SCHOOLS 2022 SUPPLEMENT

JOY: Cathedral Catholic High School students celebrated during Wish Week, where the campus community worked to grant Options special education students a wish in early April.

Thank You!
Director transformed the way the diocese’s schools worked together. Page 2

National Winner
Principal receives top honors for her leadership in bilingual education. Page 4

Champion
Local student wins first place in academic decathlon’s national competition. Page 6

Smiles Returning
Schools Embrace Joys of ‘Normal’

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Director Transformed Way Schools Worked

By Denis Grasska

John Galvan is a firm believer in listening to “that quiet whisper of the Spirit.”

Eight years ago, it was that whisper that convinced him to leave the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, where he had been a teacher and administrator for about 20 years, to serve as director of the diocesan Office of Schools.

More recently, that same whisper has intimated that it’s time to move on.

When the current school year concludes, Galvan will begin a new job with the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), where he will serve as director of catechetical assessments. In that role, he will oversee two assessment tools, Information for Growth and Assessment of Child Religious Education, that assist in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of religious education programs nationwide.

“Much like the way I came into the Office for Schools, I’m going into NCEA with a renewed purpose, with fresh energy, and really believing that it’s work that matters,” said Galvan, who will continue to reside in San Diego.

A search committee headed by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan has been interviewing prospective candidates for the diocesan superintendent of schools position. It is expected that Galvan’s successor will be named by late April or early May.

During his tenure in the Schools Office, Galvan distinguished himself as a bridge-builder.

Looking back, he takes pride in the “culture of collaboration” that he helped to foster among the diocese’s 42 Catholic elementary schools. He noted the tendency of individual schools to work in silos and view neighboring schools as competitors. He added that he and his staff strove to overcome that mentality — and he believes they succeeded.

Dr. Julie Cantillon, associate director of the Schools Office, described Galvan as “the straw that stirs the drink.”

“He gets people talking, gets people working together, breaks down those barriers,” she said, adding that he does so with humility and humor.

Cantillon said the office now has groups of educators who come together regularly for leadership development, as well as networks of schools working together on projects.

Matt Cordes, also an associate director of the Schools Office, said Galvan succeeded in “getting everyone to buy into this idea that there was something special about Catholic education in San Diego, that it was something that wasn’t happening on an individual site but was happening across two counties and one amazingly large diocese.”

“He got everyone to buy into that system ... and has fundamentally changed the way that we work together in San Diego,” he said.

Pointing to increased student enrollment diocese-wide and many schools with waiting lists, Cordes said, “We’re witnessing the resurgence of Catholic education in San Diego.”

He credits this to Galvan’s leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, when local Catholic schools re-opened and resumed in-person instruction much earlier than their public-school counterparts.

This academic year, enrollment increased by 14.8 percent at local Catholic elementary schools and by 4.2 percent at Catholic high schools. The total Catholic school student population is currently about 14,385 — an increase of 1,475 from the previous year.

“John and the Catholic schools will truly miss working with this gentleman. John, I know and strongly believe that he will continue to spread the message of love and optimism wherever he goes.”

“I am excited for John to take this next step in his professional career. I will miss working alongside him ... I am a better leader because of his mentorship in the formative years of my career.”

“For me, this year, our Office not only interacts with administrative diocesan offices like Human Resources and Finance, which might be expected, but also works closely with pastors, like the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry and the Office for Family Life and Spirituality, in recognition of a common mission.

As part of the Schools Office’s collaboration with USD, the Torero Promise represents “a big win” for the diocese, said Galvan. The program provides a pathway for students from the five local Catholic high schools to continue their Catholic education at USD and even to receive a level of financial assistance.

Another significant collaboration between the diocese and USD has been the Academy for Catholic Teaching, a master’s and credential cohort program, that prepares highly qualified, credentialed educators to teach in San Diego’s Catholic elementary and middle schools.

And new collaborations with USD continue to emerge. For example, a proposal was recently drafted for a program that would enlist USD interns to provide counseling at parochial schools.

Shortly before Galvan assumed leadership of the Schools Office, USD released a comprehensive report on the state of the local Catholic school system. It made a series of recommendations, including that the value of teachers, administrators, pastors and volunteers be recognized publicly and that the diocese form strong partnerships with USD and Escondido-based John Paul the Great Catholic University.

