



JPII goes international

Members of the Pope John Paul II High School senior leadership team took to the skies and traveled to England and Germany in early March to conduct site inspections of international exchange schools.

Headmaster Faustin Weber and Director of Advancement and Admissions Patrick Weaver traveled to St. Edmund's College just north of London and St. Mauritz School located in Munster, Germany. "I was impressed with the history of St. Edmund's. The school boasts a list of 21 martyred saints," reflected Mr. Weber.

JPII boasts a multi-year relationship with St. Edmund's. Students from each school spend a month of the summer as exchange students living with the exchange family and attending school.

JPII, in association with CYE (Christian Youth Exchange), extended the same student exchange concept to a Catholic school in Munster, Germany. Twenty-four students from St. Mauritz School arrived Sunday, April 10, to christen the new relationship.

Read more about the international exchange programs on the JPII website www.jp2hs.org.

WORKING IN EDUCATION GIVES MRS. THIGPEN'S JOB MEANING

At one point Laura Thigpen thought she might be a teacher. But along the way, she changed directions and ended up as an accountant. "I've always been a numbers person," said Thigpen, who is in her first year as the director of finance and operations for Pope John Paul II High School,



Laura Thigpen

Working for a Catholic school allows Mrs. Thigpen to combine both her gift with numbers and her interest in education. "It's given meaning to what I'm doing."

Mrs. Thigpen came to JPII last summer. After graduating from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, the Franklin, Tenn., native went to work for a national accounting firm in its Atlanta office. "I thought I would stay a couple of years," she said of living in Atlanta. "It quickly turned into 10 years."

After about seven years with the accounting firm, Mrs. Thigpen took a job as the controller for the Marist School in Atlanta, a grade 7-12 Catholic school. She held that job for three years. After the birth of her daughter Lila not quite two years ago, she and her husband, Matthew, who grew up as a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., decided to move back to Middle Tennessee to be closer to family. "I knew I wanted to stay in Catholic schools," Mrs. Thigpen said. "When I saw the opening at JPII, I quickly applied."

JPII STUDENTS WIN AWARDS AT YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

Twenty Pope John Paul II High School students were among the more than 300 who participated in the 58th Annual YMCA Youth in Government conference at the state capitol in March. The JPII delegation was led by senior Tommy Joe Bednar, whose role as Speaker Pro-Tempore (Assistant Chair) of the Senate helped train students in proper use of parliamentary procedure and advised them on the bills that they developed in their preparation for the conference.

The YMCA program teaches students the process by which bills become laws, how the Supreme Court hears cases, how the governor's cabinet debates bills that are passed through both houses, and the role of lobbyists in the course of the four-day simulation.

The conference is run by high school students who, like Bednar, were elected by their peers in the previous year to preside over each chamber and run the conference while advisors and college

Her new job at JPII includes new duties. "The change in the new job has been adding the operations side," she said. Besides the school's finances, Mrs. Thigpen also oversees technology, physical plant and the school buses, as well as being more involved in human resources.

"One of the best things about my job is this morning I was picking paint colors for the weight room, which is being renovated, then I met with Dan Singelyn about the conversion of school computers to Apple over the summer. Then I was signing checks," Mrs. Thigpen said. "It's something different all day ... and that's what I really enjoy. It keeps you hopping."

She's been impressed with JPII's faculty and its "can-do" attitude. "I have not been in a place where more people are willing to do anything for the betterment of the organization without complaining," Mrs. Thigpen said. "That's what makes JPII unique."

A constant challenge for Mrs. Thigpen is keeping an education at JPII affordable for as many families as possible. "We try our best to run as lean as possible while meeting our needs."

The challenge is finding the balance of charging enough tuition to offer the kind of program families want in their children's school while remaining affordable, Mrs. Thigpen said. The school is always trying to increase the amount of financial aid it has available to help families, she said.

The education JPII students receive is worth the sacrifice their families are making, Mrs. Thigpen said. "I firmly believe in Catholic education and want that for my family," she said. "It touches kids at the most formative time of their lives. It's about more than academics. It's about faith and building character."

staff stand back and observe.

JPII students honored at the conference included: Tommy Joe Bednar, who served as Speaker Pro-Tempore of the Senate and was selected as the second alternate to represent Tennessee at the National Affairs Conference in Blue Ridge, N.C.; Clare Zaner, elected to serve as Speaker Pro-Tempore of the Senate in 2012; Andrew Gilstrap and Bryan Melcher selected as one of five Outstanding Statesmen in the House from 95 legislators; Andrew Scruggs; selected as one of four Outstanding Statesman in the Senate of 35 senators; Hailey Cleek, Simran Mahtani and Emily Peel, received Outstanding Bill in the Senate for an act to institute vouchers for education; Nathan Edwards and Connor McCarthy, whose bill to abolish the death penalty was selected for the Governor's Packet of 10 bills out of more than 100 submitted at the conference.



