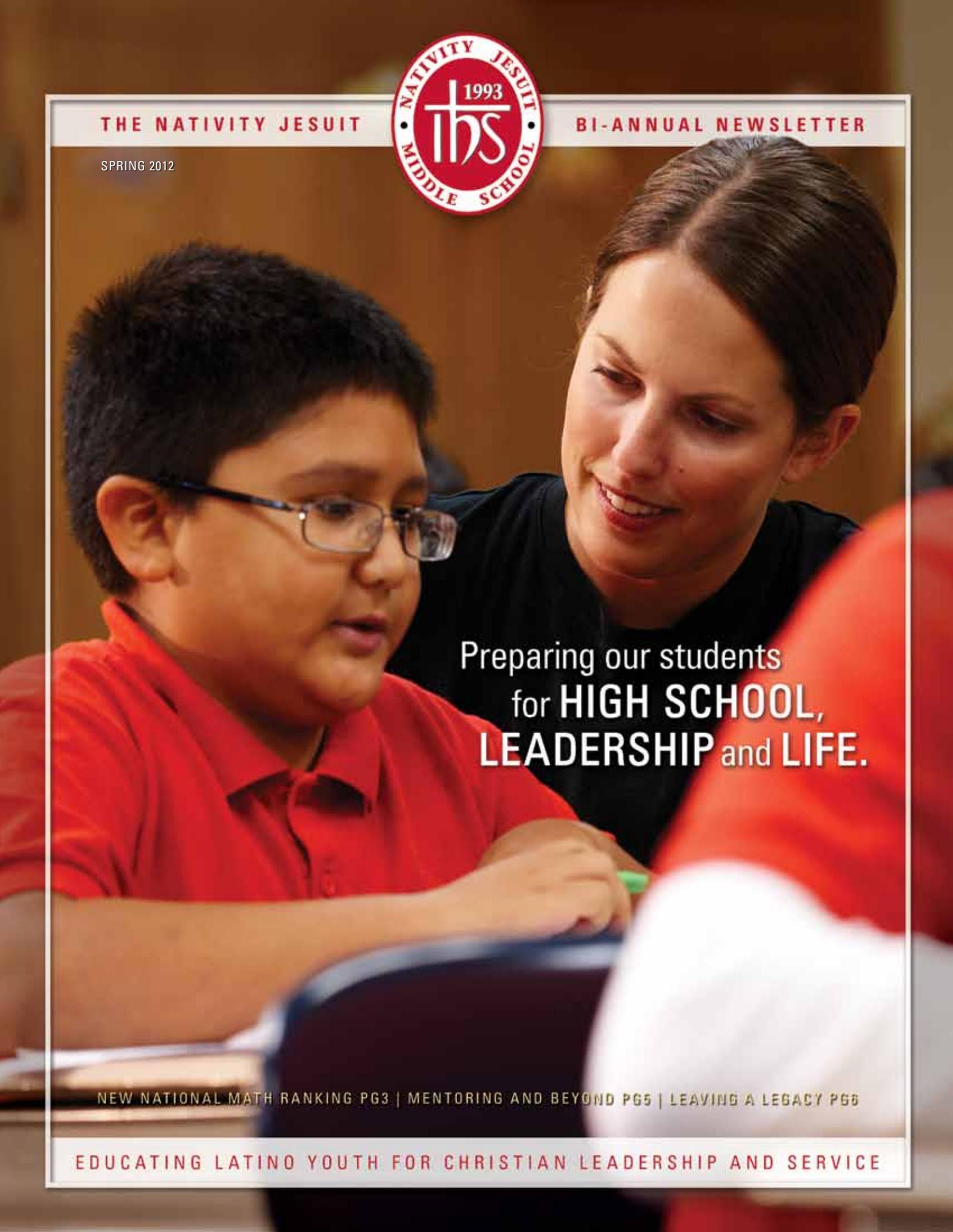




THE NATIVITY JESUIT

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2012



Preparing our students
for **HIGH SCHOOL,**
LEADERSHIP and **LIFE.**

NEW NATIONAL MATH RANKING PG3 | MENTORING AND BEYOND PG5 | LEAVING A LEGACY PG6

EDUCATING LATINO YOUTH FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

EXPLORING WAYS TO GROW AND SERVE LATINO YOUTH

In my last column, I spoke about the importance of asking the “growth question” at Nativity Jesuit Middle School. The question, rooted in the Jesuit tradition of the magis (or more), asks about how we can be more effective and/or expansive in serving Latino youth and their families on the near south side.

