

**Principal's Newsletter**

**May 30, 2015**

**"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant."**

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

Congratulations to all of our students who completed Advanced Placement Examinations throughout the month of May, the culmination of a rigorous course of study throughout the year. Teachers have posted on their websites and distributed information in class regarding extra help classes for the Regents Examinations.

We are very proud of our seniors who ended classes on Tuesday, May 19th, and look forward to their Graduation Liturgy on Friday, June 5th, and the Graduation Ceremony on Saturday, June 6th. I'm proud to report that as a class they earned over \$134 million in scholarships for college. A special thanks to all of their outstanding teachers and guidance counselors who provided an outstanding educational experience over the past four years.

***"High school is 4 years, St. Francis Prep is Forever."***

**All the best!!!**

Mr. McLaughlin

**Help for Families Paying Tuition is Within Reach!**

In the final days of the legislative session in Albany, Governor Cuomo and key legislators are leading the fight to enact the Education Tax Credit. The governor's plan, called the Parental Choice in Education Act, will help keep Catholic schools affordable. The Act provides \$150 million in education tax credits annually that will provide the following:

- Tax credits directly to low and middle income families who send their children to Catholic and other schools;
- Scholarships to students from low and middle income families to attend a school of their choice;
- Donations to public schools for enhanced educational programming;
- Tax credits to teachers for their out-of-pocket classroom expenses.

**But We Need Your Help!**

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and some Assembly Democrats are blocking this important bill. They are blocking this bill for one simple reason: the public school teachers and union lobbyists don't want parents to get any help with sending their children to a school of their choice.

Please take a few minutes to demand that your legislators enact the Education Tax Credit before they conclude their work in mid-June. Please click **Education Tax Credit Now** or go to **[www.nyscatholic.org](http://www.nyscatholic.org)** to send an email to your lawmakers. You will also be prompted to call their office - which we urge you to do.

Thank you for doing your part in fighting for our families, our children, and our Catholic and private schools.

***From the desk of Mr. Castellano:***

COURSES FOR 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Students will receive their course verification forms during the week of 1 June. Please review your child's course selections carefully. We will have days to request course changes throughout June. Changes cost \$40 and are based on space availability and qualification for the course. The last day to do course changes is **Friday, 26 June, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.** There are no course changes in the Summer or September. Please direct questions about your child's program to his or her guidance counselor. You may also call Mr. Castellano at ext. 209.

All students taking Honors or AP level courses must check the school website for Summer assignments. They will be available June 1st.

### **SENIOR DIPLOMAS:**

This year we will be mailing diplomas to graduates rather than having students pick them up at the school. Diplomas will only be released to graduates who have met all their academic and financial obligations. Currently we hope to commence mailing during the first full week of July. A notice will be posted on the school's website once we start.

### **Trial of the Century:**

On Monday, April 20th, 2015, coordinated by Mr. Jardines, Ms. Donovan, and Mr. Cohen, the Science and Social Studies Department conducted the annual "Trial of the Century: The People of St. Francis Prep v. Dr. Bennett." Two teams of students presented evidence, questioned witnesses, and concluded with closing statements. The jury was comprised of Prep students, who deliberated for over one hour. As a result of all their efforts, Dr. Bennett was acquitted of the murder charges.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all the professionals who helped make this event and prepare our lawyers in the prior weeks before the trial:

- Judge William Viscovich
- Queens Assistant District Attorney John Kosinski
- NYS Deputy Attorney General Jessica Silver
- Private Attorney Christopher Renfroe
- Private Attorney Mayra Shapiro

Alumni Team Leaders: Defense - Steven Romanello '14; Prosecution - Alex Seyad '14  
Our SFP Lawyers in training: Defense: Anthony Munoz '15, Donna Episcopio '16, Lauren Talty '16, Daniel Aranda '18, Jason Zhang '16; Prosecution: Mario Barbagallo '15, Kush Bhasin '15, Mary Zouvelos '17

SFP Investigative Team: Lead Investigator Taylor Castillo '15; Medical Examiner Zetong "Tina" Jia '15; Forensic Scientist Lanqiao "Cindy" Gao

Co-Conspirator: Mr. Michael Ciafa (no charges pending);



Photographer: SFP Alumni Office Manager Mike Graziano

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### **The Little Portion Reading:**

On May 12th, students and faculty gathered together in the Prep library to hear original poems read by our talented student writers. The event was Prep's literary arts journal *The Little Portion's* 15th Annual Poetry Reading and Open Mic to celebrate the release of its latest issue. This important student-based journal began on our Brooklyn campus in 1957 and is still going strong today. English teacher and moderator Mr. Hafker is proud of his editorial staff that meets almost every week throughout the year to read, critique, and select the best poems and stories for every new edition. *The Little Portion* also proudly showcases artwork and photos from our exceptional art students.



