

WINTER 2024

# ACADEMY CONNECTION

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC ACADEMY  
DIOCESE KANSAS CITY/ST. JOSEPH



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK! *Joyfully Catholic!*

**NEW  
PRESIDENT  
WELCOME  
AND INVITE**

**MOSCHOLARS:  
FOR STUDENTS  
FOR SCHOOLS  
FOR TAX CREDIT?**

**FALL  
ENROLLMENT  
HAPPENING  
NOW!**

**ENRICHING RETREATS**

# Welcome



*A Message from our President, Mrs. Natalie Newville:*

Despite being a year of transition, 2023 was a year of growth and success for St. Joseph Catholic Academy. Plans are well underway for 2024 and I cannot wait to see where we grow together next!

If we haven't had a chance to meet yet, allow me to introduce myself: I'm Natalie, your new President at St. Joseph Catholic Academy. My husband, Kenney, and I are returning to St. Joseph after living in Jefferson City, Missouri for the last decade. We are both proud graduates of Missouri Western State University and from Catholic high schools before that (I am a Sacred Heart Gremlin from Sedalia, and Kenney is a Bishop LeBlond Eagle). Our daughter, Catherine, has been attending Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Jefferson City since PreK.

Over the last year, there have been a great many successes at the Academy. Since starting in my new role, I've spent the last two months meeting with stakeholders, school leaders, and parents to talk about what they see as the biggest Catholic school wins in our community. While there were several tremendous accomplishments mentioned, one shining theme stood out to me: collaboration. Whether it was at the diocesan or local level, within the Academy's campuses or within the communities it serves, St. Joseph Catholic Academy is growing and improving because of the many hearts and hands involved!

Some other successes:

- SJCA had **97% staff retention** between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 year.
- We saw **increased enrollment** in our K-12 schools.
- Campuses **streamlined curriculum**, ensuring a comparable education at each school.

Even *more* success stories can be found a little further on in this issue.

Now, we're asking for your input.

In case you missed it, we recently sent out a Parent Survey to all Academy parents and to all the parents of school-aged children in the local parishes. We would love for you to take the time to complete the survey, the answers of which will help guide us in the next steps of the Academy.



If you haven't connected with the Academy yet, I invite you to join us! Follow us on social media and join our email list, so you always know what is going on. We are excited to partner with you this year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalie Newville".

# Discover Catholic Schools Week

*What a week of discovery!*

During Discover Catholic Schools Week, the Academy campuses showcased what wonderful memories are made when you attend a Catholic School.

Preschoolers and parents had the opportunity to learn how to prepare their littles for kindergarten and middle schoolers learned what to expect when they enter Bishop LeBlond! LB students even had the chance to visit each campus and read to our younger scholars.

The community heard about SJCA when volunteers spoke at each Mass in all local parishes, and we wrapped up the week with a Donor Appreciation Mass with students across the Academy.



# MOScholars: for students, for schools, for tax credit?

The campuses of Cathedral, St. Francis Xavier, St. James and Bishop LeBlond are growing! That's in part due to a new initiative in the state of the Missouri that allows tax payers the option to divert 50% of their state owed taxes into a fund that will turn into scholarships for students in need.

Did you know you can **direct up to HALF of your annual state income taxes to be used for scholarships for children to attend Catholic schools—all at no cost to you?**



By giving to Bright Futures Fund, you'll provide scholarships for students to attend Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph — many of whom could not attend without your help!



**Here are some examples of how you could convert your tax dollars into scholarship funds:**

|  |          |           |           |           |           |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Household income                       | \$70,000 | \$100,000 | \$120,000 | \$155,000 | \$250,000 |
| Total tax obligation this year         | \$3,990  | \$5,700   | \$6,840   | \$8,835   | \$14,250  |
| Amount directed to Bright Futures Fund | \$1,995  | \$2,850   | \$3,420   | \$4,418   | \$7,125   |
| Adjusted tax obligation                | \$1,995  | \$2,850   | \$3,420   | \$4,418   | \$7,125   |

Individuals can donate to BFF and reserve tax credits for any amount \$500 or more; credits can be claimed for up to 50% of each year's owed taxes.

**brightfuturesfund.org**  
816-714-2338



This year, over 100 students received the scholarship in our Academy! This tuition scholarship is also helping out parishes by reducing the subsidies needed to help students to attend without the worry of cost. This year, we were able to add over \$700,000 into our campuses through the scholarships of the Bright Futures Fund.

This fund is one of only six approved by the state of Missouri to manage these tax credit dollars, and it's the fund where our students apply to receive tuition assistance.

The fund itself was able to gather 4.8 million tax credit dollars to help students throughout the diocese and next year they have set the goal even higher.

Qualifying students can receive free tuition to one of our SJCA campuses. There are several ways to qualify, and we encourage all incoming Kindergarten and 1st Grade families

to see if they qualify, as well as any students transferring into the Academy.

