



Marist Schools Newsletter

November 2009

Christopher Columbus Alumnus

Awarded Medal of Freedom

Dr. Pedro Jose Greer, alumnus and former director of Christopher Columbus High School, received the Medal of Freedom on August 11. President Obama awarded the nation's highest civilian honor to sixteen "agents of change," citing their accomplishments as examples of the heights a person can reach and the difference they can make in the lives of others. The president said, "What unites them is a belief that our lives are what we make of them . . . and that the truest test of a person's life is what we do for one another."

Dr. Greer is the assistant dean of academic affairs at Florida International University School of Medicine and

the founder of the Camillus Health Concern, which treats thousands of homeless patients each year.

Other recipients included physicist Dr. Stephen Hawking, actor Sidney Poitier, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, retired

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archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and Sen. Edward Kennedy. Congratulations to Dr. Greer and the Christopher Columbus High School!

Presidents Meeting Scheduled

Presidents from Marist schools around the country will meet on February 1 and 2. Among the topics for discussion: development best practices, keeping tuition affordable, financial aid best practices, measuring progress and change, evangelization to ensure that faculty, staff and students understand the Catholic, Marist identity of the school, admissions best practices, and board development.

St. Brendan's Innovative Welcome

Brother Felix Anthony, principal of St. Brendan's in Miami, welcomed students transferring into the upper grades with a special orientation and lunch a week after school opened. In addition to ordinary transfers, St. Brendan's is hosting several overseas students. This welcoming program helped all these students feel at home at St. Brendan's.

Marist Brothers Elect New Leadership

Marist Brothers from around the world met in September and October for a General Chapter. Held every eight years in Rome, the general chapter elects the leadership for the Marist congregation. Bro. Emilie Turu was elected Superior General. Among the General Councilors who will assist Brother Turu is Brother John Klein, the outgoing U.S. provincial.

Bro. Ben Consigli was elected provincial of the Marist Brothers in the US. He will begin his term of office November 12. Brother Ben most recently served as Director of Marist Education.

St. Joseph Academy Welcomes New President

The Board of Trustees of St. Joseph Academy appointed Dr. Robert Brescia as president this past summer. Dr. Brescia holds degrees in government, political science, computer information systems and International Relations. He completed his doctorate in Executive Leadership at George Washington University. Bob had a long and distinguished career with the US Army before serving as Vice President of Michelin, Chief Logistics Officer for Volkswagen and Executive Vice President of Transplace, Inc. Welcome, Bob!

Marist College Inherits Esopus Mansion

Two decades ago, the Marist Brothers sold a portion of their Esopus property, including the Oliver Hazard Payne Mansion, to Mr. Rich. Mr. Rich recently passed away and left his property to Marist College. The College will develop an international leadership program on this property, which is adjacent to the retreat house and camp facilities and just across the river from the main campus of Marist College.

*The cure for boredom
is curiosity.
There is no cure
for curiosity.*

Dorothy Parker



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Marist Bayonne Initiatives

Marist has begun a new student recruitment program. The school picks up the entire eighth grade class and their teacher and brings them to Marist for the day. They are greeted by Bro. Stephen Schlitte, the principal, have a brief prayer service, and then visit classes in small groups of four or five, led by the high school's student ambassadors. Over six hundred students have participated in the "Experience Marist" program this year.

Marist has also launched a MedQuest program designed for students interested in health-related careers. The program begins in freshman year and includes courses in biology, chemistry, medical terminology, healthcare theory and practice, first aid and CPR training. Upper-class students will participate in health-related volunteer work and internships.

Marist's Project Accelerate brings gifted and talented seven and eighth graders to the school for two periods every other week. The program includes Korean history, culture and literature, coordinated with the study of novels with Korean-American characters at their home schools.

*As we read the school reports on our children,
we realize a sense of relief
that can rise to delight
that – thank Heaven –
nobody is reporting in this fashion on us.*

– JB Priestley

Your Prayers, Please . . .

Clare Brewster, Assistant Principal of St. Agnes Boys High School, suffered a cerebral aneurism in late September. After emergency brain surgery and several weeks of intensive care and rehabilitation therapy, Clare has regained her health and has been released from the hospital. Please keep Clare in your prayers as she continued her recuperation.

Dani Faulk, the librarian at St. Joseph Academy, passed away this summer after a long struggle with cancer. She was beloved by students and faculty alike, and is deeply missed by all St. Joe's. Please keep Dani and her family in your prayers.

