

St. Mary School News

St. Mary School nurtures the development of the whole child: spiritually, academically, emotionally, and socially. St. Mary School provides a strong, accessible, and rigorous Catholic education to the students of greater Grays Harbor and their families.



A Publication for Alumni, Families, and Friends of St. Mary School

Supporters mop up school flood damage

Anytime a cloud overshadows St. Mary School, the community of school supporters is quick to step forward and help find the silver lining.

The cloud that appeared this past June took the form of a broken water main that unleashed several inches of water into the school basement. The silver lining came forth immediately through ServPro technicians who dried out and then cleaned the basement, and over the next few months through individuals and groups who offered financial support. During the summer, the local Catholic parishes in Grays Harbor took up a special collection that raised \$3,200 of the \$5,000 goal to offset the school's insurance deductible.



A broken water main left several inches of water in the St. Mary School library and preschool rooms last June.



Members of the Joseph S. Novak Council of the Knights of Columbus. The group donated \$1,800 to offset school flood costs.

The Joseph S. Novak Council of the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary Parish then stepped forward with a donation of \$1,800 to pay off the remaining balance of the deductible.

"I continue to be astounded by the generous support our small school receives from its supporters and our parishes," said Principal Carrie Marlow. "We are so grateful, especially when unexpected expenses hit our already challenging budget. Time and again our supporters are there for us in so many ways. We are very blessed!"

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New Staff Members Join St. Mary School

St. Mary School is pleased to welcome five new staff members this school year and to congratulate one current staff member on her new position.



Angel Damasiewicz is the new music instructor at SMS. Angel attended Grays Harbor College to study music theory and has directed many choirs of all age ranges. She was a director in the Grays Harbor's Children's Choir, "Poco Voce," and has been the

Worship and Music Director at Harbor City Church for the past 7 years. Angel said she looks forward to teaching the kids of St. Mary School about music, worship, and everything in between.



Miguel Gonzalez is the new school maintenance person. Miguel joins the rest of his family at SMS, including his wife Delia Estrada, who is the school custodian, a son who is in sixth grade and a daughter who is in second grade. Miguel brings experience from his position in hotel

maintenance and has already completed a large number of repairs in his short amount of time at St. Mary School.



April Nelson is our new librarian. April is the mother of two girls, with the oldest in Kindergarten at SMS and representing the 4th generation of St. Mary students on her husband's side of the family. April says "Getting lost in a story has been a joy for me ever since I started to read. I look forward to sharing that with the students and helping them find books they will love."



Amy Lemus is our new kitchen assistant, and is working with our new school lunch supervisor and head cook, **Alejandra Leon** who was the previous assistant. Both are school parents of 4th graders, and are enjoying working as a team. They note that the students are fond of some of their new menu

additions, especially tacos and lasagna.



Pat Weil is the new Extended School Services (ESS) supervisor. Pat moved to the area from Hawaii, where she had experience as a bus driver for special needs students. "I'm enjoying my time at St. Mary School," said Pat. "I went through twelve years of Catholic school myself so I'm right at home."

School Snapshots



St. Mary School students and family members gathered before the start of the school year to clean up around the school campus.



Robby Lewis: 'Be involved with school and faith'

It is rare to find a young person who is still in college yet has a clear vision of where he is headed as well as the insight to reflect on how he got to where he is. However, those who know St. Mary School alumnus Robby Lewis are not surprised that he is one of those rare people.

A 2013 graduate of St. Mary School and 2017 graduate of Aberdeen High School, Robby is now in his Junior year at Gonzaga University in Spokane. "After spending 10 years at a Catholic school, I was drawn to Catholic schools during my college search in 2017," says Robby. I landed on Gonzaga after a terrific tour and researching what Jesuit-Catholic institutions had to offer students." With aspirations for a future in law and public policy, Robby has taken courses such as "Judgement and Decision Making," "Cognition," and "Social Psychology." Robby is also heavily involved in community service, working for the past 10 months as a developmental intern for the largest charitable food distribution center in the Northwest. In this position he oversees the sorting of thousands of pounds of donated food and coordinates the work of volunteers.

Another of Robby's activities can be traced back to his days at St. Mary Parish, where he helped the local council of the Knights of Columbus during their monthly pancake breakfasts and then joined when he reached the minimum membership age of 18. Robby is now the Deputy Grand Knight of the Gonzaga University college council of the Knights. "Our council volunteers at several different locations in Spokane, including the O'Malley senior residence hall and a yearly 9/11 and veterans memorial service," says Robby. "My time as a Knight has taught me the values of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism."