**MO Scholar applications are opening soon for the 2024-2025 school year.** If you are interested in more information, visit our website at [www.StJoeCatholicAcademy.com/MoScholars](http://www.StJoeCatholicAcademy.com/MoScholars) or email Natalie at [NatalieN@StJoeCatholicAcademy.com](mailto:NatalieN@StJoeCatholicAcademy.com) to get placed on our notifications list.

# Fall retreats offer enrichment and rest for the soul.

It was the second year that all 7th graders in the Academy met at Mt. Olivet to celebrate All Souls Day this past November. The event was organized by Fr. Stephen Hansen and School Sisters of Christ the King from St. James. After Mass in the chapel, students were able to visit Bishop LeBlond's final resting place along with other priests and deacons who have served our parishes over the years. Scholars and parents were also able to visit and pray at the tombs of their family members and friends.

Fr. Hansen, Fr. Davis and Fr. Al also hosted a Zoom conference with the 4th graders of the Academy to talk and share about their favorite saints. Students were able to connect with the other campuses through the modern technology!




# SJCA Accomplishments

Many of the SJCA accomplishments are behind the scenes, but we are proud of the foundation we are laying for our Catholic schools in St. Joseph! Since the creation of the Academy, we have:

- Established a new entity with five campuses under the leadership and direction of Bishop Johnston and all the St Joseph Deanery Pastors
- Created of a board made up of parents and alumni of Catholic education, representing all campuses, and launched an administrative office with key leadership roles (through a generous subsidy from the Diocese)
- Formalized the Academy Mission statement and created a strategic plan focused on:
  - Strengthening formation of our scholars in the Catholic faith and values
  - Enhancing Academic Excellence
  - Increasing Enrollment
  - Ensuring long term financial viability
  - Enhancing our campus facilities
- Successful roll out of the MO Scholars program resulting in over 110 scholars and \$700,000 in tuition revenue

Above all else, we are cultivating exceptional scholars to know, love and serve Jesus Christ. Thank you for your contribution to our successes!



The graphic features a background image of smiling children. In the top left corner is the logo for Catholic Schools, which consists of a circle of colorful figures holding hands around a central cross, with the text "Catholic Schools United in Faith and Community" below it. The main title "2024 Catholic Schools Week Academy Events" is centered at the top in a large, dark blue font. Below the title is a table with eight rows, each representing a date and an event. The dates are in a large, light blue font, and the event titles are in a bold, dark blue font. The descriptions are in a smaller, dark blue font.

| 2024 Catholic Schools Week Academy Events |   |
|---|---|
| 1/28                                      | <b>Celebrating Your Parish</b><br>Academy students: wear your uniform to Mass for a spirit pass!  |
| 1/29                                      | <b>Celebrating Your Community</b><br>State of the Academy (OLOG at 1pm, Mass at 12:15pm)          |
| 1/30                                      | <b>Celebrating Your Students</b><br>Treats for Scholars   |
| 1/31                                      | <b>Celebrating The Nation</b><br>Prayer Breakfast (OLOG 7:30am) and All-Academy Mass (LB at 10am) |
| 2/1                                       | <b>Celebrating Vocations</b><br>Rosary for Vocations and Thank You Notes to Diocesan Religious    |
| 2/2                                       | <b>Celebrating Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers</b><br>Treats for Teachers with Thank You Notes     |
| 2/3                                       | <b>Celebrating FAMILIES</b><br>No homework to spend time with family!                             |

# Academy Welcomes New Teachers Across the Campuses

The Academy had a 97% teacher retention rate from 2022-23 to 2023-24 school year! Here are the few new faces at the head of the classroom! Satisfaction rates are still 4/5! We love our teachers and they know it!



First Row: Janet Pollard (MS Math) Cathedral, Charlee Bowers (Art) Cathedral/SFX, Julie Guldán (5th grade) Cathedral.

Second Row: Jennifer Schoeberl (MS ELA and 7th grade religion) SFX, Jessica Alvarado Brenes (Music) SFX/Cathedral, Stephanie Finder (4/5 grade) St. James.

Third Row: Fr. Benjamin Armentrout (Theology) LB, Kassie Harshman (Spanish) LB, Ben Hudson, (English) LB.

Fourth Row: Vasia Katsanou (Art) LB.

**On the cover:** Eighth grade students of St. Francis Xavier campus enjoy music class. Today's lesson was working on rhythm as one unit!

Want to stay up-to-date on Academy campus events?  
Sign up at [social@stjoecatholicacademy.com](mailto:social@stjoecatholicacademy.com)  
OR join us in the conversation on FB or Twitter!

St. Joseph Catholic Academy  
3529 Frederick Ave.  
St. Joseph, MO 64506

Diocese School Theme  
for 2023-2024



Joyfully Catholic!

KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM  
*Teachings for Life.*



## Festival of Arts

All Academy Arts, Recitation and Music  
Bishop LeBlond 6 p.m.  
March 5, 2024

*Save the Date!*

### St. Joseph Catholic Academy

President: Natalie Newville

Controller: John Hapak



**PROSERV**

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