

**Winter  
2011**

**Volume 6, Issue 1**

# *Santa Maria School Impressions*

*A Newsletter for the Families, Alumni, and Friends  
of Santa Maria School*

## **Principal's Corner**

Dear Alumni and Friends!

This year we celebrate 60 years of providing quality education and strong moral development to children. I am proud to say that each year we improve. Returning alumni comment about how much things have changed at the school. My emphatic response is one of assurance that SMS is changing, but always for the better. We make sure that our students are getting the best education possible, with all of the academic rigor and extracurricular activities and programs that we can offer.

As you read this newsletter, I am sure you will agree that we strive for the very best. It is through your generosity that we can continue to provide these opportunities. I am always grateful for your constant support and encourage you to pay us a visit. I wish you and your families a Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with hope and joy.

God bless,  
Sr. Diane Mastroianni, ASCJ

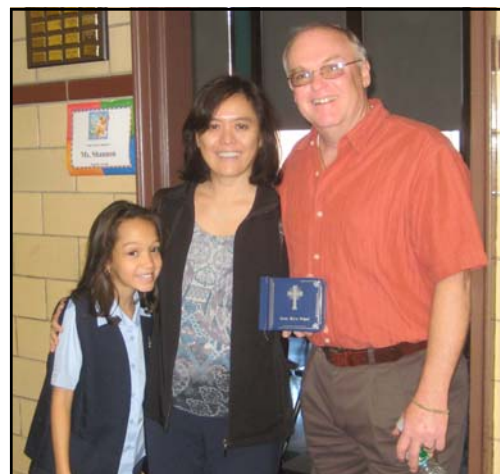
## **Santa Maria Celebrates 60 Years**

Santa Maria School opened its doors in 1951, and this year it celebrates delivering a high caliber of education to children in the Bronx for 60 years. This important milestone was celebrated with a number of events this fall in conjunction with Santa Maria Parish' 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **Anniversary Mass and Alumni Open House**

On October 2<sup>nd</sup> Santa Maria's community gathered for a celebratory mass to honor the accomplishments of the Parish's 85 year and the school's 60 year history. Following the mass there was an alumni celebration. Alumni toured the school guided by current students. Many reminisced. Some of the alumni were even members of Santa Maria's first Kindergarten class! SMS's current students exchanged stories with them of daily life at SMS and compared how the school has changed over the past 60 years.

We even heard from alumni who lived too far away to make it to the event.



*Students led alumni and family on tours throughout the building.*

Dr. Carmen Nanko-Fernandez, (Class of 1972) sent the following well wishes to Santa Maria on its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, "I remain ever grateful to Santa Maria for an education that has made my career and scholarship possible. It was a community of faith and learning that valued each and every child...In many ways it can certainly be said that I learned most of everything I know in grade school and it is still relevant today."

*("Santa Maria Celebrates 60 Years"  
Continued on page 2)*

## **Inside this issue**

SMS Anniversary Cont.	2
New Spanish Instruction	3
Alumni Spotlight	3
New Grant Awards	4
Enrollment Rising at SMS	4
Academic Interventions	5
New Technology	5

## **Help Make Our Dreams Come True**

- \$8,000** Laptop cart for classroom computer use
- \$1,000** Scholarship for a deserving Santa Maria student
- \$500** Sponsor a sports team
- \$250** Send a class on an academic field trip

*You will find a detachable contribution form on the last page of the newsletter.  
For more information please contact Nina Goldsmith, Director of Development,  
at (718) 823-3636 Ext. 5 or fellow.santamaria@gmail.com.*

## Santa Maria Celebrates 60 Years Cont.



*At Left: Members of Santa Maria's first Kindergarten class visited the school.  
At Right: five of SMS' past and present principals were honored at the dinner dance—from right to left—  
Sr. Ellen O'Connor, Sr. Maureen Martin, Sr. Diane Mastroianni, Sr. Ruth Aubrey, and Sr. Anne D'Alessio*

### **Santa Maria's Birthday Party**

On November 4<sup>th</sup> Santa Maria School held itself a birthday party! SMS families got dressed up in their best '50's attire for a sock hop to celebrate the year that Santa Maria opened its doors.

The cafeteria was transformed into a Malt Shoppe for the evening and the gym was made over into a dance floor. Students did the Hand Jive, the Twist and danced to tunes from the '50s. Many families came together in costume to support Santa Maria on its special day, and when the music started the parents were happy to show off their best twisting skills for their children.