As we look at this fast growing population in the country, this is a question that we, as a Jesuit sponsored institution, should be asking. To that end, Nativity has joined up with Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) to explore that question in greater detail. We have also initiated an association with Schools That Can, another organization that helps quality schools become even more effective.

In the course of my brief time at Nativity, I have met with other local school leaders of comparable schools. The lesson to be learned in each of these conversations is that the need for quality education for lower-income children in Milwaukee is great, and that we should be exploring opportunities to address that need.

But all this talk about the future of Nativity is possible only because of our successful past. In 2013, we will celebrate our twentieth anniversary. It is remarkable how God has blessed Nativity over the past years with so many dedicated friends and supporters, as well as the remarkable faculty, staff, administrators and volunteers who have made and continue to make Nativity such a special place.

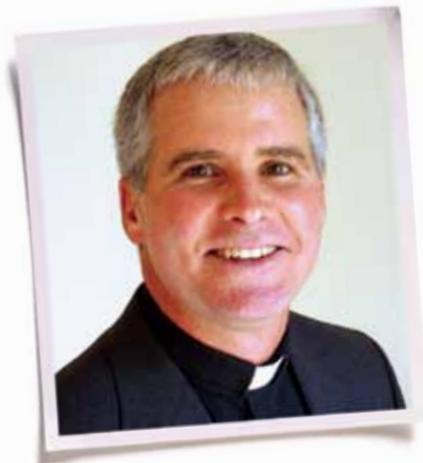
What began in 1993 as the initial group of sixth graders at St. Patrick’s school building is now a thriving school of fifth and sixth graders at our current location (the former Marion Hall of the School Sisters of St. Francis). Our school building is the envy of many, with a third floor that has yet to be developed! Perhaps one day we will accommodate and serve more Latino youth? It’s a question that begs asking!

No doubt, the pursuit of this question will demand much exploration and discussion, and I ask for your prayers as we move forward into the future. We have been truly blessed with almost twenty years of success as a quality school, rooted in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition. May God bless our next twenty years (or more) with even greater success, and may God continue to bless you for your untiring support of our mission!

Sincerely,



JAMES FLAHERTY, S.J.
PRESIDENT



“It is remarkable how God has blessed Nativity over the past years...”

NATIVITY STUDENTS NATIONALLY RANK 10% HIGHER IN MATH

Nativity students are once again excelling academically. According to the results of TerraNova and EXPLORE standardized achievement tests for 2011, our Nativity students rank 10% higher in math.

Darla Erato, Nativity math teacher is thrilled with the program. “Our students are much more advanced

compared to both Milwaukee’s city and suburban schools.”

The math series at Nativity integrates future learning, so that concepts are repeated and drilled to perfection. Our small classes allow for hands-on, personal attention to strengthen students’ skills. There are two math classes for each grade based

on ability and algebra is offered for advanced eighth graders. Students attend a mandatory study hall to complete math assignments and work one-on-one with tutors.

Our math teachers also conduct benchmark testing to aid in better curriculum planning for both the summer camp and the school year.



POSADA: A MEXICAN CHRISTMAS TRADITION



NJMS alum, Irving Ibarra ('00), teacher, Kelly Hogan Ibarra and daughter Lily as Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus.



Father Jim leads the Posada celebration in the chapel.

At Nativity, we believe in celebrating culture and preserving tradition. One such meaningful custom commemorated by Mexican families is the Posada. This nine-day celebration before Christmas brings families together to reenact the journey Mary and Joseph took to find shelter. Eight nights they are refused lodging and on the ninth night they are finally allowed to enter.

“This tradition resonates with many immigrants who were not initially accepted into a new culture,” said Jim Wilkinson, principal of Nativity. “It is also a reminder that Jesus was the poorest among us and is always present.”

