

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS

• VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2

• SPRING 2023

SINCE 1858

Welcome to the
Home of the Saints

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

Why We Celebrate Anniversaries

Dear Parents, Faculty, Alumni, Parishioners and Friends,

In about three weeks, on June 4th, Saint Augustine Church and School will celebrate its 165th anniversary as a parish. But this is more than an opportunity to pat ourselves on the back and take a bow. No, it is so much more than that! As a community rooted in our faith, what we are really celebrating is 165 years of God's **faithfulness, love and provision**.

Celebrating our anniversary is an opportunity to remind ourselves that for well over a century and a half, Jesus Christ has kept his promise to be with us always. In 1858, slavery was not yet abolished in the United States. Black people were not considered citizens of this country or even human. Yet, like the Hebrews enslaved in the land of Egypt many centuries before, the cruelty of the governing authorities failed to snuff out the faith and hope of the people being oppressed. In 1858, the founding members of the future Saint Augustine Parish started a Catholic school to assure that their children were educated, not only in math and reading but their rich Catholic

From the Pastor



faith. With faith in the God who could free them and hope that this freedom would eventually come to pass, they persevered through the greatest of trials and adversity and prepared their children for a future when slavery would no longer exist. Taking the time as a community to remember and celebrate this legacy of God's faithfulness and our ancestor's faith and perseverance is essential to maintaining our hope and confidence today.

And so, we do just that! We remember the Oblate Sisters of

Providence who served our church and school for over 90 years of our history. These dedicated and faith-filled women religious trusted in and relied on the providence of God to provide for them everything that they would need to accomplish everything that God required of them. Despite the setbacks caused by world wars, a pandemic in 1918, racial discrimination, and dried up funding that led to the temporary closing of the school on more than one occasion, for them, God would make a way.

If you want to know how we got through the crisis of mass school closures of black Catholic schools beginning in 2007, or through the pandemic of 2020, and unexpected setbacks and personnel changes this year, the reasons is the same: God made a way. We celebrate our anniversary, so that WE never forget the God who NEVER forgets us; Not ever.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

INSIDE
PAGES

| | |
|---|----------|
| <i>From the President's Desk</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Saint Augustine's Annual Career Day.....</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>Ruth Robinson Scholarship</i> | |
| <i>Fund awardees announced.....</i> | <i>4</i> |

| | |
|--|----------|
| <i>CYO Wrapup.....</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Veteran teacher tries to reach each student.....</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Major Donor Dinner provides annual update on school progress.....</i> | <i>6</i> |

Closing out the school year, feeling God's steadfast love



Dear Friends,

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-2).

As the school year 2022-2023 comes to an end, I thank God who has been so faithful to His promises which is echoed in the Scripture above. His love never ceases. It is new every morning.

These last two academic quarters, we have met with challenges, but thanks to God and your co-operation we got through the challenges. Here are three recent successes and a couple of

From the President's Desk

upcoming events we are excited about:

National Catholic Education Association Convention 2023 was held in Dallas from April 11 -13, during our Easter Break. Three of our Faculty and Staff attended. The convention is a great tool for interaction with Catholic educators from across the United States.

All our 8th graders got admitted into a Catholic high school of their choice.

Science Fair: 2023: Science fair was held on April 27, 2023, Thanks to all the parents, teachers and Students in fourth through eighth grade. Thanks to our Judges: Father Patrick Morrison, O.P, Mr. Ronald Riley, our Math Department chair, and Dr. Olga Williams, our librarian and technology instructor. Congratulations to our overall winners:

Middle School:

- 1st place: Sarah Riley Sockwell- 6th grade
- 2nd place: Owen Miaka - 6th grade
- 3rd place: Lauren Jones – 6th grade

Intermediate:

- 1st place: Wesley Sheppard- 3rd grade
- 2nd Place: Elliot Dempsey – 4th grade
- 3rd grade: Lydia Palmore – 4th grade

Confirmation is May 27, 2023, at St. Augustine Catholic Church, with the Saturday afternoon Vigil Mass. Please consider attending.

Our Ten Kindergarteners: are on the move to first grade. They graduate on Wednesday June 7.

Our last day of school is Friday June 9, 2023, the day after Family Fun Day.