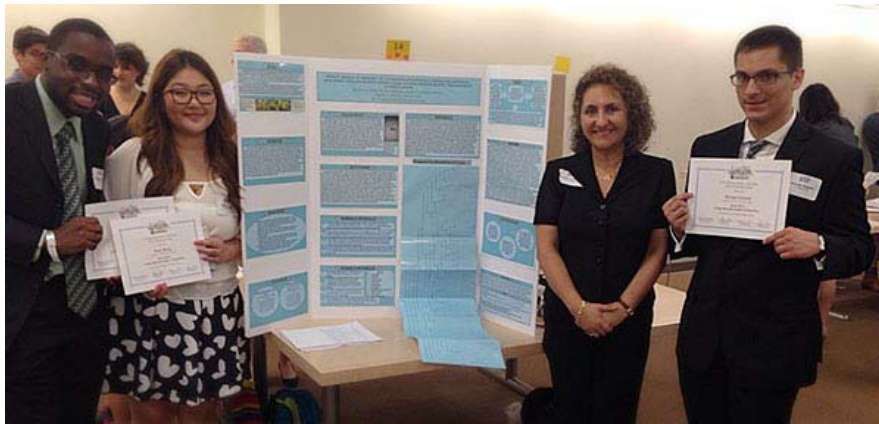
Senior Nikki Thomas reading

This year's Canticle of the Sun Prize for the student submission showing the most skill and promise goes to junior Maggie Capozzoli-Cavota.

[Click here for FaceBook Slideshow](#)

### Urban Barcode Symposium

On 27th May, 2015, Mrs. Ashkenazy mentored the first team from SFP to participate in the prestigious city-wide Urban Barcode symposium at the American Museum of Natural History. A panel of three renowned scientists questioned the team on their knowledge and understanding of the project and subject matter. All team members proudly earned a certificate of completion. The results of this symposium will be announced by Monday. The top five teams will then progress into the final round of the competition to be held on June 8th, 2015. Congratulations to George Galanis, Stacy Kang, and Reggie Sterlin. We wish our team the best of luck!



***The Compleat Works of Shakespeare:*** On May 13, the English department sponsored a special live performance of *The Compleat Works of Shakespeare* for the entire sophomore class. *The Compleat Works of Shakespeare* is a humorous take on the Bard. Three actors performed abridged versions of every Shakespeare play in just two hours. This was a wonderful experience for the sophomores who have read two Shakespeare plays in their time at the Prep. They embraced the audience participation.



## Art Department

### La Salle Academy Art Competition

On Wednesday, May 13th, five of our art students traveled to Manhattan to receive awards from the La Salle Academy art contest. Emily Paredes, Sun Young Park, Taylor Russo, Elena Spina, and Marianna Tzirani were honored at the ceremony. Their art work was on display and they received trophies to signify their excellence.



### Congressional Art Competition

Five of our art students attended the congressional Art Competition on Saturday, May 9th: Elena Spina, Taylor Russo, Marianna Tzirani, Mary Millus, and Sun Young Park. They had their work exhibited in the museum and received certificates from Congresswoman Grace Meng. Mary Millus – Senior, cor 411 – came in first runner up. Mary's art work will hang in our nation's Capital for one year.



## **Art Show**

On Saturday, May 19th, the SFP art department hosted its annual Sprint Arts festival; this year's theme was We'll always have Paris! The art wing was converted into the city of Paris for a day. Extraordinary art work covered each classroom. Refreshments were served in the Parisian Bistro while live music played courtesy of the Music department. The show concluded with animations, films, a live fashion show, and awards ceremony. It was truly a night to remember! The art department will conclude the 2015 school year with a trip to Paris over the summer.



## **JHS Art Competition**

On Wednesday, May 26th, the St. Francis Prep Art Department hosted its first JHS art competition. Twenty local schools participated. Over 75 works of art were exhibited. The art department hosted a gallery show in a café setting. There were bistro tables and chairs, refreshments, and tours of the art department. Over one hundred guests enjoyed jazz music from our Music students, Joe Barbieri, Mike Brusca, Daniel Persaud, Chioke DeBrady, Gabe Godoy, and Nick DiMaria. The show concluded with awards granted to top artists in the show. It was a special afternoon enjoyed by all!



[Click here for Facebook Slideshow](#)

## Music Department

April and May were busier than usual for Prep's Music department! We presented our annual Spring Concerts on April 24th and May 1st. The 24th featured our String Orchestra, Honors Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, Honors Percussion Ensemble, and Concert Chorus. We also welcomed special guests: string students involved in Prep's beginner string programs at P.S. 115 and St. Kevin Catholic Academy performing side-by-side with Prep's Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Prep faculty member, Gregory Williams.

On May 1st, the concert featured our Junior Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band, Prep Chorus, and Chamber Choir. Special guests that night were Band students from St. Gregory the Great School, who performed alongside members of our Concert Band. The concert ended with a stirring rendition of Prep's Alma Mater by our Jazz Band and Prep Chorus, arranged by Prep faculty member, Greg Madama.

On May 12th, Prep welcomed the Triton Brass, an award-winning brass quintet based in Boston for a special concert in our school Chapel. Members of Triton also were at Prep in February, working with members of our Jazz Band. The quintet gave a spectacular performance and are looking forward to even more things to come next year!