Every year Nativity celebrates the Posada on the evening of the last night before winter break. Students, their families and our staff eagerly participate in the event. Everyone gathers in the chapel and sings songs until the Holy Family is granted entrance. The Posada is followed by a celebration in the gym with piñatas, food and even Santa. It is truly an event that keeps us connected and reminds us of all our blessings.

A WELL-ROUNDED APPROACH TO EDUCATION HELPS DEVELOP BETTER LEADERS FOR TOMORROW



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM OFFERS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

As the saying goes, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” That’s why the staff at Nativity believe it’s important for us to incorporate extracurricular activities into the school day. Our after-school program introduces some unique and exciting activities that students may not otherwise be exposed to in their daily lives. It also provides healthier choices that keep children off the streets.

Other than a variety of sports – which are very popular among the students – our after-school program offers music, ballroom dancing, chess, computers, special field trips, and community art projects. All this is made possible with the support of 20 volunteers.



Isai, a seventh grader says, “Basketball is my favorite sport. I like that we have a variety of activities because I get the opportunity to learn new things and it gives us a chance to laugh and have fun together at the end of the day.”

To volunteer for Nativity’s after-school program, please contact Jim Wilkinson at 414-645-1060, ext. 203 or wilkinsonj@njms.org.

STUDENTS BUILD ROBOTS AND TAKE THIRD PLACE

As part of the after-school program last semester, students teamed up with the 4-H Club to participate in the First Lego League Competition. This program was designed to get children excited about science and technology, and teach them valuable life skills. After building their robots, we are proud to announce that Nativity students placed in the top three for teamwork among 40 teams!

Ivan, a sixth grader, said he liked the competition because he learned about working as a team. “I had to have confidence in others to create a good robot and it helped me think about planning, so I would be well prepared for anything.”



Jose, a sixth grader, proudly shows off the robot his team made for the First Lego League Competition.



MENTORING PROGRAM PREPARES STUDENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND

Personalized attention often makes all the difference in the life of a child. Mentoring is one activity that helps students achieve their full potential. At a basic level, the Graduate Support Program at Nativity provides an opportunity for Nativity graduates to attend a Catholic high school. At a deeper level, mentors are stable, reliable and consistent role models in students’ lives, and serve to encourage them to stay in school, achieve better grades, attend college, and prepare them to lead and serve.

“Not only do students benefit from this relationship, mentors are also enriched by the experience” said Larry Siewert, Director of Graduates at Nativity, “It’s a two-way street.”

RELATIONSHIPS THAT GROW

Mentors and students are matched for four years, but many continue their relationships beyond high school. Mentor Mark Zimmerman, winner of the Mentor of the Year Award in 2008, exemplifies what it means to be a significant support in a student’s life. Serving as a mentor is special to Mark because he and his wife do not have any children of their own.

“It’s fulfilling to know you have a hand in navigating this young person toward getting a high school diploma and, hopefully, a shot at college or continuing education,” said Mark. “In addition, you help point out the importance of spiritual growth and how faith, Christian values and service

to others are key components to the future they build for themselves.”

MENTORING ACROSS THE MILES

Mark has mentored two students through high school, graduation and through college. He is now mentoring a junior named Omar at St. Lawrence Seminary boarding school. Even though Omar is miles away, Mark mentors him and even attends parent-teacher conferences to better understand areas of improvement.

Omar and Mark have a strong mentoring relationship, so much so that Omar has asked Mark to be his confirmation sponsor this spring. Mark is looking forward to further helping him on his spiritual journey.

ADD MENTORING TO YOUR BUCKET LIST

“God taps each of us on the shoulder to serve and do his work. This is a true highlight on my life’s resume,” said Mark. “I can’t believe I waited as long as I did to say ‘yes’ to mentoring. I urge everyone to come to an orientation and hear firsthand what this eye opening program is all about. It should be on everyone’s bucket list.”

You can make a difference in the life of a Nativity student. To learn more, contact Larry Siewert, Director of Graduates, at 414-645-1060 or siewertl@njms.org.

DONOR PROFILE: MARY JOAN STUESSI LEAVING A LEGACY



"I am particularly touched when a student sends me an update on his school progress and what he is involved in."

— Mary Joan Stuessi

Nativity is very grateful for the generosity of all our donors. In this issue, we are honored to highlight donor Mary Joan Stuessi, who has generously supported Nativity since 1994.