Although these activities may seem a world away from life at St. Mary School, Robby has no problem remembering his time at SMS and how it helped shape him as a person. Some of the highlights he recalls include competing in his first all-school spelling bee in second grade, studying state history in fourth grade by creating an "ABC book of Washington," and the annual school Oktoberfest celebration and carnival. "I remember one specific year in which between three of my friends, we won eleven bottles of soda at the 'Pop Walk,'" recalls Robby. "Our parents were less than thrilled at our new acquisitions!"

Robby's mother, Maureen Lewis, had a unique vantage point for Robby's time at SMS. "Robby and I went through St. Mary's together!" Maureen recalls. "I was principal when he was in Kindergarten through second grade, and his was the last 8th grade class I taught there." She points to the diverse opportunities that SMS provided Robby. "He was in the plays, he was an altar server, eucharistic minister, and a reader at church, not to mention camps, fundraisers, and more. He learned to uplift leadership, community, academics, and most of all faith in his life."



Robby Lewis with the Knights of Columbus district deputy after receiving his fourth degree Knighthood.



Robby Lewis, center, with other students at the National Knights of Columbus College Conference in New Haven, Connecticut.

Asked what advice he would give to current St. Mary School students about making the most of their time at SMS, Robby dispenses wisdom that sounds more like that of a parent or teacher than a 20-year-old college student. "I would suggest participating in anything and everything you have time for, whether that be school sports, activities, school and community events, or simply the spelling bee. It is very important to be involved with your school and faith in order to understand where you want to be next. It was very important for me to figure out what I loved and was passionate about before making decisions about college and service involvement."

As for final thoughts, Robby shares words that sound natural for the son of parents who are both educators. "Don't turn off your learning ears when you leave the classroom, because there is opportunity to learn everywhere in life. I learned many valuable life lessons and tools from my parents, extended family, in the swimming pool, and at church."

And maybe to prove that there is still a kid's spirit inside this very mature young man, Robby wraps up his comments with an enthusiastic "Go Lions!"

Bill Reid Bequest Enables School Improvements

St. Mary School alumnus Bill Reid, who passed away last year at the age of 90, had a special fondness for the school building that his father and uncle's company built in 1926. Now through a gift from Bill's estate, the school has a fresh look both inside and out.

The first project tackled during the summer break was a complete remodel of the Kindergarten classroom, including updated electrical, new flooring, a drop ceiling with LED lighting, new cabinetry and storage areas, and a fresh coat of paint.

"I am excited to have a light and bright room that is more user-friendly for the education of five-year-olds, including space for student things as well as more whiteboards and bulletin boards for learning and displaying student work," said Kindergarten teacher Lisa Villar. "Also, it's great to have all of the cabinet and storage space as it makes the classroom less cluttered looking and more spacious."



The Kindergarten class at work in their newly remodeled classroom.

The remodel was done by Joel Cole Construction, working with a tight timeline to get everything accomplished between mid-June and mid-August.

The other area to get an update this summer was the school building exterior. As anyone from Grays Harbor knows, wind and rain love to find their way into cracks and crevices, especially the 93-year-old stucco exterior of the school. In order to keep the elements at bay, Pacific Coast Painting first pressure washed the entire building and repaired deteriorating stucco. The building was then sealed with a marine grade sealant and a new coat of paint.



The newly painted exterior of St. Mary School.

"Maintaining a 100-year-old building can be challenging," said Principal Carrie Marlow, "However, because of the generosity of our staunch supporters and alumni like Bill Reid, we can face those challenges head on. The improvements that were completed this summer were much needed and helped to complete a several years long effort to remodel the entire building for generations to come. Our school community was excited to return to a shiny clean and safe building this fall!"

Anyone wishing to come see the updated areas and to learn about future projects is more than welcome. You can schedule a tour by contacting the school office at 360-532-1230 or emailing advancement@saintmaryschool.org

School Snapshots



(Top left) SMS alumni & school families at the Oktoberfest Bratwurst Dinner. (Bottom left) "The Harbor's Wurst Bier Band" entertains at the Bratwurst Dinner.



(Top right) Students learn and compete in the newly formed SMS Chess Club.



(Bottom right) Aberdeen Lions Club volunteers use special cameras to screen student's vision.



