

THE CRUSADER

A PUBLICATION OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL SCHOOL

FALL 2016/WINTER 2017



Growing in Faith



PLUS

Knights of Columbus Poster Contest
Middle School Musical: *The Lion King Jr.*

LETTER FROM SISTER



“The mission of the Church is to evangelize, for the interior transformation and the renewal of humanity. For young people, the school is one of the ways for this evangelization to take place.”

—*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal*, #66

DEAR FRIENDS OF AQUINAS,

On a hot, sunny morning at the end of August, Aquinas again opened its doors to over 500 students to begin a new and exciting school year. Old friends were greeted and new friends welcomed. Classrooms carefully prepared were now filled with smiling faces, the souls of the little ones who would be served within their walls.

In the document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal*, the Church's Congregation for Catholic Education stated,

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics...The religious dimension of the school climate is expressed through the celebration of Christian values in Word and Sacrament, in individual behavior, in friendly and harmonious interpersonal relationships, and in a ready availability. Through this daily witness, the students will come to appreciate the uniqueness of the environment to which their youth has been entrusted. If it is not present, then there is little left which can make the school Catholic. (#25–26)

It is the genuine prayer and effort of all of us here at Aquinas, that these words ring true in the hearts of our students when they enter through the doors of our school building each day. Aquinas is not just a place where lessons are taught. It is a place where faith is informed and nurtured, where relationships and respect are fostered, and where students, teachers, parents, and staff join together and support one another in a common goal, the goal of Heaven. In this issue of *The Crusader*, we hope to provide you with a glimpse into the day-to-day activities of Aquinas where this is accomplished.

We are proud of our faculty, staff, and students who invest their time, talents, and energy in making Aquinas the wonderful place that it is. Additionally, we are grateful to all of our school parents and benefactors for their continued support and encouragement. Together, we are preparing for a future full of hope.

With deepest gratitude,

Sr. Kateri Rose, O.P.

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School of Excellence**

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Assistant Principal Janelle Ferguson

Director of Admissions Karen Cardinale

Development Specialist Pamela Howser

On the Cover: In September second grade students studied the Sacrament of Baptism. To help them better understand what they were learning, their teacher Sister Sharon Rose, had them act out the baptismal ceremony. Students each had a role to play and they were so excited! Sister Sharon Rose's mother even participated; she created the very authentic looking vestment for the priest. When the day of the big event arrived, students did a beautiful job of reenacting the Sacrament of Baptism. What a wonderful way to make this special sacrament come alive for them.

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School
AQUINAS

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School
13750 Mary's Way | Woodbridge, VA 22191
703.491.4447 | www.aquinastars.org

GROWING IN FAITH: VIRTUE ALL STARS



BY SISTER SHARON ROSE GOELLNER, O.P.

One of the great gifts of educating in a Catholic school is the virtue formation that occurs on a daily basis. St.

Thomas Aquinas Regional School has been a part of this emphasis through the implementation of the Virtues in Practice program. Developed by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation, this program offers a three-year cycle of virtues based on the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. Each month, students from Pre-K all the way to 8th grade are introduced to a new virtue as well as a fitting saint that exemplified that virtue. Our principal, Sister Kateri Rose, introduces that virtue to the whole school at the beginning of each month in an all-school assembly. Monthly virtue home projects are assigned throughout the grades, so that this virtue can be not only a definition that is taught but a habit that is formed.

This year, the program was brought to an even deeper level of practice through the awarding of the Virtue All Star certificates. Each month, teachers are on the lookout

for students who are practicing the virtue and nominate one student per grade as the Virtue All Star of the month. In the month of September, the highlighted virtue was that of charity. One teacher noted for her virtue nominee that this particular student was chosen for her "kindness to others and her willingness to put her classmates' needs before her own." For the October virtue of friendship, another teacher observed how her student interacted with his classmates. This teacher noted that the student "showed true friendship by giving his reward to another student who did not earn one. When asked why he gave his reward away, he said, 'He is my friend and I do not want to see him sad.'" November had teachers on the lookout for students who practiced courtesy, while December focused on having pure hearts for the Infant King as the virtue of purity was introduced. Through this program, both teachers and students are afforded the opportunity to see habits of virtue formed that not only gain recognition at school, but provide excellent human formation and merit for Heaven.



FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

On August 29th, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School began their 39th year of educating young students in the Dominican tradition. It was an exciting day for both students and teachers as over 500 students were welcomed to the new school year. The day started with morning prayer in the gymnasium with both parents and students in attendance. After the students were dismissed to class, parents stayed to visit with each other and Aquinas staff members over coffee and pastries.





CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



St. Thomas Aquinas Regional school, along with Our Lady of Angels parish and the greater Woodbridge community, celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Monday, December 12th. This is truly an exciting day for the students! Beginning with a beautiful bilingual school Mass celebrated in the elaborately decorated church and culminating with a reception featuring a variety of food from all over the Americas, this day is a joyful celebration of our wonderfully diverse population. Leading up to the feast day, students prepare by learning parts of the Mass in Spanish, practicing Spanish songs, and studying the history and message of the apparitions of Our Lady at Tepeyac. This celebration could not be what it is without the dedicated volunteers who do so much. From reaching out to businesses for donations of authentic foods from Latin American countries to preparing colorful decorations, they truly make this day the wonderful experience it is for our students. The opportunity to participate in this special cultural celebration is a blessing for our students and we remain grateful to all who joined together to make it possible.

Thank You!

The Knights of Columbus, Father Kelley Council generously supported St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School's celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They donated funds to cover all the poinsettias for the school hall as well as providing additional funds to support the other expenditures of the celebration including the mariachi band, food, decor and supplies. The Knights were also present at the celebration, in the procession and at the reception.

Interested in joining other Catholic men supporting our community? Then become involved with the Knights of Columbus. More information is available about the organization and the work they do at their website. Visit www.kofcuknights.org and select the *Father Kelley Council*.





DEMONSTRATING THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

On December 22nd, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School held its annual Advent Program. This is a beautiful celebration of the true meaning of Christmas performed by our talented students under the direction of our Music Teacher, Mrs. Riley. This year's celebration included a beautifully choreographed dance performance by the angel choir and several solo performances by

some of our very talented 8th grade students. Of course, everyone loved the enthusiastic singing of the primary students; who can resist those sweet little voices? Thank you to all those who volunteered their time to make the Advent Program such a wonderful celebration. A special thank you to Kelsey Heller for allowing her adorable baby, Joel, to play the role of the baby Jesus. He was precious!

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.” *Isaiah 9:5*



HELPING VETERANS WITH PTSD: AQUINAS ROBOTICS TEAM

BY MS. KATHLEEN WALSH,
STEM TEACHER WITH
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
ROBOTICS TEAM MEMBERS
SOPHIE, CHRISTIAN, JOEY,
AND ASHISH

On Saturday, November 19th, the 8th grade STEM Robotics team participated in their 3rd *First Lego League* (FLL) Robotics Competition. This competition challenges participants through Team-Building Exercises, Completion of Missions, and a Project. The team spent eight weeks preparing for the event.

The theme for the competition this year focused on improving the relationship between humans and animals. Initially, the Robotics team was focusing on prosthetics

designed for both humans and animals but the topic of veterans seemed to come up constantly. The decision was made to shift focus and work instead with PTSD and its effect on veterans. The goal was to improve the relationship between veterans with PTSD and their service dogs. The team devised an idea that would utilize a service dog's ability to sense the precursors to panic attacks. They inserted a button inside a chew toy, which would be located on the service dog at all times. When pressed, the button would transmit an

electronic signal to an actuator clamped around a spray bottle. The spray bottle would contain lavender, chamomile, and/or other substances proven to have calming effects. If a veteran began exhibiting signs of a panic attack, the dog would bite down on the chew toy, sending a signal to the actuator. The actuator would clamp down on the spray bottle, ejecting the substance up, towards the veteran's nose, thereby permitting him to inhale the calming substance. From there the substance would travel throughout the body, calming the veteran. To further aid the team's research, a task force of military working dogs from the Marine Corps Security Battalion and their handlers visited the students in October (see article on page 10). This presentation aided the group with their project, along with bolstering some of the team members' research.

