



SAINT MARY

STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL

Fall 2017

Dear Friends of Saint Mary Star of the Sea School, *Advent greetings!*

The theme of God's love for us is lighting our way this academic year. Mary continues to be our guiding star, especially this Advent as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of the Infant Savior at Christmas. At this time of the year, the students are preparing for Christmas by learning special songs which remind us of the great day in history "when peaceful stillness encompassed everything and the night in its swift course was half spent, your all-powerful word from heaven's royal throne leapt into the doomed land" (Wisdom 18:14-15). This mystery of the Word become flesh and making his dwelling among us can be pondered all of our lives.

It is a pleasure to share this newsletter with you. The love of learning and the joy of service shine through the stories and pictures. Each day I witness the teachers striving to provide an outstanding Catholic education according to the individual needs of the students. I also observe the students engaging in the learning process with enthusiasm and diligence. During this Advent season, the students are helping those in need with the annual sock drive for a local charity and "Giving Hope for Christmas" donation drive for the Hurricane Maria 2017 victims in Puerto Rico and Texas. These acts of love build a culture of service in the lives of our students.

The benefactors, alumni and friends of Saint Mary Star of the Sea School are all over the world, and we are daily reminded of your love and care for this extraordinary school. Indeed, your love helps sustain it. We thank you for your prayers and financial support to us again at this most important time.

As we approach the Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, please know that I am deeply grateful for your continued support. You are in our daily prayers as we ask God to bless you and your families with a grace-filled Christmas!

**In Our Lady, Star of the Sea,
Sister Mary John, O.P.
Principal**

New Montessori Pre-K Program Fosters Learning, Independence, and Self Discipline

A new Montessori Program and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd curriculum was adopted this year for our Pre-Kindergarten (3 and 4 yr. old) students. These programs guide children towards joyful learning, independence, and self-discipline. The new Montessori classroom at Saint Mary's has five categories of materials: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, and Cultural (which includes geography and science). The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Curriculum uses the Montessori approach to introduce children to prayer, the life of Jesus, the Mass and Liturgy, the Parables of the Kingdom, and more Christianity teachings.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was a faithful Catholic woman with a brilliant mind. She was the first Italian woman to achieve a medical degree and went on to study and observe children and their developmental and educational needs. In her life and work, she discovered that young children absorb everything in their environment like sponges. If introduced to materials that are developmentally appropriate in an environment of order, peace, and concentration, children flourish and take joy in learning. A Montessori approach recognizes that each child is a unique child of God, worthy of respect and dignity, bearing special gifts and talents.



Dominion Energy Volunteers Help with Water Day

This fall, with the help of volunteers from Dominion Energy, our first grade students had a super fun, educational, and safe learning experience on their Water Day. The volunteers helped our students fish, crab, and were even there to introduce them to a puffer fish! Saint Mary's is thankful for the support of community organizations who stand by our side to support us in our mission of providing the best learning experiences for our students!



STEM Day for 4th Grade Students!

Fourth grade students sharpened their science, math and engineering skills as they worked on various projects during their Thanksgiving STEM Day. Students were divided in groups and were given materials to build a turkey hideout to protect it from being eaten, a Mayflower ship to carry as many pilgrims as possible, and a dinner table to hold an overwhelming amount of Thanksgiving dishes. Fourth grade teacher, Karen Covert guided students through the projects, encouraging them to ask questions, observe, explore, and think creatively to solve the challenges!





MUSIC IS BACK AT SAINT MARY'S!

With a beat in their feet, Saint Mary's pre-kindergarten students enjoy music class with Kate Mousavizadegan, who recently joined Saint Mary's to teach music to elementary school students. Students in Pre-K (3) through 5th grade meet once a week to use their creativity and ability in learning and performing music through voice and instrument. Music is one of five enrichment classes offered at Saint Mary's!