New Principals at Archbishop Molloy High School and Mount St. Michael Academy

Archbishop Molloy welcomed Bro. Thomas Schady as its new principal this summer. Bro. Thomas was previously the Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education in the Archdiocese of New York, a post he held for seventeen years. Brother Thomas brings his wide experience with Catholic high schools to his new assignment as the educational leader of Molloy. Bro. Thomas replaces Bro. Roy George, who served as principal for a decade before he was named as vice-provincial for the Marist Brothers in the US.

Bro. Larry Gordon is serving as the interim principal of Mount St. Michael Academy. Bro. Larry was formerly the Assistant Principal for Academics at the Mount.

How it All Began:

The Story of Jean-Baptiste Montagne

In July 1816, the newly ordained Father Marcellin Champagnat was assigned to the parish at Lavalla, in southern France. Because of the French revolution and its aftermath, the parish was long neglected. The poor farm families tried to eke out a living from the rocky mountainous soil, and their children had little or no education.

In October, Father Champagnat was called to the bedside of a dying sixteen-year-old, Jean-Baptiste Montagne. The young man knew nothing of God or his faith. Champagnat hurriedly instructed him in the basics and assured the boy that God loved him. When Jean-Baptiste died, Champagnat decided he had to do something.

He had no money, no approval from his pastor, bishop or the civil authorities. Nonetheless, less than three months later, he recruited two young men to become the first Marist Brothers.

Since that time, Marists have opened schools in seventy-six countries. Brothers and lay Marists alike strive to provide a solid Catholic education for all, but especially for the most neglected. In the US today, there are Marist schools in Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Texas.



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Christopher Columbus Events

Six Columbus students were selected as National Hispanic Recognition Scholars and one received Honorable Mention. The program identifies outstanding Hispanic and Latino high school students from a pool of over 200,000 students.



Columbus inducted thirty-six into its newly formed Athletic Hall of Fame on October 24. Inductees to this prestigious Explorer group must have graduated from CCHS more than five years ago and been chosen First Team All-County or First Team All-State or played at the major college level or played professionally. To honor the athletic hall of famers, the school is constructing a special area near the gym that will contain their pictures and accomplishments.

Members of the Columbus school band got the opportunity of a lifetime on October 19 when the bassist, Oteil Burbridge, and manager, Kirk West, of the Allman Brothers Band visited the school and played with the students. The visit was made possible by John Lynskey, a Columbus graduate and teacher at the school.

Sharing Our Mission: Marks of the Marist

The September *Sharing our Mission* program brought together religion department chairs and campus ministers from Marist schools. The group asked what marks would identify a Marist school community. Here are their conclusions:

As Marists who follow in the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat, we are called to evangelize and make Jesus Christ known and loved through the complete education of young men and women. We accompany our students in growing as people of faith, rooted in Gospel and Marist values, who develop into:

Faith-filled Disciples: We possess a strong sense of the Divine and a personal relationship with Jesus fostered that is expressed through formation, prayer, and living a sacramental life.

Empowered Witnesses: We are joyful witnesses to God's love in our lives, enabling us to see Christ in others, to live simply, morally and with clarity.

Agents of Justice & Service: We live in compassionate solidarity with the least favored.

Uniquely Gifted Servant Leaders: We are lovingly created by God with unique gifts and talents which we are called to develop and share with others.

A Spirit of Family & Community: We embody a spirit that celebrates all people as members of the family created by God.

The Marist school stresses the values of unselfishness and openness to others. It presents knowledge as imposing a duty to serve. While being available to all, we take particular care of students who are experiencing difficulties.

Marist Constitutions

Marist Chicago Renovates Chapel, Gym and Theater

Marist High School awarded the Laetare Medal to Mr. and Mrs. William and Nancy Callaghan at the school's annual President's Dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Callaghan were the lead donors for the recent renovation of the school's chapel.

Extensive water damage was repaired, while new seating, flooring, doors and other decorative touches were added.

Students now close their sophomore retreats with mass in the chapel, and religion classes attend

prayer services in the space throughout the week. A weekly Communion service has been added for faculty. The renovated chapel offers a renewed sanctuary space.





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Improvements to the school's small gym were also made and included new seating, a new ceiling and padding. Additionally, the Red Hawk theatre is nearing completion, with water damage being repaired, the stage extended, and new carpet, seating and lighting added.

