



**GWYNEDD-MERCY  
ACADEMY**  
*Elementary*

# Mercy Monthly

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## A Message from Sister Anne



This week, Gwynedd-Mercy Academy joins in the national celebration of Catholic Schools' Week focusing on the theme: *Catholic Schools ~*

*Dividends for Life; Faith, Knowledge, Discipline, and Morals.*

We began our week with a beautiful liturgy celebrated by Father Kevin Gallagher and Father Benjamin, both from Corpus Christi Parish. Four of our graduates were invited to join us and to share their reflections on how their investment in the GMA experience has paid off in the dividends of *faith, knowledge, discipline, and morals*. Each of these alums beautifully represented the impact that a Mercy education has had on his or her life. Their message was truly a gift to our GMA family. Our students were inspired and encouraged to fully invest themselves in the GMA experience in order to realize these immeasurable dividends for life! Our faculty was reminded that what we are about each day does make a significant difference in the lives of our students.

Let us continue to work together to immerse our students in an experience of Mercy education that will profoundly impact them today and into the future – as they carry the imprint of Mercy wherever life takes them.

Happy Catholic Schools' Week!

*Mercy, the principal path pointed out by Jesus Christ to those who are desirous of following Him, has in all ages of the Church excited the faithful in a particular manner to instruct and comfort the sick and dying poor, as in them regarded the persons of our divine master.*

Catherine McAuley



## WE BEGIN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK WITH WORDS FROM OUR GRADUATES

This year's theme for Catholic Schools Week is **"Dividends for Life,"** focusing on **Faith, Knowledge, Discipline and Morals.** To bring these values to life, our Liturgy Committee invited four graduates to speak at our Catholic Schools Week Opening Mass about the role that Gwynedd-Mercy Academy played in the development of these values in their lives.

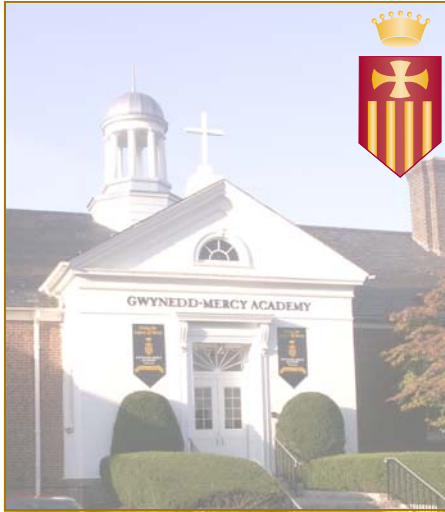
Speaking on Faith, Tory McClintock '09, said, "At GMA you are provided with numerous opportunities to practice your faith. I feel blessed to have been encouraged to participate in service opportunities during my elementary school years." She continued by discussing how many faith-building activities had laid the groundwork for her faith.

Pat O'Hara '06 spoke on the subject of Discipline. Noting that he had participated in 3 varsity sports in high school while taking all honors classes, he said, "I believe that the reason I have succeeded is because of discipline. Managing time and discipline are skills I learned at GMA. Getting good at self-discipline takes as much practice as getting good grades or participating in a sport."

Caitlin Haug '97, now a teacher, reflected on Knowledge. She remembers what a tremendous impact GMA's faculty had on her life and learning style, saying "I was taught that to know something you have to learn it, not just memorize it. I learned to understand how I needed to approach learning." Remembering her first *Pennies for Peru*, Haug said, "A couple of pennies from a kindergarten student isn't much money, but when a whole school community saves its pennies it is. I learned about Peru, a country I had never heard of—at six years old, I had my first taste of compassion."

Ned Moore '82, and currently a GMA Parent, started his comments on Morals with an observation about his former teacher, "I'm really nervous because Mrs. Egoille is here and she taught me how to speak in public, so I hope I get a good grade." Sharing his thoughts on morals, Moore said, "What I learned from Gwynedd is how to do the right thing. What I also learned is what is the right thing—the right thing for me? Or the right thing for other people? Listening to Pat's remarks about self-discipline, reminds me that it's easy to do the right thing when it's what you want, but it's hard when the right thing isn't what you want. What I learned in Catholic school at Gwynedd-Mercy Academy is to find the courage and the confidence to do the right thing even when you don't want to do it. When you step up to do the right thing, you attract other people to do the right thing too. That's what this school teaches you to do; to be a leader, attracting people to do the right thing. That's why I send my kids to this school, so they can get the foundation that I did at GMA."





**2M Creates Classroom Volcanoes**  
 Students in Mrs. Peffall's, 2M classroom saw science in action as they created “volcanoes” in the classroom. Their enthusiasm for the experiment showed that they’ll be ready when their 8th grade science fair rolls around in 2016!

February	
February 1	French-Spanish switch for grades K-5
February 1	Catholic Schools’ Week Mass-10:00 am
February 2	Panel on Haiti Magic shows for K-3 and 4-8
February 3	Faculty Appreciation Day Luncheon-sponsored by the Parents’ Organization and 8th grade
February 4	Gwynedd Bowl for grades 4-8
February 5	8th grade vs. Faculty volleyball game
February 9 and - 11	Parent-Teacher Progress Report Conferences 4-8 pm
February 12 and 15	School Holidays
February 17	Ash Wednesday Mass 10:00 am—All are welcome
February 18	Family Bingo—doors open at 5:30 pm. For dinner. Games start at 6:15-6:30 pm.
February 23	Open House for Prospective Families 9:00—10:30 am
February 23	Winter Band Concert 7:00 pm

## It’s Bingo Time!!

It’s almost time for **GMA’s annual Family B..I..N..G..O** event. **Make sure you have Thursday, February 18th marked on your calendar.** It’s an evening of fun, prizes, food and tons of enthusiasm. This year’s menu includes pizza, hoagies, hot dogs, soft pretzels, snacks, soda and water. In between bingo games, gift basket raffle winners will be announced.