We will hold Summer School from June 26 through July 27, four days a week for five weeks.

Please keep safe and remember that the steadfast love of God never ceases. His mercies never come to an end. Remain blessed.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ

Congratulations to the Class of 2023

Our eighth-grade students have been admitted to the following schools:

- Academy of Holy Cross
- Archbishop Carroll
- Bard Academy
- Bishop Ireton High School
- Bishop McNamara High School
- DeMatha Catholic High School
- Elizabeth Seton High School
- Georgetown Visitation
- Gonzaga College High School
- St. Anselm's Abbey
- St. John's College High School
- St. Vincent Palotti
- West Nottingham Academy

Saint Augustine's Annual Career Day



Bill McNulty



Dever Powell



Dr. Audrey Cobb



James Anderson



John Dempsey



John Reynolds III



Kimberly Ross



Marlysha Myrthil



Michael Lemmon



Rebeka Luis



Timothy McTaggart



Yeshi Abebe

St. Augustine held its annual Career Day on March 16 in the morning, with a dozen speakers joining us for the event to speak about careers in banking and financial services, energy, healthcare, the law, and public service. Speakers were placed on one of three speaking panels to address the students.

John Reynolds III, Esq., from Davis, Polk, a friend of Saint Augustine, spoke about his legal career.

Rebeka Luis, a school parent, spoke about her work as a pulmonary respirologist.

Ambassador Michael Lemmon, a longtime parishioner, talked with students about diplomatic work at the State Department. He recommended that students read *The Economist* as a new source.

Wearing an orange Orioles sweatshirt, Timothy McTaggart spoke about careers in banking and financial services.

Yeshi Abebe, meanwhile, spoke about her work in policy at USDA, which hearkens back to her youth in Iowa.

Marlysha Myrthil, a senior trial attorney and parishioner, speaks

about her work in civil rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, which can include advocating for prisoners who are denied basic rights, such as those denied food or placed in solitary confinement indefinitely.

Kimberly Ross, a lobbyist and lawyer, spoke about her work advocating on Capitol Hill for life insurers. She came to know the school through her friend, the late Ms. Anita Harewood.

John Dempsey, a school parent, spoke about his work with Afghanistan at the State Department, where the U.S. is trying to ensure that females can work and receive an education, among other objectives.

William McNulty, a parishioner, spoke about his work in the energy industry.

Dr. Audrey Cobb, M.D., a parishioner, talked about working as a medical doctor.

Dr. James Anderson, a former Saint Augustine student, is a psychologist and the retired chancellor for Fayetteville State University in North Carolina who is writing his memoir. He spoke about growing up without his parents and how

he overcame long odds against him to succeed in higher education.

Dever Powell, III, spoke about working at NIH and how he came back to the Catholic Church after 40 years away. He grew up in a heavily Catholic area of Pennsylvania, where one day a cross was burned on his family's front yard, which indelibly associated the Catholic Church with racism in his mind for decades.

He now counts the weekly Friday morning school Mass at Saint Augustine as one of his joys and attended a Friday morning Mass with his sister, who had journeyed from Pennsylvania. He told students that one of the most important ideas he has learned is to treat everyone equally.

EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATION

Baccalaureate Mass
10 a.m. Sunday June 4
St. Augustine Catholic Church
1425 V Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
Since 1858 – 165th Anniversary

Ruth Robinson Scholarship Fund awardees announced

Two Saint Augustine middle school students have earned Ruth Robinson Scholarship Fund grants for the 2022-2023 school year.

Honoring a longtime Saint Augustine parishioner and her dedication to education, the Ruth Robinson Scholarship Fund assists students in financial need who have strong academic performance and who are active in community service through partial scholarships.

Victoria Cadogan, an eighth-grade student, plans to attend Academy of Holy Cross in Kensington next school year, after receiving admissions offers to several other schools, including Bishop McNamara and Elizabeth Seton.

In her third year at our school, Victoria has learned to play the ukulele



Victoria Cadogan

and guitalele through the Orchestra Club, an aftercare activity. She's also been involved in the Sewing Club at Saint Augustine. Her favorite classes are English Language Arts, Math, Physical Education, and Spanish.

