

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

• VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3

• SUMMER 2023

SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

For Parents, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends of St. Augustine School in Washington D.C.

On Your Mark, Get Set... GO!

Dear Parents, Faculty, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends,

Can you believe it? We are back in school! Am I the only one who found myself thinking recently: **Where did the summer go?**

As a boy growing up in the 1960's and 70's – that is, long before there were any electronic gadgets and video games that redefined the idea of “playing and having fun” as something other than going outside – my friends and I spent most of the time playing sports like football and basketball, swimming, riding bikes, playing Four Square, Dodge Ball, running and racing! Of course, before participating in a race (on foot or by bike), everyone had to first agree on where the **starting line and finish line** were. After these parameters were clearly set, everyone would take their place and listen for the universal command that everyone recognizes: **“On your MARK, get SET... GO!”**

Out of curiosity I Googled the phrase to see if there was some deeper meaning to this phrase. There wasn't! “Originally, **on your mark, get set, go!**” was used in the 1800s to begin foot races. The word mark referred to the

From the Pastor



place on the running course where the runner would start, whether a line or a set of starting blocks. Get set is a sort of warning that the signal to start running is about to occur...” The word “go” of course is self-explanatory. So, no big revelation, but maybe a broader life application is useful to us.

To be successful in any endeavor including having an excellent school, we have to have a clear point of departure. We have to be on the same “mark”; the same page. We have to be focused on the same purpose or

mission. As a Catholic school we are guided by the words of Jesus who said: **“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of God”** (Matthew 19:14). As was the case 165 years ago, seven years before the official end of slavery in the United States, the future Saint Augustine community started a school to not only educate their children but to clear a pathway for them to a life of faith in Jesus – despite society’s efforts to hinder them in every way.

We also have to “get ready” and be prepared by planning ahead, setting goals and strategies to implement them, including plans to assure our children’s healthy growth in body, mind, spirit, but also faith and character. All BEFORE the start of school! Finally, the time comes to “go”; to execute; to show up and do it! We have all heard some version of: “*Dreams without goals stay dreams*” or “*Goals without execution accomplish nothing*”. If we do everything but “go” nothing happens; nothing changes; children stay ignorant; lives stay lost, the thirsty stay thirsty and the hungry starve.

Continued on page 7

INSIDE
PAGES

From the President's Desk	2
Class of 2023 graduates	3
School welcomes five new staff members	4

Marge Maceda passes	5
Summer program builds on Math, Reading Skills	5
New president wants to foster parental involvement	7

A new school year



Dear Alumni, Parents, Parishioners & Friends,

Happy summer and welcome to a new academic year! Saint Augustine Catholic School welcomes and values your positive energy and dedication to excellence in education and looks

From the President's Desk

forward to working with you to make this is a great school year, whether you are a parent, a prospective parent, a volunteer, or a benefactor of our school.

We are happy to inform you that our technology has been stepped up. All teachers will use Chromebooks. In addition, our middle school sixth, seventh and eighth graders will be assigned Chromebooks for their core subjects. Our primary level (PK-2) will continue to use the Savvas program. Our plan for the intermediate students (Grade 3-5) will materialize early 2024, when all students will be assigned Chromebooks. There will be training for teachers, students and parents on appropriate use and responsibilities.

I look forward to working with all our faculty and Staff to provide a safe environment where each student can reach their God-given potential. Our goal is to keep our students positively engaged and interested in school. Welcome to the Home of the Saints, where we "Live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" Gal.5:25. Our open door policy welcomes everyone. Feel comfortable in letting me know your needs and how I can serve you better. Like our patron Saint. Saint Augustine of Hippo. "We love to Learn and Learn to love"

Once again welcome to the 2023-2024 school year.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCh
Interim Principal/President.

Congratulations

Dr. Olga Williams (Technology/Librarian) on her 25th anniversary of teaching in Catholic schools in Washington, D.C. Before Dr. Williams came to St. Augustine in 2008, she worked for 10 years at St. Gabriel School, N.W., and Nativity Catholic Academy, N.W., while they were in the Center City Consortium for the Archdiocese of Washington, before their 2008 closure.

Dr. Lorrain Lee (Retired Vice Principal and Middle School Social Studies Teacher) on receiving her Ph.D. in Theology from Kingdom Life Ministry School in Suffolk, Va., in June. She received her degree after three years of studies, including defending a doctoral dissertation on "Women of God," studying women in the Old Testament and New Testament.

