

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Saints JFX  
School





Dear Parents and Friends,

I reflect on this school year with immense gratitude for our return to dynamic programs, spirited celebrations, and compelling learning experiences that had been largely paused since March 2020. On behalf of the entire Saints JFX community, thank you for the extraordinary generosity and support you demonstrated through challenging and unparalleled times. Your dedication anchored and steadied us as we navigated the unexpected. Our community maneuvered persistent change with resilience and grace, and your children watched and learned as parents, teachers and volunteers modeled Christ's love for one another through a global pandemic.

Today, our vibrant campuses are awash in joy and exuberance once again. Our children are nurtured in an inspired, faith-based environment where they expand horizons, share thoughts, develop ideas, find voices, cultivate talents, and serve the greater community with a buoyant spirit of benevolence. I am grateful for our incredibly talented faculty and staff who are committed to providing an education that is Christ-centered and nourishes both the mind and the heart. Truly, these men and women live out their vocations as servant leaders dedicated to the mission of Catholic education.

I am profoundly grateful for the gifts we receive from you in their many forms: thoughtful notes and gestures, donated items and resources, new ideas, financial offerings, contributions of time and volunteerism, and a general "can do" attitude that is the engine of this parish school. Your presence and participation continue to make Saints Joseph and Francis Xavier an exceptional community, and the gift of your children - our students - gives us all hope for a bright future ahead!

I invite you to review this annual report with curiosity around how you can partner with Fr. Wayne, school administrators, faculty and staff to sustain the delicate and excellent gift that is Catholic education. We are a united and engaged community marked by a spirit of generosity and a desire to come together to do great things. Saints JFX is a magical place and it is my great pleasure to love and serve each of our 699 students this year.

Respectfully,

*elliott*



LETTER FROM

*Christine Elliott*  
INTERIM PRINCIPAL

# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

## ADMINISTRATION

Fr. Wayne Watts, Pastor

Christine Elliott, Principal

Mia Montemurro, Assistant Principal

Joe D'Arco, Operations Director

Amy Butterworth, Director of Early Childhood

Eileen Kirk, Director of Middle School

Alex Lazar, Athletic Director

## 2022-2023 SCHOOL BOARD

Mike Henn, Chair

Chantal Petherbridge, Vice Chair

Lori Crosson-Tieché, Secretary

Lauren Nisbet

Melanie Thomas

Tasha Wallace

Mark Zienkiewicz

Gretchen Lyons

Mike Kelliher

Ann Knauth

David Majewski

Katie Byrne

Molly Harris



699

CURIOUS LEARNERS

394

ENGAGED FAMILIES  
FROM WILMETTE AND  
ACROSS THE NORTHSORE

106

TALENTED FACULTY AND  
STAFF ACROSS TWO  
CAMPUS SETTINGS

74

PARENT  
VOLUNTEER  
CHAIRS

55

LEAD TEACHERS  
AND 19 AIDES







# IN FAITH, TOGETHER, WE CAN DO ANYTHING. INFINITE & ADDITIONAL

## COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

Roughly 50% of faculty  
and staff hold a masters  
degree or other advanced  
certification.

# 38

HOMEROOMS IN  
PRESCHOOL THROUGH  
8TH GRADE

# \$9million

INVESTMENT INTO  
CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE  
IN 2019

# 18

CRUSADER  
COMMUNITIES

# 25+

HSO SPONSORED  
EVENTS TO ENGAGE  
THE COMMUNITY

# 173

YEARS OF  
CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION



# THE HSO MODELS CITIZENSHIP AND SERVICE FOR OUR CHILDREN.

2022-2023 FUNDRAISING SUPPORTED A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE  
THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF OUR PARENT COMMUNITY.



