



Catholic Education

Discovering the **value**, making the **choice**

Several parents discuss the reasons why they have chosen to send their children to a Catholic school—in particular to St. Hilary School.

Cost vs. value

St. Hilary School parent **Frank Monteleone**, who also serves as CYO flag football coach for his son Luke's second-grade team, speaks candidly about weighing the cost of a Catholic education versus the value received: "My background is in finance and accounting, so I am always looking for ways to stretch the dollar. My wife, Bonnie, and I bought a house in Copley because of the school system, so I was looking forward to not paying for day-care and pre-school when Brock and Luke were ready for kindergarten."



The Monteleone Family: Bonnie and Frank Monteleone with third-grader Brock and second-grader Luke

Bonnie explains: "Frank and I had spent a great deal of time making careful choices about day care and pre-school for our sons. So as Brock approached time for kindergarten, we started rethinking our choice of an elementary school. I began to research, including asking a million questions.

A million questions!

"As a parent, you never know what your child will need until they get to school," Bonnie continues. "Because my advanced degree is in special education and I teach the full spectrum of students, from autistic through gifted, I wanted to know about supplemental services and how the schools handle individual needs. I asked which math and reading programs they used, student-teacher ratios, if they had teachers' aides, and how they used technology. I wanted to know the graduation rates and levels of preparation for high school and college. I was also interested in an all-day kindergarten, a quality latchkey program, longevity of teachers and a competitive salary scale. And we began to realize that the K-8 continuous learning environment at St. Hilary School would likely be beneficial for our family.

"Fr. Steve, Dr. Nugent, Mrs. Alestock, staff, and teachers were very patient and helpful, despite all my questions. And, they had all the right answers. Our boys' needs would definitely be met, and we felt very confident about our decision."

On the tour

Bonnie describes their first complete tour through the school at a Catholic Schools Week Open House. "As we walked through the school, I was very impressed with the quality of the written compositions displayed in the halls, as well as the artwork, science lab,

continued on page 2

INDEX

Catholic Education—the value, the choice	1 & 2
A+ for America: Catholic Schools	3
Invitation to school Open House	3
Celebrating record of excellence at St. Hilary School	4-7
School Board	7
Parents' Association	7

and computer lab. You could see the student development as you passed from grade to grade. I wanted to see technology in action in the classroom, and I did. I wanted to see a well-maintained and well-organized facility, and I did. The staff and teachers were welcoming, the students were impressive, and the parents seemed to care about their children's education as much as we did. The atmosphere was very warm and inviting."

Discovering the value

Bonnie observes: "Now that Brock is in third grade and his brother, Luke, is in second, Frank and I have come to realize how much the faith, values and service orientation of the school has been a huge blessing to our entire family. Our sons bring their faith home! The fact that the boys participate in the weekly student Mass is meaningful to us, as is the sincerity of their prayers for others. We appreciate the reality that the teachers will communicate, share concerns and help create a true partnership between home and school. When a child sees their parents and teachers working together for their good, that child receives a powerful and reassuring message."

Getting involved

Bonnie is now a member of the St. Hilary School Board, which represents parents and advises the Pastor, Principal and Assistant Principal on school-related matters. Frank is a volunteer with the STAR gift card program, which produces rebates that help the family budget. "I appreciate the school spirit," Frank observes, "and as a CYO coach I enjoy working with the kids. It's about more than just learning to play the game. It's also about reinforcing good sportsmanship. It's great to be able to tie into the core values of a Catholic education."

Frank has also become a volunteer at St. Bernard's Hot Meal program through the parish, at the invitation of some of the parents. He comments: "I never thought I would be involved in feeding those less fortunate and a little down on their luck, but I really feel committed to it. Our whole family experience at St. Hilary School has made a huge difference in our faith and—in so many other ways—in the lives of each of us. St. Hilary School is a great community!"



The Gore Family: Mark Gore with Andrew, age 5; Marita Gore with Anthony, age 6, on their way home from a Cubs' game in Chicago this fall

A Christ-centered environment

Parishioners **Marita and Mark Gore** have two boys—Anthony, who is a kindergartener at St. Hilary School, and Andrew, who looks forward to kindergarten next year.

