

NEW PRAYER GARDEN PROVIDES PEACEFUL PLACE

All of us at Mother Seton Academy are delighted to share a photo of our new prayer garden and invite our friends and supporters to experience the joy of this beautiful addition to our Greenmount Avenue campus. This sacred space, funded through individual donations and more than five years in the making, was recently dedicated during a morning service including students, faculty and staff. Set on the site of the former St. Ann's Parish convent, the garden includes the original cross from the top of the convent and also a beautiful fountain which softens the sounds of the city. The project was originally conceived during the 2009-2010 school year when MSA moved to its current location. However, the project could not be completed until the entire building was repointed, so as not to damage the space or any of the plantings or installations. With the repointing taking place over the past few summers and completed during the summer of 2014, plans for the prayer garden were able to begin in earnest during the 2014-2015 school year.

A committee comprised of staff from Mother Seton Academy

and St. Ann's Parish worked with local landscaping firm W. H. Boyer, Inc. to complete the project. The firm coordinated all aspects of the project including design, surface preparation, selection and installation of hardscape materials and plantings, placement of all decorative features including the beautiful



Photo by James Rossi

cross from the St. Ann's convent and a stone fountain, and finally adding lighting and benches. Plans for the space, which will seat 16, include incorporating it into campus ministry activities and providing a space for individual quiet reflection. St. Ann's Parish plans to use the space for outdoor peaceful prayer and reflection, according to Pastoral Associate, Rogelio D'Almeida. There are also plans to perform outdoor Stations of the Cross during Holy Week. Family members are invited

to visit the garden following a memorial service and take a quiet moment in thought and reflection of a lost loved one. The new prayer garden truly brings an atmosphere of serenity and tranquility to our community.

Students Perform in "Once on This Island"

On April 18 Mother Seton Academy presented its first musical production, "Once on This Island." Directed by music teacher Amy Demps, and art teacher Mika Nakano, the production was well received by an audience of family and friends. In particular the audience was impressed by students using professional lighting and sound equipment and the transformation of an empty room into a stage filled with palm trees, water, and tropical sunshine. A third of the student body population was involved in making this full-house musical and as one student put it, "We had our ups and downs but we made it. It was worth it."

This tropical musical with a fairytale twist began in October 2014 with student auditions for major and minor roles. With composition by Stephen Flaherty and thoughtful writing by Lynn Ahrens, the musical takes the audience on a journey of a young girl Ti Moune to prove to the gods that love conquers all. For some of our students, this was their first time performing in public. One of the lead actresses from the musical, Esmerelda Uribe, said this of her experience, "I was shy before the musical, but now I'm not. I've always wanted to be an actress, and now I am!" Esmerelda was one of the few actors, along with five

(Continued on page 2)

STUDENTS FROM ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, FULLERTON, RAISE FUNDS FOR MSA



Many thanks to fifth graders Teghan Bauman (right), and her friend Amelia Petr (left) for their recent contribution to Mother Seton Academy. Through their “Cherish and Care” project, the girls helped others in their community, and raised funds for our school. Thank you to these very special young ladies for thinking of others and making a difference in the community.

★ on the calendar

2015 Wine Harvest and Auction

The 2015 Wine Harvest & Auction will be held on November 7, 2015 at Loyola University (McGuire Hall). Come and enjoy fine wines hand selected by Grand Cru and Maryland Wineries Association, along with delicious hors d'oeuvres, while raising much needed scholarship funds for our students. Bid on fabulous auction items or purchase an item from our school's “wish list.” To become an event sponsor, donate items to the auction, or join the event committee, please contact Joan Drebing, jdrebing@mothersetonacademy.org. Advance purchase tickets are now available for \$50 each (\$60 after October 1) at MotherSetonWineHarvest.org or by calling (410) 563-2833.

2016 Cardinal Cup 5K Run

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Cardinal Cup 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun Walk on April 25. This event is made possible thanks to the hard work of many dedicated volunteers through a long-standing partnership with The School of the Cathedral of Mary our Queen who hosts the event. We hope to see you on April 30, 2016 for next year's event.

STUDENTS PERFORM IN “ONCE ON THIS ISLAND”

(Continued from page 1)

other students, who were involved in the Friday Musical Club. This club allowed more time for exploration of individual roles. The confidence and knowledge they received allowed them to share and encourage their fellow actors and crew members during the Thursday rehearsals. The Friday club, for example, used their time to choreograph a few numbers and coach each other along the way.

The cast and crew consisted mostly of sixth graders; however, many of the upperclassmen took leadership roles such as stage manager, set director, and publicity coordinator. The directors hope this will encourage the sixth graders to expand their experience by training new students next year and thus fostering individual leadership. The mix of grades encouraged positive mentorship outside of classroom regardless of age. As most of our actors were new students, the older students helped encourage them to pursue their roles in the hallways and even outside of school.

Through this the directors found a mutual respect develop among students. A sixth grade girl Donye'a Braxton, who played the part of a boy in the play, said, “People used to pick on me because of my character's part, but I ignored it and my friends helped me out. And I love my part.” She was one of the key stars that emerged from this musical alongside our lead actress, Ericka Woodson.

