



Parent Newsletter

From the Head of School

Dear SDA Parents,

Warm greetings from the Office of the Head of School! It has been a summer of transitions at Saint Dominic Academy, as I stepped into the role of Head of School and Mrs. Guen Farrales moved into the role of Academic Dean. Rounding out our transitions was Mrs. Mary Murphy who has joined the administration as the Director of Annual Giving. While your young ladies were enjoying the summer, the school administration was up and running, working hard to implement several new programs and resources for the 2016-2017 school year.

With the implementation of a **new 9th grade mentoring program**, each 9th grade student will be guided through the transition to high school by a faculty mentor. In the works for the 7th through 12th grade is a **Saint Dominic Academy Trip Day**, which will be held in the spring of 2017. Plans are already underway for more than twelve different day trips in the New York and New Jersey area and more information on that event will follow in the coming months. If you had the opportunity to visit the school calendar online, you may have noticed the addition of ***“Quarterly Coffees with the Head of School”***. There will be one for each grade level and event reminders will be sent as the dates draw closer.

Another addition to our school day is our ***“Walk Through Wednesday”*** program, which invites interested students and parents to visit SDA on any Wednesday school is in session, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. This program, different from our Student for A Day and Open House programs, allows parents to visit while school is in session and provides them with an opportunity to talk one on one with members of the administration. We are excited to begin this in mid-September. Please also stay tuned to our website, where a new tab will share my ***Head of School Blog*** every other week.

Mrs. Farrales' letter in this issue will share with you some of the exciting academic ventures we have added; the expansion of the Dance/Fitness classes, the integration of SAT prep classes into schedules, and the continued progress of our STEM ® program, now transitioning into the 10th grade.

As you can see, it has been a busy summer here at Saint Dominic Academy; the building is in pristine condition, Siena Hall is available for rentals, and we are ready for an exciting school year. I look forward to seeing you at our **Back to School Night on September 15th** and to sharing mass and breakfast with our mothers and daughters at the **Communion Brunch on October 30th**. Know that you are in the daily prayers of the SDA community and I ask that you keep all of us in yours as well.

Warm regards,

Sarah Degnan Moje
Head of School

A message from the Academic Dean

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The 2016 Olympics was, without a doubt, among the highlights of this summer. And, quite proudly, the five young ladies of the USA women's gymnastics team were the darlings of the event. Ably coaching and supporting them was a 74-year-old woman, Martha Karolyi, National Coordinator for USA Gymnastics. Upon her retirement immediately after the 31st Olympiad, Martha leaves *"a legacy of teamwork and perfection"*. She has been quoted as saying *"I always tell the girls, we're competing against ourselves. We want to come as close as possible to perfection."*

I would like to point to a parallel between the Karolyi training camp and Saint Dominic Academy. Especially this year, we will make it our goal to equip and empower women leaders in much the same way that they train and mould Olympians... *"quiet, intense, with no wasted movement."* This year's academic calendar has been designed so that, on top of excellent speaking, writing, reading and numbers skills, an SDA education will create passionate, lifelong learners who are problem solvers, creative and critical thinkers, team players and citizens of integrity and courage, who likewise enjoy life and take pride in their work.

Because we recognize that learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a race run solo, we will continue to provide opportunities for building helpful student-teacher and student-student relationships. Classes will be decidedly collaborative, social, and active. Teachers will be the "guides on the side more than the sages on the stage". Our students will talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. It's been proven that, only under such an environment, does learning truly take place.

Also, we will emphasize prompt and appropriate feedback. Assessments should be returned within a week, if not sooner. Brief meetings with students to discuss their progress will be a staple. The Google classroom, Edline and Gmail will keep us connected.

You have my assurance that our esteemed faculty is happily anticipating the beginning of a new chapter in their careers as educators, mentors, and cheerleaders to the precious young ladies you have entrusted to our care. Their tool bags are filled with a wide range of activities that will address the broad spectrum of students that make SDA special.

From my end, I will take my brand of effectual teaching and management to my new administrative role. That is, setting a standard of excellence for teachers and students, and enabling both to meet such.

My dear parents, you complete the SDA 'Olympic' team. We are counting on you to inspire, support and reinforce. Let's take our cue from Aly Raisman's parents who were described as "adorably stressed" every time they watched her perform and compete. They were always in the audience, swaying along or "squirming in solidarity" with Aly. Her Mom, Lynn Raisman has been quoted as saying, "I get nervous because I know what goes into it and how many hours she's prepared and how hard she is on herself, and I want her to be happy and go out there and do the best performance she can do. So when it's over, she is happy no matter the results, so I do get nervous. But whatever she was doing I want her to have the best outcome."