**\$85,000** RAISED FOR PLAY AND  
ENRICHMENT EQUIPMENT



**\$2,300** IN NEW LIBRARY BOOKS SECURED  
THROUGH THE FALL BOOK FAIR



**1,000** TEACHER LUNCHES DONATED AND SERVED



**106** YEAR END BONUS CHECKS PAID TO SUPPORT  
AND RETAIN TALENTED FACULTY

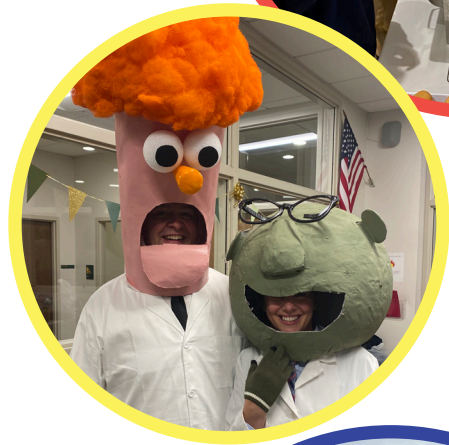


**\$20,000** IN EPIC FUNDS COMMITTED TO SECURE  
AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR VISITS

HOME +

AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	DEC	JAN	FEB	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	MAY
ICE CREAM TRUCK FOR FACULTY/STAFF BACK TO SCHOOL BASH	BOOSTERTHON FALL BOOK FAIR	TRIVIA NIGHT HALLOWEEN PARTY	PROGRESSIVE DINNER STUDENT THANKSGIVING FEAST	SIP-N-SHOP BREAKFAST WITH SANTA	STUDENT CHRISTMAS SHOPPE CHRISTMAS MOM'S LUNCHEON	BINGO NIGHT	TALENT SHOW GRADES 3-8 FACULTY FEAST	FATHER (VIP)/DAUGHTER DANCE MOTHER (VIP)/SON	ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY	SHOWCASE (FUNDRAISER)	ICE CREAM TRUCK FOR FACULTY/STAFF NATIONAL SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S DAY	TEACHERS LIGHT THE WAY SPRING BOOK FAIR





SCHOOL

12+  
COMMITTEES  
DEDICATED TO  
BUILDING COMMUNITY



# A COMMITMENT TO SAFETY



## SAFETY AND WELLNESS OF OUR COMMUNITY IS OUR UTMOST PRIORITY

Learning happens today in the context of Covid, heightened school safety concerns, and significant social emotional stressors.

Saints JFX recognizes that cultivating a successful learning environment means advocating for the health and wellness of our students in new and profound ways.

Our team maintains a close relationship with the Wilmette PD and meets regularly with the school resource officer.

Saints JFX has also made notable upgrades in security resources including double, remote lock entries.

Digital citizenship and safe use of online tools is emphasized through curriculum, firewalls, secure campus wifi and consultation with outside speakers, partners and safety resources.



# WRAPPING OUR ARMS AROUND STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

*Our student services and support teams are dedicated to ensuring that every child thrives.*

## STUDENT SERVICES TEAM INCLUDES:

- STUDENT SERVICES COORDINATOR
- TEAM OF SCHOOL NURSES
- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
- TWO LEARNING BEHAVIOR SPECIALISTS
- TWO SOCIAL WORKERS
- TWO READING SPECIALISTS
- FACULTY/INSTRUCTIONAL COACH
- PART-TIME SPEECH THERAPIST
- PERMANENT SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- ZONES OF REGULATION SOCIAL EMOTIONAL CURRICULUM
- ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS CURRICULUM THROUGH RUSH NEUROBEHAVIORAL CENTER
- SCREENING THROUGH NORTHWESTERN CENTER FOR AUDIOLOGY, SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND LEARNING
- SOOTHING AND JOYFUL SURPRISES...INCLUDING LOVE FROM TIPPY THE THERAPY DOG, A TALK ON MINDFULNESS, AND A VISIT FROM A BAGPIPER



*Joanna Nummy*  
LEARNING BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST

“ I love collaborating, problem solving, and finding the sweet spot psychologists call the *Zone of Proximal Development*. This is the place between what someone can do independently and what they can do with scaffolded support. When we do this well, we foster the growth mindset and anything is possible! ”



# KNOWING AND HON

## EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSES *Lead teacher plus aide across all homerooms*

- 11 Homerooms spanning 2 years old through Junior Kindergarten
- Flexible programs include Before, Morning, Lunch Bunch, Afternoon and After Care
- Teacher + Aide in every homeroom
- “Specials” include yoga, Spanish, library and music
- St. Joseph Campus supported by Directors of Early Childhood and Student Life
- Dedicated to building early childhood community and connecting new families to Saints JFX

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSES *Teaching aide support through 2nd grade*

