

NEWSNOTE

ISSUE 12 DECEMBER 6, 2023

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK...

Dear St. Mary's Elementary School Families,

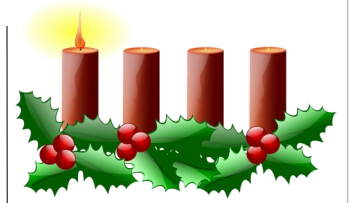
Greetings! It has been so energizing and uplifting seeing, visiting, and chatting with so many families these past couple of weeks. Because of the partnership between our teachers and SME school parents and due to the generous giving of time, energy, and efforts of many; SME has been able to offer many holiday events - and we will continue to do our part to make this the best Christmas season yet for our students!

In addition to doing our best to transform SME into Buddy the Elf's holiday wonderland, a host of parents enabled our school to allow our students the opportunity to do some holiday shopping last Friday. On Saturday, some of us will be decorating cookies and having Breakfast with Santa. Next week, our pre-K friends will be hosting their Christmas Sing-A-Longs and our Kindergarten class will take the stage for their class Christmas play! We've also welcomed back some of our alumni and their current classmates from St. Mary's High School for a Christmas concert and will host a holiday dinner for our faculty, staff, and partners from the parish! It has been a wonderfully busy season of celebration, merriment, and camaraderie! If you have not yet liked or followed our Facebook page, I encourage you to do so, so that you can follow along as we collectively write this year's story of our school.

However, our most significant and poignant event will be held in the school gym next Friday, **December 15 @ 7:00 PM**, when our school community gathers to perform the **Living Nativity**. Under the direction of Ms. Sullivan and led musically by Dr. Chudyk and Mr. Klemenz, our older student performers and our student singers from Kindergarten - Grade 8 will help remind all of us in attendance of the true meaning of Christmas. Just as Linus from the Peanuts gang reminds viewers of Luke's gospel account of the miraculous good tidings of great joy that Jesus' birth brought, our Living Nativity will help us remain focused on the most important reason we celebrate this Winter: the birth of Jesus.

I hope that you have a joyous holiday season with your family and loved ones, and I look forward to seeing so many of our school families gather again next Friday.

Spreading the Love of the Christmas Season,
Mr. Olejniczak



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Fri. 12/8** - Immaculate Conception Mass, 8:30, **NO AFTER-SCHOOL CARE AVAILABLE TODAY!**
- **Sat. 12/9** - Breakfast with Santa, 9-11 am
- **Wed. 12/13** - MP1 Report Card Upload Gr. K-8
- **Fri. 12/15** - K-8 Living Nativity, 7:00pm, **AFTERSCHOOL CARE IS ENDING AT 4:30**
- **Wed. 12/20 - Fri. 12/29** - No School: Christmas Recess



- **Mon. 1/1** - No School: New Years Day
- **Fri. 1/5** - Christian Witness Mass, 8:30
- **Fri. 1/12** - 10:45 Early Dismissal: Staff PD
- **Mon 1/15: NO SCHOOL** - MLK Jr.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRINCIPAL'S DESK	1
BY THE NUMBERS	1
12 Days Raffle	1
Angel Choir	1
HSA	1
RaiseRight	2
Mega Raffle	2
Snack Safely	2
Parish Passage	2
Square 1 Art	2
Athletics	2
8th Grade Info	2
Stay in the Know	2

BY THE NUMBERS

We offer a wide variety of opportunities to support SME and will be changing things up this year with our offerings.

We understand that every fundraiser will not be for everyone, but we do appreciate any & all support you can give!

Year round ways to help:

- ◇ Boxtops 4 Education
Just scan in the app to earn!
- ◇ RaiseRight Program
- ◇ Tops in Education Program
Link your bonus card to support SME!

ANGEL CHOIR

The Angel Choir practices will continue through December on Tuesday, December 12th & 19th from 2:30-3:30 PM in the parish center.



[12 Days of Christmas Online Order form](#)



December 25th – January 5th

Winner drawn every day!*

*Winners will be contacted after January 5th

Grand Prize is \$5,000

\$30 per ticket or 3/\$75- use the QR code to purchase the tickets online. Thank you for your support! All tickets are due by 12/18 to guarantee entrance into the drawing.



HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

A huge thank you to everyone who came in and helped out at Merry Moose. We are so grateful and appreciative for all of you. The students had a wonderful time picking out gifts and having them wrapped. It was a special day for everyone.

Today St. Nicholas visited our school and left each of our student's a surprise!



The Spirit Wear order should be in next week. Please let HSA or the office know if you want to pick up your order; if not the orders will be sent home with the students.

December Events: 9th: Breakfast with Santa 9am-1pm



ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2 St. Mary's Hill
Lancaster, NY 14086

Phone: 716-683-2112
Fax: 716-683-2134
www.smeschool.com



UPON THIS HILL,
WE DO GOD'S WILL



RAISERIGHT



Walk-in office hours:
Tuesday 9:00-12:00
Wednesday 12:30-3:30
Friday: 9:30-12:00

For a complete list of participating re-
tailers visit the shop with scrip web-
site: <https://www.raiseright.com/brands>

Here is a quick link to the order form:
[RR Order Form](#)

Reminder: Families earn 100% of rebates
up to \$250 and an 80/20 split thereafter.

