



# MOTHER SETON ACADEMY

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

FALL 2004

## ORATORY CLASS GIVES NEW VOICE TO STUDENTS

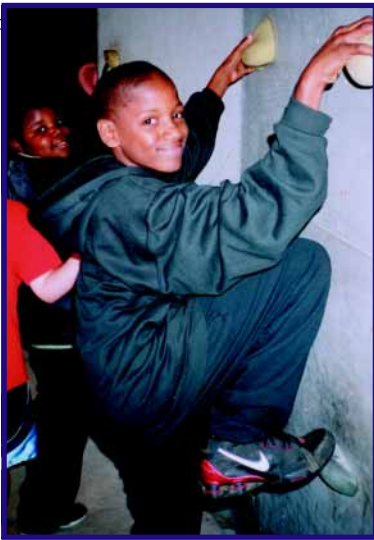
Students in Brother Jesse O'Neill's oratory and speech class are quickly mastering the art of public speaking. This is a new program at Mother Seton Academy, designed to give students the skills to communicate with confidence and poise. Brother Jesse noted, "*We are bringing words to life and understanding the audience to whom we are speaking. Oratory and speech skills require memory skills, diction, body movement and use of quotations. All of these skills will build confidence and poise in our students.*"

Throughout the year, students will present four memorized speeches to their classmates. Each speech will progress in complexity and length. Early in the school year at an assembly,

students introduced their heroes in memorized speeches. Using a persuasive style, attentive posture, direct eye contact with the audience, and confident voices, the student speakers introduced their heroes who included Michelangelo, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Michael Jordan, Derek Carter (a student's cousin serving in the military), MSA teacher Deborah

Kreipl and President George W. Bush. These and other newly acquired skills will soon be put to a practical use when MSA 8th graders begin interviewing for admission into Baltimore's finest high schools and later, when as graduates, they apply to college. In the meantime, the MSA community looks forward to watching its students blossom into fine public speakers.

### SNAPSHOT!



*Sixth grader Anthony Williams demonstrates his rock climbing skills during a visit to Genesee Valley Learning Center.*

## STUDENTS' HUNGER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN RECEIVES OPERATION RICE BOWL AWARD

MSA students and staff were recognized for their fundraising success in support of **Operation Rice Bowl**, a special effort to feed the hungry in the United States and throughout the world. **Operation Rice Bowl** is operated by Catholic Relief Services, an international agency that works to eliminate international poverty and injustice.

Under the direction of teachers Laura Peterson and Matt Hill, students raised a total of \$444 in the Spring of 2004. Students hosted a bake sale and contributed their snack money to raise funds. In September, students were presented with an award for their work by Mary D'Ambrogio, CRS Diocesan Director for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. During a special prayer service prepared by the sixth grade boys, students presented the following information about hunger:

- Nearly one-half of the world, or 3 billion people live on less than \$2 a day.
- There are an estimated 842 million people in the world who are hungry.
- There are 12 million hungry children in the United States.

Recognizing the importance of feeding the hungry, the students will participate in **Operation Rice Bowl** this school year.



*MSA teacher Laura Peterson and students Tylia Towson, Enzo Campos and Shaquel Braxton accept a special award from Operation Rice Bowl for raising money on behalf of hunger relief programs.*

## THANK YOU BENEFACTORS

Our mission would not be fulfilled without the generosity of the many benefactors who support our work. We are most grateful to the following foundations for their recent contributions:

Many thanks to the **Christopher O'Neil Memorial Foundation of the Baltimore Community Foundation** for two grants to MSA. One grant, made in memory of Larry Flink, has provided the school with a portable sound system which is used during prayer services, assemblies, concerts, speech classes and student productions. The second grant supports the three AmeriCorps volunteers who graciously commit a year of service to MSA. Their gifts and talents are used in the teaching of art, physical education and music. Students also receive small group instruction from our AmeriCorps staff. When not in the classroom, our volunteers are assisting with the "not so glamorous," but essential tasks of supervising recess, cleaning, and serving meals.

**The Lockhart Vaughan Foundation** has established a challenge grant to support our high school scholarship program which designated \$64,000 to help our graduates attend private or Catholic high schools. MSA must raise \$40,000 to receive a \$20,000 match from the Lockhart Vaughan Foundation. The Foundation is committed to matching this challenge for the current academic year and the following two years.

**The Golfers' Charitable Association** made funds available for much-needed sidewalk repairs and cleaning equipment for the school. Providing a safe and clean learning environment is essential to the on-going operation of our school.

A grant from the **William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund** will support MSA's

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Upon receiving the October school calendar, a new MSA 6th grade student cheerfully exclaimed, "I've never been on so many trips!" This young lady was



*Sr. Mary Bader, DC*

referring to the five trips planned for her class that month. Having lived the MSA experience a mere four weeks, the student was still discovering the opportunities awaiting her at the start of a school year.

In most schools, the joy and excitement of beginning a school year dim as quickly as textbook covers wear and tear.

Not so at MSA where the novelty of a new school year lasts ten months! Trips are penciled into the calendar; the tutoring, mentoring and homework programs begin; classes on public speaking and current events are added to the curriculum; and just when MSA seems to fall into the traditional "cycle of school seasons," an opportunity emerges for our students to be part of yet another unique learning experience.

Thank you for your faithful support and prayers which make the MSA experience one of meaning and joy for our children. May God's peace and love bring you the same joy you bring our school community.

counselor position for this school year. Students and their families benefit from a variety of workshops, testing services, classroom interventions and referrals to counseling, medical and social service agencies.

Many thanks to the **Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters** for a grant to cover operating expenses such as utility costs,

trash removal and office supplies. These are essential services needed to keep MSA running efficiently.