(Above) Bishop Eusebio Elizondo with SMS students after the Mass of the Holy Spirit.

Teacher Feature**Tifanie Kelly: ‘Help one person at a time’**

Second grade teacher Tifanie Kelly is a familiar and friendly face to many St. Mary School students, families, and alumni. We asked Mrs. Kelly to share her thoughts about her time at SMS both in and out of the classroom.

Tell us about your time as a teacher at St. Mary School.

I have worked at St. Mary School for 14 years as a teacher. My first two years were spent in the middle school as science, pre-algebra, algebra and PE teacher. Then an opening came available to teach first grade. My initial class of first grade students are currently seniors at our local high schools and I love watching them as they accomplish dreams and goals. Before I became a teacher, I was Mrs. Kathy Gwinn’s preschool assistant for three years. I got my teaching certificate from WSU, through an extension program Grays Harbor Community College was offering. I have also completed my Professional Certification. In my spare time I enjoy running, photography, and camping.

How has your time at SMS influenced you and/or your family?

St. Mary School has been very influential in my family and my life. My middle son Brandon started preschool out at Central Park Co-Op because I had heard that Mrs. Carrie Marlow was the best teacher around. Well, when Mrs. Marlow moved to St. Mary School my family followed. I have three boys who have experienced the many blessings of our school because of the move.

In the last four years my personal relationship with God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit have grown in ways I never could have imagined. I grew up Christian, attending a local Baptist Church and I was baptized at 13

Second grade teacher Tifanie Kelly with husband Wes and son Mason, an 8th grader, during the SMS campus cleanup this past summer.

years old. As an adult, I attended church almost every weekend, but when I would attend weekly school Mass, I felt the Eucharist calling to me. I now know why I felt such a yearning for Christ’s body and blood; the closeness I feel after partaking in the Holy Eucharist is unlike any experience I have had in my faith journey. I began the RCIA program in September of 2017 and was welcomed into the Church at Easter Vigil 2018. I feel so very blessed to be a part of St. Mary School and the congregation of St. Mary Church.

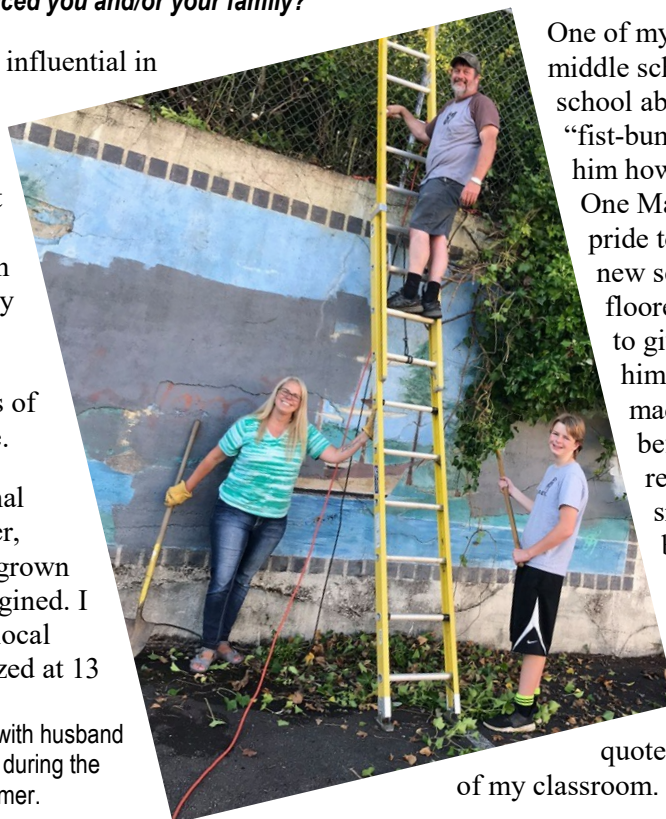
What aspect of teaching do you enjoy the most and why?

The best part of being a teacher is when I realized how much one little thing I do touches a young person. There have been many experiences in my classroom, Student Council, Robotics, sports, or Homework Club where I catch a glimmer of joy or appreciation from a student that is so pure and genuine that the Holy Spirit says, “See, this is why you teach.”

What is a favorite memory or student story of your time at St. Mary School?

