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## MARCH NEWS

*Expanded PreK program ... CYO Basketball News ... Faculty Spotlight on Mrs. Klein ... Picture This ... Middle States Accreditation ... Summer Camps ... Important Dates ... and more!*

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### PreK Program Gears Up for Expansion

Beginning next year, DMCA's pre-kindergarten program will expand to offer **full-day, 5-days-a-week PreK for 3-year-olds**. For just **\$20 a day**, parents can depend on an early childhood education experience that's specially designed to meet the developmental needs of the young students.



The expanded full-day 3-year-old program complements the range of PreK programs currently offered at DMCA. These include full-day PreK classes held twice a week for 3-year-olds, and three- and five-day all-day classes for 4-year-olds.

"Our PreK programs are interactive and participatory," said **Mrs. Melissa Roxby**, who teaches 3- and 4-year-olds at East (left). "They're specially designed to nurture children's social and emotional development while preparing for them Kindergarten and beyond. This is their first introduction to the classroom so we want to do everything we can to get them

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**Miss Shannon Lee** (right), who teaches 5-days-a-week PreK for 4-year-olds at East, agreed and noted that PreK learning stretches beyond her classroom.

"At a young age, we're giving our students a balanced and well-rounded experience that includes time in our STREAM and computer labs," she said. "They're also working with our art, music, and wellness teachers, and developing special friendships with the older students and members of their Faith Families. These experiences really come together and ignite their desire to learn and absorb everything they can."



Learning often takes place in small group 'centers' that use hands-on activities to build early phonemic, literacy, and math skills. Classroom aides support the PreK teachers, ensuring nearly one-on-one attention.

"We bring more than a decade of PreK experience to our children and families," said **Mrs. Elizabeth Mateljan** (left), who heads up PreK programs at West. "We look forward to sharing it with even more families next year."

***A PreK Open House for current and prospective families will be held soon. Be on the lookout for more info and be sure to spread the word!***

## **DMCA PRE-K/KINDERGARTEN SUMMER CAMPS**

Keep the learning going! PreK and K summer camps on space, rainbows, underwater life, and STREAM will be held **6/10-6/14, 6/17-21, 7/8-7/12, and 7/22-7/26**. Contact Caitlin Vinner at [vinner.caitlin@divinemeracy.academy](mailto:vinner.caitlin@divinemeracy.academy) or 266-3837 for more info!

***K-6 summer camps will also be held 6/24-6/27, 7/8-7/11, and 7/22-7/25. More to come!***

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Congratulations to our **Girls' Junior High Basketball team** for winning the Diocesan championship! Their win takes them to the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) statewide tournament in Wilkes-Barre from **March 8-11**. Good luck!

Speaking of CYO, DMCA and Bishop McCort are proud to host the statewide **CYO Boys' Championship Tournament** from **March 15-17** at Bishop McCort. More than 100 families from Catholic schools across the state will visit the region during the tournament. Be sure to welcome them and catch the games!



**Mrs. Jaclyn Klein, Kindergarten, DMCA West**

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These are just a few ways that **Mrs. Jaclyn Klein** describes the Kindergarten environment at DMCA. Mrs. Klein, who teaches Kindergarten at DMCA West, is part of a trio of DCMA Kindergarten educators that also includes **Mrs. Casey Lovette** (West) and **Mrs. Shanon Stephens** (East).



Mrs. Klein, who earned her elementary education degree from Penn State and a Master of Education in reading from Edinboro University, is in her 8th year as a teacher in the area's Catholic schools. The instructional changes she has seen at the early childhood level have her excited for the future.

***Mrs. Klein provides small group reading instruction to a few students while their peers work independently on similar activities that help build math and literacy skills.***

"Research shows that a strong and positive Kindergarten experience is the foundation for success later on," she said. "That's why we're integrating proven strategies into our Kindergarten program, including STREAM opportunities, tactile learning with resources like magnets and play doh, and small group instruction. Our flexible seating also encourages them to move and work together."

The full-day DMCA Kindergarten experience differs from other area programs on several levels, including spiritual development tailored to youngsters.

"Our small class sizes mean we can provide individualized attention, whether a student needs help or needs to be challenged," she said. "This one-on-one attention helps our students reach critical milestones, such as basic math facts to five, constructing three-sentence stories, and mastering developmentally-appropriate sight words."

