

# *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 - Spring / Summer 2024



## *Expressions of Gratitude and Blessings*

Today marks a bittersweet moment for me. I am filled with gratitude yet tinged with a hint of sadness. As many of you know, a major medical condition has unexpectedly interrupted my journey as the principal of this wonderful school. I may not have had the chance to serve as I had hoped, but the impact each one of you has had on my life is immeasurable.

My sincere gratitude to Father Jose A. Mercado, whose support and love of Catholic education are a shining light at Saint Lawrence School. Thank you to my council members for their service, talent, and Catholic faith to ensure our school mission is accomplished. A big thank you to our parish family, friends, and volunteers who are always there for our children.

To my incredible office and support staff, you work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep our school running smoothly. I am truly grateful for your dedication and hard work. From managing schedules to paperwork, you are the heartbeat of the school. Your attention to detail, professionalism, and kindness have not gone unnoticed. I am immensely thankful for the support you have provided me and our entire school family.

To my dedicated educators, you are the backbone of this institution. Your unwavering commitment to nurturing the minds and souls of our students has been nothing short of extraordinary. From the early mornings preparing lesson plans to the late nights grading papers, your passion for education shines through in every interaction with our students.

To the heart and soul of this school, the students, I cannot thank you enough for the joy you have brought into my life. Watching you grow, learn, and flourish has been the greatest privilege of my career. Your enthusiasm, curiosity, and kindness inspire me every day. I have no doubt that you will continue to make a positive impact on the world around you.

Life is full of unexpected twists and turns. It is our ability to adapt and grow that truly defines us. Remember that every challenge you face is an opportunity for growth, and every setback is a chance to rise stronger than before. In life, rely on your Catholic faith in all your decisions, trials, and joys.

I am excited for you to meet our new principal, Mr. Jim Messina, and to know he will receive a warm Saint Lawrence School welcome.

Though my time as your principal may be coming to an end, the impact of our shared experiences will live on in my heart forever. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your journey. May God bless you all abundantly, today and always.

With love and gratitude,

*Frank*

## *A Message from Jim Messina*



Dear St. Lawrence School Community,

I am excited and honored to become the next principal of St. Lawrence School and continue the tradition of excellence into the next phase of our school's bright future! I am proud to be a lifelong Catholic. I received my sacraments of initiation at Our Lady of Victory Church and have served as an altar server, Eucharistic minister, lector, and member of the choir. I attended Mackrille Elementary and Bailey Middle School before graduating from Notre Dame High School in 1999. I received my undergraduate degree from Central CT. State University and worked to open Saint Martin de Porres Academy in New Haven, a school that was founded in 2005 with the mission to provide a free Catholic education to children from underserved communities. While teaching there, I received my Master's Degree in Special Education and Reading from Southern CT. State University, which enabled me to work as a literacy specialist and instructional coach in Clinton Public Schools. In addition to becoming a part-time adjunct professor at the University. I was encouraged to pursue a 6th year degree in educational leadership and graduated from UCONN in 2019. I am thankful to the countless colleagues, mentors, and professors who helped guide my understanding of what matters most in education. The ability to lead the Catholic School in Southington for the last three years has renewed my belief that Catholic education has the power to transform the lives of the children whose families invest in their future.

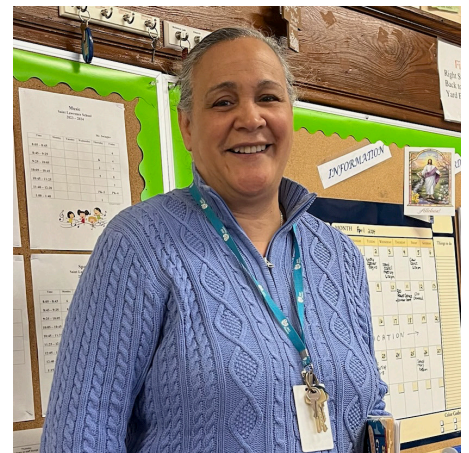
I firmly believe that I am called to be a servant leader. I look forward to working alongside the dedicated staff of St. Lawrence School, who will work with me to provide unparalleled opportunities for the children. They are destined to become the leaders of tomorrow who have a grounding in faith and a belief that all things are possible with God. I also look forward to strengthening our ties with the proud alumni of our school. Your lives are sure to be an inspiration to our students, so I hope and pray that you will continue to support the school as we begin our 107th year as a cornerstone of West Haven and Saint John XXIII Parish.