Marita observes: "When Mark and I discussed schools for our two young boys, we both agreed that the most important thing to teach them is their faith. This may be surprising because, until last Easter, Mark was not a Catholic. But we both wanted their education to nourish their souls and grow their faith. We felt this was especially important in today's society, where they are bombarded with messages that are so conflicting with our Christian faith. It's not the same world we grew up in. We try to teach them strong values and spirituality at home, but it can be overwhelming. I feel I need all the help I can get to help them be grounded and centered. It gives me real peace of mind to know they are in a Christ-centered environment."

The education of a family

"As we observe the spiritual education of Anthony, I am falling more in love with my Catholic faith," says Marita. "He shows us and talks about things that also help us grow in faith. There are moments we both get choked up when we hear him speak out about spiritual things he has learned at school. As an example, whenever he hears an ambulance siren, he and his little brother now call out: "Hey, I hear an ambulance. We need to pray for the person who's sick or hurt!"

"The other night during bedtime prayers, Anthony said, 'Let's say another Hail Mary for a boy and a girl in my class who are having problems and need prayers from us.' It is heartwarming and reassuring to know Anthony is in a loving environment that supports what we try to do at home.

Marita added, "By the way, my favorite parenting book is one that addresses the importance of core values that we find being reinforced here at St. Hilary School and Parish: *Boys Should Be Boys: Seven Secrets to Raising Healthy Sons* by Dr. Meg Meeker, who also wrote *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters: 10 Secrets Every Father Should Know*.



The Faetanini Family Front—Joe, Ross and John; Back—Gia, John, Erin, and Sal

Change that lasts a lifetime

Sixth-grade teacher and parishioner **Erin Faetanini** has taught at St. Hilary School for seven years. Three of her children now attend St. Hilary School, and two are graduates. Erin observes: "I am old enough and experienced enough now as a teacher and parent to realize that Catholic education is the future of the Church. Now I am able to appreciate what my parents did for me by sacrificing to give me a Catholic education. As I now sacrifice for my own children and, in different ways, for my students, I realize how much more likely it is that children who are steeped in their faith at a young age will carry those beliefs and values throughout their lives. And they will hand those values on to their own children. That is a blessing, especially in this culture!"

"Of course, our children are still exposed to outside pressures and are not always angels, but based on my experience, our students know that when they have to make difficult decisions in their life, they can turn to their faith to help them. Every day at St. Hilary School our students are immersed in a faith-based education, where spirituality is integrated into their learning experiences. They discuss their faith, debate it, share it with others, and put it into action. They internalize their faith and moral values," concludes Erin. "That is a change that lasts a lifetime!"



Across the nation, the week of January 30 to February 4 is recognized as Catholic Schools Week. Dr. Patricia Nugent, Principal of St. Hilary School, observes: "Catholic Schools Week is a significant event here at St. Hilary. It's a week-long celebration of the contributions that Catholic schools make to their communities and to the nation at large in the over 7,000 Catholic schools in the US. This year's national theme is Catholic Schools: A+ for America. I think the theme is particularly fitting, as it stresses the many contributions Catholic schools have made and continue to make to our nation, with our focus on strong moral values and excellence in education, as well as our high level of commitment to serving others. At St. Hilary School, we take this opportunity to celebrate who and what we are and the blessings our environment brings to us all."

Catholic Schools Week— A week-long celebration



"The weekend of January 29-30, our students will minister in various roles in the parish Masses," explains Principal Dr. Nugent. "We invite parishioners to attend our Open House on Sunday, January 30, from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. The public is welcome to tour the school and to meet the teachers, staff and students. When the school week starts on Monday, an all-school assembly kicks off our Catholic

Schools Week celebration with special guests who will focus on the importance of a Catholic education."

Each day the school will celebrate the different aspects of a Catholic education. Tuesday will be a service project day for all, with some classes going out into the community and others making things for families and senior citizens in need. Wednesday is a special day in which the faculty and staff are honored, including a wonderful lunch served by the Parents' Association. Thursday is Buddy Day, when each student will spend time with his or her buddy and celebrate their special friendship. Friday will be Student Appreciation Day, when students are honored with enjoyable activities. "It is a busy, exhausting and very enjoyable week for all of us," comments Dr. Nugent. "Together we recognize how privileged we are to be here in this Catholic community, which is devoted to excellence not only in education but also in developing our faith and in being of service to each other, our families, our parish and our community."





