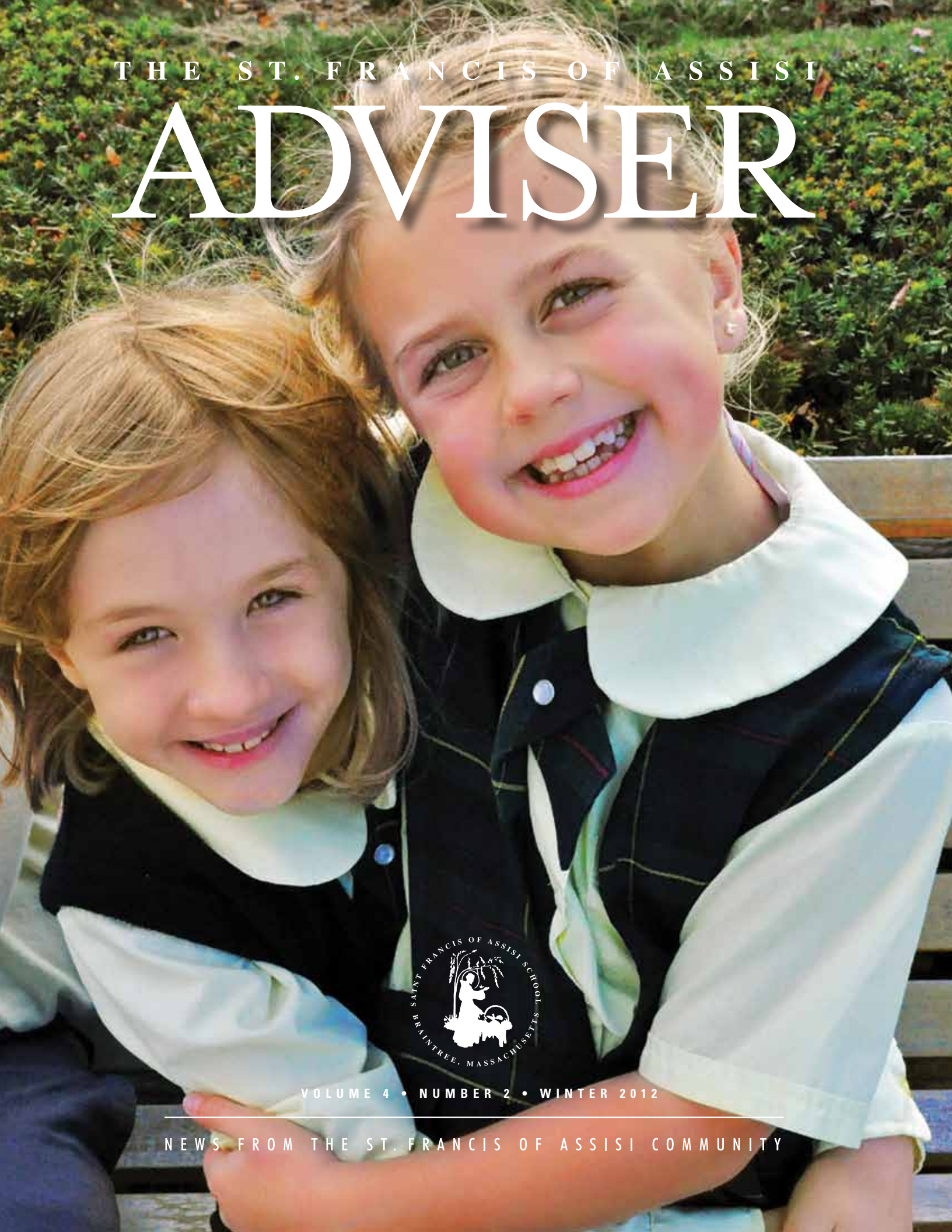


THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

ADVISER



VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 2 • WINTER 2012

NEWS FROM THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMMUNITY

Words of Wisdom

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR SHEPHERD



Last year St. Francis of Assisi School marked the first year of the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. I was thrilled to have this dream become a reality

for our school as this was the vision of so many people including administration, and board members, for the future of fundraising in the form of sustained giving.