“I’m very pleased to say, within a few years, we made traction on every single one of those recommendations,” Galvan said.

But the past eight years haven’t been free from challenges and disappointments, including the closing of five schools.

Old Mission Montessori School in Oceanside, Holy Family School in Linda Vista and St. Michael Academy in Paradise Hills closed their doors in 2016, 2018 and 2021, respectively. In 2018, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and Blessed Sacrament parochial schools also closed; however, they merged to form a new diocesan school called St. Katharine Drexel Academy, which is located at the site of the former Blessed Sacrament school.

The Schools Office pledged...
financial assistance through eighth grade to any students from these schools who wished to enroll in another local Catholic school.

Galvan acknowledged that there are times when closing a school is “the prudent thing” to do, though it is always difficult because of the history of those schools and the strong attachment that families have to them.

Dr. Kevin Calkins, president of Cathedral Catholic High School, is among many in the local Catholic educational community who are sorry to see Galvan go.

“At first, I was sad (to hear that he was stepping down) because John is such a gift to the diocese,” said Calkins. However, he added that Galvan’s new position with the NCEA means that more people and schools “will benefit from his gifts.”

“John is a quintessential professional,” he said. “He helped make the Schools Office a valuable resource to school principals and a welcoming and collaborative space for all Catholic schools.”

“While I am so excited for John to take this next step in his professional career, I will miss working alongside him,” said Kelly Bonde, principal of St. Katharine Drexel Academy. “His work for our diocese has propelled Catholic education in San Diego towards a higher level of excellence, and he has created a collegial, encouraging and supportive atmosphere among Catholic school leaders.”

On a personal level, Bonde said, “I am a better leader because of his mentorship in the formative years of my career.”

Galvan also has been a committed partner to pastors like Father Devdas Masillamony of Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley. When he first met Galvan in 2015, Father Masillamony was newly assigned to the parish; it was his first time pastoring a parish with a school.

“Whenever there were challenging times with regard to (Santa Sophia Academy), John guided and encouraged me along the way,” the priest recalled.

He particularly praised Galvan for his leadership during the COVID pandemic, during which he “remained a beacon of hope, support and strength.”

Describing Galvan as “a true servant-leader,” Father Masillamony said, “I and the Catholic schools will truly miss working with this gentleman, John. I know and strongly believe that he will continue to spread the message of love and optimism wherever he goes.”

Galvan continued from Page 2

“John is a quintessential professional. He helped make the Schools Office a valuable resource to school principals and a welcoming and collaborative space for all Catholic schools.”

He succeeded in getting everyone to buy into this idea that there was something special about Catholic education in San Diego, that it was something that wasn’t happening on an individual site but was happening across two counties and one amazingly large diocese.”
Principal of ‘Special School’ Wins Top Award

By Iliana De Lara

CHULA VISTA — All the sacrifices her parents made for their daughter have paid off.

That’s what Leticia Oseguera thought upon learning that she had been named one of this year’s outstanding Catholic educators in the country.

“I’m so glad that my parents could see the fruit of their work and the many sacrifices they made throughout their life so I could have access to education,” said Oseguera, who immigrated with her family to the United States when she was a girl.

On March 29, the National Catholic Educational Association named Oseguera, the principal of Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy, as one of 13 recipients of the 2022 “Lead. Learn. Proclaim. Award.” The honor recognizes outstanding efforts, contributions and achievements on behalf of Catholic education.

She received two nominations, one from her school and the other from Boston College, where she trains leaders of an organization that supports Catholic schools with bilingual programs.

Juan Diego Academy is the first TK to eighth grade Catholic dual-language school (English and Spanish) in San Diego County.

“I believe that the passion I have for Catholic bilingual education is something palpable,” she said in an interview. “I always take advantage of any opportunity I get to share it because I truly believe that it’s our duty to try to bring bilingual education to more schools.”

She has been an educator for 19 years, the last five serving as principal of the academy in Chula Vista.

“Leticia Oseguera is a consummate professional with high standards of excellence. She is a humble and hard worker who loves her school community and lives her Catholic school call to mission with integrity,” said John Galvan, director of the diocese’s Office for Schools.

He said that she had essentially built from the ground up the only dual-language Catholic school model in the diocese in partnership with Boston College.

