

Crusader News - January Happenings



JANUARY NEWS

ACE Support ... Extracurricular Opportunities ... Faculty SpotlightRegistration and Financial Aid Prep... Catholic Schools Week ... and more!



HELPING STUDENTS 'ACE' IT

Did you know that our **Academic Course Enhancement (ACE)** program helps students in grades 4-6 reach their academic potential? Math and reading support services are available for eligible students, as well as enrichment activities for eligible students working above grade level.



Mrs. Carrie Garlesky (above) and **Mrs. Sandy Hunsinger** (left) head up support services on East and West campuses, respectively, and work with students to strengthen math and literacy skills. Their efforts are making a difference. ACE students are consistently showing improvement on STARS assessments and in other classroom activities ... and showing more confidence in themselves, too.

WHAT IS A 'STAR' ASSESSMENT?

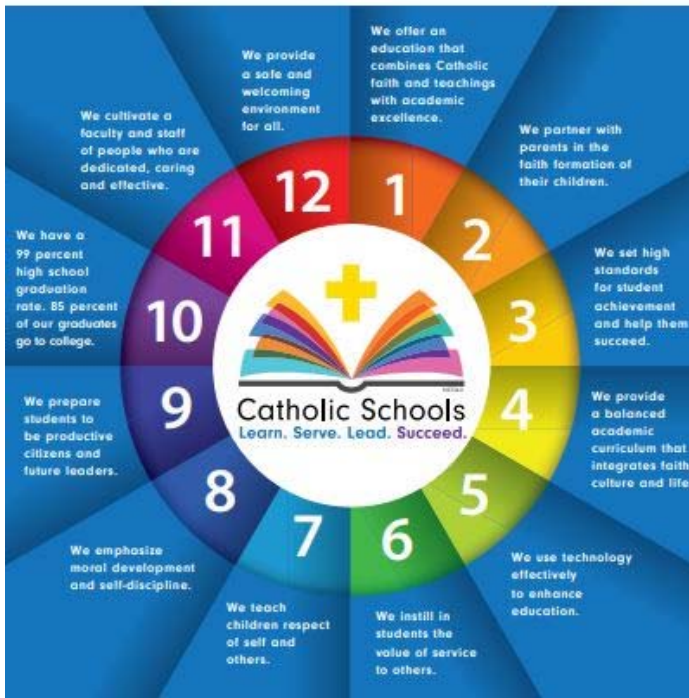
This year, we began using the research-based STAR assessment to help our teachers gauge student progress. The short test, administered throughout the year, provides important data that helps us analyze what students know and what they're ready to learn next. The assessments also help us monitor student growth, and determine which students may need more help or are ready for more advanced work. Look for more info on the STAR assessment and how we're using this national program to strengthen our learning environments in upcoming issues of Crusader News.

SAVE the DATE - CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK!

January 27 - February 2

Open House, All Campuses: Monday, February 4, 5pm-8pm

a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools



Our three campuses (East, West and Bishop McCort) will host an array of student-centered activities, including an Open House for current and prospective families on **Monday, February 4 from 5pm-8pm**. Plan to join us!

More info on our Catholic Schools Week schedule will be available soon. In the meantime, feel free to spread the word to friends and families who are considering educational options for their children. We are happy to welcome them to DMCA and introduce them to the many opportunities we offer.



***Refer a Family,
Earn Tuition Credits!***

*Do you know a family that is considering DMCA? Invite them to our Open House on **Monday, February 4 from 5pm-8pm**. If they enroll, you'll be eligible for a tuition credit. Click [here](#) for more info.*

EXTRACURRICULARS:
Exploring interests, developing friendships

At DMCA, we help develop the whole person by giving children the chance to explore a range of activities outside of the regular school day. Students can take advantage of these extracurricular programs as early as kindergarten, although most programs begin in 4th grade. Whether our students participate in the performing arts, athletics, STREAM competitions, or band and orchestra, they have the chance to learn time management and teamwork skills, and develop new friendships grounded in shared experiences.

The DMCA K-8 Cheer Squad, led by DMCA West 5th and 6th grade teacher **Megan Miller**, finished a stellar season in December after our Youth team captured 3rd place in the state competition and our Junior team earned 1st place honors! This month, our students are gearing up for our inaugural First Lego League (FLL) competition. **Justin Ogline**, our PreK-6 STREAM coordinator and FLL coach, hosted an info session for parents and students last month. More than 15 students joined the team and are preparing for a series of competitions focused on space travel.

