



SMPA Middle School News

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Mark Your Calendar!!!

No School - Monday, June 9.

Monday, June 9, the faculty and staff will be attending a Retreat Day at Mercy Center in Madison, Ct. This day is not on your calendar but has been recently scheduled. Please mark your calendars.



Graduation for Class of 2008 - Sunday, June 8 at 5 p.m.

We invite the entire SMPA community to join us at the graduation of the Class of 2008 on Sunday, June 8 at 5 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church. By permission of the Archdiocese of Hartford, the seven eighth graders will receive their diploma from Sacred Heart St. Peter School which they attended for many years. Historically, they will be the last class to receive this diploma after more than 100 years of service to Connecticut families.

Our congratulations to Lucy Boomer who will be attending High School in the Community, Daisha Brabham, Mercy High School, Shaheda Clark, Career High School, Dave Cuffy, Career High School, Jasmine Galloway, Hyde Leadership School, Taylor McNeal, Eli Whitney Technical School, and Briana Woods who will be attending Lauralton Hall,

First Students Accepted for 2008-2009

The first round of acceptances for the 2008-2009 school year were sent out last week. With the changes in our admissions policy, we have accepted nine students, put one on a wait list, and were unable to accept six applicants. Our sixth grade girls class is full and our sixth grade boys class has openings for two students. If you know of students who meet our eligibility standards, please ask them to apply. You can help to create the student body of your child's school. There are openings in our incoming fifth grade.

Pre-K Enrollment Open

We are now accepting applications for our Pre-K program. Please help us spread the word to New Haven families with 3 and 4 year old. The new school year begins July 1, 2008. Applications can be picked up in the Main Office. Please contact Allison Rivera for more information at (203) 772-2424.



Honors Announced for Third Term

At our Honors Assembly held at Sacred Heart Church, honors were awarded to students for their third term achievements. On that day we recognized:

Academic Honor Roll

First Honors;

Grade 5: Lennix Cuffy and Madiah Gant

Grade 7: Chanttal Cabral, Quinisha Penn and Kahdeem Cohens

Second Honors:

Grade 5: Alisha Brabham, Danale Frison, Marinel Gonzalez

Christopher Coriano, Chase Hart, Maliek Williamson

Grade 6: Xena Cordero, Cherry Gear, Xena-Aixa Greene, Timesha Conyers-Hope

Grade 7: Maria Gant

DeAndre Handley, Branden Rose, Ezequiel Velazquez

Most Improved in Science: Javier Stephens

Most Improved in Math: Zavier Hernandez

What Is the Monthly Activity Fee?

Recently several of our families have received reminder notices regarding payment of their monthly activity fee. When you enrolled, every family contracted with SMPA to pay a \$20 a month activity fee and volunteer two hours a term at school. Many of our families have been faithful in meeting their financial commitment. Unfortunately, some have not and their young person's scholarship is in jeopardy. Why is it necessary in a school with a budget of almost \$950,000 for families to contribute \$200 a year?

It is a policy of all Nativity Miguel schools that families assume a financial stake in the school. It is a financial show of support for their child's education. In addition, it helps to pay the fees associated with our field trips and cocurricular activities. Many of these activities are staffed by paid personnel. We pay to use the LEAP pool for swimming, we pay instructors for chess, dance, Tai Chi etc. We pay considerably more for field trips than the small fee we ask families to contribute. We do this so that our kids will have the widest range of experiences possible. With the rising cost of fuel and utilities, transportation has become a major impediment to field trips in many schools. Fortunately, we have thus far been able to avoid cutting trips. Your monthly activity fee helps to pay for that. In all, although the fee multiplied by 70+ families may seem small, it's like your family budget. Every dollar counts - and is counted on. If you miss a pay check, you have to cut somewhere. When a family doesn't pay its fee, someone else has to pick up the bill, or we don't meet our budget. Everyone has to do their part - have you?