5:30 pm - Doors Open  
 6:15 pm - Early Bird Special  
 6:30 pm - Regular Bingo Games Begin  
 8:30 - 9:00 pm - Event ends



## A Message of Thanks for our Lunch/Recess Volunteers



We continue to be grateful for the many volunteers that participate in our lunch/recess duty schedule. We rely on your presence in the cafeteria and school yard. A special thanks goes to Mrs. Lisa Gallo for creating the lunch schedule this year. If anyone has not volunteered and might be available, we could use more volunteers. Please contact Mrs. Gallo at [clkgallo@aol.com](mailto:clkgallo@aol.com).

## Kindergarten Supports the Troops



Last month, kindergarten families responded to an appeal from Sophia Lundin (KA) and her family to help them sponsor a U.S. Army platoon, part of the 2-151<sup>st</sup> Infantry. The children made Valentines to send to the troops in class. Families were given a list of items that soldiers in the platoon could use and

they generously responded. Pictured to the right are representatives from KG, KM and KA with many of the collected items which included instant soups, crackers, hot drink mixes and toiletries.

## 2010-11 REGISTRATION

Registration information for the 2010-11 school year was mailed to all families (Grades K-7) on January 30th. Please review this information carefully and respond by February 27, 2009 to reserve a place for your child(ren) for next year. If you do not receive the registration mailing by February 4th, please contact Mary Kenney or Sue Stephan at (215-646-4916). For more information on the available monthly installment plan, please visit our website at [gmaelem.org/tuition](http://gmaelem.org/tuition).

## Congratulations to our 8th Grade Science Fair Winners!



First Place	Zachary Smith	Quickest to Coolest
Second Place	Sarah Santos	Wheatgrass Wonder
Third Place	Christopher Busch	Archimedes Principle
Honorable Mention	Diana Alnemri	UV Damage
Honorable Mention	Rachel McKernan	Can Medicine Today Chase Bacteria Away
Honorable Mention	Trent Melsheimer	Would You Trust a Truss or a Beam Bridge

## VFW Presents Awards to our Patriot's Pen Essay Contest Winners!

On Tuesday, January 19th, Mr. Herman Anderson from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1711 in Jenkintown, visited GMA to give awards to 3 of our 7th and 8th grade students for their outstanding essays in the VFW's annual Patriot's Pen contest. This year's theme was "When is the right time to honor our Military Heroes?" The 3rd place winner was Nikolas Novakovic, 2nd place was Gianna Leflar and 1st place was Christine Sipos.



## SCIENCE TAKES CENTER STAGE

During the month of January, science was front and center as the 8th grade participated in the GMA Science Fair and grades 5-7 participated in the Mini Science Fair. Months of planning came to fruition last month as the 8th GMA Science Fair projects were displayed and judged by a variety of qualified guest judges. Last spring, Mrs. Elizabeth Santangelo, the 7th and 8th grade science teacher, directed the then 7th grade students to the Topic Selection Wizard at sciencebuddies.org, a website which offered a series of questions to help them find recommended topics based on their interests. When they returned to school in the fall, the full process began.

The 8th grade science fair project is a multi-step, long-term project. Organization is critical for success and gaining the greatest learning benefits. Each student must select a topic, create a hypothesis and a research method, log the results and write a research paper which explains the results. Their results must be backed up using their research.

This year, for the first time, students in grades 5, 6 and 7 participated in a “Mini Science Fair.” This gave them a chance to work within the scientific method process, but in a more limited, grade-appropriate way. Said Mrs. Santangelo, “The big difference was the 7th grade did less research with fewer variables. The end result was a summary paper, not the larger research paper required in 8th grade.” The 7th grade work was graded as a project and they were evaluated by the 8th grade for feedback only.

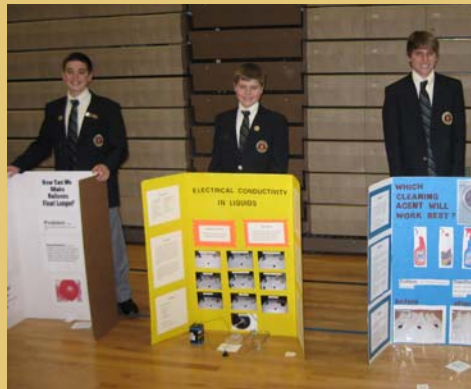
Mrs. Kathy Foy, the 5th and 6th grade science teacher, used this project as a way for her students to focus on using the scientific process from finding a problem, forming a hypothesis, creating a research plan, performing the experiment,

collecting the data and learning to summarize it in a meaningful way. Noted Mrs. Foy, “Their projects really reinforced what they’ve been doing in our science curriculum all along. It was more about the process—we didn’t want them to focus on competing.” Starting in the fall, and with a great deal of help from GMA Librarian, Mrs. Jean Bellavance, each student came up with an idea, identified the problem and made sure it was testable. Their summary papers and display boards were turned in in December.

During the Mini Science Fair on January 26th, the students displayed their boards, and had a chance to take a look at other students’ projects. This year, for the first time, some 6th and 7th grade students will be invited to present their science projects at the Montgomery County Science Research Fair, along with our 8th grade Science Fair Winners.



*Guest judges review science projects and ask questions at the GMA 8th Grade Science Fair on January 21st.*



Learning to utilize scientific method is valuable to our students for many reasons, not solely science. As Mrs. Foy remarked, “I think students can apply the scientific method process to content disciplines across the curriculum.”

*To the left, are 6th and 7th grade students at the Mini Science Fair.*