One week before the competition the Robotics team suffered what could have been a competition ending setback. A computer malfunction resulted in all the robot programming data being erased. The students were offered two options—withdraw from the competition or begin the enormous

process of recreating the programming data in one week (this initially took eight weeks). The team stepped up to the plate and chose to work extra hard to reprogram the robot to be ready for the big event.

On the day of the FLL Robotics Competition, the Aquinas Robotics team was ready. They performed their personal best in the third round of the Robotics Missions overcoming the setback of the previous week. Overall the team did extraordinarily well on the Project and scored Exemplary in 11/12 categories. Finally, the students scored Exemplary and Accomplished in all categories for judging on Team Core Values. All judges wrote that the team portrayed Gracious Professionalism on all three aspects of the competition. Additionally, judges wrote individually that the students reflected Inspiration and Teamwork. Having acknowledged that the students bounced back from the obstacles they faced, the judges awarded the team with a Judges Award for perseverance. We are very proud of these students and the amazing work they accomplished. Thank you to all the parents of the Robotics Team members for their support. A special note of thanks to Mrs. Mendell, the assistant coach, who generously

assisted every Saturday for eight weeks to help prepare the students for the tournament at Gar-Field.

TEAM MEMBERS:

- Joey—Team Collaborator/Assistant Press Release Writer
- Maya—Project Consultant/Engineering Consultant/Skit Writer
- Regina—Senior Project Consultant
- Ashish—Project Consultant/Press Release Writer
- Sofia—Senior Project Engineer/Project Leader
- Sophie—Motivational Coach/Press Release Writer
- Anish—Senior Team Engineer
- Christian—Imagination Advocate/Press Release Editor
- William—Programmer/Mission Consultant
- Chris—Senior Programmer/Mission Consultant
- Alex—Team Engineer/Programmer/Jig Maker



St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School
AQUINAS

WELCOME TO
THE DIOCESE
OF ARLINGTON
BISHOP BURBIDGE.
WE LOOK FORWARD
TO MEETING YOU!

DID YOU KNOW...

A working dog is trained in only one skill. For example, a working dog that is trained in bomb detection will not be used to locate drugs.



MILITARY WORKING DOGS

Aquinas STEM students received a demonstration on Military Working Dogs from the Marine Corps Security Battalion Working Dog Unit. This demonstration was part of the students' overall project for the First Lego League Tournament. With the theme of the tournament being Animal Allies, students had to identify a problem that exists between animals and humans and then decide how they could make that relationship better with a realistic solution. The working dog demonstration from the Marines allowed

students to see how dogs can be trained to perform numerous tasks for humans. Along with the demonstration, students interviewed several members of the Marine Corps Security Battalion Working Dog Unit who train the dogs. Students also viewed a DVD called *A Day in the Life of Othello*. This DVD was created by Dee Genetti and is about her service dog, Othello. The students spent October and November researching working dogs as they prepared their project for the competition.

BY ELYSE LANQUAYE

I never realized how rigorous the training for dogs was until today. I knew that it was serious, because, after all, they are trained by the military. Still, I didn't know how serious until today. And I never knew that humans and animals could have such a strong bond. I think it's the training that causes the strong bond we witnessed between the dog and handler. Just from a first glance, you could see how attached these animals were to the people that made them become what they are. It was more than just hardwired obedience or docile servility. The dogs really had affection for their trainers, and the trainers seemed to love their dogs. And I wondered why.