The academic programs and curriculum at St. Francis of Assisi School adapt and change with the needs of each new generation of students. I am proud to say that our dedicated faculty and staff is the cornerstone to their success.

Cutting-edge classroom technology is evident throughout the curriculum at both the elementary and middle school levels. Everyday use of computers, SMART Boards, laptops, and iPads is quite familiar to our teachers and students. Typewriters, VCRs, and phones with cords are now a past memory. As technology evolves, so does our school.

For over half a century, St. Francis of Assisi School has been forming leaders for our community and beyond. The diversity of careers represented among our alumni is amazing. The knowledge and the foundations developed at St. Francis of Assisi School now reach overseas where our graduates excel in government and international business.

As we continue to grow, I join our principal, board members, and our wonderful faculty and staff in reaffirming the commitment made by the founders and pioneering families of St. Francis of Assisi School. More than 50 years ago, they had the foresight to establish a parish school that would reap untold benefits for generations of students.

In order to continue to provide excellence in faith-based education to generations of children, we need your help. Your gift to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund will help to continue the legacy of Catholic education that has been provided by our parish school for over half a century.

God bless,

Rev. Kevin M. Sepe

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRINCIPAL



For more than 50 years, St. Francis of Assisi School has combined a respect for tradition with an embrace of the future, comprehensive, faith-based academics with a caring heart, and an appreciation of the individual with the warmth of a small school community. Today, in a fast-paced, ever-changing world and society, our school remains a community where honesty and integrity matter, hard work is an equally important value, and where the process of education

is as important as the grade. Our efforts to build an intellectual community are a priority for our dedicated faculty and staff. They are intensely devoted to the success of their students, and serve as teachers, coaches, advisors, mentors, and friends. The faculty and staff at St. Francis of Assisi School seek to challenge and inspire students to reach new levels of inquiry and comprehension in every area of school life.

We are a Catholic school community of high expectations, academic and otherwise. At the same time, we are devoted to helping our students develop intellectual, musical, artistic,

and personal interests that will allow them to live our school's mission each day as they grow and become future leaders in our society. We hope that you enjoy this edition of the *Adviser*, and as always, we welcome you to visit us here at St. Francis of Assisi School. Our students, faculty, and staff proudly look forward to showcasing off our school.

Mrs. Vittoria DeBenedictis, M.Ed.

A Time for Giving

THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL FUND

Every year, St. Francis of Assisi School appeals to the members of our community for a gift to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. Annual giving at St. Francis funds many of the “extras” that enhance and distinguish a St. Francis of Assisi School education. Like many Catholic schools, we depend upon annual giving to bridge the gap between tuition and the full cost of a St. Francis of Assisi School education. Annual giving provides a significant percentage of the school’s operating budget and enables us to attract and retain dedicated, talented, and creative faculty / staff to offer an unparalleled array of academic, enrichment, athletic, and arts programs. Your gift to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund will help us offer each student a truly exceptional educational experience.

In 2010-2011, our school received several unrestricted gifts in the foundational year of the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. The 2011-2012 Annual Fund runs through June 30, 2012, but we hope you will consider making your gift right now!

Levels of Recognition

St. Francis of Assisi School values annual fund participation at all levels of giving. Our leadership levels were established to celebrate donors who make the school a philanthropic priority with an unrestricted* gift to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. For the 2011-2012 school year, our leadership levels are:

St. Francis of Assisi Society	\$5,000 and above
Circle of Saints	\$2,500 - \$4,999
Blue and Gold Society	\$1,000 - \$2,499
Archangel	\$250 - \$999
Friend of St. Francis	Gifts to \$249
Young Alum Associates	\$10 or more from first eight year alumni / ae

**Unrestricted/restricted gifts – we encourage gifts to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund to be unrestricted, which allows the school’s administration and board to use them to meet the school’s most pressing needs. Donors who wish for their gift to be used only for a specified purpose, such as support for a particular academic program, capital improvements (i.e.: new windows), or for financial aid, may make a restricted gift.*

Matching Gifts

Many gifts to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund are doubled, or in some cases even tripled, because corporations and foundations match gifts to education made by their employees, retirees, and directors. Matching gifts directed to unrestricted annual giving count toward recognition in leadership levels. Your eligibility, amount, and timing of your match are at the discretion of the matching gift company or foundation. Please check with your human resources office to determine if your employer will match your gift to St. Francis of Assisi School. If you are eligible, obtain a matching gift form from your employer, complete and sign the form, and send it to St. Francis of Assisi School along with or following your gift (follow instructions based on company or foundation).

