and Basketball. What we will be doing this year has not yet been decided. What has been decided, however, is what we plan to do on March 21st. The hallmark of The St. Baldrick's Foundation is an event in which people volunteer to have their heads shaved in support of pediatric cancer patients; the goal is to acquire financial sponsorship in return for giving up their hair.



In early December, our students were all addressed at level assemblies by Peter Ieraci, SFP class of 1994. Peter's 3-year old daughter, Isabella, suffers from pediatric cancer and has already undergone 7 rounds of chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation treatments. She has spent nearly 200 nights of her life in the hospital. In Cor, we have asked for volunteers to shave their heads in March. We plan to put out a list of those students willing to do so and to give all others the opportunity to financially sponsor the shavees. We are also looking for faculty and staff members who are willing to support the cause by shaving their heads. If you are willing to do so, please let me know as soon as possible.

We all look forward to the spring events and for the opportunity to support this very worthy cause. More important, we are excited to support the Ieraci Family and put the phrase, "**HIGH SCHOOL IS FOUR YEARS, PREP IS FOREVER,**" into action.

Annual Christmas Party for Our Friends with Special Needs



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On Saturday, December 17, St Francis Prep held its Annual Christmas Party for Our Friends with Special Needs. There were over 250 guests and 200 volunteers attending.

"It is in giving that we receive."

Words can never express the gratitude that we have for all those who helped make this day so wonderful for all of our guests. The true Spirit of Christmas was seen today on the faces of all those who attended. Their joy puts the reason we celebrate the birth of Jesus into perspective. We could never have accomplished this day without the help and support of the entire Prep community: The Parents Guild, The Alumni, Faculty, Staff, and administration at SFP, the Prep students, CulinArt, Maintenance, Father Mark, Michael Madden, James Magalee, and, of course, the support of Brother Leonard and Pat McLaughlin. Each and everyone of you live the Franciscan Values that make SFP so unique and spiritual. You all live by example for all to follow.



We wish the entire Prep family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! God Bless!
Suzanne Pergola-Camus and Ann Marie Ditizio-Rich, Moderators

Franciscan Youth Movement (FYM)

PROJECT JOY conducted by the Franciscan Youth Movement (FYM) invited our SFP community to bring joy to the elderly by writing Christmas letters. Over a thousand letters were delivered by groups of FYM members to six different Nursing Homes and dropped off at Veterans Hospitals. FYM visited the elderly in their rooms, sang carols for them, delivered small gifts, and spent time individually with each of the residents. Brother James, Franciscan Mission Coordinator, said, "This is just one way that we put our Franciscan value TO PROCLAIM JOY AND HOPE into practice." FYM works with all facets of the SFP Family to promote our four Franciscan values. The pictures were taken at Queen of Peace Nursing Home where we also conduct day-long Service Retreats monthly.



Service

SFP Parents and students cooked dinner and served for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting at Hope Lodge NYC-The American Cancer Society at 132 West 32nd street in Manhattan. Hope Lodge provides free housing for a cancer patient and a guest while being treated in NYC. For many, they are a long way from home and are here in NYC for a last chance at survival.



Volunteers served 70 guests that night; guests included cancer patients and their caregivers. The boys were responsible for set-up, serving drinks, assisting guests to their seats, and clean up. They did a great job and the guests enjoyed interacting with them. Great Job!



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Music

Our Annual Christmas Concerts were December 9 and 10. The Dec. 9 concert featured all three orchestras, both percussion ensembles, and Concert Chorus. The Dec. 10 concert featured all three bands, Prep Chorus, and Chamber Choir. Dec. 10 also featured our annual "Hallelujah Project," in which we welcomed guest choirs to perform Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" with our Concert Band and Prep Chorus. This year, we welcomed student singers from IS 25, MS 74, IS 77, and St. Andrew Avellino Catholic Academy. We also had parish choirs from Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Athanasius. In all, well over 300 people played or sang in this piece! Here's a clip from Saturday's standing room performance!!!

Watch on YouTube!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leFm5LY_tjg

School Website
We are happy to announce

A composite image featuring the St. Francis Preparatory School logo at the top left, followed by the text "Admissions Blog". Below this, a portrait photo of Joanne Gotanco, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a red polo shirt with the school's logo. To her left, the text "Joanne Gotanco" and "Class of 2019" is displayed.

I am currently a sophomore at St. Francis Preparatory School. If I had to sum up my freshman year into two words, I would say: growth and self-discovery. High school is very different from middle school; there are lots of new things to learn – not only things that can be taught in a textbook, but things that you'll carry with you for the rest of your life. I was very fortunate to have experienced this at the Prep thus far.