I assure you I have heard the same from every SDA parent I have had the privilege of sitting down with. While our young women do make us proud, so do you parents! Thank you for all that you do and here's to an amazing year!

Sincerely,



Mrs. Guen Farrales
Academic Dean

A message from the 7th & 8th Coordinator

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As those lazy, hazy days of August have come to a close, our thoughts are turned to September and the beginning of an exciting new school year at SDA. Classrooms have been cleaned, books have been ordered, and schedules have been completed. It has been a busy summer for many of our students. In addition to enjoying beach days and other summer recreational activities, they have participated in educational or cultural events these last few weeks. I know they will have interesting stories to share with their classmates when they return.

In the middle of July I mailed “HELLO” cards to our new seventh and eighth grade students. The messages on these cards were written by eighth graders who will serve as Big Sisters to our new seventh graders. They are very enthusiastic about stepping into their leadership roles and helping our newest students to become a part of the Saint Dominic Academy community. In preparation for their responsibilities, together we planned an orientation program for our seventh graders which was held on Thursday, September 8.

Recently, I received notification from the **American Library of Poetry** that one former eighth grade student and three former seventh grade students’ poetry entries have been selected for inclusion in an anthology of student poetry entitled *Accomplished*. These students entered The American Library of Poetry 2016 Student Poetry Contest as part of our creative writing activities. Our accomplished young ladies are **Valentyna Simon, Alyssa Fuentes, Manahil Haq, and Courtney Martin**. If any other students received notification, please let us know in order that you might be recognized for your accomplishments in a future newsletter.

May you enjoy safe and happy days for the remainder of the summer season. I look forward to seeing you at our Back to School Night on September 15.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ann McLean".

Ms. Mary Ann McLean
7th and 8th Grade Coordinator

Summer Success Stories

SDA girls were very busy making their marks this summer at various programs, activities and events. Here's just a small recap:

The summer started with several SDA students helping to set-up Camp Liberty at Liberty State Park.



SDA XC team members raced at the 19th Bradley Beach 5K in August. Freshman **Suhayla Johnson** won the 13-15 year old race and was the 8th female finisher and 68th overall in a race with more than 700 participants. Sophomore **Isabel DeBari** finished 2nd in the 13-15 age group and was the 20th female and 97th overall finisher.



Summer Success Stories cont.....

Seniors

For the third year, **Nicole Bellifemine** continued her volunteer work at the Meadowlands Hospital. Additionally, she was asked by one of the physicians on staff to tutor his ten-year old niece who just arrived from China.

Lauren Kelley returned to HOBY (Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Seminar where she worked as a Team Alumni/Junior Staff Member. As such, she helped run the ice breakers and cheers, helped with the ambassador group activities and the service project, and helped give out meals and drinks.

Purnima Prasad attended a two week intense resident program at Johns Hopkins University where she received a 4.0 and college credit. She did 6 full weeks of a Research Internship with Columbia University Medical Center, where her research was done under the mentorship of Dr. Joachim Frank who is the 2014 Benjamin Franklin Award winner for Life Sciences. Purnima had the opportunity to present her research experience with NYU audiences on August 12, during the GSTEM's 4th Annual Symposium. She is hoping to publish her research article.



Maria Rivera attended New York University's Pre-College Program and took a credit course on Film Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts. She also took part in the college-writing workshop.

For the second consecutive year, **Aolanie Vargas** was awarded a full-tuition scholarship to attend the 2016 Summer STEM Program at The Cooper Union in New York City.

Summer Success Stories cont.....

Juniors

Sophia Feijoo and **Kassandra Pardo** took part in the 2016 Spirituality and Leadership Institute at Caldwell University.

Emily Gill participated in HOBY (Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Seminar) held in June at Monmouth University.

Francesca Guido attended the Concordia Language Village Italian immersion program, *Lago del Bosco*. It was a two week language and cultural summer camp held in Minnesota.

Amanda Ros and **Nicolette Racz** both attended the National Youth Leadership Forum: Law and CSI held in Washington DC. Nicolette said, "This program was an incredible experience where I made new friends from all around the world. The program helped me narrow down my career choices to find the one that's best for me. It was an experience of a lifetime, and one I will never forget."

Sophomores

Nicole Gizzi attended an 8-week program for piano at the Music Academy in Toms River, NJ. Nicole's instructor was astounded by how quickly she progressed and has been assigning her advanced pieces to practice, which most beginners wouldn't be able to play. It helped that Nicole has played the violin for the past 6 years.