“Her leadership has been the difference in creating a healthy, happy and innovative experience of faith and learning for families. I am proud to call Leticia a colleague, and our diocese is blessed because of her valuable contribution.”

Oseguera was born in a “tiny town, very rural” near the city of Zamora, Michoacán. Her father, who was only able to attend first grade, decided to bring his family to the United States to give them an opportunity for a better future. She was 8 years old when they immigrated.

They arrived in San Diego, settling in the Logan Heights neighborhood, without speaking a word of English.

“I had to learn it very quickly because I knew that my family depended on me; I knew that my parents needed help,” she recalled.

She’s keenly aware of how coming to this country changed her life, “that’s why I try to help others; that’s what drove me to go into education.”

She recalled two personal experiences, in particular, when her teachers did not have the tools to support immigrant students. She also encountered teachers, however, who recognized her potential and helped her.

When it came time to enter college, Oseguera was sure she wanted to be a teacher. She studied Spanish-St. Charles Catholic School

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language literature at UCSD, and earned a teaching credential at Claremont Graduate University, where she also received her master’s in education.

She worked in Los Angeles for the first two years of her career, then returned to San Diego to teach Spanish-language literature at San Ysidro High School.

“It was a pleasure to teach there because I could identify with students who had experiences very similar to mine,” she said. “I could be a model for them, help them, support them.”

She had been there five years when she seized an opportunity to teach Spanish at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

“I saw it as a dream I never knew I had,” she recalled. “Working at OLP was marvelous; feeling physically and mentally the peace and tranquility that come from a Catholic school environment was like feeling God every day.”

She served at OLP for seven years, the last three gaining experience on the administrative side, which interested her. She managed the languages department at the school, was in charge of various programs that supported students academically and socially, and had the opportunity to direct summer school. She decided to pursue a second master’s in School Administration.

“I discovered that, as a director, you have influence that goes beyond the classroom. What I have always wanted to do is to help students, and this now gave me the opportunity to help more people. That’s when I decided to pursue the principal’s position that opened up at Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy.”

In its second year, the school needed a leader who could build its bilingual program — and someone familiar with the Latino community.

“The school had so many needs. It was like a child with so much potential but had not received all that was needed to shine.”

Students learn in English and Spanish at the school, and are expected to fully function in both languages when they graduate.

“We have this population whose mother tongue is English, and we have this other population whose mother tongue is Spanish. We also have students who are bilingual, who speak both languages at home, and read both languages. They build friendships and that’s where a sense of community is born, the idea that we’re all in it together,” she said. “It’s beautiful.”

Juan Diego Academy began to grow gradually, and this summer will be graduating its first generation of eighth-graders.

“Today we’re a completely different school,” she said.

“A big part of the early years was forming a community among ourselves. We knew that it would be a challenge to build a school, but we supported one another, looked for solutions, working as a team.

“The reality is that we’re a special team, a special school.”

It all comes down to the fundamentals, she said.

“At times in education, the word ‘love’ is beginning to get lost while it should be the base of everything we do. In our school, we live and breathe a sense of love.”

Information about this school: materdeicatholic.org/mdjda

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Joie De La Rosa, an eighth-grader at St. Rose of Lima School in Chula Vista, is a first-place winner in the Catholic Academic Junior High Decathlon’s national competition.

Student teams from about 170 schools in 13 Catholic dioceses took part in the event, which was held virtually on March 26. Awards are given for individual performance in eight subject areas, as well as team performance in two events: a logic quiz featuring 20 challenging problems and a “Super Quiz” with 50 multiple-choice questions in five subject areas.

Joie won a first-place award in the English category.

“Being one of the first-place winners at the recent Catholic Academic Junior High Decathlon’s national competition means that my efforts in studying have paid off,” Joie told The Southern Cross. “It means that I have learned about my chosen subject, and I am ready to learn more and enhance my skills.”

In addition to Joie, there was also another local winner: St. Joseph Academy, located in San Marcos, took first place in the “Super Quiz” portion of the competition.

Prior to the national competition, Joie had participated in the San Diego Regional Academic Junior High Decathlon, held March 5 at St. Augustine High School, where she placed first in Language Arts and third in Writing.