Alumni and Reunion Giving

In these early years of annual giving at St. Francis of Assisi School, it is our hope that alumni will demonstrate their commitment to the school in countless ways, including vital support for annual giving. It is also our wish that our alumni will call upon their classmates to make a special gift in honor of their graduation year. We would love to see class reunions take place every five to ten years and have reunion and class giving become the cornerstone of class gifts.

Parent Giving

It is our hope that every family will participate in annual giving to the best of their ability. When the school seeks outside funding from philanthropic organizations, parent giving is viewed as tangible evidence of parent support for the school’s mission. Thus, parent participation is a gift, in and of itself, of the much needed funds, as well as, a vote of confidence in the school you entrust your children to each day. Our goal is to have 100% parent participation in the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. Does this mean our goal is to have our parents make our \$100,000 goal? Absolutely not! We do; however, look to you to support St. Francis of Assisi School with a donation the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund in whatever amount you feel comfortable making. Remember...

Every gift is appreciated and counts, no matter what size!!!

Volunteer Leadership

The Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund depends upon the dedication and persistence of volunteers. During the 2011-2012 school year, over 50 alumni, parents, past parents, grandparents, board members, faculty, and staff, will solicit gifts from their peers through letters, meetings, and phone calls. We are so very grateful to all of these “saints”, most especially to the following people who have stepped up to lead the 2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund:

Annual Fund Co-Chairs – Joseph and Lauren Driscoll, P '17, '19

Grandparent Chair – Michael McCarthy, GP '20

Board Chair – John Spillane, St. Francis of Assisi School Consultative Board Member and GP '16, '18

Faculty / Staff Chairs – Jaclyn Cuddahy, Pre-K Teacher and Catherine Rotondi, Grade 5 Teacher

Director of Advancement – Pamela Cook

We need and welcome your support in this vital effort. Please contact Pamela Cook, Director of Advancement, at pcook@sfb.org or call 781-848-0842 ext. 17.

Thank you for your support and dedication to St. Francis of Assisi School!

Prayers for Charlotte

AUGUST 14, 2006 – DECEMBER 7, 2011



CHARLOTTE ROSE KELLY – FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

“THUS AT THAT MOMENT THE BRAVE LITTLE SOUL WAS BORN INTO THE WORLD, AND THROUGH HER SUFFERING AND GOD’S STRENGTH, SHE UNLOCKED THE GOODNESS AND LOVE IN PEOPLE’S HEARTS.”

– From “The Brave Little Soul” by John Alessi



High Five!

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR FIFTH GRADE TEACHERS



Our High Five teachers: Ms. Sellitto (left) and Ms. Rotondi

Ms. Rotondi and Ms. Sellitto make up the team of Grade 5 teachers at St. Francis of Assisi School.

At first glance one might think they are “newbies”, but after just glancing into their classrooms you can tell they are both seasoned and dedicated to their craft in more ways than one! Their classrooms could be mistaken for a page in Martha Stewart Living! These two teach-

ers are talented, trendy, and always on their toes! They have their pulse on 21st century education and are always ahead of the game when it comes to curriculum trends and learning. Read on to learn more about this dynamic duo!

Tell us about your background in the education field.

Ms. Rotondi: I studied at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where I received a bachelor’s degree in Education and Sociology, as well as, a master’s degree in Elementary Education.

Ms. Sellitto: I always knew I wanted to be an educator. It started in high school when I would volunteer to tutor elementary students. I then went on to pursue my career at Westfield State College in Elementary Education and Mathematics. After graduating from Westfield, I attended Lesley University and received a Master’s Degree in Elementary Curriculum and Instruction. It has been a long process but well worth it!

What led you to where you are today professionally?