The above statue of Jesus with children, which stands in the entryway to St. Hilary School, symbolizes the faith and spiritual values that are the foundation of a St. Hilary School education. The motto of St. Hilary School, twice recognized as a national Blue Ribbon school, is to pursue excellence through faith, service and knowledge. Principal Dr. Patricia Nugent, comments: "We are a Catholic Christian educational community offering a quality education in an atmosphere enriched by Gospel values. Because we are committed to the belief that each student is a unique child of God, we see it as our responsibility to be partners with parents to help each child achieve his or her God-given potential to the fullest. We also welcome students and families from other faiths and invite them to help us learn about their beliefs and traditions."

Celebrating a record of **excellence** at St. Hilary School Committed to faith, service and knowledge

Since it was established fifty years ago this year, St. Hilary School has been recognized as one of the leading parochial schools in Northeast Ohio, excelling in building the core values that nurture the whole child—body, mind and spirit.

FAITH FIRST

"Through all of the changes in the past 50 years, the constant at St. Hilary School has been the commitment to fostering the Catholic faith in our students," Assistant Principal Mrs. Karen Alestock observes. "Praying together, attending weekly Mass, and living the Gospel message of Jesus are all hallmarks of our school."

EXPERIENCING THE EXCELLENCE

Recently several parents and teachers were asked to share with the parish their own personal experiences of the pursuit of

excellence at St. Hilary School. Their stories, in their own words...

A FAMILY IN CRISIS

Tim and Becky Hottovy are parents of three boys—Luke is in third grade and Gavin is in kindergarten, both at St. Hilary. Ethan is four. The Hottovys had a dramatic experience of the power of faith and prayer as members of the St. Hilary School family. In Gavin's third week in kindergarten, he suddenly became severely ill, requiring emergency surgery and a very difficult recovery. Tim shares their story: "We could actually feel the effect of the prayers as Gavin's kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Archual, had his class and the whole school praying that someday Gavin would be well enough to return to St. Hilary School. By the grace of God, that moment of return happened just before Thanksgiving. It was an overwhelming experience for us to be on the receiving end of the love, kindnesses and prayers that the St.

Hilary School community surrounded us with. And, we all love Mrs. Archual!

“When we moved here from Iowa three years ago and were looking for a school for the boys,” Tim continued, “I knew the moment I walked up to the school door that I was in the right place. I saw the statue of Jesus, and I had a sudden, overwhelming feeling of peace. I called Becky immediately and told her this was where I wanted our children to learn about our faith. From the beginning, the teachers were caring and compassionate, making our transition smooth and our sons’ experiences here very happy. The spiritual environment here is truly excellent!”



The Hottovy Family: Celebrating Gavin’s recovery! Tim, Luke, Gavin, Ethan and Becky

RELATING TO GOD

Steve and Joya Hart have three children, two at St. Hilary—Grace in 5th, Anne Marie in 2nd—and future student Kevin, who is three. “At home we work to develop in our kids a close relationship with God,” explains Joya, “and we know that St. Hilary School fosters this relationship daily. They pray at the beginning and end of the school day, before class, after lunch, and before gym and sporting events, as well as participating in weekly Mass together as a student body.”

GIVING OF YOURSELF

Principal Nugent comments: “One of our primary goals is to help our students acquire a sense of respect and responsibility for themselves as well as their home, church, school, community and country. We are able to do this effectively because of the excellence and commitment of our teachers and support staff and our close partnership with parents.”

Assistant Principal Mrs. Alestock observes: “Our school motto of Faith-Service-Knowledge is taken as a challenge to every educator here. Our faculty and staff are committed models of the Catholic faith. Each is dedicated to compassionately serve others, especially our students. Their dedication is responsible for our school’s long tradition of excellence.”

continued on page 6



The Hart Family: From left to right: Anne Marie (now age 8), Joya, Kevin (now 3), Steve, and Grace (now 11).



Assistant Principal Mrs. Karen Alestock.



All classes are matched with “buddy” classes to share activities during the year.



Second graders participated in Colonial Day, learning about colonial life.



