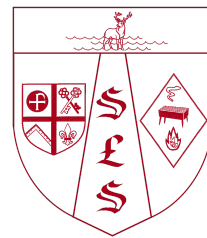


# *The Spirit of Saint Lawrence*

## *A Mission of St. John XXIII Parish*

**"Saint Lawrence School - Shaping the Leaders of Tomorrow"**

**A Newsletter for Alumni, Parents, Parishioners, and Friends - Fall/Winter 2024-2025**



### *From the Desk of Jim Messina, Principal*

When I reflect on my life up to this point, I have so many warm memories of school. I can still remember all of my elementary teacher's names and the essential life lessons they taught me along the way. From Mrs. Galligan in Kindergarten to Ms. Grady in Grade 8, these dedicated teachers helped to open my eyes to the most important life lessons. Be on time, be a person of integrity, treat others with kindness, keep an open mind, be mindful that your goal should be to learn something new every day, and be a joy-filled spirit! I'm thankful that those lessons were reinforced at home as well. I've been blessed with a stellar education that prepared me to be a leader, first in the classroom and now as a school principal. I had role models there as well - Mr. Frattini at Mackrille, Mr. Shea at Bailey Middle School, and Mr. Clifford at Notre Dame. These people helped to guide my thinking about what's most important in schools. We are all the product of what we've learned, so I'm excited to bring those life lessons to my leadership at Saint Lawrence School in its 107<sup>th</sup> school year.

I'm thankful to Mr. Frank Arnone, Mr. Paul DeFonzo, and all those who have helped to sustain the legacy of this incredible school. I'm eternally grateful to Father José Mercado and the members of the School Council who have entrusted me with the care of this incredible learning community! A gem like St. Lawrence School can only exist because of the tireless efforts of so many staff members, students, parents, and countless volunteers who are the lifeblood of our school and give us the energy to sustain our work through their time, talents, and treasure. I hope that we can continue to count on you to support our mission to *Shape the Leaders of Tomorrow!*

With Heartfelt Gratitude,

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**Help us Celebrate the St. Lawrence Class of 2024!**

**They're off to become Freshmen at Notre Dame,  
Sacred Heart Academy, and West Haven High School.  
Please keep them in your prayers!**



*Lord God, we thank you for the gift of education and the ability to learn. We ask you to bless and assist all who do the work of teaching in this world. Catholic education is a great gift in helping to form students in the faith while they learn other subjects.*

### **New Additions**

We are excited to announce several new additions to our staff. We look forward to their experience, energy and teaching excellence, and ask God to bless them as they become members of our St. Lawrence family!

Ms. Jennifer Noyes: 6th Grade homeroom / Math & Science

Mr. Eric Sale: 7th Grade Homeroom / History & Religion

Mrs. Jill Hernandez: CT Future Musicians Recorders & Band

Mr. James Eagan: P.E. Teacher - *Welcome Back!*



### **Sponsor-A-Classroom Supporters**

We are incredibly grateful for your generous donation of \$250.00 to St. Lawrence School. Your kindness will allow our classrooms to be filled with the extra supplies needed to enhance the students' learning experience. Your support is a true blessing, we thank you for helping us continue our mission of providing a nurturing and faith filled education for every child.

***THANK YOU!***

**John & Elaine Anderson ~ The Celentano Family ~ Annmarie Connelly ~ Cheryl Cresta**

**Virginia Hemming ~ Sharon Johnson ~ The Lamothe Family ~ The Mantilia Family ~ Francis McNulty**

**Richard Ocone ~ Charlene Pace ~ The Rylski Family ~ Dennis Sewell ~ Joseph & Eileen Sudol**

### **HOPES Award**

The Annual HOPES (Help our Parish Educators & Students) Dinner was held in September at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. The evening provided the Archdiocese of Hartford a wonderful opportunity to honor volunteers who give so much time and talent to our Catholic Schools. This year's Saint Lawrence School honorees were: Mrs. Shari Shore, Mrs. Jennifer Delaney, and Mr. Jonathon & Mrs. Michelle Roman. We thank them for the care and concern they have for our school parish.