Ms. Rotondi: As a child, I truly enjoyed going to school. I was rarely absent, as I did not want to miss anything! When I was in first grade, I broke my leg and could not attend school for six weeks. I was very upset about missing school, so my teacher, Mrs. Lampron, came to my house twice a week to make sure that I did not fall behind. I knew that Mrs. Lampron was very special and that she genuinely cared about my success. Since then, I have strived to become a teacher who makes a difference.

Ms. Sellitto: I’ve always had a great interest in helping others. I grew up as the big sister of two younger brothers. I picked up a lot of babysitting jobs when I was younger and volunteered tutoring at the local schools in my town.

Tell us about your work at Saint Francis of Assisi School, and why your career path has led you to teach in a Catholic school.

Ms. Rotondi: It is my third year teaching at St. Francis of Assisi School. I work at the morning and after school programs, where I am able to spend time with students of various grade levels. Catholic schools have a strong sense of community and exhibit the necessary values to guide us through life. I am appreciative of the supportive staff, and the amazing families with whom I have the opportunity to meet each year.

Ms. Sellitto: This is my third year teaching at Saint Francis of Assisi. I work the morning and after school programs and am involved in putting together the school yearbook. Catholic schools have high quality education and teach morals that can be remembered throughout life. It is a great feeling to pray with my students everyday and to be able to attend Mass with them.

What is the most satisfying part of your job?

Ms. Rotondi: For me, the most satisfying part of teaching comes from the moment when a student realizes his or her talents. It is very fulfilling to know that I have made a contribution to someone's education and future.

Ms. Sellitto: The most satisfying part of my job is the feeling I get at the end of the day. I often take time to reflect on my accomplishments and leave room for improvements. I could never explain the feeling of satisfaction I receive from teaching my students. It always feels like a day well spent.

What do you find most challenging?

Ms. Rotondi: I find it challenging that there is not enough time! There is so much information to learn, but so little time!

Ms. Sellitto: As a teacher, I have always found time the most challenging part. There is never enough of it!

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Ms. Rotondi: I enjoy reading, baking, and spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Sellitto: In my spare time I love to read and craft. I live in the city, so I like to explore different shops and restaurants in the area. I often visit my family, who live about an hour from Boston, on the weekends.

What advice do you have for your students?

Ms. Rotondi: Always try your best and believe in yourself!

Ms. Sellitto: I always tell my students to work hard and to have fun doing it. School is for learning but if we can have fun doing it then that is an added bonus! I never want my students to feel discouraged. I encourage them to always ask for help. Hard work really does pay off in the end.

What is the one thing that you would want the students to take away from their experience with you?

Ms. Rotondi: I want my students to have confidence in themselves. I want them to know that anything is possible with continued effort and commitment.



Most importantly, I want my students to enjoy their time in school – learning is fun!

Ms. Sellitto: I want my students to put full effort into everything they do. I want them to feel like they've always tried their best and to be proud of their accomplishments, big and small. When they leave my classroom for the year they should feel a sense of pride in themselves.

Our Reasons for Giving

As of November 1, 2011 each and every faculty and staff member at St. Francis of Assisi School has given. Their support speaks volumes about their dedication to the school.

"I give because I am a product of Catholic education."

"I give because as an alum I believe in the education I received at St. Francis."

"I give because I believe in St. Francis of Assisi School."

"I give because I care about the students and families at St. Francis of Assisi School."

"I give because I support our students and staff."

"I give because I believe that every child deserves the education given at St. Francis of Assisi School."

"I give because I believe in the faculty and staff at St. Francis of Assisi School."



iving are Growing.

Assisi School has made a donation to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. Education to and belief in our school and students.



"I give because I truly care about SFA, not just the school, but the students, faculty, and community."

"I give because I believe that a good start leads to a great life!"

"I believe in this school and all that it has to offer. That is why I give!"

"I give for the future of the kids."

Your Gift Matters and Truly Makes a Difference!