On May 13th, St. Kevin Catholic Academy presented their Spring Concert, which featured students involved in Prep's beginner string program under the direction of Claudine Avalos, SFP '09.

And on May 16th, Prep students participated in the New York State School Music Association's Festival at Tottenville High School. Our Chamber Orchestra earned a Silver Medal rating; of the individual students who participated, Georgia Herrera, '17, and William O'Brien, '16, earned Level VI 100's!

## Foreign Language: Field Trip to Ellis Island



## Hero Club

Hero club, which is a service club, hosted a successful Cunningham Park clean-up this month. Members of the club recruited friends and others who were interested in helping out. Together they all did a great job in sprucing up the park that we all share.



The Hero Club also ran its first-ever pay it forward campaign entitled, "Thanks for Being a Hero." Hero Club members designed and implemented this program themselves because they wanted to give back to their own St. Francis Prep community in some way. During the first week, hero club members



practiced doing good deeds around the building. By modeling what it means to be a hero, the intention was to pass along the idea to pay it forward and help out another person. During the second week of the campaign, hero club members were on the look-out for other students and faculty who were helping others. If a random act of kindness was spotted, the member would approach the hero with a thank you pen that says, "Thanks for being a hero," on it. Attached was a piece of paper that said, "We recognized your good deed and others will too. Keep up the good work! Love, The Hero Club." It is just a simple way to reinforce kind and helpful behavior around our school.

### **Handball Team**

On a beautiful, warm, spring day, the 2015 St. Francis Prep Varsity and JV Handball Teams travelled to Orchard Beach in The Bronx to compete in the Catholic High School Athletic Association (CHSAA) Varsity and JV Handball City Championships against their Briarwood rivals Archbishop Molloy. Coached by Mr. Anthony Grimm for the past 13 years along with **Mr. Billy O'Donnell '05**, an alumnus of the Prep and the school's handball team who later became an Assistant Coach and rose to assume full coaching responsibilities soon after, the Terriers' team goals were to capture yet another CHSAA Varsity and JV Handball City Championship. By the time the sun settled and the last handball was dramatically hit to conclude the day's competition, the Terriers achieved their goal of winning their 13th Consecutive Undefeated Varsity CHSAA City Championship along with their 12th Consecutive Undefeated JV CHSAA City Championship.

**Congratulations to Mr. Grimm and the SFP Handball Team for their 2015 Championship Victory!**



### **Boys Varsity Tennis 2015**

The 2015 season saw much success but unfortunately ended with the only loss of the year in the play-off championship to Fordham Prep. The Terriers won the regular season title going undefeated with

an 8-0 record. The team did not lose a single individual match against Molloy, Iona Prep, and Xavier. In singles, sophomore Gabriel Sifuentes went undefeated at the #1 position. Senior Doug Nover, playing at #3 singles, also went undefeated. Sophomore Zhicheng Ma had a very successful year of 6-3 at #2 singles. In doubles, senior Dan Nover, due to injury and illness, had to adapt to four different partners (Adam Kutschera, Rino Cattiani, Tyler Gutsten, and Chris Moczulski). Nevertheless, his excellent doubles skills brought our #1 doubles team to an impressive 6-3 record. At second doubles, senior Justin Belnavis, a new member to the team, teamed up with freshman Matt Curcio and Tyler Gulsten to dominate the league ending with a 8-1 record. This was the first time in five years that we have reached the finals. Although we graduate some excellent valuable seniors, we have a core of returning players who should make considerable improvement by next year's season. We are confident that SFP will be a force to be reckoned with in the 2016 race for the title.

## **Faculty & Staff**

On April 18, 2015, the Bronx-Westchester section of STANYS held its annual conference for science teachers. There were 16 workshops given that day. As chairman, Mr. Sciame gave the opening address for the conference and conducted a workshop on Google Classroom, which he adopted this year in his class. Twenty participants took part. The Albert Delfiner Service Award was presented to him that day. This was the second straight year he was so honored.



Mr. Gutenberg was inducted into the WCWP Hall of Fame (Class of 2015) on April 25. WCWP celebrated 50 years on the air over 88.1 FM last March 16; he can also be heard over [www.wcwp.org](http://www.wcwp.org) anywhere in the world. WCWP has promoted events at SFP over the last 6 years, including our school plays, concerts, and Open House. The station is available to share non-profit events (Relay for Life, Wounded Warrior Project, Colon Cancer Challenge, etc.) for any member of the Prep community looking toward raising awareness of a particular event or cause.



Tim Caffrey graduated from FDNY on 5-5-15. We wish him a safe and happy career.



### **Recognition**

Samantha Palermo was awarded the Gold Award from the Girls Scouts.

For the Gold Award project, she helped coordinate a cross-cultural interview program for Prep students and the students at the Saint Francis Secondary School in Lare so we can better understand each other. She also talked to younger Girl Scouts of her parish, St. Kevin, about what Lent means and how we can make the most out of it besides sacrificing something. Good job, Samantha!