



St. John Villa Academy Elementary School
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Happy 2012! As we begin this New Year at Villa, please know that all of you are in my thoughts and prayers for a healthy and happy New Year! I look forward to a year full of wonderful educational and spiritual activities for your children.

We are grateful for so many things in the past year. We thank God for all His goodness and we count all of our students and parents among the special blessings that God has bestowed upon us.

COME BE A PART OF OUR FUTURE!

Re-registration Process

February is the month when the reapplication process begins. Any student returning in September must reapply. You will be receiving an e-mail from us before the open house with re-registration forms and the tuition rates for the school year 2012-2013.

Although Catholic Schools Week is celebrated the week of January 29th, we begin a week before with an *Open House on Sunday, January 22nd* from 10 a.m.-1p.m. for all our families as well as anyone wishing to join our school community for 2012-2013. There will be representatives from our class parents and student council present in the classrooms. Please invite your relatives, friends and neighbors to share this special day. You are also reminded of the Finder's Incentive Program offered at Villa. If you recommend a new family and they remain in our school for the year, you will be eligible for a month's tuition credit which will be credited to you during the last month of the school year.

VILLA WILL HOST THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK MASS FOR THE STATEN ISLAND FEDERATION

We are delighted to have the opportunity in this New Year to host the opening Mass for Catholic Schools Week on January 29th at 12:00 noon in the school Gym. It is a great honor for St. John Villa to be chosen to open the Catholic Schools Week for Staten Island district. Therefore, I ask all Villa students and parents to join us in the celebration. Fr. Joseph Brennan will be the main celebrant. Staff, student, and parent representatives from all of the Catholic Schools on Staten Island and some politicians will be joining us to celebrate the gift of Catholic education.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK THEME

Each year we set aside a week to reflect on what it means to be a Catholic school. The theme focuses on three priorities that Catholic schools establish that make them stand out from other educational institutions. Children are taught **Faith** – not just the basics of Christianity, but how to have a



relationship with God. **Academics** – which Catholic schools are held to very high standards help each child reach his or her potential. **Service** – the giving of one’s time and effort to help others is taught both as an expression of faith and good citizenship.

Catholic Schools Week Schedule

Sunday, January 29th	12 Noon - Catholic Schools Week Mass (Gym)
Monday, January 30 th	Teacher Appreciation Day
Tuesday, January 31 st	Student Appreciation Day
Wednesday, February 1 st	Career Day
Thursday, February 2 nd	International Day
Friday, Friday 3 rd	Founder’s Mass at 9:30 am (Gym)

MIDTERM SCHEDULE - JANUARY 17TH - 25TH

Date	Grade 5	Grade 6 & 7	Grade 8
Tuesday, January 17	Science	Religion	Religion
Wednesday, January 18	Reading	Social Studies	Social Studies
Thursday, January 19	ELA	ELA	ELA
Friday, January 20	Religion	Science	Science (Mrs. Gaeta)
Monday, January 23		Composition	
Tuesday, January 24	Social Studies	Literature	Literature/Adv Science
Wednesday, January 25	Math	Math	Math

NEW YORK STATE TESTS

New York State has sent out a revised schedule for tests. The dates have been changed by just a few days to accommodate spring break for many school districts. The dates are as follows:

Grades 4, 6, 8 ELA: April 17 – 19

Grades 4, 6, 8 Math: April 25 – 27

Grade 4, 8 Science: (Performance: May 23 – June 1), (Written – June 4)

STUDENT GRADES AND PROGRESS

Don’t forget to check out your child’s grades and progress on SIS (Student Information System).

RECAP OF LIFE AT VILLA FROM SEPTEMBER UNTIL JANUARY

PRE-K

Each week the Pre-K class presents “Show and Tell” at circle time. As part of our show and tell, the children are given “Theme Projects.” They especially enjoyed making a family garden where each child made a sunflower and included the names of their family members on each of the flower’s petals. In October, as part of our Halloween celebration, the children picked their own pumpkins from a “pumpkin patch” on our front lawn. The Pre-K class participated in the Kindergarten Christmas Presentation in December. The Pre-K girls were angels and the boys were animals that were present at the Nativity. The Pre-K class will have a guest “storyteller” visit soon. We will also have a visit from a dentist to speak to the children as part of our “Dental Hygiene” program. Also, the class will learn about fire safety from a firefighter who will visit our classroom.

KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten class participates in a variety of fun and educational activities. During the month of November, we discussed the story of the Native Americans and Pilgrims. We learned

about the way they lived, the food they ate, and how they celebrated the first Thanksgiving. We also had a Thanksgiving show where the children performed for their parents. During the month of December, we prepared for the birth of Jesus. Every Kindergarten student participated in a Christmas Pageant and performed for their families. They acted out the story of the birth of Jesus. We love to learn and have fun by participating in different activities each month!

GRADE 1

Great things are happening in Grade 1! We began our year with enthusiasm and an excitement for learning. We set our goals and each day work toward making them come true. We are enjoying many stories while practicing the skills needed to make us great readers. In Math, we are exploring numbers and working on ways to make us great thinkers.

Our main focus in Grade 1 is learning about Jesus and how we can be more like him. We showed this through our First Grade Christmas play as they performed for their families and other students. Some children portrayed the animals that were present at the birth of Jesus, and they proudly told about the gifts they gave to baby Jesus ~ the simple gift of themselves!

Grade 1 looks forward to many new learning opportunities in 2012! They will learn about Chinese New Year by creating crafts and eating special Chinese food. We are also looking forward to Career Day, Our 100th Day of School, field trips, phonics songs, and SmartBoard activities.