Every dollar raised from the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund goes directly toward the programs, people, and facilities at St. Francis of Assisi School. We need your support to make sure that the needs of all our students are met. Your gift makes a tremendous impact on the students, faculty and staff at St. Francis of Assisi School and the environment in which they learn. Please make your gift to the 2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund today. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Please contact Pamela Cook, Director of Advancement, at pcook@sfab.org or 781-848-0842 ext. 17 for more information about the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund.

SFA Future Star

CLARK NAMED TO FUTURE STARS NATIONAL GYMNASTICS TEAM

Daniel Clark, 12, of Avon MA, and a 6th grader at St. Francis of Assisi School in Braintree, has been named to the USA Gymnastics 2011 Future Stars National Team. Daniel attained this distinction after his outstanding performance at Future Stars National Championships which were held at the USA Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs on December 2, 2011.

Daniel placed 5th in the overall age division and 1st on the Pommel Horse and Vault. He is among the top 8 gymnasts invited to participate in a special training camp held at the USA Olympic Training Center in Colorado during July 2012.

Daniel is coached by Levon Karakhanyan who is the head boys gymnastics coach at the New England Sports Academy in Westwood MA. Levon, a world class gymnast, was 4 time Armenian National Champion, 2 time Soviet National Champion, and was recently the ambassador for the Armenian Gymnastics National Team at the 2011 World Championships in Tokyo, Japan.

Daniel's love for the sport of gymnastics started when he was 4 years old, and he has since attained 2 Massachusetts State Championships, and a New England Regional Championship in addition to his current Future Stars National standing.



More Reasons to Give...

FROM GRANDPARENTS TO THE COMMUNITY, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS

Dear Grandparents,

It is with pleasure that I write to you as the Grandparent Chair for the 2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund campaign.

As I look at my granddaughter and hear how excited she is when she tells me all about school, and when I visit the campus, I have come to realize and appreciate the extraordinary faith based educational foundation that St. Francis of Assisi School provides to her.

In addition to academic excellence, all of our grandchildren are developing critical, analytical, and leadership skills and are mastering the technological knowledge necessary

to thrive within the rigors of today's world. I am sure you agree that it is wonderful to see them grow their creative and performance abilities that come with an appreciation for art and music. St. Francis of Assisi School also prepares our grandchildren to serve as citizens of their communities. Students at St. Francis of Assisi embody the beliefs and live the mission of the school each day.

St. Francis of Assisi School depends on the voluntary financial support from all members of the school community, including all of us grandparents, to provide the funds necessary to meet the operating expenses of the school each year. With great respect I ask you to join me and support the 2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School

Fund this year. Your gift, no matter the size, makes a tremendous difference for the school. Let us show our appreciation for the education that all of our grandchildren receive by making St. Francis of Assisi School one of our philanthropic priorities this year.

Thank you very much in advance for your gift.

With kind regards,
Dr. Michael McCarthy, GP '20
2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund Grandparent Chair

Dear St. Francis of Assisi School Community,

When I think about the many communities of which I am a part, I am always most thankful to be a part of this wonderful Catholic educational community that is St. Francis of Assisi School. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do for the St. Francis of Assisi School community through your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

When I reflect upon what the word "community" means to me, I immediately think of St. Francis of Assisi School. To Merriam-Webster, a community is "a unified body of individuals." In my honest humble opinion, that brief definition fails to describe the

true meaning of community as it applies to St. Francis of Assisi School. Here, in this close-knit, faith-based, learning community, emphasis is placed on relationships, faith, sharing, and a strong culture of commitment to creating the best possible learning environment for the students.

Thank you in advance for making St. Francis of Assisi School, specifically the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund, one of your giving priorities in the 2011-2012 school year. I know that with your generosity, along with the efforts of our wonderful team of volunteers, we will surpass our goal of \$100,000.

Your participation in this annual campaign is vital to the fiscal strength of St. Francis

of Assisi School and is necessary for the school's continual advancement. Your gifts enrich the student experience at SFA by providing important enhancements to the classrooms, updates to our technology, and opportunities for faculty development. Your contributions make a difference for every student, in every classroom, everyday.

On behalf of the St. Francis of Assisi School Consultative Board, I am grateful for your support. I assure you in advance that your donation will make a difference.