Recognition from Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen for SMPA

At our Third Term Honors Assembly, our Peace & Social Justice Club was honored by the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen for their efforts during their weekly visit. Our club was initially recognized at a banquet where we were represented by Marinel Gonzalez and Chase Hart, two of our active members and Ms. Rivera and Ms. O'Leary, the club advisors. A plaque was presented to the students which will hang in the main hall as a testament to the community service of our students. At the third term Honors Assembly, each member of the club received a certificate. Each Wednesday afternoon, a group of SMPA students goes to the soup kitchen and helps to clean, prepare sandwiches, and bag groceries.

Our Peace & Social Justice Club is the largest organization in the school - comprising more than 30 students who regularly volunteer their time to help others at one of four locations - the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Columbus House, Mary Wade Nursing Home, and our own Pre-K.

Our congratulations to the members of this organization and to their advisors Ms. Rivera, Ms. O'Leary, Mrs. Swift, and Mr. Dowley!



Lauralton Hall Science Olympiad

Under the direction of Ms. O'Leary, our science teacher, a group of our sixth and seventh grade girls spent the day at Lauralton Hall in Milford participating in their spring Science Olympiad. This was our second opportunity to compete with young women from southern Connecticut experimenting and experiencing science in action. A team comprised of Akayla McKinnie, Ki'Yonta Stevenson, Asia Barnes and Xena-Aixa Greene achieved a third place finish in the Mixed Grade Category. Nice work!



Class of 2018 Girls Go Horseback Riding

For two years, the young ladies of the Class of 2018 have heard their teacher speak of the wonderful times she has had pursuing her favorite activity, horseback riding. Well, on Monday, May 12 the nine girls had an opportunity to experience it for themselves. The day before, Mrs. Swift used desks and jump ropes as she had the girls "practice" getting on a horse. It was sight to see!! After a drive to Rocking Horse Ranch in Highland, NY, the girls spent the day horseback riding, rock climbing, swimming, miniature golf and enjoying a beautiful spring day. They learned that horses don't always listen to the first command - sound familiar??? A thank you to Mrs. Swift who arranged this very special field trip for a class she has nurtured for two years.

Wouldn't this be a great cocurricular activity for next year - anyone know a riding stable in the New Haven vicinity that would be willing to give some of our kids this experience? Please contact us.

Advanced Band Ensemble Entertains at Reception

Recently, St. Martin de Porres Academy has been fortunate to receive the support of two new volunteers, Serita Winthop and Tom McCance. Active members of the New Haven community and dedicated to the importance of education and the arts, they have become integral to the efforts of our Development Committee as they work to create a financial base that will sustain our school for years to come. As everyone knows, education is an expensive endeavor. Next year, our school must raise close to \$1,000,000 to continue the program we began three years ago.

On a Sunday in early May, the McCance's opened their home to a group of New Haven area residents in order to acquaint them with the efforts of St. Martin de Porres Academy. We were entertained by a quintet of musicians from SMPA who showed their musical acumen by playing a medley of songs. Since students are the only reason for our existence, and music is integral to our mission, these five young people are our best advertisement. A special thanks to Chanttal Cabral, Timothy Hutchinson, Tabytha Longway, Myeshia Brumell, and Philip Morrison. The guest speaker was James Surowiecki, author of *The Wisdom of Crowds* and a regular columnist for the *New Yorker*. Jim spoke about his career and the importance of education if the United States is to remain at the forefront of the global community. Jim has been a supporter of SMPA since its inception.

The importance of supporters like Serita, Tom and Jim cannot be emphasized enough. They are the engine that allows us to do our job. On behalf of the SMPA families and staff, thanks to the McCance's for opening your home and hearts to us!



Spring Fling

Riding the carousel, dancing to a live band, mingling with friends - what a great way to spend a warm spring evening. Such was the scene as supporters of St. Martin de Porres Academy gathered for the third annual Spring Fling at Lighthouse Point on May 17 sponsored by Ken and Gail Brown. Thanks to the efforts of John and Leslie Bubello, Peg and John Donohue, Sandy and Mike Dowley, Gale and Jim Tirrell, Serita and Tom McCance, Liz Fisher, Kathleen Krolak, Sandy Nelson and Robert Dietz - our enthusiastic auctioneer, this was the biggest and best yet. The auction items covered the gamut from dinner to vacations, from sports tickets to concert tickets - and our first live auction added the punctuation mark to the evening. From early returns not only was the evening a social success, but a financial one as well - as it appears that we met our goal of a \$30,000

donation to SMPA! Needless to say, we all had a wonderful evening and look forward to the fourth annual Spring Fling in 2009!