- 15 homerooms across grades K-4
- Average classroom size of 19
- Teacher + Aide in K and 1st; Shared Aide across 2nd grade rooms
- Spanish, library, PE, music, art
- Before/after care, band, after school clubs, vibrant Library programming, Irish dance and more



## MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 12 Homerooms spanning grades 5-8
- Single sex groupings for looped advisory, visual and creative arts instruction
- Morning Mingle, Life Skills curriculum, Honors Math program
- Early adolescent guidance provided by a Middle School Director
- Buddy system pairing oldest and youngest students



# ORING EVERY CHILD.



## 18 CRUSADER COMMUNITIES

K-8 grade teams grow, learn, attend Mass and play with the same community of students that pull from all grades over the course of their nine years on the SFX Campus to help establish camaraderie and connection. Crusader Community highlights include Field Day and the Thanksgiving Feast.



# STUDENT LIFE

319 STUDENTS  
ENROLLED  
ACROSS 10  
AFTER SCHOOL  
CLUBS.



## SERVICES AND EXTRACURRICULARS INCLUDE:

- **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

*Debate, LEGO, Chess, Fun Food, Coding and more.*

- **STUDENT COUNCIL**

- **CRUSADER AMBASSADORS**

- **CRUSADER COMMUNITIES**

- **BAND**

- **ONE BOOK/ONE  
COMMUNITY READS**

- **IRISH DANCE**

- **ALTAR SERVING**

- **BATTLE OF THE BOOKS**

- **SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS**

- **SAFETY PATROL**

- **THEATRE CLUB**

- **10TH PERIOD**

- **SCOUTING**





SAINTS JFX IS A MEMBER OF THE CII-3A ATHLETIC LEAGUE. OUR STUDENT ATHLETES PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING AND COMPETITION IN GRADES 5-8. SAINTS JFX PLAYS A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE COUNCIL WITH ROBUST PROGRAMS AND A FULL-TIME ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.

## ATHLETICS INCLUDE:

- **CHEERLEADING**
- **TRACK & FIELD**
- **FOOTBALL**
- **GIRLS VOLLEYBALL**
- **GOLF**
- **CROSS COUNTRY**
- **BASKETBALL**

85% OF OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ATHLETICS IN THE PAST YEAR.

## DID YOU KNOW?

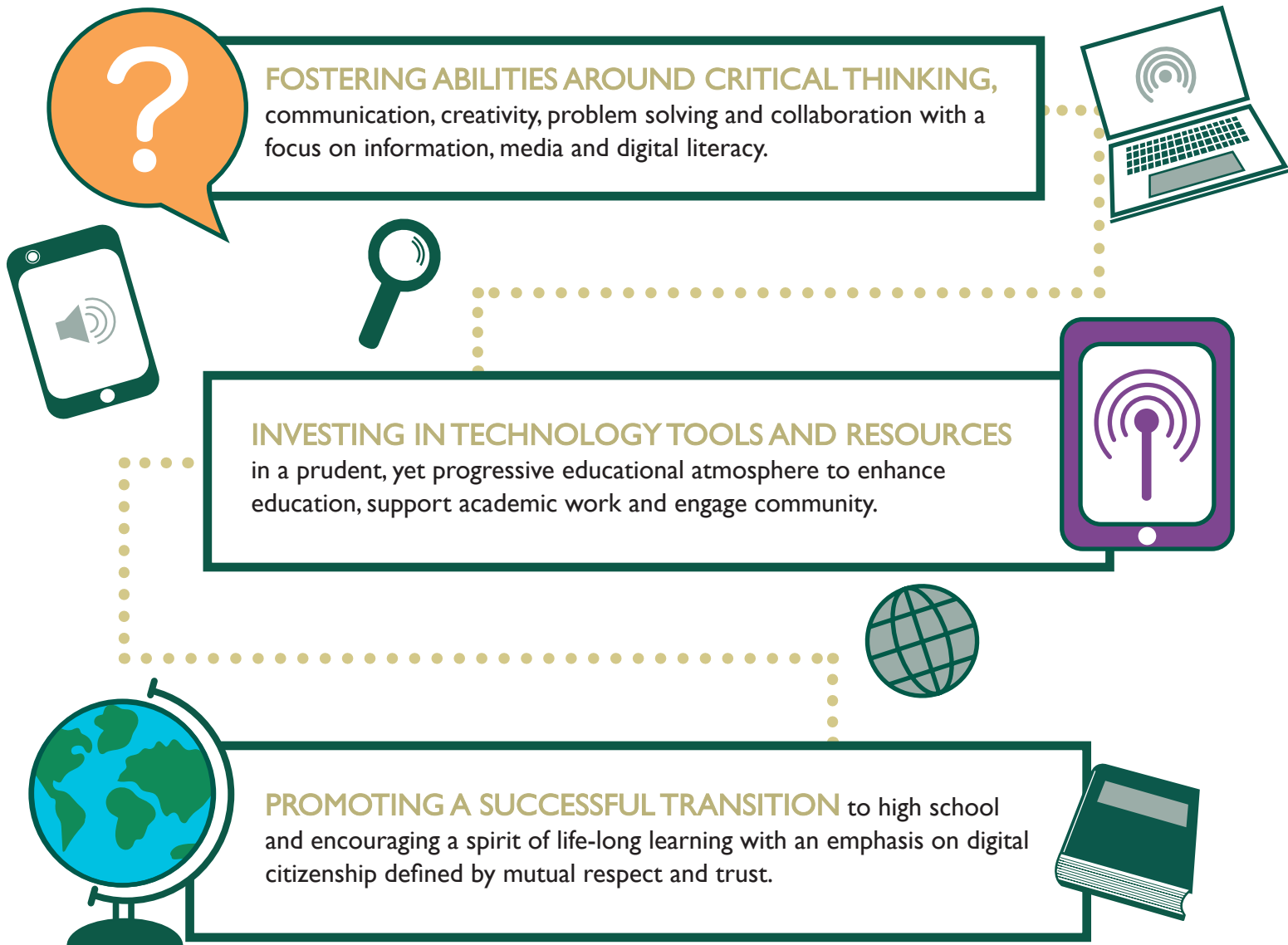
The SFX Gym features streaming by Spiideo helping to connect families to special moments.