### **Santa Maria Church 85<sup>th</sup> and Santa Maria School 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Dance**

On November 18<sup>th</sup> the members of Santa Maria's parish and school communities gathered at Maestro's Caterers for a dinner dance to celebrate these milestones. The event was attended by Santa Maria's alumni, current families, former teachers and principals, as well as members of the parish community. Honorees included the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who have administered and taught at Santa Maria School since its opening in 1951, Mr. Luongo, a dedicated teacher that holds the titles of Senior Teacher and Student Advocate at Santa Maria, and many other members of the parish school community.



*Pictured Above: Students and teachers danced in costume at the '50s Sock Hop to celebrate the decade SMS opened.*

## New Spanish Instruction



*Students sing Tarañitita (The Itsy Bitsy Spider) in Spanish class*

Thanks to the generous support of Santa Maria School's Patrons, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Brennan, SMS is able to provide Spanish language instruction to all students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Students attend Spanish class once a week for interactive exercises

and activities. Already, students have learned to sing songs they have known for years in English, such as the Tarañitita (the Itsy Bitsy Spider) in Spanish. Classroom instruction is further enhanced by the Max & Max Spanish Program which provides interactive videos and lessons to teach students about the many different cultures around the world that speak Spanish.

Santa Maria School has a diverse student body with 75% of its students identifying themselves as Hispanic. Many of our students speak Spanish at home with their families, but until now have never

received formal instruction in reading and writing the language. Initially many of the Spanish speaking students were apprehensive about having to take Spanish, a language they felt they already knew. Since then, opinions have changed. As a parent of a child whose first language was Spanish expressed, "My daughter loves taking Spanish. I have noticed her speaking both English and Spanish a lot more and it will help her maintain the language and be bilingual when she grows up."

Spanish instruction has benefited all the students. Hearing them use their new Spanish skills in other classes and make connections across cultures provides strong evidence of the program's success.

## Spotlight on SMS Alum: Dr. David C. Ring, Jr. (class of '71)

Santa Maria School remains closely tied to its alumni community. Dr. David C. Ring, Jr., a member of the class of 1971, credits his education at Santa Maria as one of the many reasons behind his success. Now a Superintendent of Schools in Maryland, Dr. Ring feels "the example of my teachers...provided a good foundation for learning which pointed me in the direction to education."

As a student at Santa Maria he enjoyed history class with Mr. Martino and fondly remembers Mrgr. Caldrola as an excellent role model and leader. Dr. Ring's time at Santa Maria School did not end when he graduated. He later

returned as a student teacher and has made many trips back to the community and the school.

Dr. Ring is, "pleased to know that Santa Maria continues to be a place that nurtures the intellect and spirit, while providing an environment that is rich in tradition, educational values and community involvement."

We welcome all of Santa Maria's alumni back into

the Santa Maria School community. Please make sure to update your contact information on our website here:

[www.santamariabronx.org/alumni.html](http://www.santamariabronx.org/alumni.html)



*Dr. David Ring Jr. in his fourth grade photo at Santa Maria School and now as the superintendent of the Delmar School District*

## Santa Maria Receives Grant Funding



*Students enjoy newly purchased library books.*

Santa Maria School received \$3,000 from the **Laura Bush Foundation** to purchase Math and Science related texts and magazine subscriptions for the library. Thanks to this grant Santa Maria added over 300 fiction and non-fiction books to its collection and continued to diversify the library's collection.

Thanks to a \$15,000 grant from **Project YESS**, Santa Maria School renovated its bathrooms. The school replaced all of the sinks and urinals in the students' bathrooms throughout the building. Santa Maria can now provide its students with clean and safe bathrooms.

A \$4,500 **Library Connections** Mini Grant was awarded to Santa Maria School for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to complete a comprehensive research project on the history of the Bronx. This grant will enable Santa Maria to purchase for its library texts and audio materials on the history of the Bronx, and take students on field trips and walking tours within the Bronx. This project will encourage 7th and 8th grade students to learn more about the borough in which they live. Please watch for the results of this project to come in the Spring!

## Enrollment is Rising at SMS

This year Santa Maria School can proudly boast its highest enrollment in the school's history. With 263 students in the Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade building and 144 children in the early childhood building, the Santa Maria School community is over 400 students strong. SMS can largely credit this to the success of the early childhood Universal Pre-K program in the past two years.