My first distinct memory about the Prep is being introduced to my Cor. Cor is the Latin word for "heart," and SFP uses that word instead of homeroom. The people in your Cor are the people you'll definitely be with for the next four years during assemblies and activities; these people will be scattered among all your classes, so it is good to get to know them. Things may get a little awkward

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in any or all of your classes during the first month or so, but eventually you'll see that things get a bit easier as time passes. The hesitation about speaking up and talking to someone new will soon be forgotten. High school is a fresh start; it's your time to be known as who and what you want to be.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Soup Kitchen

A word of thanks to everyone who donated food or decorations, came and prepared the Christmas meal, or sang carols at Presentation Soup Kitchen on Dec. 15. Your kindness provided a beautiful little sanctuary on a bitterly cold night.



All the guests had plenty of food and some took food to go. Members of Kirsten Corwin's choir sang while other students provided table service under the direction of Ellen Schuler and Andy Kotowicz. Chris Mendolia, Becky Barell, and Nicole May served up the plates while "Assistant Chef" Anne Marie Rich turned out the hot trays of delicious food.

Mrs. Maria Diaz, Soup Kitchen Coordinator and SFP mom, sends her deep gratitude and Christmas blessings to all of you. She was surprised by the additional monetary donation resulting from the Papal T-shirts. She said, "Feliz Navidad, SFP!"

Speech and Debate

From Mr. Kennedy, Moderator - Congratulations to Student Congress for placing third on December 3 at our student congress competition and to our student congress team again for their wins this past weekend! Josh Persad placed first and Isabel Casares placed second. Excellent win!

Congratulations also to Havilland Firoz and Kristen Fernandez of our Debate Team for placing third out of eleven competitors!
Keep up the good work!

Girls Varsity Basketball Team

A visit and tournament in our Nation's Capital:



The weekend of December 9-11, the Girl's Varsity Basketball Team traveled to Silver Springs, Maryland, to participate in the She Got Game Basketball Classic. Although basketball was the main reason for the trip, we decided to add a little educational experience as well. On Saturday morning – even with temperature in the single digits – we braved the cold and headed into Washington, D.C. We started out at the Washington Monument. As we made our way towards the Lincoln Memorial, we stopped at several other important monuments: the World War II Memorial, The Korean War Memorial, and The Martin Luther King Memorial, each of these memorials commemorated a major part in shaping our country's history. Our last stop was a quick photo op at the White House! It was an amazing weekend and definitely a learning experience!!!

Model UN

The St. Francis Prep Model United Nations sent a delegation of 10 students to participate at the Plainview-Old Bethpage John F Kennedy High Schools Model U.N. conference, commonly known as MetMUNC. This was their 45th year hosting their annual conference. Our students were part of over 400 other students from 15 high schools from the metropolitan area. Steven Romanello '14 has been working with their public speaking skills, which manifested in some very strong performances. We are very proud of their efforts and in particular these award winners.

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Athanasiros Dilos 104 ('20) Honorable Mention for representing Argentina in the IMF committee.
Joanne Gotanco 207 ('19) Honorable Mention for representing the U.S.A in the UNEP committee.
Kate Zahner 217 ('19) Best Delegate for representing the U.S.A in FAO committee."



Alexios Tziranis 117, Grace Lugo 210, Joshua Mathews 211, Andrew Lee 309, Nicole O'Connor 312, Zhamia Nunez-Simon 212, James Mantone 411

St. Francis Prep Recognized for Outstanding Programs in Visual Arts, School Counseling

Saint Francis Preparatory School in Fresh Meadows, NY, was recently recognized by MSA-CESS for Programs of Distinction in Visual Arts and School Counseling.



"Recognition from the Middle States Association is an honor and is a validation of the work we do here at Saint Francis Preparatory School to educate the whole person," said Principal Patrick McLaughlin.



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"We strive to provide a learning environment that enables all students to develop and broaden their spiritual, intellectual, creative, emotional, social, and physical abilities."

Saint Francis Prep was also the first school to achieve a Program of Distinction in Music in 2011.

The Middle States Programs of Distinction initiative provides external validation of an accredited school's accomplishments in specific areas of expertise and enables schools to take accreditation to the next level.

The Programs of Distinction review process helps already accredited schools identify strengths and areas for growth and provides inspiration and recommendations for attaining a high quality program.

MSA accredited schools are eligible to apply for Program of Distinction recognition for outstanding programs in Global Literacies, World Languages, Visual Arts, Music, Early Childhood Education, Service Learning, School Counseling, and STEM Education.

ALUMNI

Tatjana Mustac – Croatian Heritage Recognition

The award acknowledges Croatian Americans under the age of 40 who have been successful in their careers and are involved with their Croatian heritage. This is the link with all of the winners:
<http://www.nfcacf.org/nfca-40under40.html>. Tatjana was the youngest to receive the award!

Justin Guere was named Atlantic 10 Performer of the week (2 school records)
<http://goexplorers.com/news/2016/12/6/mens-track-and-field-guerre-osley-receive-atlantic-10-awards.aspx>