



SJS Highlights

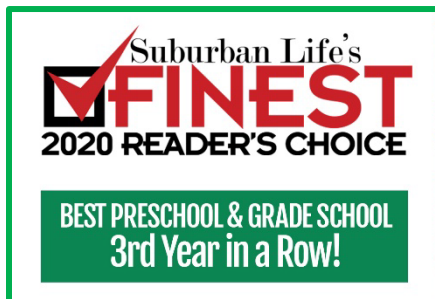
First Half of 2020-21 School Year

A Note from our Principal

Looking back on the last six months, no one could have anticipated that we would find ourselves still navigating life in a pandemic. Our classrooms and hallways look a lot different this year. Our instruction methods have changed significantly. Although a lot has changed, what remains the same is the love and care of our community. Everyone at St. Joseph School is committed to ensuring the success and safety of our students, who are at the heart of everything we do.



We have seen incredible resilience, flexibility, and teamwork from our entire school community. We are proud to be one of only a few schools in our area to successfully offer in-person, full-day instruction five days a week along with livestreaming for our remote learners since September. I am extremely grateful for the work of our faculty and staff.



Thank you to our school community for once again voting us the Best Preschool and Grade School in the Western Suburbs! It says a lot about your trust in our tradition of excellence and commitment to Catholic education.

Whether learning in-person or remotely, we are proud of all that our students, teachers and staff have accomplished so far this year and are excited to share with you some highlights from the first half. We are extremely grateful to our parents and guardians for their continued support and commitment to following our safety guidelines. May you all remain safe and healthy and continue to pray for a return to a new, better normal.

Rita Stasi
Principal

Around the School

Fourth Grade – Case of the Missing Santa Claus

We had a mystery on our hands and the 4th grade students put on their CSI investigating hats to help solve the *Case of the Missing Santa Claus*. It began with a letter from Bernard the Elf. In his letter to the students, he expressed his worry that he had lost all communication with Santa. Bernard the Elf led the class through eight fun and engaging Science investigations where students ultimately solved the case! Students learned about what a crime scene investigator does by analyzing the crime scene, collecting evidence, studying the suspects, analyzing footprints & fingerprints, matching the DNA left on the hot cocoa mug or identifying the white substance left at the scene.



Fifth Grade – Crystal Snowflakes

The 5th graders created crystal snowflakes by taking pipe cleaners, bending them into a snowflake shape and placing them into a solution of borax and hot water. The students learned about what snow crystals are, the different types of snow crystals, the saturation levels of liquids, and why hot water dissolves compounds faster than cold water. After the crystals formed, the students used magnifying glasses to observe their crystals up close then identify what type of crystal they created. Best part of the activity was that students were able to take the snow crystals home and place them on their Christmas trees!



Sixth Grade – Literature Project

The 6th graders are working on a literature circle reading unit. They are reading five different survival themed books. On the discussion days, they share their different jobs related to the reading skills that we have been practicing. They hold virtual discussions with Google Meets to talk with their group members who are sitting in different areas in the classroom and some who are learning at home. The students are doing a great job using the technology and being creative with the artist adventurer job!

Virtues/Faith Formation

Diocesan Devotional Project

This year's diocesan devotional project is Saints and Catholic Social Teachings. Four 8th grade student leaders watched a virtual training and then filmed an introductory video about the project and the seven Catholic Social Teachings. This video will be watched by students throughout the school as they start the project to learn about fourteen saints who were dedicated to serving God. Thank you to these 8th grade leaders for volunteering to lead our school in this year's devotional project!



Virtue of Humility

The virtue of the month for November was humility, accepting your limitations and God-given talents. Students in Mrs. Lyon's 8th grade class learned about Saint Therese of Lisieux and how she is an example of the virtue. The students created humility posters by researching quotations about the virtue and decorating them with roses since St. Therese is known for her promise to send roses from heaven. Nice job to all the students! Their projects are a reminder to use humility in our daily lives, and the posters have added a burst of color to the classroom.

