

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

I am grateful that once again I have wonderful news to share about our school. We have received the reports on standardized testing and I am pleased to announce that, on the overall composite score, our students averaged in the 74th percentile (did better than 74 percent of the students that took this test nationwide). In addition, when looking at the Grade Equivalent scores, the news sounds even better. The 2nd grade scored 3 months ahead, the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th grades scored a full year to a year and a half ahead, and the 6th and 8th grades scored two years beyond their grade level! We are proud to confirm that our students are receiving a solid academic education while in a caring, faith-based value-centered environment. Individual test reports will be going home with the report cards on December 1st. This way, you will be able to discuss them with your teachers during parent-teacher conferences, which are scheduled to take place on December 7th and 8th, 2010. Please, check the calendar for the month of December and notice that December 7th and 8th are half days for grades K through 5, with dismissal at 1:00 PM, followed by teacher conferences. However, the Middle School has no class on Tuesday, December 7th and has school with 1:00 PM dismissal on Wednesday, December 8th. This is to provide our Middle School parents the opportunity to meet with all Middle School teachers at their conference. Therefore, **please do not send your Middle School student on Tuesday, December 7th since the teachers will be at conferences all day.**

Technology Update: I am pleased to inform you that the interactive whiteboard at the RISEN Learning Resource Center is now fully operational. Also, significant updates to our website have been made. Regarding the school, significant information has been added to the Alumni page and the Future Students page. Updates have also been made to the Guild page and to the Homepage, including the addition of a link to the Library page. Regarding the church, our website now has a Faith Formation page, a Parish Council page and a Knights of Columbus page. I would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Scott Lau, a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church and a member of our School Board, for being our volunteer web master. This is an ongoing process and we truly appreciate all the time that he donates to maintain and improve this important information tool.

Facilities Update: Our school keeps looking better and better. New ceilings have been installed in the north Girls Room, the hall outside the 3rd & 4th grades and the hall outside Mr. Mike's workshop. The lighting has also been upgraded with modern fixtures in those three areas, as well as in the north Boys Room.

Safety Update: Crosswalks around the school have been repainted and stop signs, as well as signs with reminders for morning drop off safety, have been installed. In addition, we have posted "Students Only" signs in front of the students' bathrooms to remind our adult visitors to our school not to use these bathrooms while school is in session.

Middle School News: The winners of the homework challenge for the month of October are the 7th grade (again!). Twenty-eight students won a Principal's Dress Down Pass. They are Daniel Clark, Shenandoah Terry, Edyta Wolk, David Abraham, Fatima Barlan, Alannah Bunkley, Timothy Foster, Kiana Foster-Mauro, Christina Lawton, Beatrice Mills, Matthew Murphy, Isabella Niece, Courtney Rose, Kim Thomson, Megan Bosetti, Michelle Chapman, Sofie Clark, Shannon Forrester, Patrick Griffin, Elizabeth Jennerwein, Audrey Jones, Briana Kleiner, Kathleen Kuchenbrod, Lauren Lomasney, Francesca Matira, Ellie McCarthy, Joey Warmus, and Martin Wolk. Congratulations to all the winners! The 7th grade also invited me to attend their Science class "Cells" project presentation on Wednesday, November 3rd. It was fantastic!

The Middle School Service Club carried out a very special fundraiser. Members of the Service Club drew portraits of Fr. Dariusz and myself and put them on display in the school cafeteria during school hours, and in the church vestibule after Masses on Saturday, November 6th and Sunday, November 7th. People voted for their favorite by donating money to the portrait of their choice. All funds collected will be sent to the UNICEF Organization.

Finally, our Advance Math students are training for the Math Counts competition. Under the direction of Dr. Barbara Hamanaka, this great extracurricular activity is taking place on Wednesdays or Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 PM. Dr. Hamanaka has been very generous to give the students the choice of which day they will attend to allow them the option of participating in other extracurricular activities offered at SHS.

Elementary School News: On October 19th our 1st and 2nd grades attended a wonderful fire safety presentation given by Firefighter Jason Armstrong, from the Mohegan Tribe Fire Department. Mr. Armstrong's daughter, Grace, is a second grade student.

Also, on Friday, October 29th, the 5th grade students welcomed all other students at SHS to visit their Native Americans projects. The students did a great job and we all learned many interesting things about many Native American tribes that enrich our country.

Many 4th grade students have signed up to participate in the fall session of our Photography Club. Under the direction of our Pre-K teacher, Mrs. Julie Sparks, this club will be meeting on Thursdays, from 3:00-4:00 PM. The spring session of the Photography Club will be made available to the 5th grade students.