Dr. Lee worked at St. Augustine from Dec. 15, 1983 until July 19, 2017 – she remembers the dates – and has come back to the District of Columbia



from her home in Winterville, N.C., to assist with Before Care and After Care through Oct. 31 with her son, Andrew Lee, who is assisting her at Saint Augustine. "I've never liked being retired," she said.

Andrew Lee received an honorary doctorate in Theology from Kingdom Life Ministry School.

Volunteers Wanted

For those interested in working with our students (PK through 8th grade) who have a particular interest in a club or activity that might appeal to elementary and middle school students, Saint Augustine Catholic School is seeking volunteers for our aftercare program. Some clubs and activities meet once a week from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Volunteers are fingerprinted and go through the Archdiocese of Washington VIRTUS Child Protection Program before working with the youth. Please contact the school office at 202-667-2608 for more information. Thank you for your consideration.

Papal Blessing

On the occasion of Saint Augustine School's 165th anniversary (1858 – 2023), our school has received a Papal Blessing from His Holiness, Pope Francis. Congratulations to all who have played a part of our school life, including current and former parents, parishioners, alumni, staff, and former staff!

Class of 2023 graduates

Editor's Note: On Sunday, June 4, 2023, the Class of 2023 eighth grade at Saint Augustine Catholic School graduated during the 10 a.m. Mass, presided by Rev. Patrick A. Smith. Trinity Sunday, June 4, was the 165th anniversary of the founding of Saint Augustine Catholic Church. Here are highlights from our valedictorian and salutatorian speeches:

"We must remember the lessons we have learned"



I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated teachers and staff members. I would personally like to thank Mr. Riley (Math Department Chair) for introducing and integrating new ways into learning Math and helping me think out of my wheelhouse. Your passion for education and commitment to our growth has been instrumental in shaping the individuals we are today. You have not only imparted knowledge but also fostered our curiosity, ignited our imaginations, and guided us on this incredible learning journey. Your tireless efforts have made a lasting impact on every one of us, and we are grateful for your unwavering education.

I also want to thank St. Augustine Catholic School for helping me understand my faith more as a Christian within our Catholic religion.

To my fellow graduates, congratulations! Today is a testament to the hard work, determination, and resilience that we have displayed throughout our middle school years. We have faced countless academic, social, and personal challenges, but we have persevered and emerged stronger. The friendships we have formed and the memories we have shared will forever hold a special place in our hearts.

Middle school has been a period of growth and self-discovery, and as we move onto high school, we must remember the lessons we have learned. Let us remember the importance of embracing diversity, kindness, and empathy. We must be accepting and inclusive, celebrating the unique qualities that every individual brings to the table. By doing so, we can create a harmonious and supportive environment that fosters personal and academic growth for all.

(As we enter high school) let us not be afraid to step outside our comfort zones, for we truly grow through challenges and discomfort. Embrace opportunities for personal and intellectual growth, explore your passions, and dare to dream big.

- Lauren Little '23 Salutatorian

"We have been taught to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every human being"



First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to our parents, whose unwavering love and support have guided us on this path. Thank you for sacrificing your time, energy, and resources to provide us with a Catholic education. It is through your efforts that

we have received a strong foundation, both academically and spiritually, which will serve us through our lives.

To our dedicated teachers, thank you for your tireless commitment to our education. You have not only imparted knowledge but have also nourished our minds and souls. Through your teachings, you have instilled within us a love of learning, a thirst for knowledge, and a desire to make a positive impact on the world. Your patience, guidance, and encouragement have shaped us into the individuals we are today.

As students of St. Augustine Catholic School, we have been blessed with the opportunity to learn about our faith and embrace its values. We have been taught to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every human being, to be compassionate, to stand up for justice. These lessons have equipped us with the moral compass necessary to navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

Looking back on our middle school years, we find ourselves filled with memories of laughter, friendship, and shared experiences. We have celebrated victories and consoled each other in defeat. Our friendships have provided us with a sense of belonging, a support system that has carried us through ups and downs. Let us cherish these bonds and hold them as we embark on new journeys.

In closing, let us express our gratitude to God for the blessings we have received, for the gift of education, and for the love and support of our families. May we be inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ to be agents of positive change in the world, to uplift those in need, and to live lives of purpose and integrity.

-Joshua Xavier '23 Valedictorian

School welcomes five new staff members



Ms. Wendi Berman (7th Grade Homeroom/Middle School Language Arts) makes no bones about it: she loves language and

learning. "It serves you well in life to write well and to be able to critically think," she said. When she is not discussing metaphors and similes in literature with her middle school students, she plans to talk about historical and cultural contexts.

