

Gesu School News Flash

Winter Proves a Winning Season for Gesu

From sports to academics to community involvement, Gesu students, faculty and supporters are earning recognition and reaching new heights.

Students Strut History Smarts

Academic team brings home a trophy.

Gesu's Academic Challenge Team took 1st place in the History Round at the elementary school competition hosted by West Catholic High School in January. The team, coached by principal Sr. Ellen Convey IHM and 8th grade teacher Laura Weatherly, comprised 8th graders Andre, Britney, Devon, Jasmine, Johnathan, Laurence, Lynette, and Wardell. Questions in the round covered social studies events and people from the 20th Century.



March Madness: All three of Gesu's basketball teams made the trip to their respective CYO Region 8 Championship games on March 1st. Two brought home the title.



The **Girls Varsity** team took second place in the conference tournament after losing to Saint Francis De Sales by a score of 18-17 in a hard-fought nail-biter.

The girls' loss was later avenged by the **Boys Varsity** team, which defeated the same school in a 45-43 overtime victory to claim the Championship Title. Eighth grader Brian Mobley scored the go-ahead shot that put Gesu on top.

After opening the game with a 10-0 run, the **Boys JV** team went on to defeat St. Ignatius by a margin of 25 points, bringing home the JV Championship Title.

Championship Day inspired a grand display of school spirit from the school cheerleaders and the stands crowded with Gesu parents, faculty and supporters.

Lower Grades Leap into Technology Age

Thanks to a donation from John J.F. Sherrerd, 18 additional classrooms will be outfitted with Smart Boards.

This spring, Pre-K through 4th grade classrooms, as well as the library, the art room, the music room, the science lab, the advanced math room and the computer lab will be outfitted with SMART Board Interactive Whiteboards. The 5th-8th grades and the advanced writing room have been using Smart Boards since the school's renovation was completed in September of 2006.

The addition of the 18 Smart Boards was made possible through the generous donation of John J.F. "Jay" Sherrerd. Fifth grade teacher Chris Harris, a certified SMART Board Master Trainer, is conducting training sessions for his Gesu colleagues in anticipation of the new arrivals.

Smart Boards are large interactive screens that display the teacher's computer monitor and facilitate the use of interactive software and media with an entire classroom. Smart Board class lessons can range from a virtual dissection of a frog to the demonstration of editing techniques.



Mr. Harris watches as 6th grader Kenyatta completes a fractions assignment on the Smart Board.

WANTED: Track Volunteers & Athletic Council Members!

Gesu is in need of volunteers to help Coach Pat Leaf with the 60 plus athletes who have gone out for the track team. In addition, we are seeking members for our new Athletic Council. If you are interested in helping with either the track team or the Athletic Council, please contact Ellen at 215-763-9077 or ellen.bourbon@gesuschool.org.

Writer Earns Award for Essay

8th grader Arielle receives honorable mention in NativityMiguel Network's Contest.

A student in Dr. Erwin's advanced writing class was recently recognized for her talent with an honorable mention award in the NativityMiguel Network's First Annual Thanksgiving Essay Contest. Eighth grader Arielle's essay was selected from among 220 entries submitted by students from 23 schools. The topic question for the competition was "Why are you thankful for your school?" Arielle's hard work was rewarded with a bookstore gift card.

As a student who attended Gesu for all but 1st grade, Arielle notes that she has had the opportunity to see the school improve and grow over the years, and her single year at another school gave her a new appreciation for Gesu's value. Arielle writes in her essay, "I wake up every morning anxious to go to school to see our new beautiful building and the beautiful people inside it. I'm always anxious to know what great learning plans the teacher has that day. I'm sad that this is my last year here, but I'll always come back to visit because of the fact that the school has been great to me."

Gesu Grabs National Award

School's annual symposium is lauded for innovation in total community involvement.

Gesu School was one of 12 national recipients of the Catholic Schools for Tomorrow Award for Innovations in Education. "The award annually honors 12 Catholic elementary and secondary schools that have led the way by implementing exemplary, innovative programs to improve the teaching and learning of their students, faculty, and staffs," states *Today's Catholic Teacher*, the publication that sponsors the awards.

Gesu garnered the award in the category "Innovation in Total Community Involvement" for the Annual Symposium on Inner-City Education it hosts in cooperation with the Gesu Institute.

In 1997, inspired by the vision of Board Chairman Winston J. Churchill, Gesu School held its first Symposium on Inner-City Education to help bridge the gap of inequality between inner-city and well funded schools. Thanks to the involvement of Gesu Trustee Dr. John DiIulio, the symposium brought together a panel of experts including Tim Russert of NBC News. The subsequent symposia have all attracted close to 200 guests, including educators and foundation and corporate representatives. Gesu's tenth annual symposium, held on November 1, 2007, featured NPR correspondent Juan Williams.

Supporter-Athlete Vaults Over Goal

First-time Ironman triathlete raises over \$10,000 for Gesu School and honors the memory of her mentor.

First-time triathlete Jen Sall was preparing to compete in the South Africa Ironman when she decided to add another layer of motivation to her training. She chose to use her competition to raise funds for Gesu School's athletic programs and to honor her late mentor and former Gesu Trustee Suzanne Stack.

Jen's initial fundraising goal was \$5000. Thanks to a successful email campaign, Jen's supporters blew her goal out of the water by contributing over \$10,000 in donations, mostly through the school's secure donation website.

Jen's other monumental goal looming on the horizon – completing her first Ironman triathlon on April 13th – combines a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike ride, and a 26.2 mile run. We wish Jen much success in her training and competition!

To read Jen's full story, visit www.GesuSchool.org/triathlon.htm.

Summer Program for Top Students Expands

Gesu's Young Scholars Program will add courses and lengthen instruction time.

For five weeks each summer, Gesu's Young Scholars Program takes the best and the brightest middle school students from Gesu School and neighboring inner-city schools, and provides intensive preparation for admission to the area's elite high schools. This summer enrichment session is a key component of the Young Scholars Program's year-round efforts to support highly motivated students in their academic pursuits.

This summer the program's 60 participants will benefit from additional courses and more instructional time. Science, Latin, and possibly Spanish will be added to the course offerings, which already include Computer Education, Math, Language Arts, Study Skills and Current Events & Civic Culture. Furthermore, the day has been extended from a 12:00 p.m. dismissal to a 2:00 p.m. dismissal.

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Gesu School is an independent Catholic school serving 450 children, pre-K through 8th grade, in North Philadelphia. In a city where just 50% of students will graduate from high school, over 90% of Gesu graduates do so, and many go on to college.

Ministered by the IHM sisters and the Jesuits, Gesu School provides a caring yet challenging education, stressing values and fundamentals in an ordered environment. Considered a national

model for success in inner-city schooling, the Gesu story has been reported by such national media as the Associated Press, *USA Today*, *Education Week*, *Momentum* and MSNBC.

Annual contributions from caring individuals, along with grants from companies and foundations, cover the gap between tuition payments and the actual cost to educate a child, provide scholarships, and enable Gesu to continue in its mission.

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1700 W. Thompson Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121-5023

215-763-9077
www.GesuSchool.org
information@gesuschool.org

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Gesu President & CEO Chris Beck thanks (from left) Merrill Lynch's Regional Managing Director Robert J. Bowman and First Vice President Kevin Kolmer for the firm's



contribution through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program. Also present (from left) are Jennifer Kolmer and Gesu Trustee Susan Shea. Through the EITC program, corporations make contributions to the Gesu Scholarship Fund and receive tax credits. An unprecedented \$7 million in EITC funds can be captured right now. Please contact the Gesu Development Office for more information.