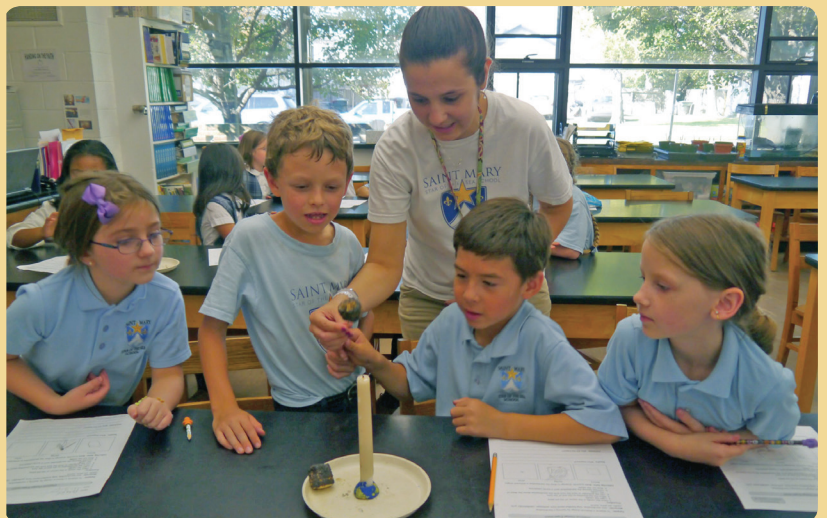
Students Build Shelters to Learn about Native American Tribes

Building a model of a Native American shelter was an outstanding way for our second grade students to learn about the people who inhabited the Americas before the Europeans. As the students researched a particular tribe, they learned how their environment, their resources, and their lifestyle affected the way they built their homes. Students completed this project by writing a report and sharing their work with their classmates. The shelters were on display for other classes to see!



STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT CHEMICAL REACTIONS WITH MARSHMALLOWS

After learning about the Periodic Table of Elements, our third grade students headed to the science lab for a hands-on, practical and fun marshmallow experiment. The students first learned about the elements that are present in a marshmallow and later they observed and discussed what happens to those elements when heat is added. Students recorded their observations and even enjoyed a sweet marshmallow treat following their work in the lab. It was neat to see that science can be educational and delicious!





EIGHTH GRADE TEAM BUILDING DAY FOSTERS CLASS UNITY

Saint Mary's 8th grade students took part in an adventurous team building day hiking the Noland Trail with Mrs. Potchatek. Along the way, students made stops to participate on several team-building activities to help strengthen their relationships and improve their ability to work together. It was a great day to foster class unity and to engage in team building activities!

Skit Teaches Students about Mercy

As an introduction to the Religion unit of study, "Mercy and the Church", the 7th grade class acted out a skit set in a courthouse with a man sentenced to death. The students saw how the judge showed mercy by not only taking the place of the convicted man, but also giving him money, fame, and his own name. This exemplified how God sent his son Jesus to be His mercy and grace in our lives. The students brought in different props, practiced lines, and had fun acting all while learning the meaning of justice, mercy, grace and peace!



SPORTS HELP STUDENTS GROW IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

This fall, students at Saint Mary's were part of the volleyball, soccer, and cross country teams. Through sports, students learn many life-long lessons that go beyond the physical exercise. They increase their communication and collaboration skills as well as their mastery of time management and decision making skills. As 7th grade student Emery D'Urso stated, "I get to have fun playing sports with my friends and I learn so much." Participating in sports is another way the student grows in mind, body and spirit at Saint Mary's!



Saint Mary's Student Wins Several Awards for Science Project

We commend eighth grade student, Parker Cruz, on his scientific endeavors. Parker has won several awards this year for his science project OYS2CLOT: The Novel Hemostatic (Blood Clotting) Properties of Chitosan Extracted from Chesapeake Bay Oyster Shells. Recently his work was recognized at the 2017 Broadcom MASTERS, a program of the Society for Science and the Public. The honor placed him among the top 300 middle school science and engineering projects in the United States.



A Delicious Hands-on Math Lesson!

