

ACADEMY MOTHERS' NEWS

SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY MOTHERS' CLUB

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Extra Curricular Activities Let Cadets Expand and Explore their Talents

Thirty plus co-curricular activities and athletics offer Saint Thomas Academy students a myriad of ways to expand their talents and explore new avenues for growth. More than 90% of students choose to participate in one or more.

The highly visible Experimental Vehicle Team just won The Popular Science National Award after years of winning competitions and receiving MIT grants. The Rifle Team finished seventh of 1200 teams in National Championships. The Chess Club has two nationally ranked players. The Quiz Bowl/Knowledge Bowl Team holds the record for consecutive playoff appearances. The Debate Team sent two cadets to the state tourney. Vista Productions has won numerous Hennepin Theater Trusts Spotlight Musical Theater Awards. The list goes on...

The prestigious Honor Guard/Color Guard represents Saint Thomas at wakes and funerals for alumni, community events, games, functions and reviews. The 72-year old Crack Drill Squad handsomely performs around the state.



Vista Theatre's 2009 Production of Charlie Brown

The KEE Club has grown so large that they need five adults to accompany them when they visit Feed My Starving Children once a month – packing food for the hungry. The FMSC schedule is on the school calendar.

The Spanish, Latin, French and Japanese clubs offer interesting venues to expand language skills watching movies, playing games and eating native foods. Students also run publications Cadence, Citation, and Kaydet yearbook, unleashing creative genius. CHOOSE and Peer Counseling provide guidance by Upper Classmen. The Audio/Visual Club provides useful training and is looking for members.

Co-curricular diverse sporting activities include bowling, orienteering, table tennis and the always-popular IBA (intramural basketball). Powerful life long skills can be had in the Debate, Mock Trial, Quiz/Knowledge Bowl, Math, Student Council or Speech Clubs. Vista and Jazz Bands, Choir and Orchestra members provide musical opportunities.

Mothers – encourage your boys to get involved. See the co-curricular link on the website for a list of activities for MS and HS students.



Mother and Son Mass and Brunch

All STA Mothers and their Cadet sons are invited to come and celebrate a special holiday mass together followed by a lovely brunch. This annual event is one of the most cherished and well attended events of the school year. Father O'Brien will be the Celebrant at each Mass. A touching rose ceremony will be held at the conclusion of Mass.

The Mother-Son Mass and Brunch will be held at school on Sunday, December 6 and on Sunday, December 13. Mass begins at 11:00 a.m. in the courtyard followed by a delicious brunch. Professional photos will be available for purchase. Photo taking will begin at 10:00 a.m. until the start of Mass and will resume after Mass has finished. Special STA ornaments will be available for purchase at the event as well as donations accepted for teachers' holiday gifts.

Watch for your invitation in the mail. Select a date and register early for this popular event. Seating is limited.

Upcoming Mothers' Club Dates

Mothers' Club/Fathers' Club Combined Meeting

Tuesday, November 17

7:00-8:30 p.m.

STA Court

Guests: Drs. Jim and Kim Harms

Mother-Son Mass and Brunch

Sundays, December 6 and 13
11:00 a.m.

Mass, followed by brunch.

Upcoming Mothers' Club Meetings –

Mark Your Calendar...

Tuesday, January 12

10:00 a.m.

Rongish Commons

Guest: Michael Mann

Thursday, February 11

Mothers Club - Moms' Night

Out - 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Location TBA

For more Mothers' Club Events and Service Information and to view photos...

Log on to www.cadets.com/MothersClub

Reminder: It is never too late to send in your membership dues. Help support great Mothers' Club services and programs.

Happy Holidays!

From the President

I recently attended our Harvest Mass and Meal, celebrating the 71st Anniversary of the Mothers' Club. What a wonderful evening shared with the mothers of Saint Thomas Academy. We were delighted to have Father O'Brien celebrate mass and welcome us into a new year here at the Academy. I continue to be amazed with the talents, skills, and gifts each of you bring so generously to our Mothers' Club. In so many ways, so many women support our school, the faculty, and our young men. Thank you for your commitment and we ask that you continue to support Mothers' Club and its activities.



Susie Housh with her sons (L-R): Jordan '07; Austin '11; and AJ '09

We have several upcoming events. Please join us November 17th at 7:00 p.m. for a combined Mothers' and Fathers' Club evening here at STA. Drs. Kim and Jim Harms will be our guests and they will share their thoughts on the loss of their son, Eric '08. This promises to be an evening you won't want to miss. The Cadet Colonel promotion is November 25th at 2:10 p.m. All are welcome to attend. Finally, as the holidays fast approach, Mother Son Mass and Brunch December 6th and 13th is the event of the year for us. Please make an attempt to share this time with your son. It creates lasting memories that you will treasure years from now.