“Joie is the most focused student I have ever taught, and her attention to detail is impeccable,” said Frampton, who noted that her student is “at the top of her class” and has won a full scholarship to Mater Dei Catholic High School in Chula Vista.

“We are so blessed to have a daughter like Joie; she is a special gift from above,” said Joie’s parents, Raul and Dhivara De La Rosa. She has grown “just a blink of an eye, and she has done so much to make us proud.”

The De La Rosas also praised St. Rose of Lima School for providing their daughter with such a well-rounded, quality education.

“We are doing their best of (their) ability to share their vast knowledge on the subject they are teaching,” said the couple, whose son, Jeb, is a fourth-grader at the school. “In addition, St. Rose offers many extracurricular opportunities and after-school programs,” like Academic Decathlon.

When she isn’t winning Academic Decathlon competitions, Joie likes to sing in the St. Rose of Lima Children’s Choir and in the school’s Glee program. She also enjoys drawing, coloring and making mini-collages.
A Commitment to Catholic Education

For more than 70 years, the University of San Diego has been committed to promoting Catholic education. In 2017, we launched the **Torero Promise**, a guaranteed admissions program creating a clear path to USD for the students of Catholic high schools in the San Diego diocese. Since 2017, more than 500 students from these high schools have been offered admission to USD. By meeting 100% of a family’s financial need, we look forward to making USD a reality for even more Catholic families in the future.*

*Need determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
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Catholic educators across the San Diego Diocese share their stories of how their schools are emerging stronger than ever after coping with two years of the pandemic. Their accounts reveal tireless work, an innovative spirit and an unshakeable faith that lifted their students and families.

Stella Maris Academy

The accomplishment I am most proud of this school year is not really my accomplishment, but the accomplishments and achievements of my outstanding students, who have been bringing the brightest rays of sunshine to Stella Maris Academy each and every day.

These kindergarten students have been resilient, positive and enthusiastic. They were able to maintain their passion and love of learning all year long. My students have flourished and grown, despite having to navigate some unexpected obstacles, like mask-wearing, quarantines and COVID tests, to name a few.

These incredible kids were ready and willing to take on everything that this year brought us, and they did it with excitement, kindness and respect. They made every single moment of our time together full of fun and friendship.

My students may only be 5 or 6 years old, but they are wise beyond their years with the patience, flexibility and grace that they have shown throughout a challenging year.

Whitney George | Kindergarten Teacher

Cathedral Catholic High School

I knew coming into this school year that Day 1 would be the most important first day of my career.

We were returning to the classroom after five quarters of online/hybrid learning. There would be sophomores stepping foot on campus who had never physically been to the “Home of the Dons.” The last time our upperclassmen were all together was when they were freshmen.

We were at a pivotal moment, and I had to get it right. My vocation as a Catholic educator is to make my students feel known and loved, not just by me, but by God the Father. So, I sat down the week before school started and wrote seven promises to my students for our school year. These promises are posted at the front of our classroom and I use them to guide my instruction and relationships daily. The poster reads:

I interact with many groups of students on campus: the kids in my math classes, whom I have the honor of teaching my favorite academic subject; the kids in Dons for Life, whom I have been entrusted to lead as the advisor of the pro-life movement on campus; and the varsity baseball team, which I proudly serve as “The Voice of the Dons” at home games.

Because of the uncertainty of the last two years, we are all craving authentic connection and flexibility.

I’m in my 15th year of teaching, but this year has been the year I’ve grown the most as an educator. Like raindrops rolling down a window, no two take the same path. But they all come together to nourish the ground and grow new life.

It’s springtime now — my favorite season — and I am so grateful to be a part of the Cathedral Catholic community. We’ve been through so much together: navigating the pandemic; the deaths of co-workers Tammy Niu, Mario Pierro and Zak Myers; learning all the while how to keep moving forward despite the challenges and grief.

There’s no place I’d rather be than at Cathedral as a Catholic educator. Roll Dons!

Christine LaPorte | Math Teacher

Smiles Return

Continued on Page 9
Joyfully Back to ‘Normal’

St. Katharine Drexel Academy

When I think of the 2021-2022 school year, the word I think of most is growth. We have seen wonderful and sustainable growth in our enrollment this year, as we continue to welcome new families to the St. Katharine Drexel Academy community that feel strongly about our mission, vision, faith and innovative pedagogical approach.