**The John J. Leidy Foundation** has awarded MSA a grant to support the computer technology program. The grant underwrites the maintenance needed to keep our technology efficient and effective.

## SHOP AND SUPPORT MSA!

**Mark Wednesday, December 22nd on your calendar.**

MSA volunteers will gift wrap at the **Barnes & Noble Booksellers** in Towson from 10am - 2pm. Store shoppers may have their holiday presents conveniently wrapped by MSA volunteers and make a charitable donation to MSA. Spread the word and encourage your family and friends to visit us.

Shop with **eScrip** and **Safeway** and earn money for MSA! (The **eScrip Online Mall** provides a link to more than 20,000 merchant locations nationwide. Shop the regional merchant list and support MSA.) Sign up by calling 1-800-801-4973 or visit [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) and click "Yes! Renew." (Respond to the email messaging and return the postage paid postcard included in their statement.)

**Office Depot** will provide 5% credit of your purchase towards free school supplies. Please ask the cashier to designate your purchase to Mother Seton Academy.



# GRADUATE SUPPORT PROGRAM PROVIDES FULL RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS

Mother Seton Academy's Graduate Support Program continues to provide a multitude of services to the school's 8th graders and graduates. Just days after beginning a new school year, MSA's 8th graders began the process of applying to high school in their weekly high school seminar class, led by Ms. Nicole Yeftich, Director of Graduate Support. Parent/guardian involvement in the process was initiated at MSA's

annual "High School Night" when Ms. Yeftich offered a detailed overview of the high school application process. This general meeting has been followed up with individual meetings to assist the families in determining the "right match" for each student. In addition, Ms. Yeftich has taken students and families to the Catholic Regional High School Fair and open houses.

Our graduates also benefit from Ms. Yeftich's services. In collaboration with St. Ignatius Loyola Academy and the Baltimore Urban Debate Team, MSA offers an SAT prep class for high school students. This class continues to be



*MSA graduate Tonet McDowell, '00 entered her freshman year at St. John's University in September.*

underwritten by a grant from the Christopher O'Neil Memorial Fund of the Baltimore Community Foundation.

High school seniors also meet with Ms. Yeftich as they begin the college search and application process. Tours of college campuses have resumed. A large number of MSA seniors are expected to take advantage of a scholarship awarded to them in the 8th grade from the H.V. Robertson Family

Memorial Education Foundation. This scholarship assures the students of \$3,000 to be applied toward their freshman tuition if they enter college in the fall of 2005.

## ALUMNI UPDATES



**Akeem Long, '01 ...** Akeem is a senior at St. Frances Academy. He just completed his second summer working at a local law firm. He also worked as a Community Mediator with the Safe and Sound Program, a city-wide effort to improve the lives of Baltimore's youth. He attended the *Countdown to College Camp* and plans to attend a four-year college and pursue a career in computers.



**Diminise Luck-Drake, '03 ...** Diminise reports that she is having a successful year as a sophomore at Mercy High School where she is studying Algebra II, Religion, French II, and Art, among other courses. She also participates in the New Destiny Marching Band.



**India Lindsey, '04 ...** India is very happy with her decision to attend Catholic High School. In addition to a full academic load, she plays soccer, participates in the pep squad and has been spotted cheering on the *Flyers* at Archbishop Curley football games.

## "A First Letter from College"

*It is awesome to be a freshman at Loyola College. I am in colleguim, an academic program in which freshmen are housed with or near students who are in the same classes. I have bonded so much with all of these people, and I can tell that by the end of the year we will all be really tight friends. We form study parties and go to lectures together and are constantly in and out of each others' dorm rooms. Just this past weekend I went home with one of them to visit her family. She is from New York and she took me into the city for the first time. I had a blast. I got to see Times Square, Rockefeller Center, Central Park, and I even went into the lobby of the Plaza Hotel. All of this is creating a great balance in my life, and for the first time I am being fully enriched in all aspects of my life; cultural, social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical. I am truly "in love" with college so far and I can tell that I am going to come out feeling the same way.*



*MSA graduate Natalie Serovy, '00 and MSA teacher Sr. Ellen Smith, IHM share a happy moment.*

~ Excerpts from an E-mail update from Natalie Serovy, MSA Class of 2000.  
Natalie is the first MSA graduate to attend Loyola College of Maryland.



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## AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM ENRICHED BY VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Each week more than 50 volunteers pass through the doors of Mother Seton Academy to assist with our after school program. These men, women, and high-school students are vital to the school's mission of providing our children with a holistic education. Staffing of the homework, tutoring and mentoring programs comes from the generosity of these volunteers.

Staff member Ms. Annalisa Snair oversees each of these programs. During the four afternoons of supervised homework time at MSA, some students are paired with a volunteer who assists the child in studying and completing homework. Three nights a week, students enrolled in the tutoring program, are assigned a volunteer who provides one-on-one assistance with math or language arts. MSA students are thrilled to have the attention of volunteers who assist and encourage them.



*Loyola College volunteer Carrie Hamilton mentors 6th grader Christina Ehatt.*

Most popular among students is the mentoring program that pairs MSA and Loyola students in a big brother/big sister type recreational situation. Visitors to MSA on Friday afternoons are always touched by the sight of 18 MSA students engaged in activities with their Loyola mentors. Whether jumping rope, shooting hoops, cooking, or just talking, MSA students thrive in this program.

The majority of MSA volunteers come from Loyola College which formed a partnership with the Academy in 1997. Loyola assigns a volunteer coordinator who recruits, trains, and assists in the placement of Loyola students at the Academy. This year's coordinator is Ms. Merrie Hicks, a senior psychology major. Similarly, Archbishop Curley High School provides student volunteers. It is no wonder that the MSA staff frequently remarks, "We could never run our program well without our volunteers!"