

GAIL GREENE ON A MISSION TO SPREAD WORD ABOUT JPPII

Gail Greene's mission is to spread the word about Pope John Paul II High School. "As great as JPPII is, there's a lot of people who don't know about it," said Mrs. Greene, who started her job as an admissions officer at JPPII last spring. "Once they see it, they realize how amazing it is. You just have to get the message out there."

Mrs. Greene will be using a variety of methods to reach the public, including social networking technology, such as Facebook, blogs and twitter. "If you don't use it you're going to be left behind."

One of the new initiatives is a student blog. "It's a good way to see, through the student's eyes, what's going on here," Mrs. Greene said. "The target is the students, but I think the parents are enjoying it too."

Mrs. Greene also will be busy with more traditional efforts. "They want me out in the community," she said. "We want everybody in town to know who JPPII is and what JPPII is." She will be visiting all of JPPII's feeder schools, as well as trying to broaden contacts with more potential feeder schools. Besides visiting Catholic schools in the area, Mrs. Greene hopes to visit all the Catholic churches on the weekend to meet parishioners and share information about JPPII. She's also hopeful she will be allowed to visit several public schools in the area to talk to students and their parents about JPPII. In conjunction with that effort, JPPII will be highlighting the achievements of the students who came to JPPII from public schools, Mrs. Greene said. Mrs. Greene also hopes to visit some non-Catholic churches



Gail Greene

in the area. Many current JPPII students are members of these churches, she noted.

JPPII will sponsor two college seminars as a service to the community, talking to parents about how to get their middle school students on the right track for college, Mrs. Greene said. One of the seminars will be at JPPII on Sept. 24, and the second will be at Christ the King School on Oct. 1.

Mrs. Greene moved to Middle Tennessee from Oxford, Miss., when her husband, Derek, took a job as the assistant coach of the Belmont University women's soccer team. She grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, and after graduating from Ole Miss, she returned to her alma mater as a history teacher and assistant volleyball coach for two years. She taught high school in Mississippi for a year and also worked as a social worker before earning her master's degree from the University of Mississippi in higher education and student services last May.

"I consider JPPII a lot like a university," with its admissions staff and college prep curriculum, Mrs. Greene said. "JPPII is very different than a public school," Mrs. Greene said. While so many students have to take remedial courses in college to prepare them, Mrs. Greene said, "Our students, they get to college and it's easy for them."

It's easy to talk to parents and prospective students about JPPII, Mrs. Greene said. "The academics, spirituality, and that the school is faith-based, these make it a good product to sell. It's what people are interested in. They want their child in an environment where prayer is encouraged."

The slogan for the year is "Inspiring Excellence," Mrs. Greene said. "The school's faculty make it more than a slogan, she said. "The teachers at JPPII are second to none. ... It's more than a job here. ... Inspiring excellence is what they do with every child."

EXCITEMENT REIGNS WITH START OF NEW YEAR

With his first year as JPPII's headmaster behind him, Faustin Weber started the 2009-10 school year with a better sense of the school and ready to get to work. "I'm excited about this year," Mr. Weber said as he welcomed the students back to JPPII for the first day of classes on Aug. 5.

"It is different going through things the second time through," Mr. Weber said, and he has a better handle on the culture of the school and its strengths and weaknesses. But his enthusiasm for JPPII is still sky high. "JPPII is an amazing place," Mr. Weber said. "The teachers are spectacular."

JPPII has launched several new initiatives this year, including the Freshman Year of Studies Program. The goal is to give the freshmen more attention and guidance throughout the year so they can more easily adapt to life as a high school student, Mr. Weber said.

Although freshmen are at JPPII, socially and academically, they're not quite high school students yet, Mr. Weber said. "Freshmen need a particular level of pastoral care."

One of the keys to the program will be a stronger relationship between students and their advisors, Mr. Weber said. Advisors have been meeting with the parents of all their freshmen students to learn more about the student. The goal is for the advisor to get to know their freshmen students better than anyone on campus, so if social or discipline problems develop



Seniors Tamecia Jones, left, and Jalissa Mosby check the list of advisory groups on the first day of school.