The training isn't only easy stuff like "down" and "sit". They were trained to attack, to sniff out drugs and narcotics. Some are even trained to sniff out explosives and people. These are dangerous things they're dealing with, and I'm sure the repercussions for disobedience aren't lenient. The dogs have to be prepared for dealing with the actual substances, and so do the trainers. Training must be hard for them too, the people, constantly yelling out commands, molding those furry balls of drive and energy into fighting machines. But I think that even if they spend the day disciplining and teaching the dogs, because they're theirs, the dogs grow on them. And they start loving them as they would your average shelter-dog. The dogs feel the love—after all, they are very sensitive creatures—and even though they don't have an intellect, and technically can't reciprocate the love, they can feel affection for their owner. So in their own way, they provide support for their human owners despite the fact the trainers might discipline harshly, and despite the fact the dog might be especially rowdy. Overall, I don't think the intensity of the training surprised me the most, though it did surprise me. It was the bond between man and dog, and how strong it was. It seemed unbreakable.

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School AQUINAS

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR



- Administered and staffed by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia
- Daily faith formation and the instilling of virtues through our Virtues in Practice Program
- Cultivating a love for the Eucharist, Our Lady, and the Church
- A tradition of academic excellence meeting the needs of diverse learners through our regular, resource, and accelerated programs
- Largest middle school athletic program, an award-winning band and chorus, and extracurricular clubs

OPEN HOUSE DATES

Thursday, Apr. 27 at 9:30 A.M.



RSVP: admissions@aquinastars.org or
call 703.491.4447 ext. 216

A Dominican Pre-K through Eighth Grade Blue Ribbon School of Excellence



*Fostering
a Love of God
and a Foundation
in Truth*



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS POSTER CONTEST

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School students participated in the Knights of Columbus Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest again this December. With over 100 entries, one winner and one runner-up was announced in each of the three age categories. The winners and runners-up are as follows:

K to 2nd

Winner: Emma Jefferson
Runner-up: Xavi Hernandez

3rd to 5th

Winner: Abey Paul
Runner-up: Katheryn Fahey

6th to 8th

Winner: Heaven Nartey
Runner-up: Faith McNulty

Congratulations to all our winners and runners-up! All of these entries went on to the state level competition.



MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICAL: *THE LION KING JR.*

BY MRS. LILLIAN RILEY, MUSIC TEACHER



With *The Lion King, Jr.* and a cast and crew of 100 students, the Aquinas middle school embarks once more on our spring musical adventure.

Auditions for the musical were held in November. As a Music Teacher with over 15 years of directing middle school musicals (9 of them at Aquinas), I have never seen as much talent as I did this year! It would have been possible to cast at least 3 shows with different main roles and all would have been very successful. With such great talent and in the interest of creating opportunities for more children, I decided to "double cast" certain characters. We will have one cast on our Friday and Saturday evening performances, and another cast for the Saturday matinee performance. The cast members for the Saturday matinee are also understudies for the evening performances.

In addition to the 13 main roles, we have four ensembles that will sing and dance quite a

lot. They are the Hyenas, the Animals, the Lionesses, and the Grasslands. Each of these groups is made up of 15-20 students.

Even though it is only January, there are already many people hard at work to make this year's show a success. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Brian E.W. McNulty of Shark Byte Productions in charge of designing our scenery pieces. Sr. Kateri Rose will use her talent to choreograph this demanding show. Along with directing the production, I am hard at work making the costumes. We were able to borrow a number of costumes from St. Pius V School in Providence, Rhode Island (Sr. Kateri Rose's former school), but with such a huge cast there is a tremendous amount of costuming still to be done. Along with Mr. McNulty, Sr. Maria Faustina and Mrs. Jeanne Newcomer, our art teacher, are working on creating the masks for the show. Rehearsals started on December 1st!!

In January, a sign up genius account was posted. Using this online tool, parents and other interested volunteers can sign up to use their time and talent in support of our musical. All updates, news, etc. are being posted on the Aquinas webpage under *Parents/ Extra Curricular Activities/Musical*.

I am so grateful to once again have this wonderful opportunity to provide the students with an incredible life experience. The lessons and benefits from participating in the musical go beyond the acting, singing, and dancing involved. Students grow in self-confidence and in responsibility and learn to work with others for a common goal. These are skills that they take with them on their journey through life. Of course, we do have a lot of FUN, too!!