*But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were hidden through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved.*

**Ephesian 2:4-5**

# KNOW, LOVE, & SERVE GOD



*Grade 3 made Get-Well-Soon Cards for Mayor Borer*



*Father José delivers a homily about Knowing, Loving, & Serving God and one another!*



*9/11 Memorial Prayer Service*



*After School Science Club*



*Teresa Pelham's Author Visit with her dog, Javier*



*Making Cards for Hurricane First Responders*



*Grade 7 Lectors at First Friday Mass*



*Pre-K Virtual Sing-Along with Mr. Kenny*



*Father Ricardo blesses the children's Rosaries*



*Our Students of the Month for October!*



*Library Time with Mrs. Collura*



*After School Karate Club with Mr. Rylski*

# *A Legacy of Faith and Friendship at Saint Lawrence Catholic School*

## **The Chessen Family- Building a Foundation of Faith**

Dan and Kelly Chessen chose Saint Lawrence Catholic School for their three daughters, Niamh, Molly, and Linnie, because of the school's warm, welcoming environment. After exploring their options, they believed the school would lay a strong foundation not just academically but also in forming good human beings, rooted in faith and community. Their decision paid off, and their daughters thrived in the school's high expectations and nurturing atmosphere.



From Bible skits to school plays, field trips and special family events like 'Christmas in the Schoolhouse' the Chessen family cherished their time at Saint Lawrence. Their involvement extended beyond the classroom-Dan served as Home and School Association secretary for six years, he coached the robotics team, and the whole family contributed to numerous school events. Kelly volunteered as a room mom. The Chessen girls are active alumni volunteers, always stepping in during open houses and school events. The family's deep commitment to the school also helped them get more involved in the broader West Haven community, solidifying a lasting bond with Saint Lawrence and its mission.

## **A Friendship Rooted in Faith** *Linnie Chessen and LuLu Sebas (Class of 2024)*



Linnie Chessen, the youngest daughter of Dan and Kelly met Lulu Sebas while playing soccer in 2015. They sparked a friendship that would ultimately bring the Sebas family into the Saint Lawrence fold. Linnie, who was already enrolled at Saint Lawrence, invited her friend to shadow her at school and immediately Lulu fell in love with the close-knit, faith centered environment. Their friendship led to a new chapter, as the Sebas family considered and eventually chose Catholic education.

The bond between Linnie and Lulu grew stronger over the years as they shared many special moments in band, theater and volunteer activities at school. Both honor society students, they were recognized for their academic excellence and their eagerness to give back to the school community. Whether helping with the food drive, bingo and many other activities, their friendship represented the values of Saint Lawrence- faith, service and community.



*So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight.*

**2 Corinthians 5:6-7**

## The Sebas Family- Faith and Quiet dedication



The Sebas family's journey with Saint Lawrence began with their daughter's friendship. After Lulu returned home raving about the welcoming atmosphere and the vibrant community spirit she witnessed The Sebas family was inspired. Once they enrolled Lulu at Saint Lawrence, they noticed their lives became more centered around faith and God's teachings

They embraced the school's sense of community, getting involved in various ways. Lulu's father Roy, while quiet and working behind the scenes, has become a pillar of Saint Lawrence whether painting, constructing or supplying what's needed. Roy and Colleen find ways to help without seeking any recognition and are always actively supportive in anything their children are involved with. Lulu's grandmother Jacki, became an active member of the school community working as a paraprofessional for the kindergarten class and dedicates countless hours to volunteering in the library. She is active in the Saint Lawrence Christmas in the Schoolhouse and is always there to lend a hand or donation for whatever is needed. The connection did not stop with Lulu. Soon her younger sister Charlotte joined the Saint Lawrence Family continuing the legacy of engagement and community involvement.

### **Carrying on Tradition- Charlotte Sebas**

As the youngest member of the Sebas family, Charlotte has quickly become a beloved part of the Saint Lawrence community. Now in second grade she is showing artistic talents, often drawing pictures. Recently, she created a special card for one of Saint Lawrence's oldest Alumni Mrs. Margaret Sauvage who is over 100 years old. Charlotte's gesture of love and connection through art exemplifies the values instilled by both her family and the school. Like her sister, Charlotte enjoys volunteering in the school library with her grandmother during the summer helping keep family tradition alive.



Final thoughts: Both families agree that Saint Lawrence Catholic School is not just an institution but a second home, where children grow in faith, character, and love. Choosing Catholic School has been truly a blessing to watch their children become the best version of themselves. The investment has been worth it. It has brought them closer as a family. The values their children have learned will stay with them for life.

***Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that  
we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart.***

**2 Corinthians 4:1**

**We would love to add you to our email list!**  
**Please email [bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net](mailto:bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net)**

# *Saint Lawrence School Annual Fund Report*

**January 1, 2024- September 30, 2024**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have generously donated to support our beloved school. Your contributions play a vital role in ensuring that we can continue providing a strong Catholic education for our students. Your kindness not only sustains our mission but also nurtures the spiritual, academic, and personal growth of every child. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and the future of our students. We gratefully acknowledge all donations, and regret any inadvertent errors or omissions.

## **Class Patrons \$500-\$999**

Keyes, Sara (53')  
Prete, Thomas (76')

## **Student Supporter \$250-\$499**

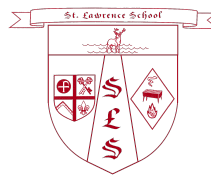
Bimonte, Barbara (59')  
Clifford, Patrick (71')  
Stop & Shop W. H  
West Haven Fire Department

## **Teacher Benefactor \$100-\$249.00**

Coyle, Thomas (63')  
Dolan, Margaret (65')  
Doolan, Kim  
Dwyer, Barbara (57')  
Dwyer Francis (58')  
Flynn, Dierdra (72')  
Gilliam, Matthew (09')  
Gunning, Carol (56')  
Heckert, Ron  
Heffernan, Michael E, (56')  
Nicholson, James (64')  
Prior, Joseph  
Raytheon  
Ritucci, Diane (72')  
Sebas, Jacki  
Sisters of Saint Joseph  
Willis, Jean  
Zweigle, Christine

## **Annual Membership \$25-\$99**

Bowery Michael (74')  
Dowgiallo, Alex (83')  
Greater, Edward (56')  
Jacobs-Chiaraluce, Briana (09')  
Jackson, Frank  
Licausi-Esposito, Grace  
Malerba, Rocco (56')  
McKiernan, John  
Meskill, Matthew (75')  
Meskill, Michael (63')  
Morgan, Ruth  
Morrissey, Elizabeth (75')  
Perez, Jennifer  
Philogene, Lijeamy  
Prete, John (71')  
Reis, Joseph (70')  
Romano, Dominic  
Staniewicz, Gary (68')  
The Community Foundation  
Tomassi, Denelda  
Tranquilli, John (67')  
Zyskowski, Mary (73')



# ALUMNI NEWS

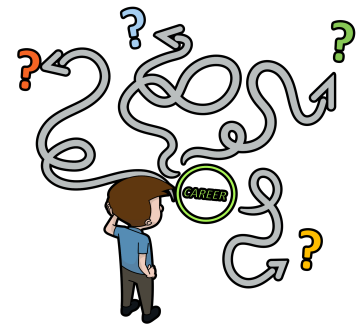
*Congratulations to the Class of 1974's 50th Reunion!*



*Saturday, September 28th, 2024, was a perfect fall day to celebrate a reunion . What a joy it was to reconnect, tour Saint Lawrence School, and reminisce about the old school days. After a delightful luncheon, the day was made even more special with a beautiful Mass at St John Vianney, bringing us together in faith and friendship, celebrating and making new memories. Thank you to all who attended!*

## Calling All St. Lawrence Alumni - We'd Love to Welcome You Back!

We are excited to invite our alumni back to Saint Lawrence School for an upcoming career day on Friday, May 2nd, 2025. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to share your professional journey and inspire our current students as they explore potential career paths. Whether you are in healthcare, business, the arts, or other fields, your unique experience can offer valuable insights and encouragement. If you're interested in being a guest speaker and connecting with the next generation, we would love to have you. Please reach out for more details and help us make this event truly special. Call the school at (203)933-2518 or email Bambi Grestini at [bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net](mailto:bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net).



***“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.”***

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## Upcoming Events

### St. Lawrence Christmas Concert

*Wednesday, December 4th, 2024*

**6:00pm at St. Louis Church**

**Pre-K through Grade 8**

*Future Musicians Recorders, Band, PK-8 Chorus, & Living Nativity  
All Are Welcome to Join Us!*



## Basketball Season is on the horizon!

Email [jmessina@stlaw.eduk12.net](mailto:jmessina@stlaw.eduk12.net) if you'd like to receive updates about the Chargers' 2024-2025 Season!