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR FRESHMAN RETREAT!

The roar of enthusiasm and anticipation swept through the throng of new students as the annual Freshman Orientation Retreat Experience came to life for a fifth consecutive year.

All new JPPII students participated in an overnight camp July 30-31 at the Boy Scout Boxwell Reservation in Lebanon.

One-hundred-eighty new students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 were assisted by the leadership student group Societas as



JPPII students crowd the hallway on their way to an all-school assembly on the first day of classes for the 2009-10 school year.

the advisor can serve as a liaison between school and family as well as an advocate for the student, Mr. Weber said.

Academically, extra effort will be devoted to helping freshmen build good habits in homework, he added, and a Bridges program will help students whose skill sets in English or Math need extra work. To help freshmen build a circle of friends and find their place in the school, they are all required to be involved in at least one extracurricular activity.

Another new initiative will be the launching of the JPPII Distinguished Lecture Series, which will bring a renowned scholar on the legacy of Pope John Paul II to campus to give a lecture. Next spring will be the fifth anniversary of the death of the school's namesake, Mr. Weber noted.

Ten new teachers have joined the faculty at JPPII, which Mr. Weber called "a pretty impressive bunch." The school has also added a guidance counselor position this year.

JPPII started the new school year with about 615 students, which is about what enrollment was at the end of last year, Mr. Weber said. Among the new students on campus this year are a full freshman class of 165 students and about 20 transfer students, Mr. Weber said. "We're delighted."

well as the entire JPPII faculty. The highlight of the experience is a cardboard boat race. All 12 new student advisor groups design, build, and sail a cardboard boat through an obstacle course. Amazingly, five boats made it back to shore intact!

During the retreat, students learn about JPPII, make new friends, meet all the JPPII teachers, attend Mass, and review the student handbook.



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RESEARCH**

**GAIL
GREENE**

Admissions Office

822-2375

info@jp2hs.org

**DISCOVERY
DAYS 2009**

**10 A.M.-NOON
TUESDAY, OCT. 20
AND
6-8 P.M.
THURSDAY,
OCT. 22**



View Points

JPII CHOIR MEMBERS PREPARING FOR SPRING IN ITALY

Thirty-eight choral students at Pope John Paul II High School are already looking forward to their next spring break. They will be spending it in Italy.

The choir has been invited by Musical Celebrations International to give three performances in Italy during a week-long stay there next March, including one in Florence, another at a church in Rome and the third singing for a Mass at the Vatican, explained Jj Ebelhar, JPII's choral director. "It's a musical, educational and cultural opportunity for these students," Ebelhar said.

The invitation to sing in Italy is a reflection of the reputation for excellence the JPII choral program is building, she said. After performing in New York's Carnegie Hall several years ago and singing at the Vatican, "It will give JPII the reputation as having a choral program of excellence and offering opportunities to our students that will be lifetime memories," Ebelhar said.

It will be a busy school year for the choir students preparing for the trip, Ebelhar said. "We have 35 pieces we'll have to learn," including the Italian national anthem in Italian, she said. That's more pieces than the choral students at JPII learn in a typical school year, she explained.

She also plans to put an Italian flair on the whole year, Ebelhar said. For the Christmas concert on Dec. 9, the choir will sing Vivaldi's "En Gloria" with string accompaniment. "It's the first masterpiece my choir has ever sung," Ebelhar said. "It's very appropriate for high school voices."

The choir members have already been busy for months raising the money needed for the trip, which will cost students about \$3,000 each. "We're hoping we can raise half of it through fund raising and donations," Ebelhar said. "It's just a very huge goal to try to reach." Among the fundraising activities are the sale of JPII calendars for \$10 each. Choir members also are selling Papa John's Pizza Cards for \$20 each, and they will host a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at 5 p.m., Dec. 9, before the school's annual Christmas Concert, Ebelhar said.

"Our biggest event will be our first ever Italian Coffee House at JPII," Ebelhar said. The Café del Amore, held Saturday, Aug. 22, in the JPII dining hall, featured performances by JPII students and alumni, coffee and desserts made and donated by parents of the choir members. The evening also featured an auction for two tickets to the Taylor Swift concert Sept. 12 at the Sommet Center. The event raised more than \$6,000 for the trip to Italy.