Creating an online account:
[RaiseRight.com](#)

SME Enrollment Code: 6876E5DA3L66

If you have any questions, please email
raiseright@smeschool.com. Our team
is here for you!

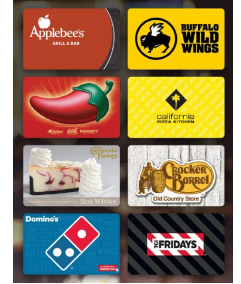
**The last day to order to guarantee
Christmas delivery is December 13th!**

Have you begun making your list and checking it twice?

You are going to buy that gift anyway, why not give yourself the gift of a
rebate on your tuition while you're at it?! Using RaiseRight cards to do your
shopping is like the gift that keeps on giving!

With RaiseRights extensive list of vendors the possibilities are endless, and
if that should somehow fail, they also offer visa gift cards!

Due to the outpouring of requests, our teacher wish list is available [here!](#)
It can also be found on the RaiseRight tab of our school website.



MEGA RAFFLE

Who Do You Know? As we prepare for the upcoming Mega Raffle, we are reaching out to the
wonderful families in our school for support. If your family has any connections or if you know
of any businesses or individuals who might be interested in contributing, we would be incredi-
bly grateful for any raffle donations. These contributions can come in various forms such as
gift cards, merchandise, services, or any other items suitable for our raffle. Your support not
only enhances the excitement of our event, but also plays a crucial role in achieving our fund-
raising goals. If you have any leads please contact the Mega Raffle Committee
at megaffle@smeschool.com for an official donation/sponsorship letter.



SME Alumni who shared their talents today
as part of the Varsity Chorus and Glee Club
during their concert for our students!

SNACK SAFELY

Our HSA team has created a survey of sorts for
your feedback and recommendations of safe
snacks to add to our approved snack list. If you
would like to contribute to that list please com-
plete the survey here:

[Safe Snack List Ideas Google Form](#)

SQUARE 1 ART

**Good News... Square1 Art ordering has
been extended... 1 WEEK!!**

Order by: 12/5/2023 12/12/23

Ordering Christmas Gifts? Order soon to re-
ceive items prior to 12/24.

Simply search for your child's art using [Art
Search](#), and enter state, school name, and your
student's name. Your student's art and code
will appear, and you may order!

Upload additional art if you like, using [Art Up-
load!](#)

If you have questions, or need anything at
all, [contact customer care online](#).

PARISH PASSAGE



that day.

Jesse Tree

Advent is upon us! St. Mary's has a long-standing tradition of having children
process at the beginning of each Mass during Advent with a Jesse
Tree Ornament. The children/teens will hang the ornaments on the Jesse
tree. We are looking for children/teens to sign up to participate in our
Advent tradition beginning the weekend of December 2-3. Please sign up
below. Your children can participate more than once. If they do not arrive
at least 10 minute prior to mass and let an usher know they are in attend-
ance, new children will be selected and they will not be able to participate

[Jesse Tree Sign Up](#)

St. Lucy's Wheat

St. Lucy's wheat packets will be available in the church this weekend and
next or in the school office. Wheat should be planted on or by 12/13. Chil-
dren can bring their wheat clippings to mass in the parish center on Christ-
mas Eve to be added to our Crèche.



Advent Wreaths

Advent wreath sets and candles are available after masses or
in the rectory.

They are \$10 for the set or \$5 for candles.



ATHLETICS - NIGHT-OUT BOOKS



Please return all sample books and
orders by Friday, 12/8.

We thank you for your support &
enjoy your savings in 2024!

**All sample books MUST be
returned to avoid being charged
for it.**

8TH GRADE INFO

Please be sure to print and sign the confirmation
email you receive upon completion and submit to the
main office. Without this signed document, we are
unable to submit a copy of your child's 1st report
card to their 1st & 2nd choice catholic high schools.

Our 8th graders will be depicting the Living Nativity
on Friday, December 15th at 7:00. Each class (grades
kindergarten - 7th) will be adding to the presentation
with song.



STAY IN THE KNOW

Make Note: No School 12/20-29

Make Note: 1/1 No School: New
Years Day

Save the Date: 1/5 Christian Wit-
ness Mass, 8:30

Make Note: 1/12 10:45 Early Dis-
missal, Staff PD, No Afterschool
Care

Make Note: 1/15 No School:
MLK Jr. Day

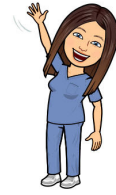
Save the Date: 1/18 Pre-K Open
House for potential new families



NOTES FROM THE NURSE



Dara Sirianni RN, BSN



December 2023

Safe Snacks

I encourage all who are interested to use the live link in the NewsNote. This Google form was created by members of the HSA for parents to have a voice in the Safe Snack options here at SME.