In July, **Jenna Manzo** attended the Global STEM Alliance (GSA) Summit held at the New York Academy of Sciences. She said, "This summit allowed me to connect and build networks with girls from all over the world who are interested in STEM, talk with scientists and even go on a field trip. I also had a chance to attend a #BUILTBYGIRLS workshop that taught me about the importance of networking." She attended the summit as a 1000 Girls, 1000 Futures member. The 1000 Girls, 1000 Futures program is an online platform that connects mentees with mentors throughout the year. Jenna's current mentor is a neuroscientist.

Jessica Stanley successfully completed the Explo at Yale summer program on the campus of Yale University in Connecticut. Jessica attended Session 2 of Explo at Yale, which is a three-week liberal arts enrichment program that promotes creativity, engagement, and intellectual daring. At Explo at Yale, students are encouraged to tap into their curiosity and pursue new interests through courses, workshops, and activities. This summer, Jessica completed the following classes: Graphic Design, Debate, Logic + Strategy Games, and Anime + Japanese Culture. From weekend trips across New England to student-led conversations and debates, Jessica engaged in residential and academic curricula with peers from more than 40 states and 70 countries.

Summer Success Stories cont.....

Caitlin Aristizabal completed a Young Adult Acting course at The New York Film Academy. She also found some acting work in an acting magazine and had the opportunity to be a part of a web series. I was an extra in two episodes and had a speaking part for one of them.

Gabriella Swope participated in the Summer VolunTEEN program at the Turtleback Zoo and has been accepted into the NY Aquarium Docent Program for the 2016-2017 school year.

Freshmen

Logan Hart spent much of her summer preparing for her upcoming competitive gymnastics season. Logan will be competing as a US Junior Olympic Level 8 gymnast. She attended the International Gymnastics Camp in June and July and trained with many past and present Olympians and World Champions from around the world. Logan is also working with the Lokai bracelet company to develop a bracelet that will benefit the Wounded Warrior Project for soldiers who were injured in combat.

Yasmeen Idrissi served as a teen mentor at Camp Liberty.

Andie Martin spent a good portion of her summer playing tennis, at a 4-week camp in Hoboken and also with lessons in Florida.

8th Grade

Jane and Mia Eid served as interns in the Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science (GEMS) program at Hood College. The purpose of the program is to raise interest in elementary, middle and high school students in careers in STEM based fields. The program is administered by the National Science Teachers Association.

Lila Oranchak, who is enrolled in a pre-professional ballet program in NYC, auditioned for and was accepted to Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet's (CPYB) 5-week summer ballet intensive held in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The students learned from a distinguished faculty and experienced a program completely focused on improving their technical skills and developing their confidence as dancers. Lila danced an average of 5 hours a day and 6 days a week.

Lila is pictured with her favorite teacher, Ted Kivitt, a former principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre.



Need to know what's happening?

The SDA school calendar is easily accessible on the schools website:

<https://www.stdominicacad.com/calendar/>

Visit here anytime for up-to-date information.

Welcome New Faculty Members

Mrs. Guen Farrales, Academic Dean is excited to announce the appointment of the following new Saint Dominic Academy faculty members.

Jillian Mulrain will serve as the new **Art** teacher. Ms. Mulrain has a BA in Fine Arts Education from Montclair University (Dean's List: GPA of 3.68) and K-12 Art Teacher Certification (NJ). Prior to joining SDA she worked as a substitute teacher in the Rutherford Public School District. She did her student teaching at Kearny High School and at Lincoln Middle School. She said, "I am confident that as an Art educator at SDA, I can work collaboratively in providing a productive learning environment that is student-focused and energized. Within my classroom, I will provide a safe place for students to explore their creativity and talents, while introducing and strengthening the knowledge and skills they will need in order to grow in the field of art." Jillian has quite a connection to SDA as her grandmother, mother, two aunts and several cousins are all alumnae.

Caitlin Angrosina '11 has joined the **Math** Department. Ms. Angrosina has a BA in Mathematics and MA in Teaching from Fairleigh Dickinson University. She believes in the incorporation of technology in the classroom to facilitate interactive learning. "Math can be fun, and not seen as a chore, and the incorporation of technology will enhance the learning experience," she said. Caitlin's two younger sisters are also SDA graduates – Brittany '15 and Sara '16. She also said, "I know the amazing benefits of an all-girls Catholic education, and I am looking forward to being part of this esteemed educational system. It would be my pleasure to give back to my Alma Mater which has given me so much!"