JPII launches 'Coffee with the Headmaster'

JPII is launching a new outreach effort to prospective students and their families this school year with "Coffee with the Headmaster." Every Tuesday, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Headmaster Faustin Weber will be available to share coffee and conversation with anyone interested in learning more about the school. Select faculty and students will also be on hand to answer questions and talk about the school's curriculum, the admission process, the school's Catholic/Christian values, and the culture of scholarship at JPII. For more information, call the school's admissions office at (615) 822-2375 or send an e-mail to info@jp2hs.org.

JPII PEOPLE: SCHOOL CONNECTION

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

St. Joseph School

When Maria Myers and Matt Nelson showed up at JPII in early August along with their 163 classmates in the new Class of 2013, they were excited to start their high school careers. And they didn't have to worry about launching this new phase of their life without any friends. They are among nearly 45 new JPII freshmen who graduated from St. Joseph School in Madison last spring.

One advantage of already knowing so many people at their new school, Matt said, is they didn't have to worry about getting to know everyone. "We can just worry about our classes."

Both Maria and Matt live only minutes from JPII and while attending St. Joseph were on the JPII campus often for athletic and other events. "This was our athletic facilities," Matt said, so he, Maria and their classmates were already familiar with JPII before they showed up as students.

One thing that did surprise Maria and Matt is the pace and workload of their classes. "I didn't think it would be this hard," Matt said. "It's so challenging," Maria added. "Here you just jump right in." They have more homework at JPII than they had at St. Joseph, Matt said, and "classes move at a lot quicker pace," Maria said.

But JPII's teachers are quick to give extra help to make sure students don't fall behind, Matt said. "They have tutorials, which are nice. They'll work with you," he said. "Right after school you can go right to them to ask for help."

Both Maria and Matt plan to become involved in athletics at JPII later this year. Maria wants to play basketball and lacrosse, while Matt is a soccer goalie.

Maria's advice to prospective students at JPII is use your planner, keep up with your homework and stay organized. "If you want to be challenged," Matt added, "it's definitely the place to go."

JPII People ... Maria Myers and Matt Nelson!



LOUGHLIN SCHOLARS ENJOY CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Once again this summer, JPII renewed its British connection. As part of the Loughlin Scholars program, JPII sent 12 rising sophomores to England over the summer to spend three weeks living with a host family and attending school there. Twelve British students – eight from St. Edmund's College and four from Liverpool College – spent three weeks in the U.S., staying with the families of the JPII students they hosted in England, attending classes at JPII, and making new friends.

"One of the best things about it is maintaining the friendships over the years," said Andy Moss, a teacher at St. Edmund's who has come to JPII every year since the program started. "It's nice to come back and pick up conversations a year later."

Over the years, the friendships have lasted well beyond the three weeks the students spend in each other's country. One of the students from St. Edmund's who participated in the Loughlin Scholars program three years ago, was visiting her host family this summer, Moss said. While here, she helped work at the annual freshman retreat at the Boxwell Boy Scout Camp. "It says a great thing" about the program that the friendships endure, Moss said.

Besides spending time in the classroom, the students do plenty of sightseeing. One of the JPII students who visited Liverpool College had done a report on castles the previous year. So her hosts took her to Wales and Scotland to visit some castles, said Nick Griffith, a Liverpool College teacher and one of the chaperones this year.

JPII STUDENTS EXCEL IN SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM AT VANDY

Two Pope John Paul II High School seniors spent six weeks this past summer immersed in complex medical research. They wouldn't have had it any other way.

Laura Walden and Tim Clavin were selected for the highly competitive Research Internship Program at the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach. As part of the program they worked closely with faculty and graduate students at Vanderbilt University helping with their research projects.

"It's full immersion, so if they are interested in research this gives them exposure to what a high quality research program is like," said Jennifer Dye, JPII's science department chair. "You don't get much better than Vanderbilt."

