

GOODTIMES

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The St. Vincent Elementary School Newspaper

A Day in the Life of a Teacher: Mrs. Salmassian

By Natalie H. and Jessica S.

Mrs. Salmassian is the second grade teacher at St. Vincent de Paul Elementary School. She graduated from USF (the University of San Francisco) with a bachelor's degree and returned later to complete her Master's degree in teaching and instruction. She has taught for 11 years, this year being her seventh year at St. Vincent's. Her parents and her aunts were also involved with teaching. Her father attended Stanford and worked for the University in their business office for eighteen years after receiving his MBA. Her mother taught primary grades (mostly first) for forty-four years and both of her aunts were teachers too. Before starting her teaching career, Mrs. Salmassian worked as a Sales Office Manager for an educational publishing company called Addison Wesley. Mrs. Salmassian's family



includes her daughter, Jessica, in the eighth grade and her husband, Zareh, who is a Continuous Improvement Manager in manufacturing for Foster's Wine Estates in Napa. The Salmassians own a black lab named Sevook, a rabbit named Lolly, and a kitten named Phoebe. Mrs. Salmassian started teaching at St. Vincent's in 2002 and has loved teaching the second grade ever since. She thinks that second grade students are at a great age because they are adjusted to the school and are eager learners. Mrs. Salmassian's favorite part of teaching second graders is that they tend to be curious, inquisitive, and good-natured. She also said, "This year Mrs. Benjamin, Mrs. Tobin, and I are working hard to provide the students with everything they need to succeed and enjoy second grade." When the school day is finished she said she loves to relax at home or have a nice dinner out with her husband. Furthermore, Mrs. Salmassian also stated that her hobbies include reading, playing the piano, and canoeing in the summer. In conclusion, Mrs. Salmassian is a highly appreciated, hardworking teacher at St. Vincent's. ★

COMMUNITY HELPERS

By: Janelle M. and Jacalyn M.

At St. Vincent's Elementary School, there are many students who are community helpers. We interviewed three students who help the community; Melanie H., Kristine B., and Natalie H.

Melanie is a fourth grade student at St. Vincent Elementary School. Her community service is training guide dogs. She trains dogs from puppies to adults to help the blind. She has been doing this community service for three years. She enjoys training dogs because she likes dogs and she likes to be around them. She said, "I



love to be around the dogs when they are puppies and when they are adults!" Melanie does not train dogs alone however. Her family also helps her. Melanie loves this service and hopes to continue doing it for a while.

Kristine is a seventh grader who also helps the community. Of the many services she does, one is making homeless packs. Kristine, along with her mother and sister, puts a variety of basic necessities including food, water, anti-bacterial gels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks and scarves into these packs. Kristine 333 makes the scarves herself and it takes three hours to make one scarf. "It is hard work but it pays off in the end," says Kristine. Kristine has been making homeless packs for many years but has only recently been adding the scarves. She likes doing this because she likes being able to help people and make a difference.

Natalie is an eighth grade student. Her community service is COTS Food For Families. Natalie and her mom drive to the Petaluma Food Kitchen every Saturday morning and put food in boxes and then deliver the food to families in need. She has been doing this wonderful service for almost two years. Natalie loves doing this service for many reasons. First, she likes to meet the families when she delivers the food. Secondly, she earns service hours. Natalie loves this service and hopes to continue this wonderful act. ★



Speech and Debate Tournament 2009

By: Kiley C., Alex ., and Harrison T.

The annual St. Vincent De Paul Jr. High Speech Tournament was held on January 24, 2009 at St. Vincent de Paul High School. Several schools were involved, including St. Vincent's Elementary School, St. John's Creekside, Healdsburg School, Cherry Valley, and Our Lady of Loretta. This year is the first year our school has participated in the debate category, and the St. Vincent debate teams did very well. The teams consisted of the following pairings: Steven W. and Harrison T., Brandon E. and Arman Y., and Haley L. and Mitchell W. Harrison and Steven were commemorated for winning three of their four debates and a winning record. Steven also received a Top Speaker Award. The award was based on the number of speaker points each debater received from the judges for skill in debating.