We’ve seen growth academically, in students gaining confidence, taking ownership, and making up for lost time. We’ve seen growth socially, in students being re-educated in navigating friendships, sportsmanship, and practicing inclusivity, not only in our school, but as global citizens of this city, country and world.

We’ve also seen growth in the strength of our community. We all adhered to and respected community health guidelines out of care for one another (and continue to do so) while also re-instituting safe and fun community events that have strengthened school culture.

Lastly, I think we have seen the most growth in our faith. Our faith is what has anchored us through the last few challenging years, and preserved and guided us through our challenging decisions and our most joyful moments.

Many of our Catholic schools boasted about our resilience and flexibility to open for in-person and online learning in the Fall of 2020. This year, it was clear how many academic, social and emotional deficits children experienced from a year and a half of fragmented schooling.

As we entered this school year, we were ecstatic to cautiously add back some of the activities that make school feel normal for our students, such as mixing grade levels for STEM instruction and Faith Hour, and that reinforce the social and academic opportunities our school provides them. It’s almost as if we didn’t realize the impact of something as simple as being able to see a child smile, until we could no longer see it.

Despite this year being full of challenges, I believe it has been one of our school’s most formative years. It has confirmed our identity and existence and the necessity of the work we do. The foundation has been laid, the work has been done and now we celebrate this growth as we look to the future, where we expect it to continue.

I’ve never been prouder of our school and look forward to seeing where the future takes us!

Kelly Bonde | Principal

St. Charles School

March 16, 2020, was the start of a course at St. Charles that none of us could have imagined. That Friday afternoon, the diocesan Office for Schools informed all schools that we were to move all students to distance learning.

Understanding that this was an enormous undertaking, the office requested that our schools be ready to offer distance learning by the following Thursday. At the end of the school day, the entire faculty stayed late into the day. They worked with one another, supporting each other. They formulated a game plan. They left the school that evening with everything they might need to successfully teach from home.

All their hard work and determination was evident when every student, in every grade level, began attending distance-learning classes not on Thursday as requested by the Schools Office but on Monday. Our students did not lose even one instructional day.

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All their hard work and determination was evident when every student, in every grade level, began attending distance-learning classes not on Thursday as requested by the Schools Office but on Monday. Our students did not lose even one instructional day.

This determination continued into the following school year when we welcomed our students with the option...
High School Transformed During Pandemic

By Sister Lupita Hernández, SJS

Vincent Memorial Catholic High School, the only Catholic high school in the Imperial Valley, returned to in-person learning this past August for the current academic year.

The pandemic hit our area particularly hard. We spent nearly a year and a half learning exclusively online since the schools closed on March 13, 2020.

When the students returned to our campus in Calexico this year, they arrived at a totally transformed school. For them, it was a brand-new school. Not only had the old trailers we had used for decades as classrooms been removed, but we had a new school building, new sidewalks and a new staff parking area. The outside of the gym had been painted to match the main field and its entryway, as well as the other existing classrooms, had been remodeled.

We now have a new front gate, which is very attractive. It carries the slogan of our religious order, Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament: “Blessed be God.”

Our new building has seven classrooms and a science lab. It has bathrooms for the students and for faculty, a copy center and, last but not least, our chapel.

When the students arrived last summer for orientation, they were stunned at what they saw.

“Wow! This is an American school!”

they exclaimed.

This was especially true for the juniors and seniors, who had seen their time at the school interrupted for a long time.

This year, due to the pandemic, we adapted our schedule in a way that we could avoid having the students eat lunch at school. For the first semester, they took seven classes. Six were at the school, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and then they went home. The last class was online, from 2 to 2:45. For the second semester, we had no online classes; we were only on campus from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

About 67% of our students live in Mexicali and cross the border to go to school. In Mexico, most people eat at 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Lunch at school. For the first semester, we were only on campus from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For the second semester, we had no online classes; we were only on campus from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

to avoid having the students eat lunch at school. As the pandemic has eased, it is great to be able to return to having our traditional events. We are having the Junior Ring Ceremony on May 19, when the juniors get their school rings, with seniors as their sponsors.

We are going to have our May Crowning like before, for the fidelity students. These students have been in Catholic education from first through 12th grade. We are going to take the students to Grad Night at Disneyland on May 31, something we were not able to do the last two years because of the pandemic. Our graduation on May 27 will be at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church as before.