# ATHLETICS



# EDUCATING LEARNERS WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS FOREMOST IN MIND.



“Thanks to EPIC, I attended the De Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture conferences at University of Notre Dame in 2018 and again in 2021, and most recently the Inaugural Word on Fire “Wonder” Conference in Dallas with Fr. Rob Ryan to explore the intersection of science and theology.”

*James Cahill*  
Middle School History and Religion





# 1:1 TECHNOLOGY IN K-8



## SJFX EPIC



Through a program generously funded by parents, our learning community enjoys:

- Grade-specific curriculum features.
- “Out of the box” professional development for faculty.
- Speakers, experiences and outside resources.
- Maker Space resources across campuses including 3-D printing, Imagination Playground, and other tools promoting hands-on learning and play.

## TOOLS

- **Seesaw platform** in PreK-3rd grade enhances learning, connection and collaboration with parents
- **Beebots software** for early coding exposure and technical skills.
- **Google/GSuite tools for Education** including GSuite tools and management of assignments, grading and collaboration.
- **Osmo Learning Systems** to help build early, foundational skills.
- **Securly software** is used to monitor digital activity and keep students safe.
- **GOTECH SUPPORT** to manage infrastructure in partnership with a dedicated faculty member.

## CURRICULUM

- **Safe and responsible digital citizenship**
- **The concept of a digital footprint**
- **Online etiquette/guardrails**
- **Social media safety**
- **The impact of what we do and say online, media choices, and more.**

**K-8 classrooms feature a Smartboard or paired Apple TV/Monitor and ELMO document camera.**





STUDENTS FROM ACROSS BOTH LEGACY AND MODERN  
FINEST UNIVERSITIES IN THE NATION, AND MORE  
TO GROWTH, READY TO SERVE, AND CALLED



*Catherine Solmos*

ST. JOSEPH'S ALUMNA

“

I currently work as a registered nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit where I care for premature and critically ill infants. I am also working on my doctorate degree which will allow me to work as a family nurse practitioner.

The wonderful teachers and experiences at St. Joe's taught me everything from taking notes and studying for exams to being a good friend and family member and treating every person with dignity and compassion.

”



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



CAMPUSES GO ON TO ATTEND SOME OF THE  
MORE IMPORTANTLY, LEAVE OUR DOORS OPEN  
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.



“

My English, Science and Math classes at SFX prepared me well for Loyola. I take honors classes, and without the foundation I received at SFX that would not be possible. The study habits I learned through 8th grade have served me well at Loyola.