She first visited St. Augustine Church in April, while attending the funeral of a friend, "Miss Kitty," who was 105 years old when she passed away. After the Mass, she spoke with Mr. Marvin Ford, a pianist and cantor, and when she found out that St. Augustine has a parish school, she let him know of her interest in teaching, which she had been discerning as a second career.

She formerly ran a production company focused on documentaries, with one work airing on PBS, and she has also worked as a voice over actor. She hopes to use her experience with public speaking to encourage her student to sit up straight, with good posture, and to hold their shoulders straight, which will help them be better speakers. "We are made in the image of God," she said.

She holds a bachelor's degree in American History and American Literature from Mills College in Oakland, Calif. She is excited about getting to know her 23 seventh grade students, in addition to her other middle school pupils. "No child is a number," she added.



Ms. Athena Grace (Counselor) has taught social intelligence to Green Berets to help them when deployed in hostile lands, and she has helped law enforcement

officers learn how to effectively use tone of voice and body language in interacting with civilians, a practice she likes to call "calming," which many call "de-escalating." She has assisted prison employees and inmates communicate more effectively.

Her work at Saint Augustine, where she serves from Mondays through Wednesdays each week, seems more mundane, but she's approaching it with the same degree of professionalism she has used with her other work. She is assisting students and staff with learning accommodations for students, in addition to teaching social and emotional intelligence.

Ms. Grace holds a bachelor's degree from Providence College in Rhode Island, run by the Dominican Friars, where she majored in History. She also holds a postgraduate certificate in Organizational Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychiatry.

"I feel really welcome here," she said of her initial days at the school. "There's a good foundation here, with a lot of room to grow."



Ms. Donna Robinson Porter (Second Grade) has taught elementary school since 1994, with the first 25 years in her native

Jamaica. She attended St. Joseph Teacher's College, which is run by the Franciscan Sisters, and she holds a bachelor's degree in Language Education and Literary Studies from the University of the West Indies. She also worked at St. Richards Catholic School in Jamaica, and she said that prayer and the religious background of St. Augustine attracted her to the school.

She moved to the U.S. in 2020, since she has an adult son and daughter,

who is a DCPS teacher, living here. Her youngest child, Deonna Lewis, is a student in her second-grade class at St. Augustine.

She described St. Augustine as "family oriented," and has found her staff members to be very helpful.



Mr. Biava Lartevi (Science) is a New Orleans native who holds a bachelor's degree from McDaniel College, as well as a

Master's in Education in Science from McDaniel College.

He has five years of experience as a substitute teacher and paraeducator in the elementary, middle, and high school level at Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, with an additional two years as a teacher intern and student teacher at Carroll County Public Schools (Maryland).

"There are tons of experienced people," at Saint Augustine, he said. "I would like to soak up their knowledge and experience."

Interviewed on the second day of school, he said he's impressed by the studios of the students, as well as "how they greet you." He added, "They seem hard-working." He appreciates the Catholic identity of the school and the opportunity to pray with the students and staff.



Ms. Taylor Simpson (PreK Assistant) is a familiar face at Saint Augustine Catholic School,

since she taught through the Summer Program in 2022. In January 2023, she returned to the school as a PreK assistant, working with PreK teacher, Mrs. Nikki Harris. Ms. Simpson grew up

Continued on page 5

Marge Maceda passes

Mrs. Marge Maceda, who taught at Saint Augustine Catholic School for more than three years, passed away on June 6 from cancer.

Her educational career spanned more than 50 years on three continents, including decades with DC Public Schools and work in early childhood education. In 2019, Mrs. Maceda came to Saint Augustine, initially teaching first grade before she settled into being a kindergarten teacher.

Ms. Jacqueline Thornton, St. Augustine's kindergarten teacher, remembers the "high expectations" that Mrs. Maceda set for her students. "She loved art and liked to incorporate it into her lessons," Ms. Thornton said. "She



was just a hard worker and was very enthusiastic about her children."

In December, Mrs. Maceda took leave from Saint Augustine after collapsing in her classroom, and she eventually moved to Ashburn, Va., for hospice care. "I'm in shock because I was with her when she got sick," Ms. Thornton said. She describes her former colleague as "very agreeable" and "very willing to work."

Mrs. Maceda is survived by her husband, Daniel Maceda, as well as their two children, Daniel and Jonathan, and granddaughter Ella. Mrs. Maceda served her District of Columbia community as an Area Neighborhood Commissioner. Mrs. Maceda's memorial service and internment took place at Arlington National Cemetery.