With Heartfelt Thanks,  
Jim Messina

**The Light of Christ Teacher Recognition Award** is given by the Center for Catholic Education and Formation from the Archdiocese of Hartford. The award recognizes teachers who live by Catholic principles and are exceptional in teaching.

We are proud to congratulate this year's winner, **Mrs. Toni Boynton**, who has been an educator here at Saint Lawrence School for 5 years.

"I started teaching in the Archdiocese of Hartford in 1999. Sister Loretta Francis Mann, the Assistant Superintendent of Catholic School, welcomed all new teachers to the orientation in Bloomfield, CT. She told us that the most important subject we will ever teach is religion, our faith, and it should be the first thing taught each day. For 25 years, I have followed that instruction."



**Timothy 6:17-19**

**Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share**

## Meet Lorenzo



Lorenzo H., a remarkable 4th grader here at Saint Lawrence School, is often described as an old soul. His generous spirit shines through in everything he does. He thrives in front of an audience. His clear speaking voice and radiant smile make him a natural at leading prayer, calling out raffle numbers, or any announcements we may need during fundraising events. He is truly a role model, exemplifying the virtues of a dedicated disciple of Christ. When asked about volunteering, he shared his thoughtful perspective: "Everyone should help in some way. Yes, we are tired and have other things to do, but is it really that hard? After all, Jesus suffered on the cross for us and didn't complain. Shouldn't we do this for him?"

Lorenzo's words remind us of the profound wisdom found in the innocence of children. He is just one of many students who have embodied the call to service and selflessness that is at the heart of our Catholic faith, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps and live out the teachings of Jesus. As they say, "Out of the mouths of babes...".

# Sponsor A Classroom for \$250

**Did you know that many classroom supplies are funded by teachers? This can easily cost hundreds of dollars. Your \$250.00 sponsorship will help fund these much-needed supplies.**

**Select a classroom or subject that's special to you, or let us help you choose. A plaque with your choice of name will be placed outside your teacher's room. You will receive updates from your class. We have eleven Classrooms available, along with Art, Music, Library, After School programs, Religion, Science, Math, Spanish and Gym.**



**To Sponsor a Class, please call Bambi Grestini 203-641-0777, or email [bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net](mailto:bgrestini@stlaw.eduk12.net)**



# SAINT LAWRENCE SCHOOL CLASS OF 2024

As you prepare to embark on this new journey in your life, embrace these changes with open arms. Never lose sight of the values instilled in you during your time here. Let compassion, integrity, and faith be your guiding lights. Now go out there and strive to make a difference in the world. We congratulate and welcome you as our newest alumni, the Class of 2024.



Row 1 - L. Chesson, M. Thompson, C. Mendez, M. Adu-Gyamfi, N. Vaughn.  
Row 2 - T. Mesquita, M. Cortes, X. Estes, L. Sebas, A. Cabacungan, S. Clayton.  
Row 3 - M. Santillan-Briceno, D. Griffin, N. Patel, J. Dong, Teacher Christopher DeFonce.  
Row 4 - Principal Frank Arnone, Rev. Father Ricardo Borja, Rev. Father Jose A. Mercado.

***St. Lawrence School was founded by the Reverend Jeremiah Curtin and the Sisters of St. Joseph Chamerby in 1917***



## ***From Jet Fuel to Generational Impact: Thomas Prete's ('76) Ascent Through Faith and Engineering***

Thomas Prete, a 1976 Saint Lawrence School alumnus has led an inspiring life characterized by faith, dedication, and service. Tom's father, an Air Force pilot and engineer, significantly influenced him after transitioning from military to civilian life here in West Haven. It was here that Tom began attending Saint Lawrence School in the fourth grade. This period marked the beginning of Tom's exposure to a structured Catholic environment, where he developed a blend of spiritual and intellectual curiosity. Throughout his youth, Tom absorbed the life lessons his father and teachers imparted, lessons of discipline, perseverance, and the importance of a strong moral compass. These values deeply influenced him as he moved on to attend Notre Dame High School where he continued his Catholic education, balancing his studies with his love of hockey.

Tom's education and his father's motivation taught him resilience. During moments of doubt in college (Southern and UConn), when the burden of math, science, and technology seemed overwhelming, it was his faith, education, and family that helped him realize he was fully equipped to pursue a career in engineering, turning what once felt like an insurmountable challenge into a clear path forward.