"It's been great," Victoria said of attending Saint Augustine. "I have many friends in the middle school and in the earlier grades."



Angie Callejas

Angie Callejas, a sixth-grade student, enrolled in Saint Augustine in February. Born in El Salvador, she came with her family to Maryland five years ago and initially struggled with learning English. She found out about Saint Augustine through a friend who is a sixth-grade student, Kaylin Yenez.

She attends St. Bernardine of Siena Catholic Church in Suitland, where she is an altar server.

"I'm much happier at St. Augustine than I was at my previous school," she said.

CYO Wrapup

Competing in the second-tier Mid-Atlantic East Division Silver tournament, St. Augustine's Varsity Boys 14U basketball team lost to Holy Trinity in the tournament's third round on Feb. 19 to end their season.

According to Kip McCoy, CYO Athletic Director at St. Augustine, the season was one of "staying the course," filled with tests and opportunities to overcome adversity, since the squad posted a 1-6 regular season record. Lawrence C. Marshall II '93 served as his assistant, and the men flipped roles for the Varsity Girls 14U basketball team.

The team rallied to beat St. Columba of Oxon Hill, 51-49, on Feb. 11 at Kennedy High School in Silver Spring, with eighth grader Magnus



Garbla, who plans to attend Gonzaga, hitting a free throw toward the end. They advanced to the next round after they beat Annunciation by forfeit on Feb. 18 at St. Elizabeth. They then returned to St. Elizabeth in Rockville the next day to face off with Holy Trinity.

Meanwhile, the Varsity Girls team completed in a non-tournament CYO division, posting a 4-3 record. McCoy is proud of players like Mia Magarin, a "diminutive player" from the sixth grade who showed tremendous fight during games, including during one game where a much bigger player picked her up as they both tried to control the ball, resulting in the referee calling a jump ball.

McCoy also highlighted the play of Abagia Mersha, an eighth grader who has qualified for the Scripps National Spelling Bee and plans to attend Georgetown Visitation. Many of the varsity girls players had not played competitive basketball before, and the season was full of many lessons and experiences as a team.

Veteran teacher tries to reach each student

Reaching students where they are forms a key component to Mrs. Barbara Greyson's teaching philosophy.

In her fifth year at Saint Augustine, Greyson serves as the fourth grade teacher at the Ward 1 school. This year, there are 17 children in her classroom.

While she remembers her childhood as one where she and other children loved having books in their hands, she understands that many children learn more visually, so she integrates audio-visual components, such as slides on her classroom projector, into her daily class plans. When she teaches Math, she prefers to show problem solving using her classroom whiteboard.

"Kids are much different than they were 10 or 20 years ago," she said, a refrain heard from many K-12 educators. "Kids expect things to happen quickly," she commented. "We used to sit and read a book. We just had books," in the days before notebook PCs and smartphones, which built in a certain degree of patience, she said. "We were fascinated by books."

The New York City native has served as a teacher for more than 20 years and has learned the importance of reaching each child, knowing them well. Such an approach involves understanding the "strengths and weaknesses" of each child, including understanding the temperament of each pupil entrusted to her care. She can then develop methods and techniques that can enable her to best reach each child.

She appreciates the "creative thinking" that comes with teaching social studies, while in Science class, she likes to use hands on exercises to help her students learn. For example, during a late February field trip to Skate Zone, a roller skating rink, enabled them to learn about Newton's



Law of Gravity, the scientific process of physical movement, and about the physics of roller skating.

Interviewed right after Black History Month in February had ended, she had just taught her students about the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman, who was born into slavery in Maryland's Eastern Shore, before escaping to freedom in the north, before coming back to help many others to liberty, despite the great risks to her own well-being.

Her students, many of them first-generation Americans, are fascinated

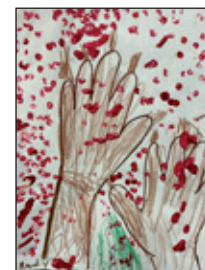
that a historical, larger-than-life figure like Tubman lived in nearby Maryland.

This year is the first one where Greyson will witness a graduating eighth grade class walk the St. Augustine Church altar to receive the diploma, having taught many of them five years before. She enjoys seeing her students grow taller and mature. "It's like they become men before your eyes," she said of the male students, as their voices deepen with the onset of puberty. "They give you a hug," she said of her former students who stop by her classroom.