Summer program builds on Math, Reading Skills

Saint Augustine Catholic School held a five-week, half-day summer program funded by DCPS that helped K-7 students build on their Math and Language Arts skills to fight summer learning loss.

Forty-five students participated in the free program, according to Dr. Olga Williams, Saint Augustine's technology teacher and librarian, who helped lead the program, which took place from Jun 27 to July 26. It featured four hours of class time, four days each week, with free breakfast and lunch served.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, H.H.C.J., Saint Augustine's acting principal and president, Ms. Helene Cropper, eighth grade homeroom and middle school social studies teacher helped lead the program.

St. Augustine partnered with Dr. Marilyn James of Children and Charity International, which received funding from DCPS. Three DCPS teachers – a Reading Specialist, elementary school teacher, and a college student who is a Math teacher – worked in the summer



program.

Dr. Williams noted a significant gain in student comprehension, as tested at the beginning of the program and end, using iXL, a computer-based testing program.

Saint Augustine has also partnered with Children and Charity International and DCPS in funding the Failure Free Reading program, which helps students in Kindergarten through 8th grade who are performing below grade level in Reading.

Continued from page 4

School welcomes five new staff members

in the Shaw neighborhood of Northwest Washington, near Howard University, and she holds a bachelor's degree from SUNY-Oswego, where she majored in Criminal Justice, with a minor in Forensic Science. She went to high school at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School.

"She's really good. She's awesome," Mrs. Harris said of her colleague.

Ms. Simpson has created a PreK3 website, and Sister Emmanuella Ladipo has asked her to create a website for each grade at the school. Ms. Simpson has also stepped forward and will be the Yearbook Coordinator for Saint Augustine.

In other staff news, former Math Department chair Mr. Ronald Riley has become the school's Math teacher, while Ms. Helene Cropper, who formerly served as vice principal, has become the middle school Social Studies teacher and eighth grade homeroom teacher.

A strong year

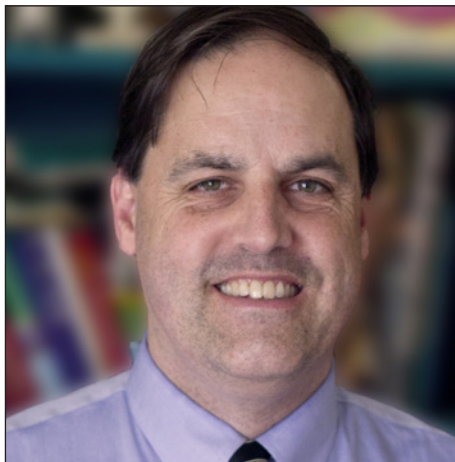
Bill Murray

We had a strong 2022-2023 school year. For the year ending June 2023, we received more than \$474,000 through 410 donations and grants from individuals and foundations to support Saint Augustine Catholic School. This represents a 15% increase over the previous year.

This support is critical for our school, given that it costs about \$13,000 to educate each child, and our annual tuition is \$6,500 per student. Parental fundraising, offertory donations, and support from our churches is very helpful and appreciated, but the support from individuals and foundations through our website at www.staug-dc.org, through workplace donations, the mail, and in person, which is the focus of my work, are critical to our well-being.

One of the reasons for our success in 2022-2023 is our pastor's search, through the parish bulletin and occasional pulpit announcements, for donors who are able to pledge \$25,000 over five years to support

Development Corner



our operations. We now have 28 such active pledgers. This tactic has worked well since 2007-2008, when the parish took over the daily financing and management of the school and began to launch a fundraising program in its support.

We continue to send our graduating eighth graders to top local area high schools, including Academy of Holy Cross, Bishop McNamara, DeMatha, Georgetown Visitation,

Gonzaga, St. Anselm's, and St. John's. We are very proud of these boys and girls. More than half of our families qualify for the Free and Reduced Meal Service program, so we are educating a student population that is largely at risk.

We provide an education that include an academic, moral, and spiritual components. Many of you who attended Catholic schools in your youth can attest to the value of our parochial schools.

Our Career Day on March 16 and Major Donor Dinner on March 4 were highlights from this year. The Major Donor Dinner had the highest attendance since we began this annual event a dozen or so years ago. We appreciate your partnering with us in support of our students.

Bill Murray serves as the development director for Saint Augustine Catholic School and can be reached at 240-418-5427.