Post college, around the late 80's and early 90's, Tom was inspired by the movie *Top Gun* which resulted in his connecting all the dots. He combined his love for aviation, fighter jets, and engines with his desire to serve the country. This led him to Pratt & Whitney, where his career flourished, and he now serves as Vice President of Military Engineering. His leadership style, characterized by humility and equality, has been central to his team's success.

Tom lives happily with his wife Rose in Connecticut and is particularly proud of his three sons, two following in his footsteps in engineering, the third living his dream of medicine. Tom credits his achievements to the enduring influence of his religious education and the values his family and teachers instilled in him.

Today Tom's focus is on addressing the shortage of engineers in America. He is particularly concerned with reaching out to those without engineering influences in their lives and to women and those unaware of the potential in this field. Through initiatives like the \$500.00 scholarship for Promise in Engineering funded by Tom and his wife Rose, donations of technology from Pratt & Whitney, and his educational engineering presentations to Saint Lawrence School 7th and 8th graders, he is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of engineers. Tom's story is not just about professional achievement but about giving back and empowering others, a true testament to living a life of faith, passion, and purpose.

***Thomas Prete is truly a blessing for Saint Lawrence School!***

# *Saint Lawrence School Annual Appeal Donations*

*July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023*

*We gratefully acknowledge all donations and regret any inadvertent errors or omissions.*

## **Principal's Leadership Circle (\$5,000+)**

DeGrand, John and Gail  
Grillo, Therese '40 (*Bequest*)  
McGuire, Kathleen

## **St. Lawrence School Society (\$1,000 - \$4,999)**

Pratt & Whitney (*Coordinated by Thomas Prete '76*)  
Collins, Maureen '56  
Nemit, Jeffrey  
*(in honor of Jane Nemit)*

## **Class Patron (\$500 - \$999)**

Reynolds Jr., Edwards '58  
*(in honor of Suzanne and Nancy Reynolds)*  
Koalchic, Mary Ellen '56  
McDermott, David '51  
Mercado, Rev. Jose  
Panza, Elizabeth  
Prete, Thomas and Rose '76  
*(Prete scholarship for Promise in Engineering)*  
Sudol, Eileen  
*(in honor of The Reardon Girls)*  
Zylinski, Cheryl

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

Bertini, Gerald '53  
Carroll, Elaine '21  
*(8th Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Clifford, Patrick '71  
*(In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Clifford)*  
Celentano, Ron  
*(5th Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Connelly, AnnMarie  
*(PreK3 Class Sponsor)*  
Lacobelle, Jerome '77  
Reynolds Jr, Edward '58  
*(7th Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Raffone, Angeline '11  
*(4th Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Sudol, Eileen  
*(3rd Grade Class Sponsor)*

## **Student Supporter (\$250 - \$499) cont.**

Thomas, Dina '72  
*(Art & Music Class Sponsor)*  
Ocone, Richard  
*(1st Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Heckert, Ron  
*(6th Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Hemming, Virginia  
*(PreK4 Class Sponsor)*  
Rylski, Adam  
*(2nd Grade Class Sponsor)*  
Strawson, Jean  
DeCrosta, Justin  
*(Christmas Fair Sponsor)*  
Maturro, Frank '72  
*(In Honor of Phylis Maturro)*

## **Teacher Benefactor (\$100 - \$249)**

Shea, Diane '75  
Hemming, Virginia  
Hanson, Dorothy '71  
*(in honor of The Platt Family)*  
Hare, Kathleen '61  
*(in honor of The Platt Family)*  
Kelly, Ann '53  
Fonda, Lou '81  
Bica, Alice '61  
*(in honor of Carrie Dessert)*  
Solakian, Michael '68  
Pope, Kathryn '56  
*(in honor of Dorothea & John Lappert)*  
Panza, Elizabeth  
*(in honor of Henry Panza Sr)*  
Dwyer, Francis '58  
Campane, Lawrence '59  
D'Amicis, James '79  
Johnson, Debra '66  
Stewart, Diane '66  
*(in honor of William & Marie Maskill)*  
Bacinello, Nancy '51  
*(In honor of Joe, Rose and Fred Prior '54)*