Mark your calendar for March 24th and 25th and join us to see the Middle School roar with the *Lion King Jr.* Tickets will be on sale online starting in the middle of February.



GUESS WHO IS TURNING **40** THIS YEAR??

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS REGIONAL SCHOOL!

On September 6, 1977 under the direction of Bishop Thomas J. Welsh, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School opened its doors. This September we celebrate 40 years of providing quality Catholic education to the Woodbridge area.

Did you attend Aquinas? Do you know someone who attended Aquinas? We are actively seeking alumni to share in our celebration of this anniversary year. Contact Pamela Howser at alumni@aquinastars.org for more information.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY



Aquinas students have been inducted into the National Junior Honor Society, St. Albert Chapter, since 1987. Students must submit an application, which is then reviewed by middle school faculty. Consideration for NJHS is not just limited to the student's academic performance. The five pillars of the NJHS are: scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character. NJHS candidates must excel in and continue to be dedicated to all five of these areas. They are recognized as leaders within our school. Congratulations to the following inductees for the 2016–17 school year:

8TH GRADE INDUCTEES:

Gabrielle Brisbin	Maya Lennon	Sofia Quint
James Choe	Faith McNulty	Erin Reilly
Kiduse Gezehagne	Christopher Mendell	Karina Savidge
Jordyn Grandberry	Regina Nappo	Jonathan Taye
Christian Johnson	Sophie Novitsky	Tennel Thoronka
Harrison Kelly	Anish Pothireddy	Rafael Villagomez
Elyse Lanquaye	Ashish Pothireddy	Garrett Vowinkel

7TH GRADE INDUCTEES:

Mahreen Ahmed
Emory Butler
Kathyleen Caverro
Benedict Dichoso
Soneha Datta
Betty Phan
Anastasia Rao





1



2



3



4



5

1, 2 8th grade students sold fresh Krispy Kreme donuts and hot cocoa to raise money for their class trip to New York City.

3 4th grade students dressed as their favorite saint as part of the celebration of All Saints Day.

4 8th grade team building field trip to Terrapin Adventures.

5 Prince William County Fire Department and EMS visited Aquinas.

6 The Scholastic *Bookaneer* Book Fair had a profit of over \$4,000! This money will purchase new books for the Aquinas library.