Sister Anne Elise planned an engaging Math lesson for our 5th and 6th grade students to study fractions. With a brownie recipe on hand, the students used manipulatives as an introduction to parts and wholes. Before baking, each student compared fractions using measuring cups, measuring spoons, and water. Once they started baking they were able to answer multiple conversion questions such as how many tablespoons in each cup, half cup, third cup, and quarter cup. After a morning of fractions, the students enjoyed their delicious and sweet results for lunch!



Students Visit Mosaic Factory



The 7th grade students went on a field trip to New Ravenna Mosaics where they were able to see almost everything there is to running a mosaic company from marketing, packaging, ordering, cutting tiles, and designing different patterns, satisfying

customers, and managing employees. The students were able to see how the mosaics were made by visiting the warehouses, observing how sorting is done and what machinery is used. Student Kyla Daniel said, "The most interesting part of the tour was learning that the workers have to go through every box to find the right color and shape for their mosaic." Another student, Cody Jackson said, "My favorite part of the tour was seeing all the beautiful and interesting designs of the mosaics." After the tour, the students were able to make mosaics of their own and get their creativity going!

Saint Mary's Awards First STEM Scholarship to Grace Schaeffler

Saint Mary Star of the Sea School proudly presented its first Annual STEM scholarship to Grace Schaeffler. Grace graduated from Saint Mary Star of the Sea School in 2013. She is pursuing a degree in Engineering at Virginia Tech. This is the first year that Saint Mary's awards this STEM Scholarship, which was established by the graduating class of 2013. Since then, each graduating class has contributed annually to award this scholarship to a Saint Mary's graduate pursuing a degree in a STEM-related field. Congratulations, Grace Schaeffler!



Saint Mary's Honors its Veterans!

Saint Mary Star of the Sea School celebrated Veterans Day to honor the men and women in our military who have served and continue to serve our country. This year, we were privileged to have Air Force Major Heather Dahmer (mother of Nicholas, 3rd grade) as our featured speaker. Major Dahmer is a neonatal and pediatric nurse who provides medical services for the children of those who are called to duty to protect our country.

SAINT MARY'S TAKES PART IN EUCHARISTIC PROCESSIONS

This fall, our families participated in two Eucharistic processions in which our students and Sisters gathered in Virginia Beach and Fort Monroe for a wonderful day praying as a family and a community, expressing our faith in Our Lord Jesus in prayer, song, and public witness.



NASA Educators Train Saint Mary's Teachers on GLOBE



School was not in session yet, but our teachers were back at school in early August getting ready for another exciting school year! A group of NASA educators came to Saint Mary's to train our teachers on the GLOBE Program, a hands-on international education and science program that

joins students, educators, and scientists from around the world in studying Earth system science. The objectives of the program are to improve science education, enhance environmental awareness, and increase understanding of the Earth as a system. Sister Mary Therese also completed the GLOBE Training Program and now our school is an official GLOBE site! This certification allows our students to access the GLOBE database and enter information they collect from our location to help scientists around the world study our environment. It is never too early to start forming scientists!

SAINT MARY STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL



FOUNDED 1923

This year, Saint Mary Star of the Sea School held two special events and an All Star Raffle to help raise funds to support our scholarship fund and the operation of the school. With the generosity and support of parents, friends, and many local businesses, we raised much needed funds that will directly impact our students.

Golf Tournament Raises \$13,000

The Saint Mary's Parent Teacher Organization held its Annual Golf Tournament on October 7th, 2017 at the Woodlands Golf Course in Hampton. The golf tournament has become an annual tradition for many golfers and we sold out again this year! We appreciate our community partners and the following business sponsors for donating so generously: Gately Communication Co., 3 Bowls of Color, Crabtown Bar & Grill, The Stellute Law Firm, Pincus Construction, Pomoco Auto Group, Renea Matter from OVM Financial, Robert A. Dreelin, D.D.S., Multi-Print, Inc., Coliseum Pediatric Dentistry, Home Helpers and Direct Link, Graphics 4U, The Brake King, Angela Stellute Ballard from Abbit Realty, Kippe O'Neil from Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, Angela DeLong from Bull Island Realty, and The Knights of Columbus Council 511 (St. Mary Star of the Sea), Council 11264 (St. Rose of Lima and the Korean Martyrs), and Walter Pollard Council 5480.