New York Times Scholars at Mount St. Michael & St. Agnes

The New York Times recognizes just twelve students each year from among the over 100,000 high school seniors in the city. This year, two of these outstanding twelve came from Marist schools: Andrew Boryga from Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, and Ismael Xique from St. Agnes Boys High School in Manhattan. St. Agnes has won this prestigious award three times in the ten years the Times has made these grants, a record unmatched in the City of New York.

Each scholar will receive \$30,000 in aid for college, a laptop computer and a summer job at The Times, as well as access to a network of counselors and alumni who can provide advice and support in the years ahead.

The Times article announcing the awards featured Andrew Boryga, saying:

Andrew is the son of Sylvia Boryga, a single parent raising him and his two younger sisters. He has had to assume adult-like responsibility for his sisters including attending parent-teacher conferences when his mother had to work. The New York Times quotes Andrew, "It had its downsides but I actually liked it. It helped me because it made me independent. In the long run, it really helped out".

Despite his responsibilities Andrew has found time to participate in numerous activities here at the Mount. He is President of the National Honor Society and ranks in the top five of the class. Athletically he captains the track team, running all three seasons. Playing the guitar and a fondness of reading takes up his leisure time.

When asked to comment on his years here at the Mount, Andrew states, "Gaining acceptance into Mount was the starting point for all the success I have received thus far. Mount has provided me with an environment that promotes knowledge and personal growth. It has

If it were not for Mount, I would not be the person I am today."

surrounded me with teachers who have a genuine interest in my education as well as my future. I have learned values which have helped me gain success in high school, and will continue to help me over the next four years at Cornell; values such as discipline, character, and leadership. In addition to all this, Mount has most importantly provided me with a family. I have made friendships with peers and teachers alike that I feel will last me for a lifetime. I can honestly say that if it were not for Mount, I would not be the person I am today."

Come September Andrew will be off to Cornell University to which he has been granted a full

scholarship on an early acceptance. At Cornell he will major in Journalism and plans on studying other languages in addition to Spanish. He hopes to find time to join clubs and in particular to write for the school newspaper. In June he will write for the Norwood News and July will find him working at the New

York Times.

Last year, the time also honored Ms. Kate Authenrieth of the St. Agnes faculty, proclaiming her as a "Teacher who Makes a Difference." Kate was one of just twenty teachers so recognized.

Roselle Seniors Kick Off Year

For the Seniors of Roselle Catholic's Class of 2010 what could be better than a beautiful Friday afternoon for getting together on Chakey Field for good food ... some friendly competition (football, soccer, etc) ... hanging out with friends (dancing, jumping rope) ... and most of all, celebrating being a SENIOR.

The new senior class has a tough act to follow. Among last June's graduates, four students qualified for the AP Scholar with Distinction Awards by receiving an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. Three students qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award with an average of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. And eight graduates of the class of 2009 qualified for the AP Scholar Award by completing three or more AP Examinations with grades of 3.0 or higher.



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Mount St. Michael Alumnus: "I was a student when the Mount first opened its doors in 1926. . ."

Recently, a 96-year-old retired businessman drove into Mount Saint Michael's parking lot, walked up to the main office and said "I'd like to speak with someone in the Alumni Office, my name is Jerry Ponsiglione." Jerry was met by former Mount Principal, Brother John Herrmann FMS, who asked if he had attended the Mount. Jerry's response was "Sure... I was a student when the school first opened its doors in 1926. I came back to see the changes."

Jerry was a boarder from 1926 through 1932. He was involved in many activities and loved sports, especially baseball and basketball. He told us stories of various players and teams he participated with, like Jimmy Lynch a 1932 graduate who became the first ordained priest to graduate from the Mount. "Jimmy was very smart, and active in all Mount activities - a real leader, and a hell of a foul shooter!"

Mr. Ponsiglione spoke emphatically about the positive influence the Marist Brothers had on his upbringing. "Mount Saint Michael Director, Brother Mary Florentius was a great role model; he worked very hard to get the Mount up and running." Jerry continued to express the importance the *Brother Prefects* had on what he called his "life's fundamentals." The Mount taught Jerry the importance of life skills, from basic algebra to appropriate table manners; "Never leave a teaspoon in the cup," he mimicked. "The Mount not only taught me about writing and math, but also how to analyze and interpret life. Those skills helped me many times in my various business ventures."

Jerry left the Mount in 1932, but not Marist education. He graduated from St. Ann's Academy (another Marist school, now Archbishop Molloy) in 1934 before going on to New York University. Jerry married his wife Dolores in 1942 and raised four children in their Brooklyn Heights home. Through hard work and shrewd business transactions, Jerry went on to great success in the shipping business, and continues to visit and lend his experience to his sons who now run the everyday operation. Mr. Gerald Ponsiglioni never ceases "to reach for the stars."