Grade 5 students made masks in art class.



Kindergarten students learn about fractions of apples.



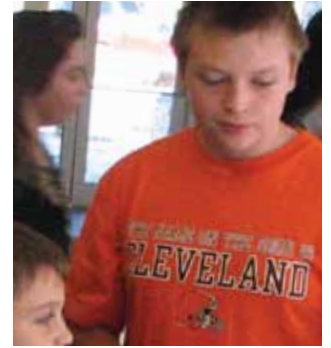
7th grade students discuss a lab experiment they conducted and prepare a lab report.



Grade 3 students conduct a bake sale to purchase items for needy children on the parish Giving Tree.



8th grade advanced math students compete in a national online math contest.



Students sort food items during the Thanksgiving food drive.

SERVICE IN ACTION

Sixth grade teacher and parishioner **Erin Faetanini** comments: "When it comes to service, I believe St. Hilary School is unparalleled. On a daily basis, in both big ways and small, we teach our students the importance of giving to others, then provide opportunities to put service into action. I think the proof of that is how excited our seventh graders get when they have the opportunity to participate in the parish's Junior High Youth Group, where they do service for others.

LEARNING TO HELP OTHERS

Parent **Joya Hart** observes: "Steve and I are trying to teach our boys that giving to others is not only what God wants you to do—it is also a path to happiness. St. Hilary provides many opportunities for our three children to put serving others into practice. For example, being personally involved in choosing which foods to contribute during food drives makes them think about what other families may not have in their kitchens and what they might really need. When they are picking out books for needy children on the parish's Christmas Giving Tree, they have a chance to think about what those young people might enjoy.

"Giving of their own talents is also so valuable," Joya continues. "The school choir and some of the classes visit nursing homes or make cheerful artwork for the food trays of the elderly. The school's very active buddy system gives older students the opportunity to help a younger student one-on-one, developing a relationship and learning how to use their own gifts to help another child."

THE JOY OF LEARNING

Principal Nugent asserts: "We are very proud of our school's record of academic excellence. In feedback from area high schools, we consistently hear how well our students are prepared for high school, with excellent study and writing skills, as well as their readiness and self-confidence to step into leadership roles. They also consistently score very well on standardized tests, and 95% of our graduates are accepted by and attend parochial high schools."



Principal Dr. Patricia Nugent

TEACHING FOR EXCELLENCE

Teacher **Jane Klenotic**: "Our students have a wide variety of skills and abilities, and I am proud to say that the entire staff at St. Hilary School strives to help each child learn and grow to the best of his or her abilities in all the academic disciplines. We set individual goals as high as possible to inspire and challenge each student to reach his or her potential. For example, we start teaching writing very early. In my second grade classroom, we are reading novels and learning together how to construct a book report. We work to meet the reading needs of each child, including reading help for those who need it and an accelerated reading program. And we have the latest technology, including SmartBoards used in every class, a computer in each classroom, a science lab, foreign language instruction, and a complete computer lab. Our full-time computer teacher instructs the children, using computers to



Second-grade teacher Jane Klenotic

improve their skills in all disciplines. I know all our students are achieving excellence, and I love teaching here!”

CHALLENGING AND NURTURING

Parent **Ann Kyner Meszaros**, who is not a Catholic, explains why she selected St. Hilary for her oldest son. “T.J., now an 8th grader at St. Hilary, attended the old Fairlawn Elementary for his first two years, but I wanted to find a school with a program that would challenge him. Because I was a working mom, I wanted a place where I could be sure he was being nurtured in all areas, not just intellectually.

St. Hilary School really worked with us and made provisions for T.J.’s individual needs. When we arrived, so many parents called to welcome T.J. and me to the school, since we were not part of the parish and were transferring in. They called to introduce themselves and to be sure we were comfortable. It is such a welcoming attitude! It’s like being in a school family. And I am so pleased with the excellent way the school has prepared him in every way for high school next year.”

Ann and her husband of two years, Gary Meszaros, have a blended family with four sons, all of whom attend St. Hilary School. T.J.’s brother Joey is now a 4th grader. Jayson is in 5th grade and Drew is in 3rd grade.