Sincerely,
Mr. John Spillane, GP '16, '18
2011-2012 Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund Board Chair

Beacons of Light

A MESSAGE FROM THE ANNUAL SFA SCHOOL FUND CO-CHAIRS

As we look forward to Christmas and the New Year, we are pleased to kick off the Annual St. Francis Assisi School Fund campaign.

Our two sons, Joe and Sean, are students at St. Francis of Assisi School. Joe is in grade three, and Sean is in grade one. We are very happy with our choice to enroll them at SFA, so it was with great pleasure that we accepted the offer to serve as this year's co-chairs. Our goal for the 2011-2012 campaign is to raise \$100,000. We will only reach this goal through the shared commitment of you and our extended St. Francis of Assisi community. The funds will be applied to support the goal of sending our students into the world prepared not only with knowledge and skills, but also with a sense of compassion and responsibility for our community and beyond.

Having just celebrated our 50th anniversary as a Catholic school, we now look forward to the next half century. What challenges will confront our children in the years to come? How can we best prepare them to compete, and excel in their areas of chosen discipline? These and other questions drive our school's leaders to continue to provide the best education possible for our students.

As you may already know, St. Francis of Assisi School was recently recognized as a model school by the Archdiocesan Task Force, was accredited by New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and was awarded seven commendations for its curriculum, and academic achievements. The tangible

assets considered for accreditation can be easily counted; however, we know, as members of the St. Francis of Assisi faith community, that the success our students enjoy both in the academic arena and in their personal lives is also a result of the spirit of the school. For this achievement, we are thankful for the leadership of our pastor, Rev. Kevin Sepe, our principal, Mrs. Vittoria DeBenedictis, the faculty/staff, and board of SFA whose dedication to the mission of the school gives it a special spirit.

Your help and commitment to St. Francis of Assisi School is essential and will allow future generations of students to enjoy the educational and faith opportunities that have produced so many "Beacons of Light".

These funds will be applied to the following areas:

- Technology in the classrooms, including iPads to support the SMART Board systems
- Capital improvements to the school building such as new windows
- Enrichment programs
- New curriculum and text books
- Ongoing effort to keep tuition low and teachers' salaries competitive

Your contribution will ensure that graduates of SFA will succeed by imitating St. Francis of Assisi as "instruments of peace".

Yours in Christ,
Joseph R. Driscoll & Lauren E. Driscoll, P '17, '19
Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund Co-Chairs



Exceeding Expectations

A REPUTATION OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



Celebrating more than 50 years of excellence in education and faith, St. Francis of Assisi School has quickly become one of the premiere elementary and middle schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. Under the direction of our dedicated pastor, Father Sepe, and principal, Mrs. DeBenedictis, the faculty and staff continue to exceed expectations and shape the minds, hearts, and souls of the students they teach, guide, and mentor.

As we begin the 2011-2012 school year, excitement and a sense of hope envelopes our school and community. The comprehensive education offered at St. Francis of Assisi School, serves as an example to follow for other schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. Year after year we are commended and recognized for our curriculum and standards of teaching and learning. Each spring our students' test scores continue to place in the top tier, which is a clear reflection of the effort and care that our faculty and staff put into their classrooms. Our reputation of academic excellence has worked its way up to the collegiate level, and we have been awarded the opportunity of mentoring student teachers this year.

Our curriculum is solid and we strive to not only meet, but exceed academic standards. We continue to stay on the pulse of 21st century education and are concentrating on curriculum mapping throughout our classrooms and teaching. Our faculty continues to stay on top of growing curriculum trends and excel in their own personal academic growth as well. Several of our staff/teachers have earned Masters Degrees in education, and more will complete degrees in higher education this year.

Professional development is something we pride ourselves on and our faculty and staff continue to reflect their own growth in the classrooms in which they teach.

Enrollment is flourishing at every grade level and in keeping with the times, we have moved to a rolling admissions policy. With our growing popularity as a stalwart in education, we will add a second Open House next fall, which will supplement our annual Open House during Catholic Schools Week, which will take place from January 30 to February 3, 2012. In addition to adding new students each and every day, we are pleased and proud to announce the addition of a second sixth grade classroom. While many schools have dwindling numbers at the middle school level; we continue to grow.

