

St. Catherine of Siena, Martinez
Parish Newsletter
January 2012

*A publication of the Parish
Communications Committee*

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**“Catholic Schools: Faith.
Academics. Service.”**

Faith. Academics. Service.

Catholic Schools

The annual observance of Catholic Schools' week starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2012 is January 29 to February 5. Schools typically commemorate this week with Masses, open houses and activities for students, families, parishioners and the community at large. St. Catherine of Siena School is no different. All are invited to attend the 8:30 AM family Mass on Sunday, January 29 to kick off the celebration. Mass will be followed by Open House in the classrooms. There is also an informational evening scheduled on February 2 at 6:00 PM in the Parish Hall. And, enrollment applications are now being accepted for grades Pre-K through grade eight for the 2012/2013 school year. Join us. Celebrate with us. Take a look and see what St. Catherine of Siena School is all about.



When classes began in August, students planted vegetables in the school garden, which they now enjoy eating through the hot lunch program. The parent run hot lunch is nutritious with fresh salad and fruit and a different hot entrée each day.



Parish Office: 1125 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 925-228-2230
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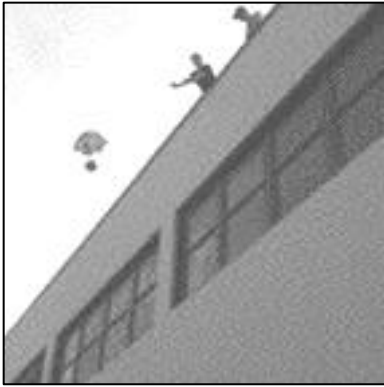
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The upper yard was repaired over the summer which included freshly painted benches and play equipment, new bark and basketball courts. The physical education teacher focuses on teaching students the rules of basketball, good nutrition, and CPR. This spring, the concentration will be on the rules of soccer, volleyball, and baseball.



On Grandparent's Day, all enjoyed a prayer service before lunch in this beautiful church. Lunch was served to over 400 students and their grandparents which is believed to be a record turnout!



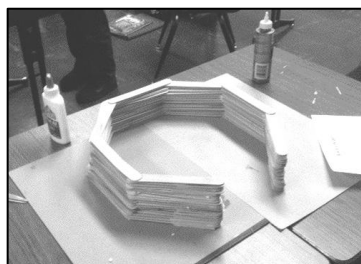
One of the favorite eighth grade events is the *Egg Drop* experiment sponsored by Laurie Pitchers, the junior high science teacher. Students build compartment, much like a space shuttle, to hold a raw egg before releasing it

from the school's roof. Certain guidelines must be followed in building the egg holders in order to be entered into the contest. The containers are then tossed from the same distance atop the roof with the eggs snugly inside their compartments. The experiment is to see which vehicle is constructed best, preserving the shell of the egg. It is a wildly anticipated annual event and great fun to watch to see which eggs will make it out of the scramble.



Fourth graders pictured here are each constructing a relief map of California in the familiar shape of our great state following the instructions of teacher Janette Wilkinson. They study and represent the four regions of California including the desert, mountains, central valley, and the coastal areas. Next, they will build the California Missions that will be on display during Catholic School's Week.

Most grades study Native American History. Shown here is a Hogan, a type of Native American housing constructed by the fifth grade. Janeen Harris teaches the fifth grade class.



Each year a traditional feast is arranged by Cindy Polizzi and the Kindergarten class donning costumes of Native Americans and pilgrims along with a well attended prayer service for their families to celebrate Thanksgiving.



St. Catherine School was honored by the Diocese for academically achieving the highest standardized test scores this year. Students are scoring in the 80th percentile in the nation in Language Arts and Math. The school was featured on the front page of the Department of Schools Diocese of Oakland website. It was named the School of the Week for December 4 through the 10, 2011.

Pictured here is SCS instructional assistant, Linda Jimenez teaching Marcy Cook Math Tiles, a method that reinforces basic math facts.



Additionally, junior high math teacher, Joe Lanza's students attend the zero period prior to the start of the school day. This time allows students who want to be challenged in math at the high school level an opportunity to do so. These students are testing at the eleventh grade math level.

Preschoolers under the direction of Kelly Pola are mastering the use of the calendar. They understand the days of the week and the months of the year. They are a very bright group of children!