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GOVERNOR HASLAM SPEAKS AT JPII

Continued from page 1

inspire the governor to enter politics after a career with his family business, Pilot Corp. Speaking to the Israelites exiled in Babylon, the governor explained, Jeremiah urged them to "promote the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you; pray for it to the Lord, for upon its welfare depends your own."

There is a debate in American society about what role faith should play in the public square, Gov. Haslam said. Some argue religious faith should have no role in public affairs, citing the importance of the separation of church and state. Others answer that faith must be a part of public policy debates because it is a part of who we are as a nation, he added.

Christians must stand up for the moral truths they believe in, Gov. Haslam said, just as Pope John Paul II did. "He passionately, without apology, defended truth," the governor said. The pope argued that defending moral truth is not demeaning to others, Gov. Haslam said, but is instead a defense of freedom because freedom apart from truth ends up as a pretense for tyranny.

"Truth has always been challenged," noted Gov. Haslam, who pointed to the Gospel of John's account of Jesus' appearance before Pilate. When Christ told Pilate he came into the world to testify to the truth, the governor said, Pilate answered sarcastically, "What is truth?" "That is the question of our day," Gov. Haslam said.

"We are called to speak the truth. We shouldn't apologize for that," Gov. Haslam said, but we should speak the truth with love. "What if we all

brought our faith as a gift," he said. "The world might look different."

After his talk, the governor took questions from the audience. He said state government in Tennessee doesn't have a choice but to become smaller and more efficient. His first state budget introduced earlier this year was nearly \$2 billion less than last year because federal stimulus funds are no longer available, he explained. "I keep talking about it as the new normal."

Higher education in Tennessee needs to develop a tuition policy that has a predictable path for students and their families and a plan for providing tuition assistance that has an "understandable path," he said.

He also wants state colleges and universities to work to increase the number of the state's college graduates, an area where Tennessee lags far behind the national average, Gov. Haslam said.

JPII Board Member Rick Isaacson of Gallatin helped extend the invitation to the governor to participate in the Distinguished Lecturer Series.

He had met the governor early in his election campaign, and was impressed, Isaacson said. "He was so down to earth. He had the right principles."

Isaacson supported the governor during the campaign. When Weber asked if he could invite the governor to speak, Isaacson said he made some contacts with people in the governor's administration.

"I'm amazed that this early in his tenure he could do this," Isaacson said. He hopes the governor's appearance at the school will bring more attention to JPII.



APRIL 2011

Headmaster Faustin Weber ■ 615-822-2375 ■ www.jp2hs.org



Gov. Bill Haslam, right, talks with JPII Board members Bill Wood, left and Rick Isaacson during a reception before the governor's speech as part of the John Paul II Distinguished Lecturer Series. Mr. Isaacson helped arrange the governor's appearance at JPII, where he spoke on the role of faith and morals in public life.

GOVERNOR URGES CHRISTIANS TO BRING FAITH TO SOCIETY 'AS GIFT, NOT CLUB'

During his life and long papacy, Pope John Paul II was able to both vigorously defend the moral truths taught by the Catholic Church and to be a model of civil dialogue with those of other faiths and different world views, said Gov. Bill Haslam.

He could balance both, the governor said, because "he brought his faith as a gift and not as a club to society."

Gov. Haslam spoke at Pope John Paul II High School in Hendersonville on Tuesday, March 29, as part of the school's John Paul II Distinguished Lecturer Series. The series was inaugurated last year to celebrate the life of the school's namesake by bringing experts and civic leaders to the campus to speak about matters of church and state.



THIS ISSUE:

GOVERNOR SPEAKS AT JPII

STUDENT, TEACHER HONORED AT SYMPOSIUM

WRITER'S CAFE

JPII PEOPLE

ONE PRETTY DRESS

ALUMNI NEWS

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR ON THE JOB

NEW EXCHANGE PROGRAM

LAURA THIGPEN

YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

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Continued on page 6

JPII'S ATHLETICS DIRECTOR GETS EARLY START ON NEW JOB



Rocky Zazarro has gotten an early start on his new job as athletics director at JPII.

Rocky Zazarro has gotten an early start on his new job as the athletics director at Pope John Paul II High School. When Zazarro was hired to replace the retiring Julie Rollins, JPII's first athletics director, he wasn't expected to start until the summer. But when his replacement as principal of the Phoenix School in Crossville was hired, Zazarro decided to use some of his accumulated vacation and leave time and move to Hendersonville and JPII.