St. Joseph Academy Service, Encounter, Scholarships

In October, 8 faculty and 28 students from Saint Joseph Academy's Marist Youth Group participated, in partnership with Self-Help Housing, to build homes for local families.

About 36 students enrolled in Christian Service Class volunteer at 12 sites around the Brownsville area, serving daily in nursing homes, hospitals and homeless shelters.

A variety of service projects are being held during the upcoming holiday season including; a winter coat drive, a canned food drive and sports shoe recycling drive.

Plans are in the works for the Comida Navidaña which will provide Christmas dinner for approximately 250 people in Matamoros, Mexico. Many Saint Joseph Academy faculty members and students participate in this annual ministry.

The Fall Encounter Retreat for 76 juniors is underway. This is the largest group that Saint Joseph Academy has had participating in this retreat.

Five students were recognized as National Hispanic Scholars as a result of their combined PSAT scores and GPA.

International Exchange Students studying at Saint Joseph Academy include three from Germany and three from China.





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Central Catholic Marks 75th Anniversary

Brother Florentius founded Mount St. Michael Academy in 1926. He was then assigned to be the principal of St. Anne's elementary school, his alma mater in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Bro. Florentius saw that there were four parish high schools for girls, but there was no Catholic secondary school for boys. He met with the city's pastors in June 1935. The pastors agreed in principle that – someday – they might be able to support a boys' school. But certainly not in the midst of the great depression, when parishes were struggling to meet existing expenses.

Brother Florentius thanked them for their interest, and then opened Central Catholic three months later in September 1935. Like Father Champagnat, he has no money, no buildings of his own (the school used rented space in a K of C hall and a church basement), and no approval from the pastors.

Despite the odds, the school flourished. Uniquely in an ethnically divided town, Central welcomed students from every nationality in the City of Immigrants. Today, Central has grown to over 1400 students in three connected buildings, and is the only Catholic high school remaining in Lawrence. The school opened its doors to young women when the last parish girls' high school closed a decade ago.

This year, Central celebrates its 75th year of service to young people in the heart of Lawrence city.

This year, Central launched several new technology initiatives to keep alumni, friends, and prospective students more closely connected to the school. Bro. Rene Roy, Central's Vice President for Mission, has created a blog on Marist Spirituality at: <http://cchsbroreneroy.blogspot.com>.

Prospective students can keep in touch with the school through a twitter connection to the school's principal, David DeFillippo.

The school also has a Facebook account for alumni and a LinkedIn site for alumni business networking.



Rest in Peace

Brother Cornelius Russell of Marist College Brother John Alexius of Archbishop Molloy HS

Brother Cornelius Russell entered the Marist Brothers in 1947. He held degrees in history and education and taught at St. Helena in the Bronx, Central Catholic in Lawrence, MA, Archbishop Molloy in Queens, NY, Aquinas HS in Augusta, GA. In 1961, Bro. Cornelius was assigned to Marist College. He lived and worked there for over 40 years, serving as a professor and controller of the college. He passed away in October at Cabrini Nursing Center after a long illness.

A native of Haverhill, MA, Brother John Alexius joined the Marist Brothers in 1946. He held degrees in English and religious education. He taught at Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx, St. Ann's Academy in Manhattan, St. Mary's HS in Manhasset, NY, and St. Joseph HS in Laredo, TX. His last assignment was at Archbishop Molloy HS, where he lived and worked for forty years. He taught English, religion and typing before being named the school's treasurer in 1970. In his "retirement," he continued to work part time in the finance office, assist the maintenance staff, and took special care of infirm Brothers living in the school residence.

Guadalupe Middle School News

Guadalupe School has successfully completed its permanent accreditation visit. As an outcome of the visit, the school will soon begin a strategic planning process. The Guadalupe school is also planning to construct additional classroom space to accommodate their student body. Congratulations to Bro. Leo Shea and the Guadalupe school community on these milestones!

Our Lady of Lourdes HS New Governance Structure

Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie, NY, began the new school year with a new governance structure. The school was founded by the Archdiocese of New York and was long-administered by the Marist Brothers. In September, the school became a separate corporation with its own board to assist in the governance of the school. Working with the current Principal, Father John LaGiovane, the newly created board will bring expertise in many areas to the school. We wish Lourdes every success with its new board.