



## ALUMNI and FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Winter/Spring 2015

[www.stmark-school.org](http://www.stmark-school.org) | 410.744.6560



Dear Alumni, Parents and Friends,  
As the school year winds down, I reflect on the positive occurrences our school community has experienced in this year of change and growth. My goal this first year is to strengthen the partnership among the students, parents, and educators in our school community. Throughout this year we have been successful in improving our communication to all our stakeholders through monthly meetings and communicating our common goals of academic excellence and spiritual formation.

Our Catholic identity has been nourished in so many ways: daily prayer, monthly Mass, monthly prayer services planned by our students, Living Stations, Reconciliation during Advent and Lent, and service projects throughout the year. Our theme of serving God and others has been recognized in our daily life at St. Mark.

Academic excellence continues to be in the forefront of our goals. We pride ourselves on providing a balance of STEM-based activities in our classrooms coupled with enrichment opportunities in the fine arts curriculum. Our students have opportunities to showcase their talents with the robotics club, STEM club, school play, choir, band, literary magazine and art show.

We remain true to our mission, proud of our accomplishments and pray that God will continue to bless this wonderful school community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions (410-744-6560 [mdestino@stmark-school.org](mailto:mdestino@stmark-school.org)). I would love to hear from you!

Sincerely in Christ,  
*Mary Destino*  
Principal

### STEM at St. Mark

#### (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)

St. Mark was designated a Green School in 2012 and has for many years participated in environmental projects to uphold and support our Green School status. However, did you know that we provide STEM based classroom activities to our students too? In addition, our STEM club for Grades 6-8 has begun to meet under the tutelage of grade 5 teacher Miss Emily Langton, who is currently seeking her Master's Degree in Teaching under the Operation Teach program. Emily's concentration in STEM training for her degree has allowed her the opportunity to share her knowledge with students, as well as fellow teachers, to provide classrooms with STEM enriched activities. For example, students in Grades 4 had a construction lab in conjunction with a unit on weather in which they built a spinning anemometer. Middle school students create, build, test and demonstrate bridges, catapults and mazes in classroom labs. The results may not always work--but it is in the process that they gain knowledge.

Utilizing a STEM based education model teaches students to become independent learners while working with real world and complex problems. Students must "think outside the box" and engage in inquiry and gather evidence and data to support the answer. Miss Langton states, "it's all about the process and the ability to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and exhibit respect for others. These are the skills that the 21st century learner needs to succeed in today's world and eventual workplace."

We look forward to continuing the academic excellence and faith based education that have always been the strength of the Catholic school system, especially at St. Mark, where everyday we stay true to our motto to "Learn and Bring Christ to the World."



*Students in the STEM Club were asked to build a structure from one sheet of paper to support a stack of books! It really can work!*



*Girls in Grade 8 construct a marble maze*

### **"Sent by God to Serve" Our Faculty Retreat Dec. 1, 2014**

When we gather together in August for the first faculty meetings of a new academic year, we experience a role reversal and we become the students. We meet our new co-workers, we learn new policies and procedures and we discover what the new year holds in store for us as the educators of God's children. Teachers who work in a Catholic school are fulfilling a mission to bring God's love to their students. In order to further this mission, the Archdiocese of Baltimore sets aside a day for a faculty retreat. This year's theme is 'sent by God to serve.' In bringing this theme to life, our faculty dispersed to different institutions to carry out the mission of service: My Brother's Keeper, Our Daily Bread, Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Anthony's Shrine and St. Joseph's Nursing Home. Activities included serving meals, playing games, providing manicures, visiting, cleaning the grounds, setting up outdoor nativity scenes and sending a message of kindness and caring to some of our neighbors. The faculty were eager to experience a more involved day of retreat for a change of pace. Part of their "lesson" for the day was to take what they learned from their service and share it with the students. We hope to encourage a spirit of giving and generosity in our students to reflect the Christian values that will leave an imprint on their souls as they venture out in the world beyond St. Mark School.

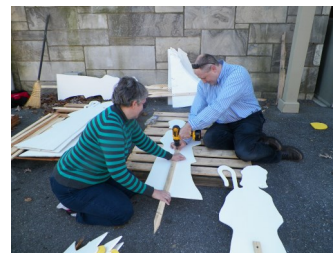
We're sorry to report that pictures were not allowed at The Little Sisters of the Poor, but the faculty who represented us there had a wonderful day and were uplifted by witnessing the special care given to the elderly residents.