As our economy slowly recovers, I sincerely thank each of you that has financially supported the Mothers' Club. Our goal is to further the interest of Saint Thomas Academy and encourage and nurture a cooperative spirit among parents, sons, faculty, and administration. We look forward to your continued involvement and support.

- Susie Housh, Mothers' Club President 2009-2010

Cadet Moms...we need you!

We would like all Cadet moms and Cadet legal guardians to know that you are all members of the St. Thomas Academy Mothers' Club. As members of the Mothers' Club you are invited to participate in the fun social activities offered as well as participate in the enrichment of your son's Academy experience by sharing your time and talents. We also ask all STA moms to consider making a financial donation to the Mothers' Club. Without these donations we would not be able to provide support for many school related initiatives or offer Mothers' Club activities. It is not too late to send in your Mothers' Club donation or sign on to assist with one of the many activities and events that the Mothers' Club sponsors.

For more information on the STA Mothers' Club and how you can make a donation of time, talent or financial gift, log on to the school's web site at www.cadets.com/MothersClub.

MOTHER'S CLUB HOSTS NATIONAL SPEAKER NATHAN DUNGAN



Jessica Nickelson, Nathan Dungan and Susie Housh

On the evening of October 20th, The Saint Thomas Academy Mothers' Club and the Visitation Parents' Association hosted an evening with personal finance expert and national speaker, Nathan Dungan. Nathan is the president and founder of Share Save Spend, an organization dedicated to helping youth and adults develop healthy money habits. The event was held at Visitation in the DeSales Auditorium. Many cadets and their parent(s) attended this entertaining and enlightening event.

"In The Know" about Military Leadership at STA



Saint Thomas Academy's main military mission is to train young men in ethical leadership. Since 1906, the school has retained a regular/retired Army officer as Commandant of Cadets to lead the cadets through the 4-Year military program.

Freshman and sophomores are introduced to the rank and structure of Army JROTC and taught to be followers of the upper classmen who are the leaders in the school. The organization of the school is formed as a Brigade with three Battalions: Gold (3 companies) Blue (3 companies) and White (Band and Honor Guard). The Brigade Commander (Cadet Colonel) commands all students and a chief of staff supervises event planning.

Promotions for a leadership position begin with the Junior Officer (JO) application process starting in December and ending with promotions announced the following May. Twenty cadets are selected from the Junior class to compete for 14 slots titled "JO's." During the senior year, these cadets continue to compete and are selected to be the Cadet Colonel and the top 5 Lieutenant Colonel leadership positions. Serving with the Cadet Colonel are one Executive Officer (who is second in command of the Brigade), three Lieutenant Colonels who each command a Battalion, and a Chief of Staff.

Many criteria are used in the promotion selection process, including GPA, extracurricular involvement, merit and demerit status, and military leadership performance. The Cadet Colonel Promotion is the final phase of the JO application process, where a selection board comprised of STA Administrators and faculty members review and vote on eligible cadets. The Brigade is a student driven and run organization under the management of LTC (Ret) Michael DePuglio and the military cadre.

Six leaders in the Brigade are chosen each year in November during the Cadet Colonel ceremony.

CADET COLONEL PROMOTION CEREMONY



This year's Cadet Colonel Promotion will take place on November 25th at 2:10 p.m. and will bring many alumni, family and visitors to the school. Mothers' Club will assist with the event by hosting a reception following the ceremony. **All mothers are invited to experience this wonderful event, and, if possible, help at the reception that follows.** Please contact Ann Deasey or Julie Gould to help volunteer.

Honor Guard - Volunteer Organization of Cadets Held to Higher Standards

The Honor Guard is an elite volunteer organization of cadets employed to represent the tradition of St. Thomas Academy at various civic, archdiocesan, school, charitable, competitive and bereavement events. The Honor Guard is responsible for raising and lowering our flag at school every day. Official duties range from holding doors and greeting guests to presenting the colors at formal functions and also include distributing programs, leading prayer, and marching in parades. The Honor Guard Cadets understand the importance of being professional and take their duty of representing STA very seriously. Students must meet attendance, conduct, and academic standards to be eligible to participate. Honor Guard members must attend weekly planning meetings and regular training and practice sessions as well. They wear distinctive company brass on their shirt collar, a black leather belt and custom belt buckle with their daily uniform, and a shoulder cord, beret, and white parade belt with their blousecoat. The Color Guard is a detachment within the Honor Guard and they are entrusted with the National, State, and School Colors.