"It was not like I expected at all, but I really enjoyed it," Walden said. "I was really happy with what I was doing, so I got a lot out of it. ... I would highly recommend it."

Clavin echoed his classmate's sentiments. "Going into it I had my doubts. Spending six weeks of summer in a lab didn't seem ideal," he said. "I really did enjoy it and I got a lot of experience from this whole thing."

The selection process for the program, which included an essay and several interviews, was as competitive as it's ever been, Dye said. To have two students from the same school selected is "outstanding," she added.

The high school students in the program are assigned to



Twenty-four students participated in the Loughlin Scholars exchange program, including 12 from JPII, four from Liverpool College and eight from St. Edmund's College.

The JPII students who visited St. Edmund's College were: Kelsey Harrell, Emily Garrettson, Summer Kennedy, Hailey Cleek, Evan Leonard, John Hannah, Logan Pulliza, and Jake Walker. Those who visited Liverpool College were Hannah Vickery, Sarah Missimer, Greg Rausch, and Andrew Hnilica. The Liverpool College students who visited JPII were Lauren Archondopoulos, Hope Davies, Tom Featherstone Witty, and Jack Donellan. The St. Edmund's College students in the program this year were: Christina Theoharous, Emily Wootton, Grainne McIntyre, Holly Major, Hugo Davies, Jake Larkin-Collins, Jonathan Chappell, and Jonathon Ilett.

The British chaperones were Griffith from Liverpool and Moss and Tessa Rankin from St. Edmund's. The JPII chaperones were Colleen McCormick and Joan Lange at St. Edmund's and Ginger Vooyoys at Liverpool.

one of several research labs at Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt Medical Center where they work side by side with their mentor, learning about the project and helping to conduct the experiments. "I was surprised with all the trust they put in us," Walden said of the opportunity for high school students to participate so fully in the research.

Walden was assigned to a mechanical engineering lab where she helped with research into a new technique for separating cells that could potentially allow blood analysis to be done with only a drop of blood rather than a tube of blood. She was already interested in engineering and physics, Walden said. "This just gave me a lot more passion about the subject."

Before participating in the program, Clavin was most interested in chemistry. When he was placed in a molecular biology lab, he was a little worried, he said. But the experience was eye-opening. "I honestly enjoy doing molecular biology much more than chemistry now." His research focused on a protein that is involved with the function of pain relieving medications. Clavin quickly realized that the research involved several fields of science, including chemistry and biology. "It has applications all across the board."

At the end of the program, the students had to prepare a presentation on their research as part of a competition among all the participating students. Walden finished second in the competition.

Booster club supports sports teams

Students athletes at JPII have a new teammate: the school's new booster organization, the Knight Club. The club was launched this summer after months of planning, said Julie Rollins, the school's athletics director.

"A lot of families thought JPII compares very well academically with any school in the area," said Joe Jackson, president of the Knight Club. "When it comes to athletics, a lot of schools have a 100-year head start on us."

One of the first goals of the club is to foster more community among the families with children at the school, Rollins said. "The fellowship is important for parents to get to know one another and get involved in the school."

About 180 families have already joined, said Jackson. "We'd love for everybody to join and we welcome their suggestions and input," Jackson said. For more information about joining the Knight Club, visit the school's website: www.jp2hs.org.

The club will sponsor three major fundraisers a year, Jackson explained. The first was selling advertisements in the school's all-sports program and banners at the football field, Jackson said, which raised \$24,000. The next project will be a golf tournament on Friday, Oct. 23, at Through the Green Golf Course. For more information about being a sponsor or playing in the tournament, contact Jo Lind Weaver at (615) 822-6226. The third event, which will be held in the spring, is still being planned, Jackson said. All the proceeds from the fund-raisers will be used to support the athletic program at JPII. "Each coach gave us a wish list of things not in the athletic budget and we try to help with those," Jackson said.

Besides Jackson and Rollins, other board members of the new club are: Sean Brooks, Eddie Vaughn, Matthew Lascara, Russell Marino, Mary Jo Hammer, Celeste Duzane, Charlie Guerry and Sue Baechle.