We had a great day on the course and raised over \$13,000 for the school. We are looking forward to a Spring Golf Tournament this school year so look out for that date to be announced soon!

NEW ALL STAR RAFFLE FUNDRAISER NETS \$17,000



This year Saint Mary Star of the Sea held their first annual All Star Raffle. Students sold raffle tickets from September through October with November as the month for drawing winning tickets. Tickets were sold for \$10 each; the prizes were \$100 a day for the month for November with the grand prize of \$1000 that was drawn on November 30th. The raffle was very successful bringing in over \$17,000 for the school. Thank you to all who participated by purchasing and selling tickets! We look forward to this fundraiser again next year!

Sixth grade student, Emery D'Urso who sold 10 books of All Star Raffle tickets earned the honor of being Principal for the Day.

UPCOMING EVENTS: SAVE THE DATE!

ADMISSIONS OPEN HOUSE

Sunday
January 28, 2018
2 to 4 p.m.

AUCTION NIGHT

Saturday
March 3, 2018
6 p.m.



Community Organizations Award Grants to SMSS!

Saint Mary's applied for and received two grants recently; the first was a \$1,000 grant from The Dominion Charitable Foundation. The grant was to supply the playground area with 100 yards of mulch. The project will help the school control soil erosion and storm water runoff into the waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

The other grant we recently received was a \$500 Walmart Community Grant from Sam's Club in Newport News, VA. The grant money will be used to further our STEM curriculum and go towards the completion of the floating dock, the final phase of our waterfront classroom project.

Low Country Boil Raises \$7,000 for Scholarships

This year, we held the Low Country Boil on October 14 on our beautiful waterfront shoreline. The event, which is sponsored by the development department, helps Saint Mary's to reconnect with friends, honor our alumni, and raise money for the scholarship fund. Approximately 110 guests enjoyed a delicious seafood feast provided by Graham & Rollins Seafood Company. The night was a huge success raising over \$7,000 for the scholarship fund! Thank you to all who volunteered and attended! Our major sponsors for this year were: Gately Communications, Old Point National Bank, Old Point Trust, and Pomoco Auto Group. Our beverage sponsors were: Jennifer Roberts, Towne Bank Mortgage and Mike Pincus, Pincus Construction. Thank you for your continued support of the Low Country Boil!



Alumni and Supporters Recognized with Annual Awards

An entrepreneur, a SMSS parent who has supported the Marine Science program, and a successful realtor were honored this year with Saint Mary's annual awards at our annual Low Country Boil held in October 2017.

The awards were established to recognize outstanding alumni and to show gratitude for exceptional service to Saint Mary Star of the Sea School. The following are the 2017 award recipients:

St. Therese of Lisieux Young Alumni Award: Angela Stellute Ballard, SMSS Class of 1998



Born and raised in the Olde Wythe neighborhood of Hampton, Virginia, Angela Stellute Ballard spent most of her childhood outdoors swimming, boating, and exploring in the neighborhood creek, Chesapeake Bay, and James River. From a close-knit Catholic family, she attended grade school at Saint Mary's from 1990-1998, and went on to graduate from Peninsula Catholic High School in 2002. Angela then attended James Madison University, where she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Magna Cum Laude, with a concentration in Theatre and Dance. Determined to follow her passion, she pursued a performing arts career in Norfolk, VA, Washington, D.C., and New York, NY. After a run in the Big Apple, the beautiful beaches and lush green landscape called her back home to the Hampton Roads area. Angela was the drama teacher at Saint Mary's for three years and selflessly donated her time to the eighth grade musical production that is performed each year at The American Theatre. We are thankful for her talents, time and dedication she generously contributed to Saint Mary's. One of her fondest memories was being chosen to crown Mary for May procession during her 8th grade year. Angela currently is a realtor with Abbitt Realty and she resides in Hampton with her husband and son and enjoys spending time with her family.