New Faculty cont.....

Dr. Ronald Schreck has joined the **Science** Department and will be teaching Chem I Honors and Conceptual Physics. Dr. Schreck has a PhD in Organic Chemistry from Rutgers University. He holds a NJ Teaching Certificate in Physical Science (Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science) and has been teaching for 20 years. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Monmouth University. He has also worked as a Research Scientist for Johnson & Johnson, Union Carbide and International Flavors and Fragrances. On joining SDA, Dr. Schreck said, "Recently retired from the public school system, I wish to inspire young people to understand the natural world of science and mathematics, and appreciate its importance and connection to their lives, now and in their future. Utilizing my wealth of education and experience, I wish to be part of an educational institution that engages students in authentic learning, leading to successful lives."

Dr. Malleswari Ponnala has also joined the **Science** Department teaching Chemistry and Anatomy & Physiology. Dr. Ponnala has a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry from Acharya Nagarjuna University and Certification from the New York Academy of Sciences as a STEM Teaching Fellow. She has served as Adjunct Assistant Professor for General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry at Saint Peter's University, Manhattan College, City University of New York, and Rowan University. She has high school teaching experience from Cardinal Hayes High School Bronx, New York. She said, "I am a mother of two beautiful girls, a third and a first grader. I would like to spend more time with them. A few years from now, I would love for them to attend Saint Dominic Academy because the school has impressed me a lot."



Notes from SDA's Parent Association

The SDA PTA is excited for the upcoming school year and extends a warm welcome to all the new parents and students. The PTA will hold its annual 'Back to School Night Meet and Greet' on Thursday, September 15, 2016 starting at 6 p.m. in Elan. Please stop by and say hi. It is our hope to grow our volunteers this year so we can further enhance our girls' experiences at St. Dominic Academy through the work of the PTA.

You will also be receiving an email in early September to participate in an online survey to create an online school directory that will help us build stronger relationships with parents and students who live locally and within our ever-expanding residential areas.

The current board members are listed below. Again, welcome to the new parents and students and welcome back to all the returning students and parents.

Current Board

President:	Jennifer Bailey, President
Vice-President and Secretary:	Lori LoCascio
Treasurer:	Open - Seeking a Volunteer
Mother/Daughter Communion Brunch Co-Chairs:	Kelly Lekic and Cathy Sabia
Back-to-School Night "Meet and Greet" Chair:	Eileen Gill
Calendar Raffle Fundraiser Chair:	Mary Dowden

Parent Volunteer Opportunity

SDA is seeking the assistance of parent volunteers, who may wish to work as a team, to operate the School Store, two days a week from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

As a volunteer in a Catholic school, you will be required to be certified by Protecting God's Children and you will also need to go through a security check, i.e. fingerprinting. The Academy will cover the cost of those requirements.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Mrs. Sharon Buge in the Finance Department at sbuge@stdominicacad.com. Subject line: School Store Volunteer

Thank you!

Student Council Leadership Workshop

On Tuesday, August 23, Lead U, a NJ-based leadership training team was at SDA to conduct a Leadership Workshop for Student Council, Spirit Committee, NHS and Student Ambassadors.

The eight-hour workshop focused on identifying individual leadership styles and taking ownership of an individual's leadership roles.

The girls participated in skits, brainstorming sessions and group discussion.

STUCO President Lauren Kelley said, "The Lead U workshop brought out the true leaders in all of us, not only as individuals, but also collectively as a group. We learned the importance of discussing and suggesting ideas, and then taking those ideas and putting them in to action. I believe I can speak on behalf of all the SDA leaders that we will take the motivation, innovation, and inspiration we felt at the workshop and spread it throughout our school community this upcoming school year. A huge thank you to the Lead U team for an amazing day and for all the work they put into the workshop. JD and his team are great examples of what it means to embrace your passions 100% and to take ownership of who you are as a leader." Agreeing, was junior Raquel Lekic, "I had a really great time at the leadership workshop! The leaders were really genuine and taught us a lot on how to improve ourselves and use our skills to get our peers involved!"

For more information on Lead U and the programs they offer, visit www.leaduthere.com



SDA Athletics Fall 2016 Preview

S.D.A offers four fall sports with varsity and underclass opportunities in each. The following capsules below identify prospects for each team.