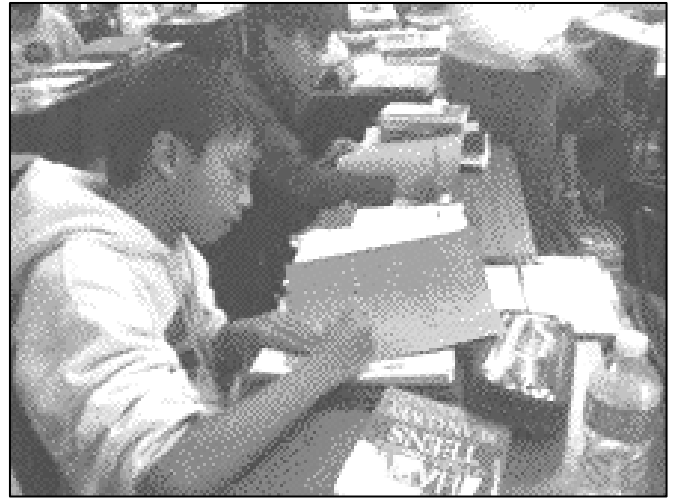




Second graders learn about motion and energy in a fun way taught by teacher Kristi Hoefler.



First graders learn about all God's creatures great and small from their teacher Sandra Lozano. This young man is making venom like a spider would to catch his prey. The sugary substance will help the spider attract dinner.



St. Catherine School has one of the strongest Language Arts program in the Diocese. Valerie Spagenberg, the eighth grade teacher, knows the importance of journal writing to inspire students to keep track of good ideas for producing great essays and award winning stories. These eighth graders are graduating in the 80th percentile in writing.

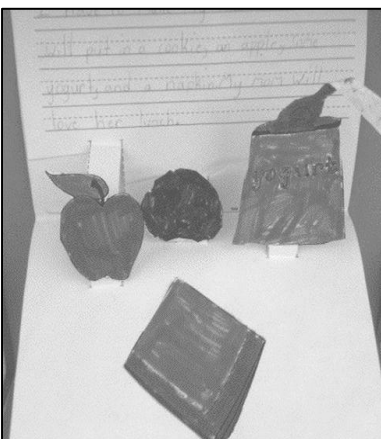


Students in the seventh grade attend a week long experience at Caritas Creek Camp. Known to all as simply *Caritas*, it is a Catholic based outdoor education program designed to bring the students closer to their classmates, their teachers, and especially to closerGod.

The students at St. Catherine School are participants in varied service projects. The opportunities are many. They have raised money for



Leukemia and Cancer research; they participate regularly in food collection for the St. Vincent de Paul Society St. Catherine Parish Conference; they buy Christmas gifts for those at Juvenile Hall and collect items for the *Get on the Bus* program; they serve hot lunch with Loaves and Fishes monthly, and, this year, students donated 74 jars of peanut butter to St. David's pantry for the Richmond Food Bank. Students also participate in the annual run/walk for the Darius Jones Foundation for Heart Health, and much, much more. During the upcoming Catholic Schools' Week students will collect warm coats and pullovers for the homeless in our area.



Third grade teacher, Amy Gillum, teaches her students creative ways to compile book reports while focusing on understanding the parts of a story seen here in a very imaginative and unusual way.

The St. Catherine School mission is to think globally about people who need help. This is what students learn from Pre-K to eighth grade and will become better people as a result of the prayer opportunities and service projects at their disposal.

Message from the Principal:

I am extremely blessed to be part of such a great school community. I love the city of Martinez and St. Catherine of Siena Parish School. As a parishioner, I've had the opportunity to meet and work with many great people in this community and I look forward to many great years to come!

Sandy Wright



The Good News in Education

ALL ARE INVITED

Kick-off Catholic Schools Week

Sunday, January 29

Student Mass 8:30 AM

**OPEN HOUSE
& BOOK FAIR**



Classrooms open from 9:30 AM to noon

Hospitality after all Masses

**NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
FOR 2012/2013 SCHOOL YEAR**



Applications available
in the
school office
or call
925-228-4140 or email
Principal at
swright@csdo.org

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

January 25 through February 2

INFORMATION NIGHT

February 2

AUCTION

March 31

OKTOBERFEST

October 6



MARTINEZ

SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL

- Pray for students and teachers
- Donate through collection basket
- Sign-up for eScrip at www.escrip.com using St. Catherine School ID #121963817
- Swipe a "S.H.A.R.E.S" card when shopping at Lucky, SaveMart, Smart Food, and Food Maxx Supermarkets at no cost to you
- Support student fundraising efforts (ie. cookie dough, candy, paper, & book sales)
- Volunteer to tutor students after school
- Attend the annual *Auction* on March 31st
- Donate a service or item to the auction
- Purchase raffle tickets
- Clip *Box Tops for Education* and deposit in the receptacle in the church vestibule
- Volunteer at the *Festival* October 6th
- Purchase scrip for a variety of merchants
- Subsidize a student's tuition
- Employer matching grant program
- Attend monthly school Masses

S.O.S.

contact the school with any questions

Message for this issue was contributed by St. Catherine School Principal Sandy Wright with information from the National Catholic Educational Association website: www.ncea.org/news/pressrelease/article.asp, the Diocese of Oakland website: www.oakdiocese.org/public/school-of-the-week, and, arranged and edited by St. Catherine of Siena Communications Committee.

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