Hardships were shared, especially for the sixth grader Ericka Woodson, who had to learn over ten musical numbers including one dance solo. Through the challenges, however, many other talents rose. From singers to painters, dancers to builders, many different kinds of artists came together and collaborated to tell a story. The school was blessed to have the principal, Richard Gudel, who, through his expertise, made this musical possible.

“Once on This Island,” is a story about a girl who goes against all odds to set the people free to love one another. This story has expanded Mother Seton Academy's future for more opportunities for the students' God-given talents to come together to tell their own story.



Photo by Linda Clarke-Tucker

FROM THE PRESIDENT



In this newsletter, you will read of our first successful musical that was staged this spring as well as the creation of our prayer garden, a long standing desire for us. We are pleased that we graduated 22 eighth graders and look forward to an incoming class of 28 boys and girls. We are blessed to be able to create a community that values beauty and peace within our busy world. We continue to grow in our mission to provide a transformative education to the boys and girls entrusted to our care.

Growth happens because of people who are dedicated to our mission. We are blessed to have a dedicated faculty and staff who are committed to serving our students. I am sad to say that our principal, Mr. Richard Gudel, has had to resign due to health concerns. We are grateful for his academic leadership and desire to find ways of fully developing the talents of our students. We will use the upcoming year to launch an intensive search for the right candidate to be principal. In the interim, an administrative team has been appointed to guide the academic program through the year ahead.

We are grateful for the ways that you have helped support the mission of Mother Seton Academy. During the tumult in the city this past spring, I became convinced more than ever of the urgency of our service to the children of Baltimore and their families. Together we provide a beacon of hope for them in the midst of all the social and economic challenges in our broader community. In our mission statement, we make the following commitment: Promoting dignity and respect for each person, Mother Seton Academy challenges its students to realize their God-given talents and become leaders who serve their families, communities and society. Together we make this happen.

During these summer months, please continue to pray for our students and their families that they enjoy peace, health and safety. May God bless you and your loved ones with peace and hope throughout the months ahead.

S. Peggy Jaskeles, SSMD

Support MSA through a Bequest

A bequest is one of the simplest ways to support Mother Seton Academy. This thoughtful gift will make it possible for us to continue giving our children a chance at a fulfilling future.

For more information about how you can include Mother Seton Academy in your estate plans, please call Joan Drebing at 410-563-2833 or email jdrebing@mothersetonacademy.org.

★ staff spotlight



Photo by Baha Albataineh

Jonathan Luca, Business Manager and Director of Information Technology at Mother Seton Academy, joined the staff in 2005. In addition to his duties as Business Manager, Jon manages the school computer systems and networks. He works directly with all technology vendors and is also responsible for coordinating the installation of all technology at the school.

Jon is originally from upstate New York but considers Baltimore his second home. Jon earned his bachelor's degree from Mount Saint Mary's College in Newburgh, NY. He was program director for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Orange County, NY where he worked for 10 years. In the fall of 2005, Jon began serving MSA as a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer. In July 2007, he became a full-time MSA employee. Although he says every day is different when you work in a school setting, normally he begins his day checking in with staff to make sure all school programs and systems are running smoothly. Since Jon's duties are varied his day may be spent on the telephone with computer services vendors regarding important system upgrades, reaching out to the school's Finance committee to share information regarding an upcoming meeting, working on a piece of equipment in need of maintenance, or updating the school's publications or website.

For the upcoming school year, Jon is looking forward to continuing to manage the school's financial and information technology functions, as well as assisting with student activities and special events. While it is sure to keep him busy, he is excited MSA is able to upgrade classroom technology and server equipment this summer. We are indeed blessed to have Jon as part of the MSA family!



2215 GREENMOUNT AVENUE
BALTIMORE MD, 21218
p.410.563.2833 f.410.563.7353
mothersetonacademy.org

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT NO. 4315

ACADEMYINSIDER

SUMMER 2015

★ Congratulations Class of 2015



PRESIDENT:

Sr. Margaret (Peggy) Juskelis, SSND

CORPORATE BOARD OF MEMBERS:

Sr. Kathryn Clauss, IHM - Chair
Sr. Susan Czaplicki, SSND
Bro. Thomas Giardino, SM
Bro. Lawrence Harvey, CFX
Sr. Ruth Bernadette O'Connor, OSF
Sr. Mary Catherine Warehime, DC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Brendan Baloh
Michael Brown, Esq.
Sr. Kathryn Clauss, IHM
Sr. JoAnne Goecke, DC
Bro. John Hamilton, CFX
Louis Heidrick, AFSC
Sr. Joyce Helfrich, OSF
Sheila Shaw Horton, Ph.D.
Rev. David McGuigan, SM
Dana P. Moore, Esq. - Secretary
Patrick Mutch - Chair
Michael Naccarato, CPA, Esq. - Treasurer
Laurette O'Malley
Michael Paszkiewicz
Daniel Ramos
Melissa Smith
Paul Speargas, CFA
Lisa Stromberg
Sr. John Vianney Zullo, SSND