Upcoming School Events

Nov. 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15

VISTA Fall Play

Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*

Nov. 11 and 12

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Nov. 15-19

Chemical Health Week

Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Liturgy

Cadet Colonel Promotion

Nov. 30

Advent Giving

Adopt a Family Begins

Dec. 1-4

Senior Photos

Dec. 8

VISTA High School Choir and Orchestra Concert

Dec. 16

VISTA Middle School Concert

Dec. 17

Parent Diversity

Focus Group Meeting

Dec. 18, 21, 22, 23

Semester Exams

Dec. 23

Deadline to order

Kaydet Yearbook

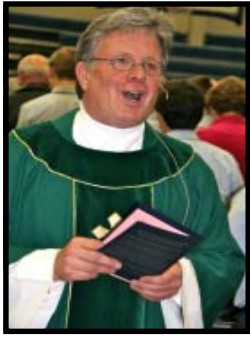
Dec. 24-Jan. 3

Christmas Break

February 5, 6, and 7

VISTA Variety Show

Meet Father Tom O'Brien



A person needs only a quick glance at Father Tom O'Brien to see the joy in his face as he passes through his days at Saint Thomas Academy. Because of his busy daily schedule, a dizzying volume of commitments at STA and Church of the Visitation, his calm presence is amazing. Father O'Brien admits to being a man who requires little sleep, awake by 4:30 a.m., in bed after midnight. He jokes that he's already written his obituary, "Father O'Brien died much as he lived, causing trouble and inconvenience for everybody." Not surprising that he's an efficient planner of future events, but his words belie this man of many talents, generousities, and accomplishments. How lucky we are to have him in our community. In addition to his Academy work, he became pastor of Church of the Visitation in Minneapolis in 2008, after serving for two years as their sacramental minister. To say he leads a full life is a great understatement. Instead, we wonder how he fits sleep into each day!

Father Tom was born in Connecticut and spent his youth in Ohio and Michigan. As a young boy, he vowed to be the best altar server ever, after discovering that athletic talents were *not* his gift. Father O'Brien attended Georgetown University, intending to continue his studies into medical school, only to discover a freshman year professor whose influence took his life on a path to the priesthood. His admiration for theology professor Monika Hellwig compelled him to take every course she taught and eventually major in theology. Still, he planned on med school. A retreat in Berryville, VA and its ensuing events allowed Father O'Brien to witness the great gift of a priestly vocation and in awe of it, he sought to become a priest himself.

He thought about it for awhile, as he pursued a master's degree in English at the University of Michigan and worked full-time for Youth for Understanding, then the world's largest high school student exchange program.

Eventually, the call of the priesthood became irresistible, and in 1983, Thomas O'Brien was ordained a priest in Arlington, VA. He served for 2½ years in Fredericksburg, VA before being released for a fellowship at Yale University. He then accepted a full-time position as the Director of Campus Ministry at Choate Rosemary Hall—one of those New England prep schools!—and was the first Catholic priest on their faculty.

Father O'Brien went on to serve at Saint John's University in Collegeville, as Executive Director of Development and External Relations for the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, as they brought the Saint John's Bible project to fruition. In 2005, the Saint Thomas Academy community was lucky to have him join our Institutional Advancement Office. His titles, include Director of Catholic Identity and Mission, as well as Teacher.

The impact Fr. Tom makes on the young men of STA is profound. He shares with them the academics but even greater are the teachings he shares of life. In any given day, our boys may hear him saying, and witness him living these great lessons...

*...Spend an hour in prayer each day and God will give you all the time you need to accomplish all He wants from you. * Learned from Mother Theresa while working together in a Virginia AIDS hospice.*

...Match all you say and do, express it in authentic ways that live out the logic of your loves and beliefs.

...Focus on Christ. Everyone who enters our doors should know that Christ is the reason for this school.

...Jesus promises his followers that the Spirit will guide us into the way of truth. This means it's a journey, a process, not a finished product or an accomplished fact. We must cooperate with the Spirit—together—if we are to become who God created us to be.

He asks students to grapple with difficult issues in class, exploring their beliefs and understandings. He enjoys their interactions and loves their discovery and learning. When asked for the best kept secret of STA, Father Tom answers, "Whatever it is that each of these boys has within him—that's the secret; our entire effort here is to *discover* that secret, to help each boy find in himself the unique gifts God has given him, and then to dedicate the rest of his life to using those gifts to be the man God wants him to be."

*In his spare time (hah!), Father Tom enjoys gardening, cooking, reading, and a cold diet Mountain Dew.

A Harvest Prayer

(Anonymous 17th Century Sermon)

Please be gentle with yourself and others.
We are children of chance, and none can say
why some fields blossom while others lay brown beneath the harvest sun.
Take hope that your season will come.
Share the joy of those whose season is at hand.
Care for those around you. Look past your differences.
Their dreams are no less than yours.
Their choices in life no more easily made.
And give. Give in any way you can.
Give in every way you can. Give whatever you possess.
Give from the heart.
To give is to love. To withhold is to wither.
Care less for the size of your harvest than for how it is shared,
and your life will have meaning,
and your heart will have peace.