I play football and compete in wrestling at Loyola and we recently won the state football championship. My SFX Athletics experience in Middle School really helped to prepare me for high school sports. ”

*Kenny Langston*  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER ALUMNUS



# WE MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS THROUGH THE PURPOSEFUL ORGANIZATION OF OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS, SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION WITHIN A VALUES-FOCUSED ENVIRONMENT.

## PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDED IN SAINTS JFX CURRICULAR TOOLBOX INCLUDE:

- **Rush NeuroBehavioral Center**
- **Northwestern Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning**
- **Kolaam Dance**
- **Poetry Pals**
- **And More!!**



## EARLY CHILDHOOD:

On the St. Joseph Campus, Early Childhood students are introduced to the joy of learning and are encouraged to develop in both confidence and curiosity as budding students. This early academic experience is marked by friendship, learning and growth. A seasoned team provides for the educational, emotional and moral development of students through thoughtful, creative teaching strategies and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Teachers are dedicated to the development of the “Whole Child” through hands-on learning and exploration, developmentally appropriate religious lessons and services, “specials” classes including Spanish, Music, Yoga and Storytime/Library, and guidance from our Early Support Team.

Classroom activities are differentiated to the needs of each individual child based on their unique developmental levels and abilities. Little ones emerge from the St. Joseph Early Childhood program as joyful, curious, and faith-filled learners equipped with the tools and confidence to excel in Kindergarten and beyond.



ON THE SFX CAMPUS, LOVING CHALLENGE AND INCREASED OPPORTUNITY FOR DIFFERENTIATION IS A CORE COMPONENT OF CLASSROOM LEARNING. READING AND MATH DIFFERENTIATION IS SUPPORTED ACROSS ALL GRADE LEVELS.

### ELEMENTARY:

Elementary teachers in K-4 encourage personal responsibility, accountability, and a service-minded view of the world and our place in it. The math curriculum, supported by the Houghton Mifflin Elementary Series, offers research-based approaches to support a range of learning aptitudes. Language arts is taught using a carefully selected guided reading program through the fourth grade to ensure that students are provided with ample opportunities to master reading with comprehension.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL:

The middle school team strives to prepare students for the rigors of high school by creating a “safe” place to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them, and identify opportunities to lead. Seventh and eighth graders who qualify are invited to enroll locally in an honors tracking for math, or alternately in a Loyola Academy talented math program that meets each morning on Loyola’s campus. Google Classroom manages grading and assignments in grades 4-8, and collaborative G-Suite tools offer teachers and students flexible and sophisticated resources in preparation for high school. Middle school students also log a sequence of community service hours over the course of each academic year to nurture future service-minded servant leaders.



SAINTS JFX  
IS RECOGNIZED BY  
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION AS A  
NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON  
SCHOOL IN 2012,  
2018 AND 2019.



### TESTING:

Standardized testing is directed through the Archdiocese of Chicago. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, Archdiocesan schools moved to the iReady diagnostic for its ability to assess and adapt to the needs of individual learners. i-Ready matches the difficulty of test questions to the ability of each student allowing our team to measure individual growth over time.

#### 2021-2022 COHORT-WIDE FINDINGS INDICATE:

109% MEDIAN GROWTH OF STUDENTS IN READING DIAGNOSTICS FROM FALL 2021 TO SPRING 2022.

92% MEDIAN GROWTH OF STUDENTS IN MATH DIAGNOSTICS FROM FALL 2021 TO SPRING 2022.



# COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

SAINTS JFX PARTNERS WITH EXPERTS FROM ACROSS OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, MAKING BEST-IN-CLASS TOOLS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.



**FAN**  
FAMILY ACTION NETWORK

FAMILY ACTION NETWORK IS A 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION THAT CURATES A HIGH-QUALITY SPEAKER SERIES EACH ACADEMIC YEAR. ALL FAN PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.



THE ALLIANCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD IS A COLLABORATIVE, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION THAT SUPPORTS AND GUIDES FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS TO NURTURE THE HEALTHY, WELL-ROUNDED DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.

**The Alliance**  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



# SAINTS JFX PROMOTES A CULTURE OF SERVICE AND COMPASSION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TWO SHARING PARISH COMMUNITIES.