Debater Harrison T. told us about his experience. "Our topic was nuclear energy. My partner and I had to debate both sides of the issue, and this required about two months worth of research. The participants all convened in Tillman Hall. For one hour the two categories, speech and debate, would leave the hall and go to the classrooms to do our events. My partner, Steven, and I would go into the room with our opponents and one judge. We would do the debate, and then come back to Tillman Hall. This year was very exciting since this year was the first year SV participated in debate. When the awards ceremony came, both of us were amazed that we had a winning record. The event was really fun, and I would do it again in the blink of an eye."

The St. Vincent's speech team also did extraordinarily well. The team consisted of five people: Ellie O., Josh M., and Jessica S., who participated in Dramatic Interpretation; Kiley C., who was in Humorous Interpretation; and Regina P., who participated in Expository. All those in Dramatic Interpretation made it to the finals, and Ellie won first place in her category, and also a scholarship to the Speech and Debate Camp held each summer at St. Vincent's High School. Josh received second place in the same category. Kiley received second place in Humorous Interpretation. Regina received first in Expository and also received the scholarship to the Speech and Debate Camp.

Kiley, the second place winner in Humorous Interpretation said, "For the tournament, we were supposed to pick a book, take parts of it, and piece it together [to make a speech.] We started in November and Mrs. Roffmann, her daughter, [who is a professional and has gone to nationals] and Mrs. DeVost would listen to our speeches and give us constructive criticism. We were supposed to fix the flaws in our speeches by our next meeting. At the tournament, we would stand in front of the judges and say our speeches. The judge would evaluate our performance and rate it 1-5. There were never any ties except for 5's. All together, the speech tournament was very fun, enlightening, and helped me with my public speaking skills." Overall, we congratulate the students brave enough to participate on a job well done! ★



Learn About Lent

A study of the season

By Ryan C. and Cara G.

As many students are aware, there is an upcoming Church season this spring. This season is called Lent. However, many students may be unaware of all of the facts surrounding Lent. Lent is a forty day-long preparation for Easter, leading up to the celebration of the Great Easter Triduum. The purpose of the season is to prepare for remembering and celebrating Jesus' rising from the dead after three days and saving us from sin and death. When it comes to participation, there are many ways to take part in the season. First, you can participate through prayer. Secondly, you can participate through penance, which is the desire to be forgiven for your sins. Finally, you can participate through almsgiving, which means giving in an act of charity to those who need it. This participation is required by all Catholics as an act of worship of Christ.

To help confirm these facts, the religion teacher, Mr. Forsell, talked to us about Lent. Mr. Forsell stated, "Lent is a time for us to remember that we are made for God and for heaven. It is also a time to strengthen our friendship and relationship with God. We celebrate Lent by praying, fasting, and almsgiving. The significance of Lent is that it is a time for Catholics to re-

member and celebrate all that Jesus did to save us. It is also a time to prepare for the great Easter Triduum. Christians around the world participate in this holy season of renewal.

In conclusion, Lent is a very important, if not the most important, time of the year for many Christians around the world. ★

Christmas at St. Vincent's

**By John P., Cameron S.
and Cameron M.**

Christmas is a special time of year when we celebrate all that we have in our lives. We spend the day with our families, friends, and relatives. But, not everyone spends Christmas Day the same way. We set out to find how some students at St. Vincent's spent their Christmas. We were rewarded with a wealth of information. We found that 50% of the students we interviewed went to visit their grandparents. For example, John C., a second grader, said he went to his grandparents' house as did Akayla F., a fourth grader. Adam M., a fifth grader, also spent the day at his grandma's house. He particularly enjoyed his Christmas. "I really liked seeing my Nana," he said. "I only see her once a year." Victoria Y., an eighth grader, had the same feelings. She too visited her grandparents. Her favorite part of Christmas was seeing family she only sees once a year. Besides visiting grandparents, some students stayed home. Harrison T., for example, is a seventh grader who spent Christmas at home, celebrating with his family. Jenna M., a third

grader, also stayed home. Some students visited other places. Andrew L., a first grader, traveled all the way to Palm Springs to beat the cold. Also, Brandon B., a sixth grader, went to visit his aunt in Vacaville. Altogether, everyone seemed to enjoy their Christmas Day and are already looking forward to next year. After all, there's only about 300 more days until Christmas! ★