There is more construction to come at our school. We have a new project that is scheduled to start in May and be finished in December. We are going to build two more classrooms and a student center, where the students will be able to eat lunch and stay after school to rest or do their homework, all with AC, away from the heat.

We have had a big increase in our enrollment. Last year, we had 262 students and, this year, we are at 309. Part of the growth is due to our teachers, who taught online all last year. They did an awesome job. They were always there for our students. The parents were very happy with the schedule we followed. Some parents told me that they even sat with their children to hear some of the classes and really enjoyed them.

We have received great support from our school community during this difficult time. I am grateful for our benefactors, especially Bishop Robert McElroy and the diocese.

Everything we have accomplished is through God’s grace. I haven’t done anything on my own. He works through me.

As the year is coming to a close, I feel very thankful for all of the people who believed in us. I am especially thankful for all of our faculty and staff, for their hard work and dedication. They helped us to make a difference in the lives of our young people. May God bestow abundant blessings upon the people who have believed and supported Vincent Memorial.
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Smiles Return – St. Charles School  Continued from Page 9

of in-person or online learning. Our teachers now had to develop a new skill set, hybrid learning.

The joy of having students back on campus was immense. The responsibility of keeping them safe and healthy was even bigger. The COVID guidelines we adopted were rigorous. The cooperation of parents, students and staff, through the two years of having students on our campus during a pandemic, has led to our never having to close the school, nor a single classroom, for quarantine due to exposure to the virus. Those of us that work in schools know that is an extraordinary accomplishment.

We knew there would be a loss of learning during the pandemic. What surprised and concerned us even more was the emotional toll it has taken on our students, our families and ourselves. We began meeting and discussing how we could further support our students in their social-emotional learning.

New behavior and discipline issues surfaced. It was clear to us, as a staff, that our lives had all been greatly altered and so too should our approach to discipline. In most situations, we have been addressing issues using Restorative Justice Practices, which empower students to resolve conflicts on their own.

The greatest achievement of the past two years is that we have been able to offer a safe place where our students can come to school to learn and to heal. This would not have been possible, without the monumental hard work and dedication of our staff in support of our students’ academic and emotional growth.

Sylvia Benning | Principal

St. Gregory the Great Catholic School

This has certainly been a year to remember — an unprecedented time of challenge as we journeyed through the COVID-19 pandemic together. Our Guardian spirit at St. Gregory the Great Catholic School could not be masked as we experienced Zoom, temperature checks, wearing face masks, modified quarantine, in-school antigen COVID-19 testing, and social distancing.

Indeed, many of the challenges we faced yielded multiple blessings, which made our school community stronger and more unified. God’s grace overflowed, providing us with courage, resilience, stamina and hope.

Upon reflection, the teachers at St. Gregory the Great agree that the most challenging aspect of the past two years has been making a social-emotional connection with current and many new students through the barriers of computer screens and face masks. They heroically overcame this challenge with abundant measures of love, care, patience, innovation and energy.

Maeve O’Connell | Principal

Smiles Return  Continued on Page 14

Our greatest joy was to return to school in-person following the COVID closure, and eventually have the option to unmask at school to enjoy the beautiful smiles and facial expressions of our students.

Maintaining and strengthening connectivity between home, school and parish became a priority this year. It was our blessing to provide resources for our families to support the establishment of a sacred space in the home. Bridging the gap between home and school was tested with the suspension of parent volunteer activity at school.

Enhancing our communication methods became crucial in connecting our parents to school and classroom life. Publishing our weekly Guardian Newsletter digitally allowed us to include videos of classroom and school events and hyperlinks to online resources. The nature of distance learning during the pandemic caused a shift to digital platforms like Google Classroom and Seesaw, which our teachers continue to use to support student learning to this day.

Adding live-streamed liturgies to our Mass schedule allowed us to increase our celebration of the Eucharist from bi-monthly to weekly — a major blessing since our church and school campuses are separated by a significant distance.

As we journey through the final weeks of this school year, it is exciting to see the return of many events, such as Grandparents Day, the Father/Daughter Dance and Mother/Son Night, Field Day; the faculty vs. eighth grade kickball game, reopening our Student Store, and establishing School Safety Patrol. Adding the Spring Concert (themed “Beatlemania”) and Sports Recognition Night to our May events calendar makes this year even more special.