Saints Museum

To celebrate All Saints Day, it has become a tradition for our 3rd graders to research a saint and then create living art to display at a "Saints Museum". This year, we took advantage of a sunny albeit brisk day, to host the museum outdoors a couple of weeks early. Through their research and respectful representation of the saints, the students were able to feel a human and spiritual connection to our beloved saints. Family members were able to safely walk through the outdoor museum and learn more about the saints.



Student Council Activities

Flag Raising

Members of the SJS Student Council held a flag raising ceremony on November 6, 2020 to install a new U.S. flag on the corner of Highland Avenue and Franklin Street. The Student Council, led by Tyler B. and moderated by Middle School English Teacher, Mrs. Laura Cramer, replaced the previous tattered flag which had been ripped by recent high winds. Thank you to the SJS Student Council for the wonderful effort and gesture to show respect for our country and to keep our school property looking its best!



Food and Clothing Drives

Our Student Council organized food and clothing drives before the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Each grade was given donation suggestions to help stock the St. Joseph Parish Food Pantry shelves for the holiday season. Thank you to our SJS families for their generosity to help serve those in need in our community!

Awards

Navigating Creativity

A big shout out to 2nd grader Ellery C. who was the winner in the Grade 2-3 category of the November Navigating Creativity art competition, hosted by Navigate Adolescence! The monthly Navigating Creativity competition provides opportunities for children to share their creativity in a community-wide virtual art show. The November Challenge invited young people to use the idea of "Connection" to create a maze. Ellery said, "When I do art, I feel connected to everything around me."



Fenwick Math Competition

In November, twelve SJS students competed virtually in Fenwick High School's 50th annual Math Contest for middle school students. Over 500 students from 33 different schools participated with more than 300 students competing in our division. We are proud of our students for choosing to participate and of their performances. Congratulations to 8th grader Veronica R. who took 2nd place in the competition!

Events

Virtual Christmas Music Program

Our annual Christmas music program is a tradition that SJS families look forward to every year. It is a beautiful and festive event that helps us prepare for the birth of Jesus. In lieu of an in-person program, several of our students, with the help of our music teacher Mr. Horneman, recorded some seasonal favorites to help us get in the holiday spirit.



Teacher Highlights



Sharon Turkowski



Meghan Hanika

New Teachers Welcomed to SJS

We are blessed to have several new teachers joining us this year! There is nothing quite like starting a new job during a pandemic, but they have shown wonderful resilience and perseverance, and we are so happy to have them as part of our SJS family!

Please welcome Sharon Turkowski, 2nd grade; Meghan Hanika, 4th grade homeroom and 4th/5th Social Studies, Linda Burk, 6th grade homeroom/Math and Middle School STEAM, and Laura Cramer, 8th grade homeroom and Middle School Language Arts.



Linda Burk



Laura Cramer

Lead Preschool Teacher

We are excited that Laura O'Brien is now a lead teacher in our Preschool 3 and 4 half-day program! She was a Preschool Teacher Aide for two years prior to becoming a lead teacher.



Master's Achievements

Congratulations to two of our teachers on recently earning their Master's degrees! 1st grade teacher Miss Jane Krueger earned her Master's in

Education, with a specialization in Curriculum and Instruction, from Western Illinois University and Middle School Language Arts teacher Mrs. Laura Cramer earned her Master's in Education with a specialization in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment from the University of Mary.



Alumni Highlights

Big 12 Conference Women's Newcomer

Congrats to SJS 2016 Alumna Brenna C. on her Cross-Country success at Iowa State! She was recently named Big 12 Conference Women's Newcomer of the Year after placing 5th in the Big 12 Championship that helped the Cyclones win!



Montini National Honor Society

SJS 2018 alumnae Reeghan B., Megan C. and Paige P., were inducted into Montini Catholic High School's National Honor Society, whose

members are responsible for organizing and enlisting school participation in various events during the school year. Each member strives to emulate the four pillars of Character, Scholarship, Leadership and Service in their everyday lives.



Reeghan B.

Megan C.

Paige P.

Montini Scholarship Recipients

SJS 2020 alumni Michael R. and Tommy W. were recipients of Montini Catholic High School's Freshman Placement Exam Scholarships which are offered to incoming freshmen excelling on the Freshman Placement Exam.



Stay connected with us!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.
Share stories and pics with us by emailing
communications@sjsdg.org.