THE SPORTS CORNER

**By Ellie O. and
Megan T.**

The Northern Valley League, or NVL, seventh grade boys began their season with their first basketball game on Thursday, January 8. They played in Santa Rosa against Rincon Valley Christian. Unfortunately, RVC beat our boys by ten points, the final score being 28 to 38. The team members are; John ., Derek M., Austin S., Cameron M., Kyle B., Richard Y., Alexander N., and Brandon E. Their coach is Ralph Evans. We spoke with Derek, John, and Austin. They all agreed that the best part of their team was getting the chance to play basketball with their friends. For the most part it is everyone's first year, except for Brandon, Alexander, and John. During the games, the coach makes it fair and lets everyone play. "Our coach is

really great, and I think it's cool to play with my friends," Austin commented. This season is a great experience for our seventh grade boys.

The St. Vincent's Northern Valley League, or NVL, girls' volleyball team has been a tradition for our school. The coach, Mrs. Leslie O'Neill, has given her time to coach the mixed team of seventh and eighth grade girls. Their first game was at their home gym, St. Vincent's High School, where they played Rincon Valley Christian. The game was a real nail-biter! They won in the third match, 15-17. The team consists of six seventh graders; Ursyla B., Megan T., Ellie O., Grace J., Jacalyn M., and Rainey H. Grace says that her favorite part is spending time with her friends. "We are really working well together. The coach is supportive and fun to work with," she states. Another one of the team players is Ursyla. She started playing volleyball when she was in the third grade and has loved it ever since. She loves spending time with her friends and playing the game with them. Also, there are six eighth graders, Briana V., Veronica B., Victoria Y., Rocelyn D., Shannon O., and Fiona D. The eighth grade girls are sad that it is their last year at the elementary school, but they will always have the memories in their hearts. Briana loves playing with her team. She has been playing volleyball for one and a half years. "Coach has helped me so much, and she is the reason I have made such an improvement this year," Briana says. The St. Vincent's NVL girl's volleyball team has one dedicated coach and many hardworking players. ★



God Squad Live in Concert

By Arman Y., Johnny K.
and Ricky Y.

The St. Vincent Elementary school band called the **God Squad** performed on December 17, 2008 at 2:15 p.m. outside on the playground. An estimated 300 students packed the bleachers to watch the band play. The band began by playing, "Rock the Show." This song featured Atea S., Rose S., and Isabel V. on vocals. This song revved up the crowd for a great show in which the band was asked to play an encore. One of the band members, Rose, co-wrote the lyrics to this song. She borrowed the tune from a song by Carrie Underwood. Rose began singing when she was three years old. Rose is also the first eighth grader to join the band. Isabel and Atea swept the crowd off their feet with a mid-show song, "Let it Be". Atea is a fifth grader at the school and has a wonderful voice. She also plays the piano, which she has played for many years. Isabel is a sixth grader at the school who plays the electric piano and sings. She has played for seven years and practices everyday. Olivia, a sixth grader, joined the band because she loves music. She has played the keyboard-bass since September and is doing a great job. She began playing piano in Kindergarten and played for about six months. She wrote and sang the lyrics and melody to the song "Sometimes", and Mr. Goldowitz wrote the music. Austin B., electric keyboard player, did a phenomenal job as well. He wishes to write his own song soon. He joined to get involved in his new school. Andre is a fourth

grader at the school. He plays the guitar and practices everyday. He wanted to join the band because he thought it would be a fun experience. He has been playing the electric guitar for one year and hopes to write a song as well. "Playing in the band is not as easy as it seems," says Andre.

Mr. Goldowitz encourages the students

"I was excited, yet scared because I didn't know what the results would be," Janelle states. Even though the judges appoint the Science Fair winners, Mrs. Giacometti is the hard-working teacher who puts it all together.