Yale Community Health Project Comes To SMPA

During the months of April and May students from Yale came to SMPA and spoke with our seventh graders about health and wellness issues that confront young people in the New Haven community. Trained by experienced educators, the program pairs Yale students with middle school classes in New Haven to lead discussions about ten topics that range from nutrition to puberty to making healthy and safe choices. We are grateful to these young people for including our school in their program.



Book Bowl Competition At St. Martin de Porres

This spring we have begun the first Book Bowl Competition ever at SMPA. Styled after the competition held annually in the New Haven public schools, this is an effort to encourage students to read and to read with understanding from a set list of books chosen by educators as appropriate to the age and maturity of each age group. Some of our most avid readers have requested this and, through the efforts of Ms. Phyllis Lobo, a Hamden educator on sabbatical this year, and Sr. Louise, our librarian, we have purchased the books and distributed them to those interested students.

On Friday, June 6 the finals will be held at the Friday afternoon Community Gathering. Teams will compete by responding to questions on each of the eight books that are required reading. The winners will be awarded a great grand prize and a stunning trophy. In addition, the winning teams will have their name engraved on a plaque that will hang in the main hall for all to see. Reading is at the core of our school's academic program. I can think of no activity more worthy of recognition. Is your young person participating?

End of the Year - Busy Time - Stay Focused!

As the year winds down, there is a marked tendency to forget that school is still in session and that assignments are due and tests are important. As you look over the list of the

many trips and activities that fill our calendar for the upcoming three weeks, please encourage your young person to attend to the most important matter at hand - academics. It would be most unfortunate if your young person's grades should suffer from a premature summer vacation.

Some Changes In Store For 2008-2009

With planning well underway for the 2008 - 2009 school year. Our staff is almost complete with several new instructors joining us. In addition we are contemplating several structural changes that we hope will improve the education we are able to offer our young people.

We will be teaching more of our classes in a coed environment next year. We experimented this year with three classes and we expect to expand those coed classes for 2008-2009. It has always been our plan to give our eighth graders a coed academic experience as they prepare to attend primarily coed high schools. We will also teach our fifth grade as a self-contained class with several coed classes as we ease them into the program at SMPA. The fifth grade will have a schedule that will allow them to stay within their class for most of the day.

In addition our schedule will allow us to offer several coed classes in all grades. In no case will this bring the class size above the maximum number of 15. We hope that this combination of single-sex classes and coed classes will benefit all of our students by playing into the varied strengths of our young people.

Presently our teachers meet the first Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. after a long day of teaching. Our meetings generally don't end until 7:30. We have come to realize that these late night meetings are probably not the best time to elicit good ideas and generate discussion. So, with the new year, dismissal on Friday will be at 3 p.m. to allow time for weekly staff meetings. We chose Friday because our past experience has shown that early dismissals are most common Friday afternoons as families prepare for a busy weekend.

This past year we changed uniform companies. Families are now able to order their child's uniforms at the Dennis Uniform Company on the Boston Post Road in Orange. They do not have to be ordered by mail as was necessary when we had Lands End, often with long delays in shipment. Some families wanted to order their own uniforms and did not want their child measured at school. So, beginning this year, all families will be responsible for their child's uniform. We have not changed the uniform and families are responsible for ensuring that their young person has the proper uniform to begin school. St. Martin de Porres Academy will no longer share the cost of uniforms with our families.