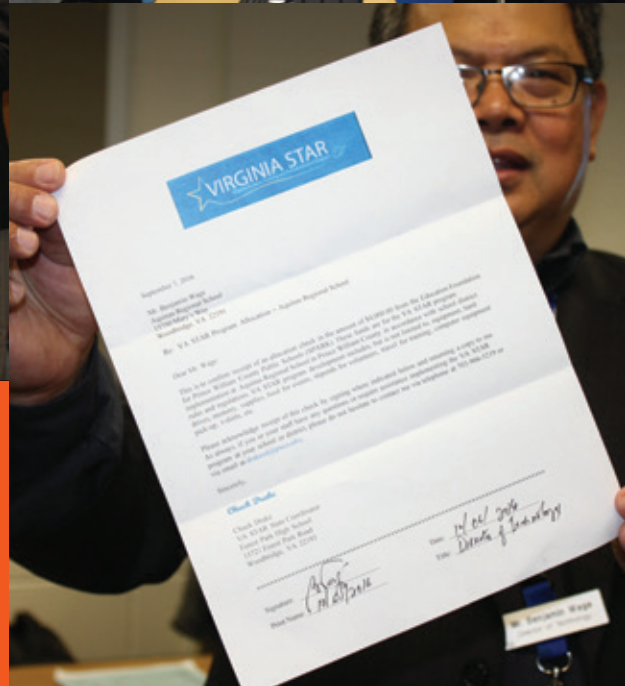
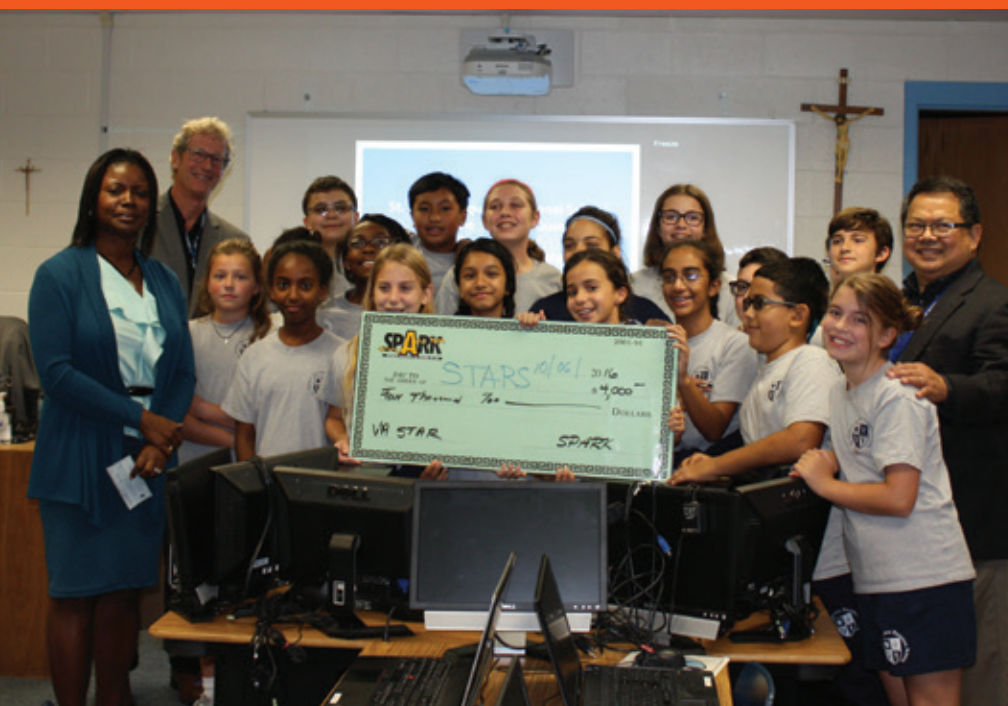
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SERVING OUR COMMUNITY: THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

Aquinas conducted a school wide food drive during the month of November. Each grade had an assigned food item that would traditionally be included in a Thanksgiving meal. On November 17th, Middle School students gathered in the gym to weigh, sort, and bag the donated food. Students also decorated brown bags and created Thanksgiving cards to include with the food items. When it was all said and done, 834.5 pounds of food was donated to the St. Vincent De Paul OLA Conference to benefit needy families. Together students were reminded that they have much to be thankful for and to pray for all those less fortunate.





EQUIPMENT DONATION FROM THE VA STAR PROGRAM



The St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School SWAT (Students Working for Aquinas Technology) team was thrilled to be the recipient of a generous donation of 18 laptop computers and 12 desktop computers along with a \$4,000 check for additional supplies from the VA STAR (Virginia Student Training and Refurbishment) program. VA STAR is a statewide program that teaches students to refurbish surplus computer hardware from government agencies and private companies. Through the initiative of our Technology Teacher, Mr. Ben Wade, Aquinas was identified as the **first** Catholic school VA STAR site. On October 6, Mr. Chuck Drake of the VA STAR program visited Aquinas to present this generous donation to the SWAT team.

The Aquinas SWAT team is comprised of students selected by the moderator based on their technical and computer abilities, good moral character and dedication to serve the school community. Through participation in the VA STAR program, these students have the opportunity to work toward earning industry-standard certifications which can lead to jobs in the field of technology. A requirement of the program is that a number of refurbished computers be donated to individuals in the community identified as in need. To meet that requirement, the Aquinas SWAT team will participate in a Bridging the Gap event where, in collaboration with the St. Vincent de Paul OLA Conference, they will donate the computers they have repaired to those who would not have a computer otherwise.