Service to Saint Mary Award: Richard Fierros.



Since joining Saint Mary's, Richard Fierros, father of Leo (7th) and Elizabeth (Class of 2016) has contributed his time, talent and treasure to advance the mission of the school. Ritchie, as we call him, served as a member of the Auction Committee, carpool coordinator, cafeteria helper, and was a chef for various school events.

Ritchie's main contributions, however have been to support the Marine Science program. During the last four years, he voluntarily coordinated the shoreline clean-up efforts, and created a data base that allows students to organize and use crab data, weather and water sampling information for research purposes. He maintained the waterfront classroom to make it an effective learning environment. Ritchie was almost on a daily basis watching for signs of washed up items, removing wanton waste from the shoreline and continuing the fishing tagging. He is also in the process of creating a SMSS cloud based website

that allows users to access marine life data and share research information more readily. His biggest project to date has been the crab weather and water study. These endeavors have produced great results with the students and have provided valuable information that has been utilized not only by Saint Mary's students but by other educational institutions around the country. Ritchie believes that the waterfront classroom provides so much variety to the curriculum and connects well with the STEM curriculum. He writes, "Nowhere in the City of Hampton can students say they have touched a live seahorse, a puffer fish or handled a feisty blue crab; all this before lunch!" The time and energy that Mr. Fierros voluntarily donates to the school, with such joy and enthusiasm, comes from the heart and is appreciated by students, parents and all of the faculty and staff; especially Sr. Mary Therese!

Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award: Joseph Gately, SMSS Class of 1964

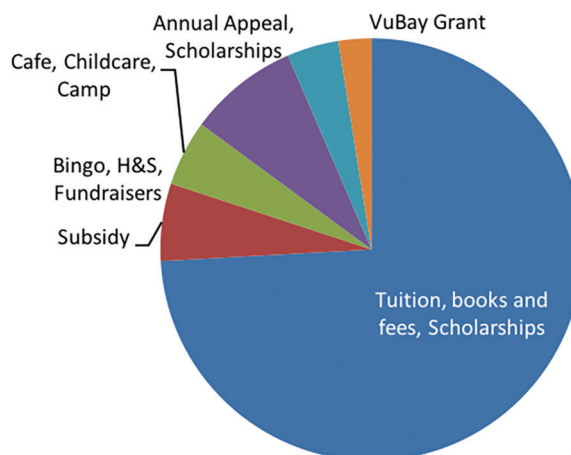


Joseph Gately attended kindergarten through eighth grade at Saint Mary's, graduating with the Class of 1964. Joe went on to attend Peninsula Catholic High School, Old Dominion University, Thomas Nelson Community College and Christopher Newport University. Joe furthered his career track by becoming a Signal School Instructor in the US Army and served in the US Army Reserves. He founded Gately Communications, a local communication company that is a full service provider of system design, integration, programming, optimization, customer training, service, repair, and preventative maintenance programs for wireless communications. Joe was also an Adjunct Faculty Instructor in Electronics and Communications for Thomas Nelson Community College. He has served his local community on various school boards and is a current Corporate Advisor to the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials.

One of his fondest moments of his time at Saint Mary's is working with Mrs. August who influenced his love of dancing and music. All of Joe's brothers and sisters also attended St. Mary's. Gately Communication Co. and its's sister company, Signal Engineering has been a loyal supporter of Saint Mary's over the years sponsoring and participating in the golf tournament. Joe was also instrumental in helping raise money for our "Windows of Opportunity" campaign; he was a decade chair and had the largest number of donations for their class.