"A school doesn't need two principals," said the Greensburg, Pa., native. "There was no reason for me to stay."

Since making the move earlier this year, Zazarro has been busy getting to know the school and its athletic program. "We have the best education available anywhere in Nashville. That's why I moved here," Zazarro said. "Our school building wants for nothing," and JPII has great teachers and solid coaches. "It's a very well run program," he said. "We have a great bunch of people who care about the kids we have and the kids we're getting to get."

But there are challenges, including several needed additions to the athletic facilities at JPII. At the top of the list, Zazarro said, are a restrooms/concession stand building for the football field and a second restrooms/concession stand for the lower fields, which include the soccer, lacrosse, softball, baseball and practice fields.

The school also needs a track, he said, and the Vision 2016 strategic plan for the school identifies a need for scoreboards and bleachers for lacrosse, bleachers for soccer, additional sidewalks, lighting, and drainage and landscaping work.

Over the school's recent spring break, work began on a \$100,000 renovation of the school's weight room, thanks to a donation from Catholic businessman Jim Carell.

Although the school's supporters are anxious to get started on all the needed improvements, Zazarro has been urging patience, even if that's hard to do. "We need to be patient," Zazarro said. "It's going to take us a little time to grow the way we want to grow."

He has been reminding people that JPII is still a young school. "We're only nine years old. We're still babies."

School officials are working on a master plan for facility improvements, which will be an important part of the process, said Zazarro. "It's important to get the site right before we announce any new projects. If you put a facility in the wrong place, you're stuck with it," he said. "It's not an easy thing to do."

Zazarro is confident his experience in working on the construction of two new high schools during his tenure in Cumberland County will be valuable at JPII.

He served as a liaison for the school board when the county built Stone Memorial High School, and he served as the school's first athletics

SENIOR AMELIA EHMLING HOSTS ONE PRETTY DRESS ON JPII CAMPUS



Senior Amelia Ehmling started One Pretty Dress to provide girls in need a prom dress, shoes and accessories.

Pope John Paul II High School senior Amelia Ehmling established a local charity fondly known as One Pretty Dress in the spring of 2010 to provide prom dresses, shoes and accessories for girls in need.

Amelia was inspired to form One Pretty Dress after going to prom as a sophomore in 2009. "I had so much fun that I felt no girl should miss her prom. To me, it's a rite of passage," she said. Being fully aware of the slow economy and the hardship many families were experiencing, Amelia wanted to make it possible for any girl to experience her prom.

On March 5, 2011, Amelia, with the help of several of her friends and fellow JPII classmates, held the second annual One Pretty Dress event on JPII's campus. The event took months of planning, communicatin and gathering. Amelia began collecting dresses in the fall with JPII as the first of many drop-off sites around the Hendersonville area. When asked how she got the word out, she said, "I created a Facebook group and put blurbs in local newspapers, but mostly it was by word of mouth." Many who heard about the event contacted her and offered to hand out flyers and advertise the event in their church bulletins.

In all, Amelia collected shoes, jewelry and 180 dresses, almost double from last year! Forty-four girls from White House, Beech, Hendersonville, and Nashville area high schools arrived on the JPII campus with great expectations and walked away overwhelmed with excitement and gratitude with a dress, shoes and accessories in hand.

One Pretty Dress served two purposes for Amelia. One, she was able to make possible a night of magic for fellow teen-age girls, and two, she was

able to fulfill her Christian Service Internship at JPII. JPII's Christian Service Internship program requires each student to serve 40 hours of community service each school year. This year, Amelia went above and beyond that requirement by dedicating 75 hours of service to One Pretty Dress.

Although Amelia will graduate this spring, she has already secured the future of One Pretty Dress. Two sophomores, Hannah Mitchell and Rebecca Kaiser, have volunteered to keep the charity running. "We are looking forward to continuing the charity and making it even bigger!" said Rebecca.

For information on how you can be a part of One Pretty Dress next year, please contact Rebecca at Rebecca@abagoo.com.

Local salons, flower shops, and restaurants are invited to join in the magic by offering discounts for One Pretty Dress recipients. This year, Carriage House Cleaners in Hendersonville donated dry cleaning services for all 180 dresses.

ALUMNI NEWS

Class of 2007

Andrea Encena is graduating from New York University with honors in May. She is getting her bachelor's of fine arts degree in studio art with a minor in creative writing.