The only acceptable uniform is:

- Khaki slacks from Dennis Uniform Company for boys.
- Khaki slacks, pleated skirt, skort from Dennis Uniform Company for girls
- Blue or green polo shirts with the SMPA logo - long or short sleeved
- Blue or green sweater vest with SMPA logo from Dennis Uniform Company
- Blue or green long sleeved sweater with SMPA logo from Dennis Uniform Company
- Blue Dennis Uniform Company gym shorts - plain
- Grey t-shirt, plain - no logos
- Navy blue sweat pants and sweatshirt - plain - no logos
- Black shoes or sneakers - plain - no other color - no logos - plain
- Brown or black belt - plain, small buckle - to be worn whenever slacks are worn
- Sneakers - any color - for gym day

The major violations of our uniform revolve around three issues - random khaki slacks, no belt and improper shoes. Please be sure that your young person has the proper uniform to start school. If the uniform that was purchased this year still fits and is clean, and in good repair, there is no need to purchase a new one. However, shirts, pants, skirts and skorts, sweaters, and gym shorts must be from Dennis Uniform so that all of our students are dressed, indeed, uniform... the same.

We are looking at several other changes including elimination/modifications to the hot breakfast and lunch program, the establishment of a refundable book fee, change to an elective art program, the restriction of cocurricular activities for students not in good academic or behavior standing, the establishment of a coupon book for the monthly activity fee, and a more rigorous discipline policy. We have heard from many of you regarding these, and other issues, and welcome your comments and suggestions.

We will have an additional full-time teacher on staff next year and we are looking to further enhance our performing arts program to include a major drama program. We have begun discussion with the New Haven Chorale to establish a strong relationship with them that will bring their expertise and resources to our school. We are exploring the possibility of a guitar program, a string program, and the creation of a jazz ensemble for our most advanced and enthusiastic musicians. In addition, our dance offerings have been very popular and we would like to strengthen that program.

We have set in place an Algebra I class for those advanced math students in eighth grade, a pre-algebra program for the advanced seventh graders, advanced literature classes which we hope will qualify some of our students for Honors English in high school. Of course, for those students who prepare most thoroughly for Spanish we will offer a third year of Spanish in eighth grade. We began this year to offer French, once a week, for a small group of students who have excelled in Spanish.

All in all, there is much on the horizon for 2008 - 2009. With a smaller student body of sixty plus students, we will have much more flexibility in our program and much more accountability in our policies. Smaller can definitely be better!

Upcoming Events - Please mark your calendar!

- May 28 - Appreciation Luncheon for SMPA Community Volunteers
- May 30 - Dental Van visits SMPA Book Bowl first round competition Peer Mediation Presentation
- June 3 - Class of 2008 retreat at Mercy Center
- June 5 - Yankee Stadium trip for grades 5 & 6 Boston trip for 8th grade Donor Luncheon @ Albertus Magnus College - performance by Advanced Band
- June 6 - Class Night given by Grade 7 girls for Class of 2008 Book Bowl Finals
- June 8 - Graduation at 5 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church
- June 9 - No school - staff retreat day
- June 10 - Bronx Zoo trip for fifth grade Basketball Hall of Fame - sixth grade boys
- June 11 - Hairspray Club goes to Broadway
- June 12 - Baseball Trip to Shea Stadium for seventh grade boys
- **June 13 - Spring Band Concert @ 5 p.m. - mandatory attendance by all students
- June 18 - School Field Day at Hammonasset Park in Madison
- June 20 - Last day of school - assembly @ 10 a.m. dismissal immediately following
- **June 30 to July 11 - Summer Program**
 - boys @ Notre Dame High School in W. Haven
 - girls @ Lauralton Hall in Milford
- *Dates for sixth grade boys trip to Basketball Hall of Fame TBA*

"The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn."

-John Lubbock

Mr. Bowes, Mrs. Surowiecki, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Rivera, Mrs. Baloga, Mrs. Champlin, Mrs. Couch, Ms. Del Guidace, Mr. Dillon, Mrs. D'Urso, Mr. Eloi, Ms. Gazvoda, Mrs. Gongaware, Mr. Hill, Ms. Kalimon, Ms. LeCuyer, Sr. Louise, Mr. Messina, Mr. Marrero, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Murphy, Ms. O'Leary, Ms. Penn, Ms. Peters, Mrs. Shevekina, Ms. Stahl, Mrs. Staples, Mrs. Swift, Ms. Williams.