Many programs are just getting started for 2019, including Reading Competition, Forensics and our spring musical. These and other extracurricular activities are led by teachers, volunteer parents and others, all of whom have completed and obtained necessary clearances. Click [here](#) for a list of available activities or call us for more info.



Our 4-6 English Language Arts Team

Over the last several months, our K-6 faculty members have completed extensive professional development modules, many of which emphasize the effectiveness of individualized learning strategies. In our English Language Arts classrooms in grades 4, 5 and 6, this includes 'guided reading,' an instructional approach that involves our teachers working with small groups of readers to help them improve their reading, writing and comprehension skills.



Through guided reading, our teachers have the opportunity to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of the small group. Research indicates that this type of 'differentiated learning' generates positive gains in students' reading performance and keeps students challenged, regardless of their academic ability. It also has cross-curricular benefits since it helps students strengthen overall comprehension abilities.

The East ELA team for grades 4-6 includes Mrs. Laura Swank (left) and Mrs. Victoria Reilly (right).



We know it's a privilege to teach your children. We thank you for the opportunity and encourage you to contact your child's teacher any time with any questions, comments or concerns you may have. Contact information for our 4-6 English Language Arts team can be found [here](#).

The West ELA team for grades 4-6 includes Ms. Megan Miller, Mr. Ryan Woodruff and Mrs. Kim Hill.



PICTURE THIS *Capturing the everyday spirit of DMCA*

*Top and clockwise: East students in Miss Shannon Stephen's Kindergarten classroom get ready for Christmas; West graduates and DMCA 7th and 8th graders **RJ Shayesta, Sarah Bell and Ella Leitenberger** talk with **Mrs. Batzel** about products they made in the new 7th and 8th grade STREAM Lab using the Lab's 3D printer; East graduates and DMCA 8th graders **Megan Lee and Lauren Mucciola** show **Mrs. Podratsky** their bridge designs during the STREAM Lab open house.*



REGISTRATION and FINANCIAL AID NEWS

It's hard to believe but open enrollment for the 2019-20 school year is coming up! In the next few weeks, all school families will receive info about how to register through SchoolAdmin, our on-line registration system. Online applications will also be available for families interested in financial assistance. Please note that students must be registered at DMCA through SchoolAdmin before financial aid considerations can be made. Look for more info in the coming weeks and at our **Open House on Monday, 2/4, from 5pm - 8pm.**



Our students were featured in several local media stories in December, including the ribbon cutting that officially opened the 7th and 8th grade STREAM lab. The state-of-the-art engineering and technology lab was made possible in part with support from the Laurel Auto Group, the Toyota USA Foundation, and other donors. Here are a few links to media stories in case you missed them ...

[Divine Mercy students are living the STREAM with new tech lab Academy adds \\$100K lab in Johnstown](#)



1/9 - PTO Meeting, 6:30 pm, BMCHS

1/10 - Get More Math Parent Workshop, 6:30 pm, Guzzi Auditorium, BMCHS (Grades 4-8)

1/10 - First Lego League Pep Rally (West)

1/11 - First Lego League Pep Rally (East)

1/14 - DMCA Board Mtg, 6 pm, John Paul II Bldg, St. Benedict's Church Campus

1/21 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School

1/30 - Catholic Schools Week PreK-12 Rally

2/1 - Teacher Appreciation Day - Noon Dismissal

Just a note ... **DMCA Board of Directors** will host its next **Listening Session** at its January meeting on **Monday, 1/14, at 6 pm** in the John Paul II building on the St. Benedict Church campus. Please contact **Kathleen Martella-Zucco**, DMCA Board Chair, at martella-zucco.kathleen@divinemeracy.academy if you would like to be placed on the agenda to share your thoughts, ideas or perspectives with board members. For scheduling purposes, guests must be on the agenda to present.

Also, be sure to check out the [DMCA Google calendar](#) for school-wide events and specific happenings at each campus. Our 7th and 8th graders should also review the [Bishop McCort calendar](#) for important dates throughout the year.

The mission of Divine Mercy Catholic Academy is to empower our students through Christ-centered academic excellence within a safe and secure environment that will create a solid foundation of values, leadership, and commitment to self and community.

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Do you know someone who wants to stay updated on DMCA happenings? Tell us! We would be happy to include them!

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Questions? Comments? Please contact us [here](#).