Other News: Our school's traditional Holiday Food Drive benefiting Groton Human Services was a huge success. We would like to thank all of our families for donating so many food items. We would also like to thank Mrs. Ann Griffin for bringing our donations to the Food Bank. Her car was packed! In addition, our 3rd graders decorated Thanksgiving placemats and sent them to the Fairview Nursing Home in Groton. It is wonderful to see how our students' involvement, no matter their age, has a positive impact in our community. In addition, on October 27th, our faculty and staff wore pink for Cancer awareness and patient support. We made a collection and donated \$371.00 to the Terri Brodeur Breast Cancer Foundation. We are blessed to be part of such a compassionate and generous community!

On Sunday, October 31st, our church celebrated World Priest Appreciation Day. Mr. Marty Snyder, a school parent and the president of the Sacred Heart Parish Council, led parishioners on a special blessing to Fr. Dariusz during the 11:00 AM Mass. After the Mass, there was a reception in the cafeteria. Our school's faculty and staff, as well as each grade, prepared cards and other tokens showing our appreciation, which were presented to Fr. Dariusz on his special day. What a great opportunity to say "THANK YOU!" to our pastor for all that he has done and continues to do for us! We are blessed to have him with us!!!

On Saturday, November 6th we celebrated the first Sacred Heart Parish and School Family Night. It celebrated All Saints Day and children that wished to do so could come dressed up as their favorite saint. Our next Family Night will be on Saturday, December 4th, after the 4:30 P.M. Mass in the cafeteria. The theme will be Saint Nicholas Day. Families are asked to bring a dish to share. School families will receive a flyer with more information. We would like to thank the Sacred Heart Parish Social Committee for planning and coordinating this wonderful fellowship activity. They have scheduled a Family Night for every month, each time with a different theme. Please note that these are not fundraisers but fellowship activities for our whole parish and school community to enjoy. What a blessing!

On Wednesday, November 10th, two active duty petty officers from the Groton Sub-base, Petty Officer Matthew Simmons and Petty Officer Russell Barnes, came to our school for a meaningful flag-side ceremony in commemoration of Veterans Day. We wish to convey our gratitude to Mrs. Kobe Powers and her husband Master of Arms Chief Eric M. Powers, for facilitating this visit. It was an honor to have them in our school! Also, members of our school community contributed pictures and other memorabilia to put together a tribute to our community's veterans, which was displayed in our school lobby. We thank Mrs. Cindy Powden, Mrs. Nancy Pescatello, Nurse Cathi McMickle, Ms. Cathy Santangelo and Mrs. Jane Murphy for helping set up this wonderful exhibit.

Also in the lobby, we have posted a copy of the narrative for our Five-Year Interim Evaluation Report to share with our entire parish and school community. This narrative, together with all supporting documents, was submitted to New England Association of Schools and Colleges as part of the standard procedures to maintain

accreditation. I would like to encourage all to take some time to read this report, which describes our efforts and accomplishments during the past 3 years and presents a vision for our school's future.

I would like to remind our students, 3rd grade and up, that the deadline for submitting a poster for the Knights of Columbus Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest is December 2nd, 2010. Winners will be announced on December 19th, 2010.

Finally, the Christmas Season is almost upon us! This is a busy time of the year. Let us not forget the real reason for the season. As a Catholic school, our activities revolve around the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There will be more opportunities for charitable work as well as joyful celebrations. Our Band and Chorus Christmas Concert is scheduled for Thursday, December 9th, 2010 in the cafeteria. And to wrap it all up, once again we will have the opportunity to enjoy one of our finest celebrations: our traditional Lessons and Carols, a combination of Biblical readings and Christmas hymns performed by all our students. It will take place on Wednesday, December 15th, 2010. I would like to remind you that this is a formal school activity and that, as such, **attendance is mandatory**. I can assure you that you will very much enjoy seeing your child(ren) participate. It is truly a feast for the spirit and the senses.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy Thanksgiving. May all of us, as we gather around the table with our loved ones, thank God for sending us His Son and for loving us as His own sons and daughters. Personally, I have so much to give thanks for. God has blessed me with a lovely husband and four wonderful children. Moreover, He has blessed me with a very special extended family: the students, parents, faculty and staff and parishioners of Sacred Heart. Your wonderful love and support would be more than enough to give thanks for. However, you have given me the gift of a lifetime by sending me to the Holy Land. THANK YOU!!! What an amazing experience I just went through! It was filled with so many powerful spiritual experiences that will forever be a source of comfort and love for God. And if that were not enough, our whole school was outside to receive Fr. Dariusz and me when our bus arrived to the parking lot. I felt like it was the exclamation point at the end of sentence of praise to the Lord! Although life is now back to normal, I have been given strength to face my challenges with a renewed desire to follow God's will. I can always go back to that experience for guidance, enlightenment, forgiveness and healing. This is the gift of gifts that our Sacred Heart community has given me. Please know that I prayed for all of you in every church and special place we visited. I left notes asking for your needs and intentions and lit a candle everywhere it was possible. I will soon be sharing my experiences with our school and parish community, so that I may give back to you some of what you have given me. May God's love continue to grow in our hearts this coming Advent Season and beyond!

In Christ's love,

Dr. Calle