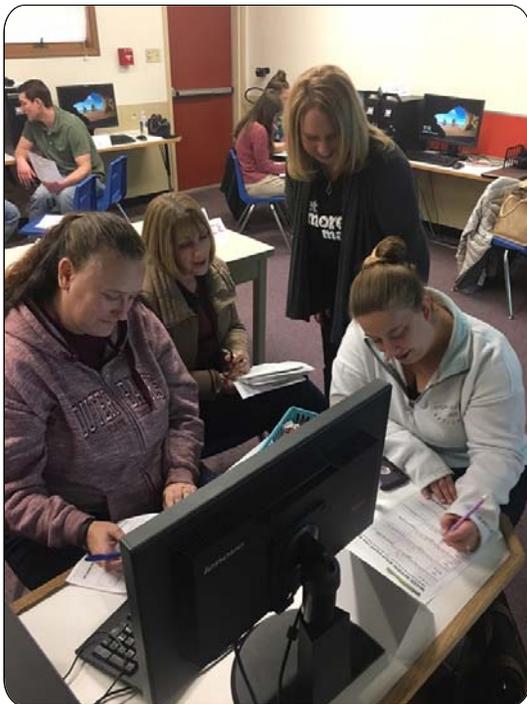


***Kindergartners Giovanni Benford and Brooklynn Updyke work together on a phonics activity in Mrs. Klein's classroom. Small group instruction and independent learning help ensure DMCA kindergartners reach milestones.***

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Many parents or grandparents have '529' plans to help cover college tuition costs. But as of 2018, **529 plans can also be used for private elementary and high school tuition.** [Click here](#) for a quick overview on 529s or talk to a tax specialist or financial advisor about how these tax-exempt savings plans can benefit you and your child.

## *Sharpening Instructional Skills*



Helping our teachers stay up-to-date on instructional strategies and techniques is a top priority. In February, our **K-6 teachers** attended a day-long Math in Focus training while **Justin Ogline**, our STREAM coordinator, participated in the statewide PA Educational Technology Expo and Conference. Additional seminars will be held in the spring.

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A team of educators from across Pennsylvania will bring their experience and fresh eyes to DMCA from April 9-12 to observe and analyze what we do. Their visit is part of a peer-review accreditation process practiced by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS). *(DMCA is a candidate for accreditation.)*



We have asked them to share their insights on things we're doing well and provide guidance on areas where we can improve. Our staff and faculty have been preparing for the visit for more than a year to ensure we adhere to MSA-CESS standards. This has been a true labor of love and especially meaningful to us in our developing years as Divine Mercy. Your support of our school and our efforts go a long way as we continue to grow as DMCA and **#witness the difference!**



## Registration Information

Open enrollment for the 2019-20 school year is here! Please note that **all** school families need to register through [School Admin](#), our on-line registration system.

The site also includes tuition rates and financial assistance info. Don't forget you can **earn tuition credits** for referring a family to DMCA. Click [here](#) for more info. Questions? Contact Maria Sanders at 536-8991 or [sanders.maria@divinemeracy.academy](mailto:sanders.maria@divinemeracy.academy) Thank you!



## PICTURE THIS

*Capturing the everyday spirit of DMCA*

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Clockwise: These Crusaders lent a helping hand to the Cambria County Backpack Project; **ACE students** spent the day with Bishop McCort international students to learn more about Chinese, Egyptian and Belarusian cultures; students in **Miss Dravis'** 1st grade class celebrate 100 Days of School; East Principal **Mrs. Podratsky** pulls the winning Disney trip ticket sold by 7th grade parent **Todd Euen**.



ICYMI ... our students were featured in *Our Town* and other local media stories in February! (Photo reprinted from *Our Town*)

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[Live Stream Partnership - Our Town](#)  
[Divinely Inspired Art Show - Tribune Democrat](#)

The art show was also featured in stories by Our Town, WJAC-TV, and WTAJ-TV. Visit our [Facebook](#) page for more everyday news, including hands-on learning projects, Faith Family updates, school news, and more!



- 3/1** - Dress Down - Race for Education
- 3/6** - Ash Wednesday
- 3/6** - PTO Mtg, BMCHS, 6:30 pm
- 3/11** - Dress Down - Race for Education
- 3/15** - Noon Dismissal (7/8 only)
- 3/15-17** - Boys' CYO Tournament, BMCHS
- 3/15** - Dress Down - Race for Education
- 3/21** - School in Session - Snow Make-Up
- 3/22** - No School - Act 80 Day

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.

*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!

Divine Mercy Catholic Academy · 2306 Bedford Street · Johnstown, PA 15904 · USA  
 East Campus: 814-266-3837 · West Campus: 814-539-5315 · Middle School: 814-536-8991  
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