Mrs. Greyson rarely is absent from school and has formed a tight bond with her intermediate cluster teachers, Ms. Taylor Stewart (third grade) and Mrs. Cheryl Hanton (fifth grade). "We check on each other," she said. She appreciates the encouragement that Mrs. Hanton, St. Augustine's most veteran teacher, with more than 40 years of classroom experience, gave her during her early weeks and months on campus.

Celebrating the Colors of Spring

Student Artwork | Ms. Malika Bryant, Art Teacher



Major Donor Dinner provides annual update on school progress

One of the proofs of Saint Augustine Catholic School's success, according to the school's Governance and Strategic Planning Committee chair, is the ability of its young alumni to go mano-a-mano in debates with students in top high schools.

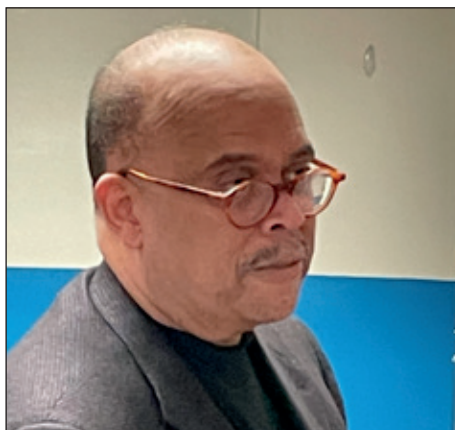
"To have the moxy and confidence in an academic setting is particularly important, especially for Black children," said *Lawrence H. Parks II '76*, speaking at the Major Donor Dinner on March 4 at the Saint Augustine School cafeteria.

During a 30-minute talk, he recalled the story of a Saint Augustine alumna who is studying at Georgetown Visitation, who engaged in a debate in a social studies class with the daughter of a high-level White House official with both students engaging in other in a spirited debate. He recalled an anecdote about a school alumnus who showed his class on a whiteboard how to derive a mathematical equation, impressing the teacher.

"People want to poach a little bit," Parks said of competitive high schools and their desire to admit high-performing Saint Augustine eighth graders. He compared the young alumni to runners with batons in a relay race: if they perform well in high school, they can pass the baton to students who are behind them in school, having established a good reputation for St. Augustine at the high school. He noted that Catholic colleges and universities, in particular, are starting to offer full-ride academic scholarships to St. Augustine's young alumni.

About 35 donors of St. Augustine, including dozens of parishioners, attended the Saturday evening event, a three-hour buffet dinner.

Saint Augustine's forming a strong spiritual and academic foundation for its students, in addition to their social



cohesion, results in many returning to the school for high school service projects, for the annual Christmas performance, and other events, according to Parks.

Parks has three acts he encourages of young alumni. The first, "become a priest or nun," in addition to "(finishing) your education." The third mandate, once the young person is established: "you've got to contribute financially."

One guest of honor was Fr. Maurice Sands, who is the executive director of the Black and Indian Mission Office, an apostolate headquartered in Foggy Bottom that was founded by St. Katharine Drexel, the wealthy Philadelphia heiress who founded the Blessed Sacrament Sisters and Xavier University in New Orleans and dedicated her life to evangelizing among African-Americans and Native Americans.

A second guest was Mr. Kenneth Nickels, who has gotten involved with Saint Augustine School through his late wife, Dr. Marilyn Nickels, editing and publishing the memoirs of the late Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner, a botanist who was a St. Augustine parishioner. In Dr. Nickels' name the Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner STEM Fund supports the STEM program at the parish school.

Speaking of Saint Augustine

School's need to build its enrollment, Parks said, "We need to figure out our competitive niche," given the school's competing with public schools, charter schools, Catholic schools, and independent schools.

The school is practically full in the middle school (Grades 6-8) but has a lot of openings in PreK through second grade, in part because of declining birth rates. He sees some potential in the increasing population density in Meridian Park and Ward 1, where St. Augustine is located, and he thinks that St. Augustine's faculty mixture between veteran teachers and younger ones is ideal.