FALL FESTIVAL 2016



October 14th was a beautiful day for the annual Aquinas Fall Festival; the weather couldn't have been better! After a number of years at St. John Paul the Great Catholic High School, the festival returned to the Aquinas campus. It was a day of family fun with food, music, moon bounces, a lollipop pull, pumpkin painting, and the famous cake walk. A spirited pep rally was held and included several performances by the cheerleaders as well as the exciting introduction of the boys' soccer team. Festival attendees enjoyed food choices

including Subway and Chick-fil-A sandwiches; played games such as corn hole and football toss; and jumped about in the bounce houses. The day concluded with an animated performance of the National Anthem by the 1st grade and an enthusiastic send-off to the big game for the boys' soccer team. Many festival attendees followed the team over to Veterans' Park to watch the game and cheer the boys to victory. A big thank you to our fabulous PTO and all the dedicated volunteers who gave their time to make this day a fantastic success!

AQUINAS FALL SPORTS IN REVIEW



The Aquinas sports articles were written by our talented students. Thank you to Rafael Villagomez, Madeline Esposito, Joseph Wolstenholme, Elizabeth Eckman, and Faith McNulty for their contribution to this issue of the Crusader.

BOYS' SOCCER

Student Reporter: Rafael Villagomez

Coaches: Walter Rivas (Parent) and Tom Demas (Parent)

Number of wins and losses: During the regular season the boys' soccer team had 5 wins and 7 losses. At the Linton Hall Tournament we placed 4th.

Highlights of the season: The highlight of the season for the boys' soccer team was the game we played following the fall festival. As the whole school would be there to cheer us on you could only expect some nervous faces. When the game began the environment around us was truly amazing. The game's final score was 6 to 2 with Aquinas victorious! Goals were scored by Uriel, Dominic, and Rafael.

Biggest improvement: Our biggest improvement of the season was at the tournament. For our second game we went up against the 2nd year champions Holy Cross Academy. Throughout the entire season we lost to them by a landslide with scores like 8 to 1, but at the tournament we pulled together as a team and gave them a run for their money. Although we still lost by a score of 3 to 1, we undoubtedly showed

them our potential as a team even having a better score than the team who lost to them at 2nd place.

Favorite moments: Our team's favorite moments are always the moments off the field. Whether we won or lost the game we always were given the chance to gather and tell jokes about an embarrassing moment that happened during the game or compliment that amazing goal scored by so and so, because at the end of the day we are all friends and teammates who just love to play soccer.

Graduating 8th grade team members:

Eric Rivas, Daniel Fonseca, Joshua Tria, Alex Rubio, Raphael Rodriguez, Rafael Villagomez, and William Riggs.

CHEER

Student Reporter: Madeline Esposito

Coaches: Jenn Collins (Parent, Staff)

Highlights of the season: Our team had so much fun working with the elementary kids who are learning to cheer. Cheer is kind of their time to hang out and talk with their friends. I think most of them have fun because it's their chance to shine and



prove what they can do in front of the older girls. Emma and I also had a great time considering that we are best friends and have the privilege of being the captains of the cheer team. We have been given permission to choreograph the winter dance performance so we will be working on that very soon.

Biggest improvement: The girls have showed a lot of improvement and I think that's amazing. I know winter season is going to be better than our fall season and fall season was pretty great! Now that Emma and I have seen what the girls can do we know what to work on to improve in the winter and even next season.

Favorite moments: Being a part of the Fall Festival Pep Rally was one of our favorite moments. It was so much fun getting to dance up on the stage while everyone was clapping and singing along. Other favorite moments included riding together to the games and sharing funny stories and practicing cheers and dance moves at each other's houses. I love seeing all the girls come in and sit down and talk because I see the bond of the grades combine into one full, great, strong team of girls.

FOOTBALL

Student Reporter: Joseph Wolstenholme

Coaches: John Paul DeGance (Parent) and Tim Eddy (Parent)

Number of wins and losses: The football team had 1 win and 4 losses.

Highlights of the season: The highlight of the season was our win against Potomac School.