Class of 2008

While spending her junior year studying abroad at the University of Exeter in the UK, **Alexandra Patterson** has had some free time to volunteer in the Special Collections Library as well as pursue several virtual internships for Her Campus Online Magazine, Pretty Young Professional and Dormify. She has served as an associate editor for a book by Graduate and Clueless founder Jeff Sanders, and she can now add "published" (and paid) to her resume, with an article posted on USA Today.com on Jan. 31 and an article in the an upcoming issue of a popular online magazine.

Brian Kennedy is in Xi'an China this year studying Mandarin for his International Business degree.

Class of 2009

Emily Mills is a starting player for the inaugural women's varsity lacrosse team at Centre College. Before lacrosse season started she had just returned from her second trip to Israel for studies in biblical archaeology.

JPII PEOPLE: SCHOOL CONNECTION

We hope to highlight the high school careers of some of our students with reference to their "feeder school."

Holy Rosary Academy

A visit to Pope John Paul II High School helped clinch the decision to enroll at the school by freshmen Hannah Roberts and Katie Swaringen, who both graduated from Holy Rosary Academy.



Hannah Roberts

"When I came, I just really enjoyed the kids and how outgoing they were," Hannah said. "They seemed really close. I enjoyed the school. The teachers were really enthusiastic." Katie echoed Hannah's comments. "It was really awesome," she said.

Hannah had heard about what JPII is like from a friend and swimming teammate, Kathleen Witte, a JPII grad. "She loved it," Hannah said of her friend. "She was always so enthusiastic about it and happy with it."



Katie Swaringen

People had told Hannah that the academics at JPII are challenging, "but it gets you ready for college," Katie said, "I pretty much heard the same, and that it was really new." That was a noticeable change coming from Holy Rosary which opened more than 50 years ago, Katie said.

Handling the increased homework load at JPII hasn't been too difficult, both Hannah and Katie said. "You just have to plan it out," Hannah said. "It was harder than Holy Rosary," Katie added, "but it's not too bad."

Hannah likes "how we get everyone involved," with no cliques, she said. The atmosphere that encourages student involvement, makes it easier for students to discover and follow their interests, Hannah said.

Katie would tell prospective students, "Come here because it's so amazing and there's so many awesome people here."

JPII People ... Hannah Roberts and Katie Swaringen!

View Points

WRITERS CAFÉ PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

Senior Laura Maas read her JPII poetry contest winning poem, "Broken Dancer," as part of the third annual Writers Café. "All along she's been an incredible poet," said Joan Lange, JPII's librarian and the faculty advisor for Teen Reading Advisory Board, which helped organize the event.

The evening included readings of about 20 poems and short essays by students and faculty as well as musical performances, Ms. Lange said.



Laura Maas reads her poem during the Writers Café.

The idea for the Writers Café came from Thomas Koen, a senior this year and a member of the advisory board, Ms. Lange said. The board's goal is to encourage reading and use of the library by JPII students, she said, and Thomas realized there were many talented writers among the student body who people were unaware of. "We wanted to give them an outlet," Ms. Lange said.

This year's Café, featured several new things that Ms. Lange hopes will become traditions. Some of the poems were written as an assignment for the public speaking class to write something inspired by a piece of art, she said, and when those pieces were read during the Café, the art was also shown. Next year, she hopes JPII's art students will provide works for the process and maybe produce art work inspired by the poems, Ms. Lange said.

This year was the second time that the winners of the English department's poetry contest read their pieces, Ms. Lange said. This year also was the first time that a member of the faculty, English teacher Alanna Wortman, read some of her poetry. "I think the students really appreciated that," Ms. Lange said.

The event also included the performance of several student-written songs. Among them were Seth Carver and Greg Rausch performing their song "Awake"; Isobel Ward sang "Love and Loss"; Laura Maas performed "Red Light, Green Light"; Sarah Missimer, performed "Crashing Waves"; Maggie Finaly performed "Your Light"; Audrey Manners performed "Their Night"; and Jenna Singer performed "Siren."



UPCOMING EVENTS

GRADUATION

SUNDAY, MAY 22
2:30 P.M.

CALL
(615) 822-2375
FOR DETAILS

JPII student, teacher honored at research symposium

Senior Kevin Clavin and teacher Jennifer Dye were honored at the 46th annual Tennessee Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The symposium consisted of student oral research presentations judged by a panel of UT Knoxville faculty. Clavin, of Hendersonville, presented his research on tumor cells and won the second-place honorable mention and the opportunity to attend the National JSHS in San Diego, April 27 through May 1.

Dye, the science department chair at JPII, received the 2011 Teacher Mentor Award. She has written the book "Investigating Science: A Guide to Conducting Independent High School Student Research."