One of my favorite memories is of a middle school student who attended our school about two years ago. Every day I “fist-bumped” this young man and asked him how his day or week was going. One Mass morning he said, with great pride to me, “Look Mrs. Kelly I have a new school sweatshirt that fits.” I was floored. I held it together long enough to give this young man a hug and tell him how nice he looked. I barely made it back to my classroom before breaking down. The realization of how much a simple small act can touch one life became clear to me that day. Mother Teresa said it best, “Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you.” I try to keep this

quote in mind every day inside or out of my classroom.



School hosts Wednesday Mass celebrations

The auditorium at St. Mary School takes the term “multi-purpose room” to a new level, hosting assemblies, school lunches, PE classes, and various other activities. However, the auditorium was able to serve a higher purpose this fall, as the setting for several weekday Mass celebrations.

The Wednesday morning Masses were moved to the school for three weeks in late September and early October while the carpet in St. Mary Church was replaced. The auditorium stage served as the sanctuary, and folding chairs took the place of church pews, but in most other ways the Masses had same rhythm



Fr. Simham celebrates Mass in the St. Mary School auditorium.



Members of the Donovan, Isaacson, and Quigg families gather after the Mass held in memory of Jane Isaacson and Nan Quigg.

as regular Wednesday Masses, where students participate as lectors, ushers, choir members, and altar servers.

One special event was the October 9th Mass, which was held in memory of twin sisters Nan Donovan Quigg and Jane Donovan Isaacson, who would have been 100 years old on that day. More than 20 members of the Donovan, Isaacson, and Quigg families came to participate in the Mass. “It was a special day,” recalled Steven Isaacson, one of Jane Isaacson’s sons. “The twins would have appreciated the fact that Mass was held in the auditorium of the school that they loved.”

SCRIP program an easy way to support SMS

Most fundraisers at St. Mary School take place over a few days or a few weeks at most. But there is one campaign that runs 24/7 all year long and is supported by people near and far. The program is known as “SCRIP” and involves selling gift cards for local and national retailers. For each card that is purchased, St. Mary School receives a rebate from the retailer of anywhere from 1% to 20% of the card amount.

The SCRIP program generates around \$14,000 per year for the school and the best part is that there is no extra cost to the person buying the card. The school keeps an inventory of cards from over 40 retailers, including national brands like Amazon, Starbucks, and Walmart, along with local stores such as Casa Mia, Mazatlan, and Swanson’s. There is also now an option to buy “e-cards” online or through a phone app so people can support SMS from anywhere in the country. If you would like more information on how to participate in the SCRIP program, please call Advancement Director Pete Scroggs at 360-580-7714, or email advancement@saintmaryschool.org



School Snapshots



SMS students show off their Vocabulary Parade words and matching costumes.



A Message From Mrs. Marlow

Dear St. Mary School Community and Supporters,

Let me begin with a very heartfelt THANK YOU! It is because of you and your support and prayers that we are once again off to a wonderful start on a new school year! On the first day of school our fabulous school staff welcomed 160 Preschool through 8th grade students into our building, classrooms, and hearts. It is an honor and our mission to make top-notch Catholic education available in Grays Harbor!

The first few months of our new school year have brought many blessings. In September we began the year with eager students and just as eager parents. Our middle schoolers were blessed with the opportunity to attend the regional Mass of the Holy Spirit at Sacred Heart Church in Lacey. It was a wonderful celebration for the five Catholic schools in our region and Auxiliary Archbishop Eusebio Elizondo gave a very motivational homily for the students. We also welcomed 17 new families to St. Mary School with New Family Orientation and our Parent Mentor program.

Next came October and our hard-working families brought us an extremely successful Oktoberfest celebration. The community support and participation we received this year for Oktoberfest was overwhelming and everyone involved had a fantastic time! In addition, the teachers were able to participate in a faith-filled retreat day and our students celebrated the wonder of words with our annual Vocabulary Parade.

Needless to say, things are very busy here at St. Mary School! From before school Rosary and Chess Club to afterschool Robotics Club, middle school homework help, choir, and primary tutoring, St. Mary School is the place to be and all of it is made possible by you. Your continuous support and prayers are felt every day.

As we continue to navigate the blessed waters of this school year, we thank you and ask God's blessings for us all. May you and your family enjoy a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!

Together in Christ,

Carrie Marlow
St. Mary School Principal

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Considering a gift?

St. Mary School has gift opportunities to support student scholarships, technology/educational supplies, building maintenance, our endowment, and more. For more info. contact Pete Scroggs: 360-580-7714 or advancement@saintmaryschool.org