Another challenge is that in some families of students, both parents are not necessarily in step with each other about the importance of a Catholic education. When they have near-term financial pressures, some parents are also not fully understanding the long-term investment that paying tuition at a Catholic school involves.

During a brief talk, Rev. Patrick A. Smith, pastor at St. Augustine, let the dinner attendees know that the Ward 1 councilmember, Ms. Brianne K. Nadeau, had agreed to sponsor legislation to rename the 1400 block of V Street, "Saint Augustine Way," with the city council planning to take up the legislation. Fr. Smith also said that the school was working on getting the necessary approvals to install solar panels on the roof of the school building, to complete a plan that the current eighth graders had devised several years ago.

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo, HHCJ, the school's acting principal, and Bill Murray, the school's development director, also spoke at the Major Donor Dinner, which is a longstanding annual event.

Science Fair – April 27

Fr. Patrick Morrison, O.P., a chaplain at Medstar Hospital in Washington, D.C., who assists at Saint Augustine Parish on the weekends, served as a judge at our annual Science Fair. He occasionally offers Friday morning Mass for the school community. Mr. Ronald Riley, longtime Math Department chair, also served as a Science Fair judge, along with Dr. Olga Williams, librarian and technology teacher.



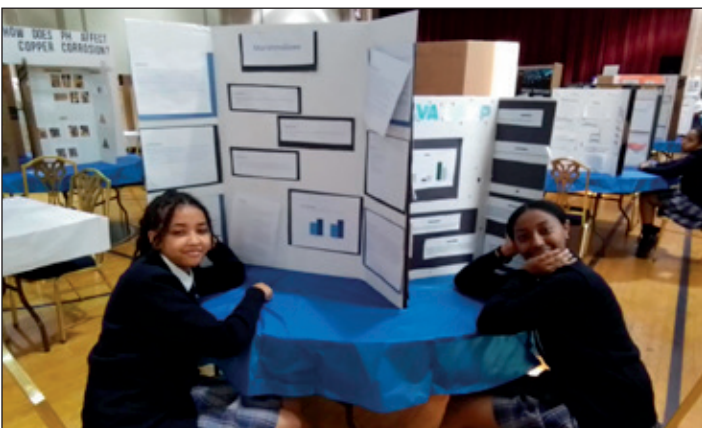
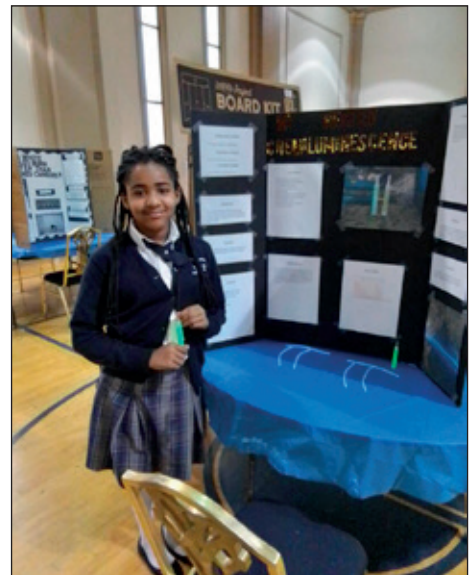
Science Fair Winners

Intermediate Cluster

- First Place – Sarah Riley Sockwell (sixth grade)
- Second Place – Owen Miaka (sixth grade)
- Third Place – Lauren Jones (sixth grade)

Lower Cluster

- First Place – Wesley Sheppard (third grade)
- Second Place – Elliott Dempsey (fourth grade)
- Third Place – Lydia Palmore (fourth grade)



Office of Alumni Relations/Development
St. Augustine Catholic School (PreK-3 to 8)
1421 V Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
202-667-2608

Non-Profit Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 966
Southern Maryland

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS • VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2 • SPRING 2023



The Eighth Grade is raising funds toward its school year-end trip to New York City. Here, three boys staff a table at the end of afternoon classes, selling snacks.

www.staug-dc.org

Rev. Patrick A. Smith
Pastor

fatherpat@saintaugustine-dc.org
202-265-1470 (church office)

Sister Emmanuella Ladipo HHCJ
President

elapido@saintaugustine-dc.org
202-667-2608

Bill Murray
Development Officer

bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org
240-418-5427

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.