The Office of Advancement has been working hard on the many aspects of fundraising, marketing, admissions, and communication at St. Francis of Assisi School. As you know, most independent schools, private high schools, and colleges rely on sustained giving in the form of major gifts and annual giving. St. Francis of Assisi School is no different. We are in the process of shifting from an events driven school to a sustained giving format in regards to fundraising. We look forward to building our alumni constituency and integrating this and other important constituencies back into our school community. Giving is integral to our school's growth, as tuition does not cover the full cost of educating a student. Communications at St. Francis of Assisi School is an important part of our day to day work and our school magazine publication, *The Adviser*, has been given high accolades by our peers at all levels, including collegiate.

We are truly living our school mission each and everyday with SMART Boards in every classroom, including both of our preschool programs. In addition to Smart technology, we continue to stay one step ahead with the addition of several iPads to our school last year. This technology is clearly a sign of the times, and in order to prepare our students for this technological age, iPads for each classroom is our goal for this 2011-2012 school year. Our Director of Advancement will be working hard on securing annual gifts and donations this year to make this dream a reality.

St. Francis of Assisi School continues to grow in ways we never thought possible. It is difficult sometimes to keep up with the times, but at our school this is not a challenge but a reward of our hard work, strong curriculum, dedicated faculty/staff, and faith.

SFA Class of '88

FACEBOOK FRIENDS "LIKE" TO CELEBRATE A CATHOLIC EDUCATION



On Saturday, November 19th 2011, several

members of the St. Francis of Assisi School Class of 1988 gathered for an informal reunion. Those in attendance were Kenny Autio, Paul Daly, Chris DiBona, Jim Connaty, Christine Doherty, Stacy Fisher Kenny, Deirdre Fleming Shea, Sarah Frazier Pompeo, Sue McColgan, Jennifer McHugh Brady and Suzie Pokaski Paone. The group enjoyed a great evening out at a local restaurant just a block away from the halls of SFA. The reunion, organized by Deirdre Fleming Shea, was the first of what is sure to be many for the Class of 1988.

Several months ago a few friends from the Class of 1988 contacted each other through facebook. Deirdre began reaching out to contact as many classmates as she could think of, which in her words was easy, "...because after spending each day with the same friends from grades one through eight, you never forget anyone." After receiving a quick and overwhelmingly positive response to her outreach efforts, she decided to create a

St. Francis of Assisi Class of 1988 group page on facebook for everyone to chat, catch up, and keep in touch. When Deirdre mentioned the idea of a gathering to the group, the response was nothing but positive and, not surprisingly, all members of the group enthusiastically said "Yes!" She thought it was a shame that most of the class spent the better part of eight years together at St. Francis of Assisi School and then, after graduating and attending different high schools, sadly lost touch with each other. According to Deirdre, "We were such a big part of each others' lives from the time we were six years old right through our teenage years. We were all so supportive of each other throughout our years at SFA that we felt really excited about reconnecting. SFA was such a nurturing environment that the thought of seeing each other after all of these years did not elicit any feelings of trepidation the way other types of reunions may. Our class was a very close one. We supported each other during happy times, on birthdays, holidays, and in our sports, and academic adventures, and more importantly, our friendships were vital during difficult times such as loss of a parent."

Deirdre summed up the night and reunion by saying, "We had a fabulous evening updating each other on our lives over the past 23 years and of course reminiscing about our "plaid-clad" days at SFA!"

This reunion of the St. Francis of Assisi Class of 1988 will hopefully open the door to others considering such a reconnection of classmates and gathering. In addition to the reunion, the Class of 1998 also made a gift from the class to the Annual St. Francis of Assisi School Fund. Alumni are the cornerstone of our foundation and we encourage everyone to follow in their footsteps!

If you are a graduate of St. Francis of Assisi School and would like to reach out to classmates, create a facebook page, host a reunion, or just reconnect with SFA, please contact Pamela Cook, Director of Advancement, at 781-848-0842 ext. 17 or email pcook@sfab.org. Please also consider a visit to the school as our current students would love to show you around and learn about the "good old days!"