It is said that “God never gives us more than we can handle.” Our community’s faith, prayer, innovation and resilience are the beacons that have allowed St. Gregory the Great Catholic School to triumph during unprecedented times. We remain “Guardian Strong!”

Maeve O’Connell | Principal

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- Considers Others’ Ideas
- Gives Feedback

Culturally Competent Citizen
- Has Social Awareness
- Is Empathetic
- Practices Self-Discipline

Innovative Problem Solver
- Learns & Grows from Mistakes
- Takes Risks
- Works to Solve Problems

Faith-Filled Christian
- Serves Others
- Has a Relationship with Christ
- Models Gospel Teaching

Collaborative Communicator
- Writes & Speaks Clearly
- Listens to Others
- Considers Others’ Ideas
- Gives Feedback

Culturally Competent Citizen
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Innovative Problem Solver
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Smiles Return  Continued from Page 12

Good Shepherd School

As I reflect on these past two years of teaching at Good Shepherd during the pandemic, I feel grateful for the many accomplishments we have achieved as a school community. The overall achievement I feel most proud of for our school is maintaining a strong sense of belonging and community among the students and families.

This sense of community is built upon the three core values of faith, hope and love mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Romans. The Good Shepherd faculty and staff found strength in our faith, believed in hope for better times, and nurtured love for each other and the school as the foundation to a strong sense of community.

Our faith, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, guided us to help all students recognize that they belong to one faith community. This faith helped us be flexible and to create and update guidelines as needed.

As the school and parish communities are integral to each other, the students were fortunate to celebrate Mass using the outdoor altar that the parish constructed in early April 2020. Bringing camping chairs and jackets if needed, the students and teachers enjoyed weekly outdoor Mass and special celebrations such as the Missionary Childhood Association Mass and First Communion with the faith-formation students. We were, and still are, one community in faith, whether celebrating Mass inside or outside of the church building.

We relied on hope in knowing that our school and faith community will work together to overcome challenges. The seventh- and eighth-graders, especially, held onto hope with the return of many activities due to improved COVID conditions.

I was thrilled to organize a “make-up” of the sixth-grade camp in Julian that had been canceled for two consecutive years. The older students experienced the community bond as they worked together to bus the tables, sing campfire songs, or achieve their goal on the high ropes challenge. With the unexpected gift of snow mid-week, the students and I felt renewed in our hope in the strength and commitment of the school community.

Our love for each other and for the school served as the foundation of this strong sense of community. The students and staff reflected the love and respect for each other through following the many health and sanitation procedures.

The teachers reflected the love of our students and learning as we used new websites and technologies to teach in class, or on Zoom, or both groups at the same time! Since many Good Shepherd families chose distance learning for the children, the teachers adapted curriculum, learned strategies, and underwent training to show their love for and meet the needs of all learners. Our Good Shepherd school faculty and staff relied on faith, hope and love to maintain and nurture a strong sense of community despite all the challenges during the pandemic. I feel our loving and amazing community will come out of this pandemic with renewed confidence and hope for a brighter future for our children!

Teresa McKinney | Middle School Teacher

Smiles Return  Continued from Page 12

GOOD SHEPHERD SCHOOL
Office Website: SDATHOLICSCHOOLS.ORG

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Teresa McKinney | Middle School Teacher
Cristo Rey Cuts Ribbon on Sports Court

Board chair Dean Dwyer and basketball player Carlos C. did the honors of cutting the ribbon.

The on-campus space will be used for sports practices, physical education classes, recreation and more. The ribbon-cutting was a time to celebrate everyone who contributed to the project and give the students an opportunity to start enjoying the court.

Donors to the project included: Dean Dwyer, The St. Augustine Foundation, the Eudists, Damian Esparza, Gil Brady, John Yacoville, Bob and Pat Nascenzi, Martha and Gerry Wyrich, Mark Zangrando and Anjie Frias. The contractor was Clint Hardick of Echo Sport, Inc.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CRISTO REY SAN DIEGO HIGH SCHOOL

INAUGURATION: Cristo Rey San Diego High School held a ribbon-cutting ceremony March 31 to mark the opening of the school’s new sports court.

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