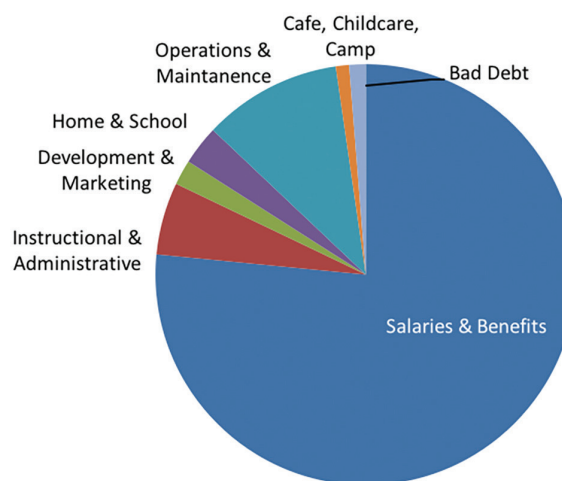
INCOME

1	Tuition, Books & Fees, Scholarships	879,868
2	Subsidy	70,300
3	Bingo, Home & School, Fundraisers	59,779
4	Cafeteria, Childcare & Camp	100,163
5	Annual Appeal, Designated Scholarships	46,886
6	VuBay Grant	30,000
Total Income		1,186,996



EXPENSES

1	Salaries & Benefits	969,482
2	Instructional & Administrative	70,542
3	Development & Marketing	24,362
4	Home & School, Fundraisers	38,304
5	Operations & Maintenance	135,009
6	Cafeteria, Childcare & Camp	12,932
7	Bad Debt	16,064
Total Expenses		1,266,695



Saint Mary Star of the Sea School Advisory Board

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Sister Mary John Slonkosky
Principal

How can you receive 65% of your donation returned to you in Virginia tax credits?



Donate to the McMahon Parater Foundation for Education (MPFE) through the Education Improvement Scholarships Tax Credits program.



Your gift will provide scholarships for new students from families with limited incomes to attend Saint Mary Star of the Sea School.



"It is the responsibility of the entire Catholic Community – bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity – to continue to strive toward the goal of making our Catholic schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children..."

THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

In 2008, Bishop DiLorenzo established MPFE to provide tuition assistance to students who wish to attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of Richmond.

In 2013, the Virginia Department of Education approved MPFE to receive tax credit-authorized donations under this new program. In addition to these tax credits, donors who itemize will also receive deductions for charitable contributions on state and federal taxes.

Thus, individuals and businesses can receive substantial tax benefits by contributing scholarships through this tax credit program.

At least 90% of each donation will be used to provide scholarships.

IMPORTANT: Donors should consult their tax advisors to determine their specific tax savings.

EXAMPLES OF TAX SAVINGS

Individual Taxpayer	Federal AMT Rate (28%)	Non-AMT Rate (33%)
Donation Amount	\$5,000	\$5,000
Virginia Tax Credit (65%)	-\$3,250	-\$3,250
Virginia Tax Savings (5.75%)	-\$288	-\$288
Federal Tax Savings (charitable deduction) *	-\$1,400	-\$1,650
Year 2 cost of VA Tax Credits on federal taxes	n/a	+\$1,167
Total Tax Savings	\$4,938	\$4,021
Net Cost of \$5,000 Donation	\$62	\$979

**Pease Limitation, reinstated Jan. 1, 2013, may impact federal tax savings. Individual circumstances vary.*

For information, please contact Noelle Pincus at 757-723-6358 or visit our website at:
<http://www.saintmarystarofthesea.com/support/virginia-education.cfm>



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Mission Statement

Saint Mary Star of the Sea School provides a Christ-centered Catholic education to PK3 through 8th grade students of all faiths under the leadership of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. The spiritual, intellectual and social development of all students is provided in a safe and disciplined environment. With a solid foundation in academic and moral excellence, the students are prepared for success in high school and beyond.



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- Find us on Twitter  : [@SaintMaryStar](https://twitter.com/SaintMaryStar)
- Connect with us on LinkedIn  : [Saint Mary Star of the Sea School](https://www.linkedin.com/company/SaintMaryStaroftheSeaSchool)
- **Saint Mary Alumni!** We want to hear from you. Please go to our website saintmarystarofthesea.com. Click on the Alumni tab and fill out two surveys: “Tell us about yourself.” and “How did we do?”
- To receive our newsletter regularly please email us at development@saintmarystarofthesea.com