GRADE 2

Creative writing is an important part of the curriculum in Grade 2. Many of the children's poems, stories, haikus, and acrostics have been published in the Young Advance section of the Staten Island Advance. In November, the class worked together on a Thanksgiving Word Find Puzzle. A photographer came to take our picture, and the puzzle and picture appeared in The Advance on the day before Thanksgiving. Grade 2 is also working on reading 100 books in 100 days of school!

GRADE 3

When the Saints come marching in.....Grade 3 did an interdisciplinary project blending music, history, and religion. The children were responsible for researching their Saint, writing a report, and constructing a costume. The prayer service was held in our Chapel in November honoring All Saints Day. Grade 3 showed that the Saints really did shine like the sun!

Where in the world is.....If you enter Grade 3 this month, you will be visiting five continents and eighteen different countries. After researching the country of their choice, the children will be making display boards. They will locate their country on a world map, bring in a food item from that country to share, teach us a song or dance, etc. The display boards showcasing their country will be presented during Catholic Schools Week.

GRADE 4

This past September, the IPAD Pilot Program was implemented in Grade 4. All of the students were so excited to have their own IPADS. After several training sessions with the Board of Education, we were ready to roll in the world of educational technology. Mr. Joseph Iacono, an IPAD specialist, quickly showed us how to use them efficiently in the classroom. He even started us with our own blog, and we love it! It is great to see the students sharing ideas and responding to each other in the posts. We have used "blogging" mainly in the subject area of reading. We have utilized "IBOOKS" and have read excerpts of certain classics, such as "A Little Princess," and "Grimm's Fairy Tales." The best part...these books are free!!! We also use our IPADS in

Mathematics and have downloaded several free games which help fine tune basic skills. These automaticity drills are going to really help us do well on our upcoming New York State Mathematics test.

In other exciting news, we look forward to showcasing our project on mammals this month. The PowerPoint, pictures, and reflection will be included in our E-Portfolios. We are all excited to learn from each other during the presentations!

GRADE 5

If you walked through our Elementary School auditorium on Thursday, December 15, 2011, you would have found yourself in a different time zone amidst many famous Americans from the 1700s. These historical people were actually the Fifth graders who participated in Villa's Wax Museum, an interdisciplinary project consisting of Public Speaking, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Performing Arts. It began in November when the students went on a class trip to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in Manhattan to get ideas for their project. They then researched an influential person of early America, wrote a speech, created a display board with interesting facts and pictures and prepared a costume and props to accurately portray their figure. It was an educational, enriching experience for the students, one that they will never forget! Congratulations, Grade 5, on a job well done!



GRADE 6

St. John Villa takes a stand against Bullying!!! As you know, bullying is having a tremendous effect on American children today. It is all over the news, and it is obviously an issue that requires attention. During the first semester, we focused our attention on this very topic. During public speaking classes, Grades 5 through 8 concentrated on the dynamics of bullying, their victims, bystanders, etc. We distributed a special book to them entitled "Stop Bullying." The students were able to read true stories about this serious issue, and it really gave them something to think about. They then wrote their own anti-bullying skits in the form of commercials, rap songs, short plays, lyrical dances, etc. In mid-November, we held Villa's first annual "Anti-Bullying" campaign. Students visited the other classrooms and performed their skits to promote an overall message of peace and zero tolerance for bullies. The campaign was a huge success, and the students have learned so much about compassion for others. Philo of Alexandria said, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle."

GRADE 7

Recently, Grade 7 created "Class Crests." They were given background information as to what exactly a crest is and what it should look like. They were given a website to visit where they would find symbols and their meanings and colors and their meanings. The individual group then had to choose the symbols and colors to be used in creating their class crest. These symbols and colors were to represent the qualities and characteristics that the students wanted their class to possess. The class crest had to be drawn by hand or created with other materials. A report was to be included describing the symbols and colors used, along with their significance and relation to the class. One crest was chosen to represent Grade 7 for this school year, 2011/2012. It will hang in the classroom until the last day of school.

GRADE 8

On December 14, 2011, the Class of 2012 received their class rings. Sr. Anita and Sr. Lucita presented each student with their class rings during a Mass celebrated by Father Willie from Holy Child Parish. During the reception of the rings, the class reminded each other that a ring

has no beginning and no end. They were tangible symbols of friendship and bonds formed during their years at St. John Villa, which, with God's help, will last for years to come.

Speaking on behalf of her classmates, Adriana Guarino spoke of the importance of the class ring, both now and in the future, as the Class of 2012 graduates in June and moves on to high school. While a relatively new tradition in the Elementary School, it has nonetheless become an important part of a student's Grade 8 experience. It is something we are sure will continue for each graduating class that follows!

COMPUTER CLASS

Students in Grades 4 through 8 are working on an exciting project in their computer class. Our school is participating with the New York City Department of Education under the federally funded Title IID Grant. This grant allows students to develop electronic portfolios to collect and reflect on their work. We are using a secure educational account through Google which can only be accessed with a username and password.

Mr. Joseph Iacono from the Office of Educational Technology has visited our school a few times to introduce and track student's progress in this innovative venture. Each student created an e-portfolio that contains their "Homepage" as well as "About Me" page and a "Goals" page. They have now begun the process of uploading selected works from the current and past school years. This is the "collection" part of the process, but equally important is the "reflection" aspect. They will post their thoughts and update their goals bi-monthly. The digital task is a work in progress that will grow with them throughout their educational careers. Good work!



Student Council 2011-2012

Special Thanks!

On behalf of the student council and the entire Villa family, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your generous support for "Children's Chance Organization." During the month of December, we collected \$1,533.00. This money will benefit children who need special medical attention.

*God bless you all!
Sr. Lucita Bacat, C.S.JB*