Universal Pre-K (UPK) is a government funded Pre-K program that enables 4 year olds to receive two and a half hours of free Pre-K each day. This program, now in it's third year at Santa Maria, has grown with each year. UPK students are also offered the option to stay for a full day program at a reduced rate. The

success of the UPK program has brought in many new families and has enabled our Kindergarten to grow. This year Santa Maria has 45 Kindergarten students in two classrooms.

The expansion of Santa Maria's early childhood program has led to the growth and strengthening of Santa Maria's elementary programs.

Collaboration between teachers and administrators has enabled the students in PreK through 1<sup>st</sup> grade to receive streamlined instruction. This consistency in programs helps students flourish and develop early



*Students learn through play and discovery in the Pre-K program*

reading, writing and math skills. Santa Maria School expects these wonderful trends to continue in years to come and looks forward to reaching as many students in the community as possible.

## Academic Interventions

Santa Maria School is committed to providing the highest caliber education possible to its students. As part of this commitment teachers work with many specialized coaches to strengthen their lesson planning and instruction methods. Coaches are an important part of maintaining a standard of academic excellence at Santa Maria. They work with teachers to plan and model lessons. Santa Maria School supports its faculty by making sure teachers use the most updated technology and resources.

This year, thanks to the support of our school's Patrons, we have been able to continue our work with two programs that helped bring about a great deal of success last year. Jasmine Maldonado from the New York Hall of Science continues to visit the school every two weeks to work with teachers in the science lab. Ms. Jasmine helps teachers bring the Science curriculum to life with engaging hands-on labs for the children. She has also helped organize and

updated the Science lab so that it is easy for the teachers to use.

Santa Maria is continuing its work with Rachel Etienne, a literacy coach from the Urban Education Exchange. Rachel works with the teachers to develop reading comprehension skills among students. Through read-alouds and other techniques the students work on the different skills that make up reading

comprehension including main idea, cause and effect, character, and sequence. These dynamic coaches have been very helpful to our teachers. Their work has helped increase enthusiasm for learning as well as test scores.

In addition to our work with the New York Hall of Science and Urban Education Exchange made possible by our school's Patrons we have been provided additional



*NY Hall of Science Coach, Ms. Jasmine and Mrs. Viera, 8th grade science teacher work together to help students create fixed and moveable pulleys.*

coaching opportunities through the Archdiocese. Teachers work with coaches from Catapult Learning Center in Math and Literacy and a coach from the Sustaining Excellence program works with our Principal, Sr. Diane. These opportunities ensure that each of our teachers has someone to collaborate with to plan and deliver effective lessons and increase communication among the faculty and staff.

## Santa Maria Uses New Technology

Santa Maria's commitment to integrating technology continues this year with the new Santa Maria Google Apps system.

This program has increased communication and collaboration in the building by providing each of the teachers an e-mail address and access to Google applications including e-mail, documents and calendars. Each teacher maintains a

classroom website to communicate homework and post classroom accomplishments



for parents. Websites are password protected so that parents can feel assured their children's information is not being shared across the internet. Santa Maria also created a parent e-mail database to send updates and information home in a new way. These additions have helped the Santa Maria community grow stronger as we continue to work towards our goals!

# Santa Maria School

1510 Zerega Ave.

Bronx, NY 10462



Phone: (718) 823-3636

Fax: (718) 823-7008

Email: fellow.santamaria@gmail.com

www.santamariabronx.org

*Santa Maria School is a Roman Catholic School whose mission to educate its students is inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ and grounded in the teachings of the Church. Santa Maria seeks to develop a community of learners centered in prayer, worship and service. Committed to excellence, Santa Maria strives to foster a life-long love for learning, and is dedicated to the spiritual, intellectual, physical and moral development of each child, so as to form responsible citizens.*

## Help the Children of Santa Maria Fulfill Their Dreams

We are deeply grateful for your support. A gift of any amount will make a difference in our students' lives.

**\$8,000:** Laptop cart for classroom computer use

**\$1,000:** Scholarship for a deserving Santa Maria student

**\$500:** Sponsor a sports team

**\$250:** Send a class on an academic field trip

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone & Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a check payable to **Santa Maria School** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit card for the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) Visa MC AMEX

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CSC \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please restrict my gift to the following use (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

*All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

*You will receive written acknowledgement of your donation.*

Please send checks to:  
Santa Maria School  
Attn: Nina Goldsmith  
1510 Zerega Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462