Throughout the years Mrs. Giacometti has directed many Science Fairs. She has seen several amazing projects, but her two favorite projects were those of Brandon

M. and Courtney C. Brandon, who did the project "Fear Factor" in the area of behavioral science, received an honorable mention in the State Science Fair. Courtney, who did an experiment on the hazards of smoking, received third place in the State Fair. In addition to these great projects, Mrs. Giacometti always enjoys seeing how the projects turn out. "The projects turn out somewhat different than the way I visualized them. I ab-



to write their own songs and to step out of their comfort zone. "As long as everyone tries their best, I'm happy with the band! Making mistakes is not a big deal as long as they've practiced at home. The more practice - the less mistakes and the more confident they feel. Everybody makes mistakes, but putting in the effort is the most important thing. Full effort is full victory!" says Mr. Goldowitz. ★

olutely love seeing the results," she states. Mrs. Giacometti has seen so many different projects, she is constantly amazed with student inventiveness. She states, "I am so proud of the effort students put into doing the Science Fair." That in fact, is the reason why the judging of the projects is Mrs. Giacometti's least favorite part of the Science Fair and why she sometimes even disagrees with the judges. She knows how hard each student has worked and how much they have strived to get there. On the other hand, her favorite part of the Science Fair is when the projects come in, and everybody comes for the Science Fair Night. "Students are always so proud and pleased to show their work to others," she says.

The Science Fair with Mrs. Giacometti

By: Emerald J. and Kimya B.

This year the St. Vincent de Paul Science Fair was held on February 2, 2009. Projects from fifth to eighth grades were displayed in the science lab and hallways. It is mandatory for all fifth and sixth graders to participate in the Science Fair, but optional for seventh and eighth graders. All participants can earn up to 100 points of extra credit. Janelle M., a junior high student said, "It takes about one month to come up with an idea, do the experiment, and put the project together. But it depends on the experiment that is done, and how detailed it is." The Science Fair Night is a very enjoyable night.



The Science Fair is a great way not only to learn something new, but also to have fun and become more interested in the field of science. "The Science Fair is definitely a lot of work. However, it introduces you to new ideas about everyday life. I love it," says Janelle.

The winners for this year's Science Fair were posted in the Tuesday note. Special recognition goes to the first place winners in fifth through eight grades. They are Cole M. (fifth grade), Isabel V. and Lauren K. (sixth grade), Jenna P. (seventh grade), and Kiley C. (eighth grade). ★



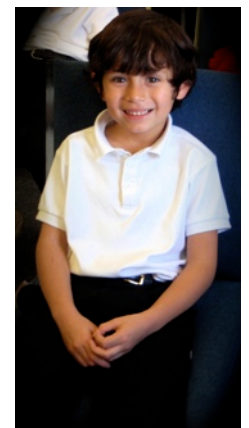
George B. is a kindergartener at St. Vincent de Paul Elementary School. He has an older brother named Miguel, who is in first grade. George enjoys St. Vincent's because he has made many friends. George enjoys learning new sight words every Wednesday in kindergarten. George's favorite part of the day is during recess when he can play with all of his friends. Outside of school, George enjoys playing football and Wii with his brother. Overall, George enjoys kindergarten at St. Vincent's.

Another kindergartener that loves St. Vincent's is Jessica B. Jessica loves St. Vincent's because our principal, Mrs. Roffmann cares for the students. Jessica really enjoys coming to school. She loves seeing all of her friends and she looks forward to math class. She also enjoys math meeting every morning because she can learn the months of the year and count the number of days we have been in school. Also Jessica really enjoys activity time during the day. During activity time Jessica can play dress up with all of her friends. Jessica really likes her teacher, Mrs. Sarlatte. "She helps me whenever I need help," says Jessica. After school Jessica goes to gymnastics where she can do all sorts of tricks. Both George and Jessica enjoy kindergarten at St. Vincent's. ★

A Day in the Life of a Kindergartener

By Brianna V. and Brenna T.

For some students, kindergarten is the first exposure to the enchanting, wondrous world of education. For most, it is the time when they will learn to read their first words and to do simple mathematical equations. We talked to two students for whom kindergarten is a brave new world of discovery.



Special thanks to Mrs. Carlsen for many wonderful photographs in this issue.