Biggest improvement: Our biggest improvement this season was our pass rushing. We showed noticeable signs of improvement on this during our game against Potomac School. On Potomac's last drive our defensive line showed Potomac that they didn't have all day to throw a pass.

Favorite moments: The best moment of our football season was definitely our win against Potomac School. We were losing 14-6 at the end of the first half, but our tenacious defense and quick offense led us to a win. We scored two touchdowns in the second half whereas Potomac didn't score at all. I really liked how our linebackers (Justin Newman, Tyler Grey, and Jacob Moran) showed great intelligence in deciding whether to blitz or cover the pass. Another highlight of our season was Ethan Eddy's amazing passing skills. Whenever we



Thank you to all our dedicated coaches who volunteer their time and talent. Our Aquinas athletics program would not be what it is without each of you. Thank you for all you do!!



needed about fifteen yards, he was always able to identify the receiver and connect for the first down.

Graduating 8th grade team members:

Kareem Dhillon, Ethan Eddy, Troy Guo, Alex Saint-Victor, and Joey Wolstenholme

JV VOLLEYBALL

Student Reporter: Elizabeth Eckman

Coach: Anne Eckman (Parent)

Number of wins and losses: The JV Volleyball team had 5 wins and 4 losses.

Highlights of the season: Our best team moments were when we would really get into the game. We would all be hustling, calling, and volleying the ball. It was definitely more fun than having just one or two hits over.

Biggest improvement: Our biggest improvement was our serving. We went from maybe six or seven serves over to almost every serve going over.

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Student Reporter: Faith McNulty

Coach: Hannah McNulty (Alumni, Staff)

Number of wins and losses: Girls Varsity Volleyball had an 8-0 regular season and placed 2nd in the VCEA volleyball tournament (Virginia Catholic Education Association).

Highlights of the season: The highlight of the season for us was when we beat Flint Hill. For as long as I can remember, we have never won a game against them. It was so exciting! All the girls on the team were setting up the ball and passing and receiving the ball really well. We played as a cohesive team. It all clicked.

Biggest improvement: We came together as a team. We started the season with only 3 team members who had played together on varsity in the past. It was a rocky start and we were only looking to get the ball over the net, but by the end we learned how to play as a team and not as individuals.

Favorite moments: Our favorite moments were when our coach would tell us to "shake it off" and make us dance it out even if we were on the court. It worked though. She could always bring us around and pull us back in if we got overwhelmed or off kilter.

Graduating 8th grade team members:

Lauren Bly, Jordyn Grandberry, Maya Lennon, Faith McNulty, Ashley Offenberg, Sophia Quint, Karina Savidge, Nina Stolmeier, and Alissa Turner.

RunFit KIDZ

Congratulations to the RunFit Kidz! Our 2nd through 5th grade participants wrapped up another successful season with their 5K Celebration Run. Our runners came out and enjoyed the beautiful weather and ran a FANTASTIC race! Special congratulations to Eric Benner who placed first for our school with a run time of 22:10.78. We are so proud of all of our runners . . . Way to Go!!

AQUINAS & John Paul

BUILDING TRADITIONS TOGETHER



EVENTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Basketball Tournament: February 25

Baseball Clinic: March 4

JP5K Run for Options: April 8

Beauty and the Beast: May 4–7

For more information, and to register, please visit jpthegreat.org today!

For Parents:

Workshop: Parenting In the Age of Social Media & Technology,
featuring keynote speaker, Dr. Ray Guarendi—*February 11*

Bioethics Seminar: “Called to Happiness” a 5-session overview
of the semester class, taught by Sr. Terese Aure, O.P.—

Tuesday evenings, starting February 21



jpthegreat.org

Saint John Paul the Great Catholic High School
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St. Thomas Aquinas Regional School admits students of any race, color, and national origin.



SAVE THE DATES

FEBRUARY 10

School Spirit Night at Sweet Frog

MARCH 24 AND 25

The Middle School Spring Musical

APRIL 27

Open House at 9:30 AM

APRIL 28

Race for Education

MAY 5

Grandparent's Day

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