## WE PARTNER GLOBALLY WITH SHARING PARISH, IMMACULEE CONCEPTION, HAITI

In just over a decade, Saints JFX has supported the construction of a school building, corn mill, fresh water well, breadfruit trees and more to sustain a faith and learning community.

Saints JFX families show their support through financial donations to dress down days, and provide gifts of school supplies, clothing, water bottles and other items needed by children and families.

## WE PARTNER LOCALLY WITH SHARING PARISH, ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, CHICAGO

St. Thomas is a richly diverse parish in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood primarily serving immigrant families from Vietnam, Eritrea/Sub-Saharan Africa and Mexico. Over 95% of St. Thomas families subsist on incomes below the poverty line.

### SAINTS JFX FAMILIES ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORT AND PARTNER WITH ST. THOMAS FAMILIES THROUGH:

- HALLOWEEN CANDY DRIVE BENEFITTING THE FOOD PANTRY
- THANKSGIVING FEAST CANNED FOOD DRIVE
- LENTEN BLESSING BAG COLLECTION ON THE SFX CAMPUS
- CRAYON DRIVE, COLLECTED THROUGH 4:45 P.M. FAMILY MASS
- \$1 DRESS DOWN DAYS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR
- SOCK DRIVE ON THE ST. JOSEPH CAMPUS





*Lauren DeFrank*

MATH SPECIALIST

“ The families here at Saints JFX have all been warm, welcoming, and caring towards me. We are here for the same mission: excellence in education. I feel blessed to be working with a wonderful community of families. ”



*Kerry Siefer*

FIFTH GRADE TEACHER &  
IRISH DANCE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

“ I truly believe it is my calling to teach children at a Catholic school, in part due to the gratitude I have for the amazing teachers and community I experienced as a child. I LOVE teaching children to be excited about learning new things and how to strive to be their best selves. ”

## WHAT OUR DEDICATED FACULTY ARE SAYING...



*Candice Zammichieli*

3-YEAR OLD PRESCHOOL TEACHER

“ What does Saints JFX do well? Everything! Communication is great, we have the luxury of a wonderful HSO that spoils us each month. We have the supplies we need to support our students, we have many opportunities for professional development, and opportunities for added income such as before care and after school clubs. I believe that Saints JFX really does a wonderful job of “taking care of” their teachers. ”



*Myranda Sorock*

JR. KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

“ Saints JFX is so supportive of their teachers and staff. The appreciation is overwhelming and fills my bucket with happiness. Everyone has been so welcoming, including the families. I am grateful to be part of this team. ”



Dear Friends,

Saints JFX School is the product of a loving and purposeful recipe of engaged parents, dedicated teachers, curious learners, committed leadership, and a supportive parish community. As your pastor, I treasure the vital role our school plays in the rich educational ministry of our parish. I am grateful to our Saints JFX administrators, teachers, and staff for creating an academic experience that shouts excellence, while also providing an education that feeds the heart and soul. The curriculum, programs, and services we offer rooted in sound Catholic values, and designed to develop character, confidence and compassion, and the incredible sense of community we foster make me so proud.

Saints JFX School attracts families from all over for several reasons, including academic excellence, faith-based learning, and the opportunity to grow in a PreK-8 community. What most don't realize until after they join us is how Saints JFX becomes an integral part of every family. Children set roots and thrive in an environment where they are known and loved over a decade of learning together. Students and parents forge lifelong relationships that define their identity. We witnessed the strength of those connections this year in palpable ways. We see evidence of the power of these transformative relationships when our alumni return as college students visiting past teachers, or as new parents enrolling their own children in preschool.

I'd like to thank our dedicated school board team for producing this year's annual report. What you see here tells a compelling story about our beloved community and what makes Saints JFX such a special place. Thank you, parents, teachers, parishioners, and alumni for the resources you invest in this community. I assure you that your gifts of talent, time and treasure pay dividends worthy of your sacrifices. Be assured of my prayers for you and your children. Please keep me in yours.