***Several spent the day at Our Daily Bread in Baltimore completing a multitude of tasks for the clients of the soup kitchen.***



***We shared the day with new friends at St. Joseph's Nursing Home in Catonsville.***



***Assisting St. Anthony's Shrine in Ellicott City with preparing for the Advent season.***

***Making lunch at My Brother's Keeper in Irvington***



### **An Egg-citing Day for St. Mark Girls**



Teams of budding female engineers ventured across town to Participate in Notre Dame Preparatory's Elementary and Middle School Egg Drop Challenge. The girls were tasked with designing and constructing a container that would protect an egg when dropped from a standard height. We practiced after school in the gym using scaffolding with the assistance of our dedicated maintenance staff, Mr. Gary Auer and Mr. Ryan Blake. St. Mark sent 3 teams from grades 4 to 7 to compete on Saturday,



Jan. 31. One of our teams won the "Most Creative" entry in their division. St. Mark students who represented grades 4 and 5 earned a certificate for their colorful egg saving device aptly named, "The Cloud." Pictured above (L to R): are Julie Kline, Sophia Hess, Amelia Hess, and Catherine Kirby with teachers and mentors Mrs. Janine Lowry, Mrs. Karen Huppman and Mrs. Sandy Ward. We're proud of all the girls' efforts and thankful for the support of the teachers!





## **In Memoriam** **Isabelle Mengers**

The family of Isabelle Mengers bade her farewell from her beloved St. Mark on Dec. 4. Mrs. Mengers held the distinction of being one of the first lay teachers at St. Mark School. During her teaching career which began in 1953, she enjoyed teaching 4th grade. For 25 years, with great compassion and dedication to her students, she instructed St. Mark pupils and imparted her love of the Catholic faith with them. The Mengers family was deeply ingrained into the St. Mark Parish and School. Mr. and Mrs. Mengers became members after marrying in 1940 and, over the years, contributed their time and talents to church and school organizations including the now defunct Mother's Club, Boy Scout Troop 456 and the School of Religious Education.

Mrs. Mengers was the mother of 3 daughters, grandmother of 7, great-grandmother of 13, and great-great-grandmother of 1. The family home on Hilton Avenue was the source of many happy family memories. One of her daughters, Ann O'Donnell (Class of 1955), states, "We run into former students all the time who remember my mother and recall having her as their teacher."

**Please remember to share the successes of St. Mark School with people you know! Testimony from current and past families, friends, relatives and alumni help to bring new students to our classrooms and keep us a strong academic community.**

**Thanks for remembering St. Mark when people ask about a great school!**

If you have any news of your own to share, please contact Mary Morrison at 410-744-6560 X249 or e-mail [mmorrison@stmark-school.org](mailto:mmorrison@stmark-school.org). Thank you for your support of St. Mark School.



***Gr 7 Chesapeake Bay Field Trip  
Lucky for them it was unseasonably mild in November***



***February recess! It's been so cold, but we try to go out as often as we can!***



***On a monthly basis, we have an award ceremony for the students who exemplify the "Value of the Month." Two students from each homeroom are chosen and honored at our prayer service. Students receive a lion paw dog tag to wear and/or display on their backpack. The values include: respect, honesty, responsibility, self-control, hard work, concern for others, tolerance, cooperation, fairness and self-knowledge.***



***AquaPartners Classroom Lab in Gr 4***



***Gr 7 Dissection lab. The girls are discovering what an owl eats through careful examination of the owl pellets.***

### **Dates to Remember**

- Wed. April 1-** Living Stations of The Cross  
2:00 pm Church
- Wed. April 15-** School Mass  
1:45 pm Church
- Fri. April 17-** Career Day  
St. Mark School
- Thurs. April 23-** St. Mark Feast Day  
Prayer Service  
And Value of the Month Assembly  
8:30 am church
- Fri. April 24 and Sat. April 25-** School Play Performances  
"Once Upon a Mattress."  
7:00 pm  
Fr. Henry Hall  
Tickets req'd.
- Fri. May 8-** Mother's Day Plant Sale  
8-3 p.m Gym



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**The newsletter for  
Families, Alumni,  
Grandparents and  
Friends of St. Mark  
School!**



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### **Grandparents Day**

Grandparents Day is always a special day at St. Mark. We schedule the day around Thanksgiving so that visiting grandparents or senior relatives can combine the two visits into a memorable experience with the grandchildren. We begin the morning with an all school prayer service in the church and then proceed to classrooms. Snacktime is an absolute must, and other special presentations and partner activities are included to round out the day. It is a special honor to welcome our many grandparent visitors and none are more special than our alumni grandparents whose grandchildren presently attend St. Mark. Pictured above are some of the alumni families (ltoR): Jimmy and Danny Sentz with Mrs. Joan Cashour; Anastasia, Grant and Francesca Gumbel, and Molly, Sophia, Amelia and Andrew Hess with Mrs. Anita Prestianni Rienecke; Colin and Ben McElroy with Mrs. Marty Gresia; Wyatt Gentner and Mrs. Betty Gentner; seated—Jace Taranto with Mrs. Lynne Lee; and Lauren, Alexandra, and Courteney Savage with Mrs. Pat Savage.