Making A Difference

2010 GRADUATE, RYAN WALLACE, SHARES HIS STORY



Ryan's third grade portrait

Ryan Wallace, a recent graduate of St. Francis of Assisi School, exemplifies the true mind, body, and spirit of what a model St. Francis of Assisi School alumnus embodies. During his time at SFA, Ryan went above and beyond to not only live out the mission of

our school, but to teach and share with others the gifts which he received at St. Francis of Assisi School. He has since moved onto Archbishop Williams High School, yet Ryan continues to live each day to its fullest, helping others, and making us proud to call him a St. Francis of Assisi School alumnus! Read below for a glimpse into Ryan's world to see firsthand why we've chosen to spotlight such a young, but accomplished alum!

This past summer, I traveled to the outskirts of Appalachia with eleven schoolmates for a mission trip sponsored by my high school, Archbishop Williams High School. Our mission was to assist needy families with painting and minor household repairs. In addition to paying our own expenses for the week, we provided both the materials and labor for these services.

We left early Monday morning, July 25, and drove six hundred miles to Dunbar, PA. Dunbar is a very small town located in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania. The median household income in Dunbar is twenty five thousand dollars, with sixteen percent of the population comprised of senior citizens. Twelve percent of the total population lives below the poverty level, and seventeen percent of Dunbar's senior citizens live in poverty.

Upon our arrival we were greeted by four Sisters of Charity of Nazareth who were our guides for the week. We stayed at the Sisters' remote mountainside retreat house and each evening were led in prayer and reflection by the Sisters. Sisters, who quickly

became our friends and mentors. I was inspired by the Sisters' call to service, their dedication to the poor, and their generous spirits.

Each morning we awoke early and drove down the mountain to start our day of service. The first few days were spent painting the exterior of a wonderful woman's house. Jo is in her early eighties and has lived alone for many years with no relatives nearby. I think what struck me most about Jo was that she seemed very lonely and in need of companionship and love more than home repairs. While we were at her home, she spent most of her time with us telling stories, feeding us, and looking out for us. The time we spent with Jo was gratifying and humbling.

Our next assignment was painting the ceiling of a trailer home. Again we provided service for an elderly woman, Vera, who lived alone, and again was very thankful for our company.

The final project on our last day was working at the local food pantry. The pantry provides over one thousand boxes of supplies to needy individuals and families each month. In assembly line fashion, we packaged four hundred and fifty boxes and loaded them onto pallets for distribution.

The residents of Dunbar made a lasting impression on me. Two evenings we were hosted for dinner by neighbors of our beneficiaries as an expression of gratitude. These families did not have many more resources than the people we helped, but they were willing to share what they had to thank us. Their generosity provided a powerful example of gratitude.

The trip was not all work. We did have fun. We visited the convent of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in Pittsburgh and were treated to dinner and a swim. A local Dunbar family also invited us for a swim one evening. Because a bear on the property

made going out after dark impossible, we played board games and cards back at the retreat house. I did not know many of my fellow volunteers before the trip because many of them are upperclassmen. However, relaxing at the retreat house gave me an opportunity to get to know them, and we quickly became friends. This was one of the best parts of the trip for me.

This was one of the best parts of the trip for me. I learned a few things on this trip. I realized that despite being the greatest nation in the world, America has a serious problem with poverty that needs to be addressed. I learned that no matter how little some people have to give, they are happy to share. This was demonstrated by my fellow parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi who helped greatly to sponsor our trip and by the residents of Dunbar who shared their homes and food with us while we worked in their community.



We packed 450 boxes of supplies for needy families at a local food pantry.

I learned that Jesus' example of helping the poor is a path to happiness. The gratitude demonstrated by the people we helped was deeply touching and appreciated. It made service truly rewarding. Finally, I learned that when you put a group of young people together, they can accomplish great things and make a difference in peoples' lives. I look forward to next year's trip, meeting new people, and making new friends while helping others.

St. Francis of Assisi School



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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Catholic community of faith striving to follow Jesus, pledging each day to do our best by imitating St. Francis of Assisi as “instruments of peace.”

Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment and to be academically prepared for this technological age.

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