The Kyner-Meszaros family at their wedding two years ago. Back—Gary Meszaros and Ann Kyner Meszaros. Front—Jayson Meszaros, Drew Meszaros, Joe Kyner and T.J. Kyner

Jayson, Drew and Gary are parishioners at St. Hilary, but the entire family goes to weekend Mass together at St. Hilary. Ann comments: “All our boys are very happy at the school, and Gary and I are very happy as well!”

May all the students, parents, families, teachers, staff, and administrators at St. Hilary School enjoy their week of celebration during Catholic Schools Week, as well as the remainder of their special year of celebrating the school’s 50th anniversary!



ST. HILARY SCHOOL BOARD

Members of the board are elected by the parents of St. Hilary School students. They function as advisors to the principal and the pastor. The board promotes excellence in Catholic education by acting in the best interests of the parish, students, parents and school staff. It provides input on policy development and implementation to the principal and pastor. The board meets the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open.

Board member and St. Hilary School parent, Karen Weber, who also serves as an Assistant Principal for the Hudson Schools, comments: “It is a joy to serve on the St. Hilary School Board. I am able to blend my role as a parent and public educator in a manner that benefits our school and its children. Our St. Hilary school community is unique, with many parents focused on their children’s academic success and the strong roots of their Faith.”

Members of the 2010-2011 St. Hilary School Board:

- Molly Scantling, President
- Maura Bozzelli, Vice-President
- Mike Close
- Mark Demechko
- Bonnie Monteleone
- Barry Thoman
- Karen Weber

ST. HILARY SCHOOL PARENTS’ ASSOCIATION BOARD

Members of the Parents’ Association Board are elected by parents of St. Hilary School students. The Board provides support to the school through fundraising, planning and assisting with school events. It promotes excellence in Catholic education by acting in the best interests of the parish, students, parents and school staff.

The Board oversees a host of committees that do everything from fundraising to event planning, from serving hot lunches to recycling school uniforms among families, and so much more. Volunteer opportunities are

available to chair or serve as a member of these committees. New volunteers are always needed and welcome!

Parent Association President, Karyn Martin, and President-Elect, Tony Brady, offered this joint statement: “It has been a great experience learning how the Association manages the various fund raisers and hospitality events. One of the greatest pleasures is getting to know all the other parents that help and chair the various committees. What we do is very important in assisting the school to provide a quality education by funding the many enrichment programs.”

A parent comments: “I have the greatest respect for The Parents’ Association, which is the core group of volunteers for the school. They make sure the school has what it needs, work tirelessly and put their hearts and souls into helping the school in countless ways.”

Board Members of the St. Hilary School Parents’ Association

- Karyn Martin, President
- Tony Brady, President-Elect
- Colleen Bisesi, Vice-President
- Melissa Ost, Secretary
- Dana Salamone, Treasurer

January 2011



St. Hilary Catholic Parish
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You are invited!
St. Hilary School Catholic Schools Week

OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, January 30
from 12:15 to 2:15 p.m.

Celebrating
50 Years of Excellence!

INSIDE:

Catholic Education—value and choice

A+ for America: Catholic Schools

Invitation to school Open House

Celebrating excellence at St. Hilary School

School Board

Parents' Association

This Newsletter is brought to you
by the Stewardship Committee at
St HILARY PARISH CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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Have feedback on this newsletter?
Contact Lyn Schott at 330-867-1055

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You are invited as we celebrate our St. Hilary Parish family.
This year we will recognize St. Hilary School's 50 years of excellence.

Feast of St. Hilary

Saturday, January 15, 2011

5:00 - 9:00 pm • Horning Hall

Children are invited to the
Kids' Event in the Spiritual Center.

Cost: Laundry Soap

Donation for Open M

POTLUCK PARTICIPATION

A - D Salad

E - K Dessert

L - S Side Dish

T - Z Appetizers

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Adult and Teen Volunteers are needed to
make this a success.

SET-UP: Friday, Jan 14, 5:00 to 10:00 pm

KIDS' EVENT: Jan 15, 4:30 to 9:00 pm

sign-in table, supervise children, help
with crafts and games

Contact Lyn Schott at 330-867-1055
ext. 217 or Lschott@sthilarychurch.org



RSVP by January 10 to 330-867-1055 or church@sthilarychurch.org