Bill Murray

Required Minimum Distributions

If you have a tax-deferred retirement plan, you can avoid stiff penalties by taking out too little from your retirement plan.

The IRS requires that you withdraw at least a minimum amount - known as a Required Minimum Distribution - from some types of retirement accounts annually. The distributions are required to start by the time you turn 73 years old.

For more information, please consult a tax or personal finance professional. You can also reach Bill Murray, St. Augustine School's development director, at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or 240-418-5427 for more information about giving opportunities to St. Augustine School.

CFC/United Way Support:
Do you work for an organization that participates in the United Way or Combined Federal Campaign



programs? Please consider supporting St. Augustine Catholic School (CFC #20000/United Way #9670) during this open enrollment season. We have been working in the community since 1858, faithful to our mission in promoting students in PreK-3 through 8th Grade and their intellectual and moral growth so that they may provide leadership in a global society.

If you have any questions or would like to let us know you have made a pledge, please contact Bill Murray, development director, at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or 240-418-5427. You can also visit our website at www.staug-dc.org. Thank you!

New president wants to foster parental involvement

While Ms. Tiffany Austin is a new Saint Augustine School Parent, she is not new to the school.

She enrolled her daughter in the third grade for the 2023-2024 school year as a new student, but she has been active in the school community for seven years, since her niece first enrolled seven years ago.

She became so active that for the second half of the 2022-2023 school year, she served as the vice president of the Home & School Association (HSA) at Saint Augustine Catholic School. During the 2023-2024 school year, she is serving as president of HSA.

"When I came here, I fell in love with the school," she said.

HSA raises money to support the school, and it holds social events, such as a Halloween Party, a Back to School BBQ, and the Christmas Show, to help foster the engagement of parents with the school.

Ms. Austin hopes to recruit classroom parents that would represent each grade in HSA and help build stronger connections to the organizations. By early September, HSA volunteer parents has signed up from



the Kindergarten, third and seventh grades.

She hopes to recruit at least one Spanish-speaking parent who could translate documents into Spanish to better enable communications with parents who speak Spanish as their first language. She is excited that an Ethiopian parent has volunteered on the HSA board, given the large numbers of Ethiopian-American students at the school and potential challenges with communications.

In addition to holding regular HSA meetings and maintaining an email address (sainttaugustinehsa@gmail.com), Austin and her colleagues have designed an online parent survey that

St. Augustine School parents can access through a QR code.

Ms. Austin has set a modest fundraising goal of \$5,000 for the 2023-2024 but hope to increase future year's goals. She hopes that HSA can help raise funds toward the annual eighth grade trip to New York City. Parents are also considering applying for a playground grant with Kaboom!, a District of Columbia-based non-profit that builds playgrounds for community use across the country.

Ms. Austin and her sister attended St. Michael the Archangel School in downtown Silver Spring when they were growing up, and her English teacher was one Ms. Helene Cropper, who also taught her sister. Now that her niece is a seventh grade student at St. Augustine, her Social Studies teacher is Ms. Cropper.

"She's going to have the best (Social Studies) teacher," Ms. Austin said enthusiastically.

Continued from page 1

From the Pastor

In the spring school Newsletter a few short months ago, I reminded all of you: ***"As a community rooted in our faith, what we are really celebrating is 165 years of God's faithfulness, love and provision."*** But if we want to truly honor this legacy, we must LIVE it today by focusing on the Mark (the mission) and Getting Ready by doing the hard work of preparation and then... Executing (Go!) the mission and changing lives for the better today, and forever!

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

Catholic Business Network-DC Annual Gala

Thursday Oct. 14, 2023 at
6 p.m.

Four Seasons Hotel,
Georgetown

Honoring Rev. David
A. Bava, Holy Redeemer
Catholic Church,
Washington, DC (Religious of the Year)

John Ritz, William C. Smith & Co.
(Catholic Business Person of the Year)



Given Fr. Bava friendship with Fr. Patrick Smith, our pastor, and Holy Redeemer's support our school, as well as CBN-DC's support for Catholic education in the city, we invite you to join us:

For more information, contact Bill Murray at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org or visit www.cbndc.org.

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St. Augustine's Youth Choir, consisting of students from Grades 3-6, practices for the first school Mass of the year with Mr. Marvin Ford, music teacher.

www.staug-dc.org

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Story ideas for the newsletter? Please contact **Bill Murray** at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Would you like to update your address for our records?
Please complete an alumni contact form at www.staug-dc.org/alumni.html.

We welcome inquiries from alumni, former students and anyone interested in our school.