Mary Joan attended private schools herself, and she understands well the transformational power of a private education, especially in an economically-depressed area.

Over the years, Mary Joan's belief in Nativity has been sustained through regular communication, and by attending the Annual Scholarship Dinner for 16 years! Mary Joan is delighted when the students dressed in uniform greet guests at Nativity functions. "I am particularly touched when a student sends me an update on his school progress and what he is involved in."

Knowing the school is in good hands with strong leadership gives Mary Joan confidence. One person who Mary Joan sees adding tremendous value to the school is Larry Siewert, co-founder of Nativity and Director of Graduates. His decision to support the boys financially, emotionally and academically, even after their graduation from Nativity, has been a source of inspiration.

Every year, Mary Joan is committed to helping fund scholarships, but when Nativity moved to its current location, she graciously funded the beautification of the courtyard. With Mary Joan's generous donation, the Mary Joan Stuessi Courtyard was commissioned and is now a reflection of God's creation and beauty. It is also a

reminder that the school can be supported in many diverse ways.

Mary Joan encourages others, who are thinking about supporting the school, to attend the scholarship dinner, golf outing, or even visit Camp Thunderhead. She suggests learning more by visiting the school, going to one of the many activities offered by Nativity, or simply talking with the students and their dedicated parents.

Mary Joan is not only supporting the school today, she is leaving a legacy. "These Latino young men should be able to assume the role of service and leadership. They are our future. These commitments are satisfying to me and I am enjoying it!"



THE KEY TO NATIVITY'S SUCCESS

Over the years, staying connected to wonderful volunteers, donors, foundations and companies has proven to be the key to our success.

This past October, we experienced a tremendous outpouring of support for our "Working Together, Staying Connected" Annual Scholarship Dinner at the Marquette University Alumni Memorial Union. The event was a huge success with 340 in attendance and our students helped raise more than \$150,000 by selling raffle tickets and leading the scholarship appeal. That's a 10% increase over last year!

Thanks to our generous donors and sponsors, more children will be afforded a Nativity education. Special thanks to Shorewest Realtors, our event sponsor, and our \$2,500 table sponsors: National Insurance Services, Inc., Northwestern Mutual Foundation, UMOs, The Henke Foundation, Marquette University, BMO Harris, R.W. Baird, Quarles & Brady and others.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

2ND ANNUAL READ-A-THON
April 3 through 27, 2012

ANNUAL STUDENT POETRY CONTEST
Nativity Jesuit Cafeteria
April 23, 2012, 5:30 p.m.

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL
CLASS OF '74 REUNION AT NJMS
April 24, 2012, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

NATIVITY JESUIT MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADUATION
St. Joseph Chapel, 1501 S. Layton Blvd.
(South 27th Street at Greenfield Ave.)
Milwaukee, WI
Across the street from NJMS at the
Sisters of St. Francis complex.
June 2, 2012, 6 p.m.

NATIVITY JESUIT MIDDLE SCHOOL
SUMMER CAMP
June 23 through July 27, 2012

11TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
Bluemound Golf and Country Club
Aug. 27, 2012, Registration 10:30 a.m.

St. Mary's Visitation
Christian Women Presents
2ND ANNUAL KITCHENS FOR A CAUSE
Sept. 29, 2012, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Proceeds to Benefit NJMS



YOUR SUPPORT IS ALWAYS WELCOME. BELOW IS A LIST OF NEEDED ITEMS:

NATIVITY JESUIT MIDDLE SCHOOL:

20 HEADSETS FOR COMPUTER LAB
SET OF NOVELS FOR CLASS
PORTABLE MIMEO BOARD

CAMP THUNDERHEAD:

LEGOS AND KNEX BUILDING SETS
BOARD GAMES • WASHERS/DRYERS
BIKES • TROLLING MOTOR
AIR COMPRESSOR • PONTOON BOAT



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SNAPSHOTS

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Larry Siewert, Director of Graduates, congratulates Rob and Lisa Harrington, 2011 Mentor of the Year, at our Annual Scholarship Dinner this past October.



For a community service project, eighth graders worked as a team to write a grant and secure funding to make, paint and place four park benches along the Hank Aaron Trail.