Cross Country- The program has been training four nights a week and Sundays at Holmdel Park since June 27 (nine days after returning from the Outdoor Nationals in Greensboro, North Carolina.) The team will look to defend its 34th Jersey City title in 38 years with a team that collectively has one varsity XC season of experience. This youthful group has worked extremely hard and with the addition of a few new members can, as always, contend for league and county honors and be a factor in Parochial B, a statewide competition that SDA won last winter. The season continues with the 22nd Annual S.D.A. Cross Country Invitational which draws top teams from all over New Jersey on September 10 in Lincoln Park.

Soccer- Coach Jorge Hernandez Blue Devils will be buoyed by a promising freshman class and some wily veterans. The schedule, which begins on September 13, vs McNair should allow the Blue Devils to more than double their win total from a year ago. Coach Hernandez has been pleased with his team's attendance, hard work and improved skill level.

Tennis - The perennially successful Tennis team is again guided by veteran coaches **Marilyn and Clare Wilson** who impart their knowledge and passion to our girls. The challenging eighteen match league schedule begins on September 13 and will prepare our netters to make a solid run through post season play. The team, like soccer, practices and has matches in Lincoln Park.

Volleyball - The team coached by **Michael Kushnir** has a must year in 2016 hoping to improve from a season ago. Recently previewed in the *Jersey Journal*, Coach Kushnir feels his team has made solid strides to improvement and hopes to avenge some of their close losses from 2015. The girls have a solid attitude and look forward to the challenges that await them this season.

Welcome to the SDA Sisterhood!



LINK Crew did an amazing job welcoming the SDA Class of 2020



The happy faces of our 8th Grade “Big” Sisters with their 7th Grade “Little” Sisters



(l-r) New juniors Jessica Wisowaty and Brianna Hernandez with Isabella Trinidad '18, and Donna Abello '19 with new sophomores Lauren Hernandez and Ysabella Vitangcol.

The SDA Tradition Continues...



Welcome to the following students who are following in their mothers/grandmothers footsteps!

Logan Hart, daughter of Kristen Zadroga Hart '89

Yasmeen Idrissi, daughter of Patrice Daly Idrissi '84

Angelique Maniego, daughter of Maria Sarmiento '91

Amaya Pacheco, daughter of Erika Alvarado Pacheco – '92

Danielle Pinto and **Natalie Pinto**, daughters of Maria Sasso Pinto '78

Katherine Quigley, granddaughter of Joan Duane Quigley '52

Claire Roake, daughter of Joan Moore Roake '83

Elyse Sanchez, daughter of Dana Broderick Sanchez '91



SPREAD THE WORD

SDA Open House

Thursday, October 13 from 6-8 p.m

Sunday, October 16 from 1-3 p.m.

Walk Through Wednesdays

Any Wednesday that school is in session from 10 – 11:30 a.m.,
beginning on September 21

SDA will also be participating in the
Archdiocesan High School Expos:

Monday, September 26

Archdiocesan Center located at 171 Clifton Avenue in Newark

Thursday, September 29

Primary Prep Elementary School Auditorium
(St. Aedan Parish) at 41 Tuers Ave. in Jersey City

Both events begin at 7:00 p.m.



Referral Program

How would you like to receive a \$500 credit posted to your tuition account?!?

The WOM Referral program is growing! Each year, more and more SDA families refer new students to our community. Won't you join them? Since you've already received your referral cards, it's this easy...

- Tell a relative, neighbor, friend, co-worker, etc. about Saint Dominic Academy. (Please try to reach out to those who might not already have an interest in SDA.)

Referral Program continues...

- Encourage them to visit our Open House on October 13 (6-8 p.m.) or October 16 (1-3 p.m.)
- Complete a referral card and give it to the prospective family. This card must be turned in any time **before January 1, 2017**. It can be returned by the prospective student via mail, at Open House, at Freshman for a Day, at the COOP exam or most preferably, it can be attached to the student's application.

In any case, it MUST be returned to SDA before a letter of acceptance is sent in January 2017. Any forms returned after that date, will not be eligible for the Tuition Bonus.

If the student registers and attends Saint Dominic Academy, the referring family (you!) will receive a **\$500 tuition credit** in February 2018. The new student's family will receive a **\$250 tuition credit** in February 2018. If you are a current senior family, you will receive a \$500 cash bonus. **Please note: you can refer family members, but you will not receive a tuition credit for a sibling.**

BONUS: If the new student comes to SDA from outside of Hudson County, you will receive an additional \$250 for a total tuition bonus of **\$750!!**

It's that simple and so easy to recruit for SDA, and earn a little tuition bonus as well!

More info: Contact Andrea Apruzzese in the Admissions Office:

aapruzzese@stdominicacad.com or 201-434-5938, ext. 14 for referral cards.

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Empowering Women for Leadership

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