To date there are only 2 responses and this link has been available in the last 2 NewsNotes.

If there are new suggestions I will have them printed and sent home with the 12/15 NewsNote.

Illnesses/Covid

Please view the SME website for the handout "I need to stay Home If...". This handout will provide you with the guidelines necessary to help prevent the spread of illnesses.

Also, please note that any student who tests positive for Covid must isolate for 5 days and can return on day 6 with the recommendation they wear a mask days 6-10.

We can minimize illness by:

- 1-Getting plenty of rest*
- 2- Eating a balanced diet*
- 3- Drinking more water*
- 4- Avoiding crowded areas*
- 5- Covering coughs/sneezes*
- 6- Washing hands frequently or using sanitizer*
- 7-Getting your annual Flu vaccine*

Contact Information

Dara Sirianni RN, BSN
Office Hours- 9:30-1
phone- (716)683-2112 ext 128
fax- (716) 683-2134
email- nurse@smeschool.com

Physicals

Thank you to everyone for submitting physicals.

As a reminder it is a NYS Law for all students wishing to participate in a school sport to have a physical submitted annually.

I always recommend submitting a copy to the Health Office after each Annual Examination.



SME Christmas Spirit Week

December 11th - 19th

12/11 - Christmas Kick-Off - Wear your Favorite Christmas Attire

12/12 - Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree with your favorite Christmas socks and hat

12/13 - Mad about Christmas plaid - Wear Plaid/Flannel

12/14 - It's Tradition - Wear An Ugly Sweater Day

12/15 - Dress up in Christmas Colors (Red/Green, Red/White, Silver/Gold)

12/18 - T'was the Week Before Christmas- Wear Your Christmas Pajamas

12/19 - Calling All Santa's Helpers - Dress as an Elf, Reindeer or Santa himself

We hope everyone participates.

If you choose not to, you must wear your school uniform.

**** No sweatpants or clothes rips or tears.**

Ten things that Pope Francis Wants us to learn from the Nativity Scene

Significance of the Christmas Crèche

Pope Francis: *Admirabile signum* (Enchanting image)

By Catholic News Agency Staff

- 1. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel.** The depiction of Jesus' birth is "a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God," the pope writes. The nativity scene invites everyone who contemplates it "on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman."
- 2. The custom is rooted in the Bible.** The pope underlines that the nativity scene rises from "the pages of sacred Scripture." St. Luke's Gospel says that Mary "gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (2:7). The manger is the focus of nativity scenes. Indeed, the Italian word for nativity scene is "presepe," from the Latin word "praesepeum," meaning "manger."
- 3. The tradition was born in an unassuming Italian town.** St. Francis of Assisi stopped in Greccio in November 1223, probably on his way back from Rome after receiving papal approval for the Rule of his religious order. Fifteen days before Christmas, he asked a local man named John to help him "bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay." On Christmas Day, St. Francis was joined by his friars and people from the surrounding area before a manger full of hay, watched over an ox and a donkey.
- 4. The first nativity scene was connected to the Eucharist.** Describing the scene in Greccio that day, Pope Francis writes: "All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist." Unlike in nativity scenes today, the pope says, there were no statues. Instead, "the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present."
- 5. The original nativity scene inspired a vision.** The pope recalls that one of the witnesses to the first nativity scene saw "a marvelous vision." Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of St. Francis, wrote that "one of those present saw the Baby Jesus himself lying in the manger."

6. **The nativity scene is a means of evangelization.** The pope says that by creating the nativity scene, St. Francis “carried out a great work of evangelization” that continues to touch hearts to this day. The saint had discovered “a simple yet authentic means of portraying the beauty of our faith” that was accessible to all.
7. **The manger is a sign of God’s love.** Pope Francis writes that nativity scenes resonate so deeply because they show God’s tender love. They proclaim that “the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness.” They engage the senses and imagination, helping people “to ‘feel’ and ‘touch’ the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation.”
8. **The nativity scene contains a call to service.** The pope says that the Christmas crib contains an implicit message. “It summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty, and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross,” he writes. “It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need.”
9. **Even a nativity scene’s landscapes are meaningful.** The pope notes that depictions of the Nativity often include “the ruins of ancient houses or buildings.” He writes: “More than anything, the ruins are the visible sign of fallen humanity, of everything that inevitably falls into ruin, decays, and disappoints. This scenic setting tells us that Jesus is newness in the midst of an aging world, that he has come to heal and rebuild, to restore the world and our lives to their original splendor.”
10. **Nativity scenes nourish devotion to Mary and Joseph.** The pope observes that the Virgin Mary is shown as “a mother who contemplates her child and shows him to every visitor.” In her, “we see the Mother of God who does not keep her Son only to herself, but invites everyone to obey his word and to put it into practice.” St. Joseph stands at Mary’s side, protecting her and the Christ Child. The nativity scene reminds us that Joseph “entrusted himself always to God’s will, and put it into practice,” encouraging us to do the same.