With warmth and gratitude,

*Rev. Wayne F. Watts*

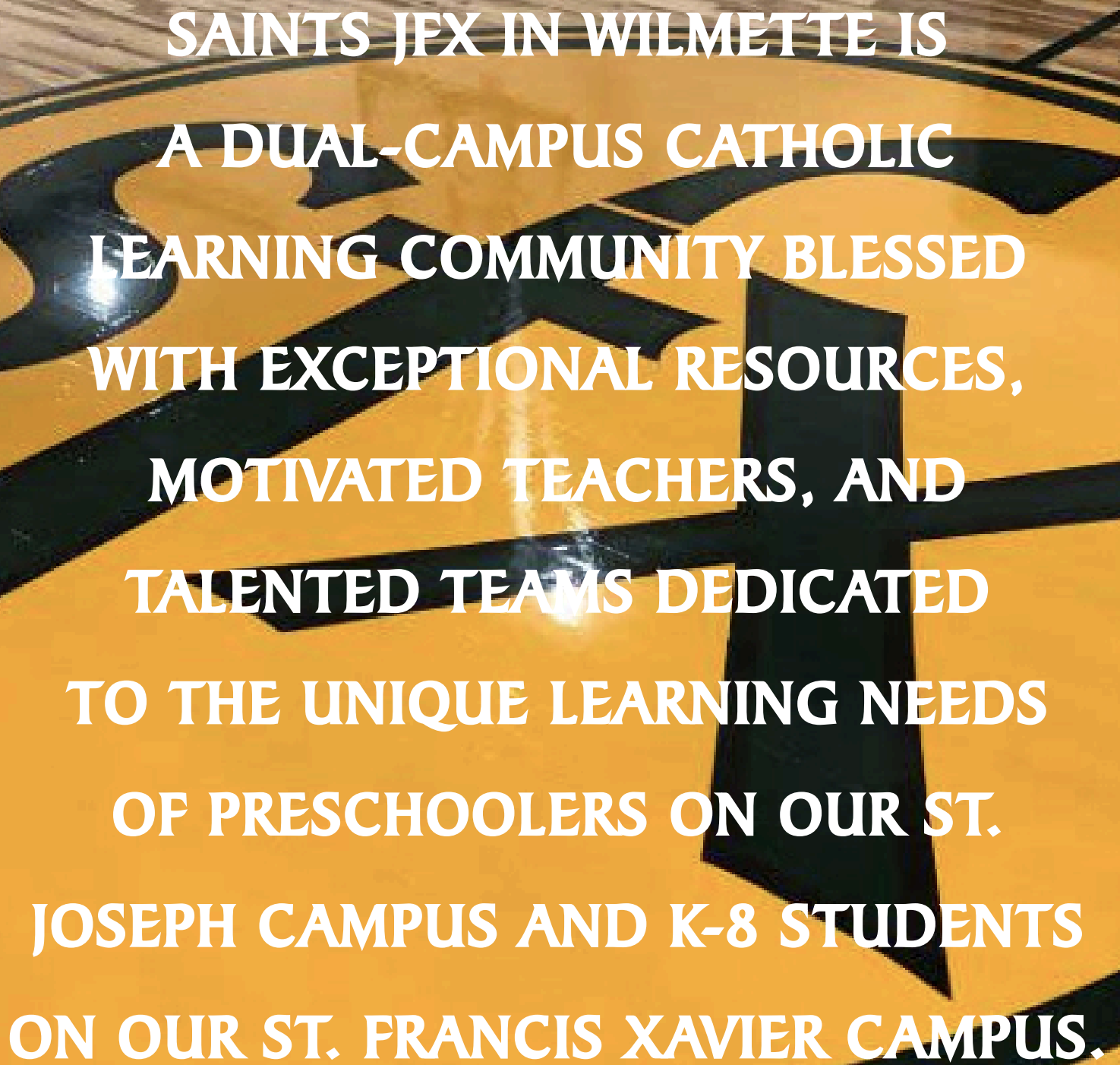


LETTER FROM

*Rev. Wayne F. Watts*

PASTOR





**SAINTS JFX IN WILMETTE IS  
A DUAL-CAMPUS CATHOLIC  
LEARNING COMMUNITY BLESSED  
WITH EXCEPTIONAL RESOURCES,  
MOTIVATED TEACHERS, AND  
TALENTED TEAMS DEDICATED  
TO THE UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS  
OF PRESCHOOLERS ON OUR ST.  
JOSEPH CAMPUS AND K-8 STUDENTS  
ON OUR ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CAMPUS.**

Saints JFX School  
Wilmette, IL 60091  
[www.saintsjfx.org](http://www.saintsjfx.org)