**Teacher Benefactor (\$100 - \$249) cont.**

Connelly, Annmarie

Boyne, Patricia '67

Dolan, John '68

Doolan, Mary '37

*(In honor of Dr. Paul Doolan '37)*

Doolan, Kim

Hamilton, Shelia '70

Heffernan, E. Michael '56

Keyes, Sara '53

Koalchic, Mary Ellen '56

Lipsett, Mary Ann '73

*(in honor of Viola Cassella, Patricia and Sue Trotta)*

Meskill, William and Marialys '61

Meskill, Matthew '75

Morrissey, Vincent '57

McDermott, Catherine

Dargan III, Robert '63

Patry, Suzanne

*(in honor of Arthur Patry '34)*

Prior, Joseph '50

Phelan, James '64

Riggione, Neil '64

Ritucci, Diane '72

*(in honor of Karen Sortito '74)*

Siciari, Michael '65

Skerritt, John '69

Savino, JoAnn

Venditto, Joan

*(in honor of Gloria Weber)*

Toole, Audrey

*(in honor of Edward Toole)*

Zweigle, Christine

Zyskowski, Robert '71

Urbinati, David '68

*(in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Urbinati)*

Dwyer Barbara '57

*(in honor of Frank Dwyer)*

Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery

Riggione, Niel '64

Rev Mercado, Jose

Festa, Lauren '96

Porto Funeral Home

Dwyer, Frances '58

Campane, Lawrence '59

Gunning, Carol '56

*(in honor of Rose, Joseph and Fred Prior)*

**Teacher Benefactor (\$100 - \$249) cont.**

Dolan, Margaret '65

Warley, Edward '54

Dolan, Margaret '65

Warley, Edward '54

**Alumni Donor (\$25-\$99) cont.**

McDermott, Sister Catherine

Bowery, Michael '74

Burns, David '54

Bush, Erin

Cariglio, Rosemary and Louise

Carmody, Kevin '73

*(in honor of James Carmody '62)*

Chiaraluce, Jacobs and Brianna '09

Coyle, Richard '67

Cozzolino, MaryEllen '53

DeFonzo, Paul

Dioro, Lois '69

Fischer, Jean '63

Donahue, Dennis '49

Foschi, Gregory

Gill, Mary '45

*(in honor of Kelly Gill families)*

Gill, Joseph '57

Grether, Edward '56

*(in honor of Frederick & Robert Grether)*

Hackett, Francis '53

Johnson, Debra '66

Marcello, Arianna '08

Killion, Mark

*(in honor of William Killian '43)*

Kovacs, Theresa '83

Lewis, Jane

*(in honor of Sr. Mary Luke)*

Martinelli, Lenore '59

Mascia, Patricia

Menzo, Salvatore '53

Montefusco, Stanley '75,

Morrissey, John '71

Morrissey, Michael '66 and Mary Jane '65

*(in honor of John and Doris Morrissey)*

McKiernan, John

Elizabeth, Morrissey '75

*(in honor of John and Doris Morrissey)*

**Alumni Donor (\$25-\$99) cont.**

Mongillo, Louis '70

Murphy, John '68

Moran, Patricia '69

*(in memory of Peter M Ladutko '71)*

Nicholson, James & Mary '64

O'Keefe Elizabeth '56

*(in honor of Eugene and Frances Wrinn)*

Potter, Benjamin

*(in honor of John F Sullivan '51)*

Siclari, Michael '65

*(in honor of Michael & Mary Siclari)*

McCourt, Kim '81

Perez, Jennifer

Prete, John '48

Sauvage, Margaret '36

Steeves, Carolyn '56

Staniewicz, Gary '68

Toce, Danielle '72

Stewart, Diane '66

Stuhlman, James '67

Turcio, Katherine '48

Weber, Joseph '82

Malerba, Rocco '56

Reis, Joseph and Kathleen '70

Bica, Alice '61

*(In honor of Carrie A. Dessert)*

Cozzolino, Mary Ellen '53

Cuomo, Donna '65

Chesson, Mary and Niamh '21

Clifford, William '68

Conte, Joseph '65

Contois, Ellen '71

Dargan, Timothy '72

Farrell, Gerald '55

Montero, Matthew '19

Morrissey, John '71

Taylor, Martin and Patricia '61

Weber, Paul '77

*(in honor of Les and Josephine Sweetman)*

Weber, Joan

Zweigle, Christine

***Thank you to the Knights of Columbus, Holy Father John Paul the Second Council #14326, for your unwavering support.***



## **Saint Lawrence School Golf Classic**

**Join us on Friday, August 23, 2024**

**Orange Hills Country Club**

**389 Racebrook Rd Orange, CT 06477**



**Saint Lawrence School Golf Classic is Saint Lawrence School's largest fundraising event each year, which helps our school purchase teaching materials, new technology, and provide qualified students with scholarships. By participating in this major fundraising event, you are assisting in the mission of educating our children in a safe, faithful, and academically excellent environment.**

**<https://birdease.com/slsgolfclassic>**