

Catch-Up with the Council

A publication of the Chester County Advisory Council for Elementary Education

June 2025 edition

Celebrating Years of Service in Catholic Education



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Holy Family
SCHOOL
Christ Centered | Student Focused | Family Driven

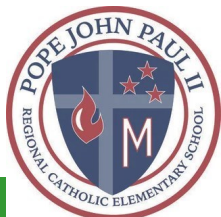
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ST. ELIZABETH



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2025 STREAM Expo & Robotics Competition



The **2025 STREAM Expo and 1st Annual Robotics Competition** was held on April 29th at Cardinal O'Hara High School, bringing together 25 archdiocesan elementary schools to showcase innovative projects and celebrate educational excellence. The participation of St. Elizabeth, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Sts. Peter & Paul from Chester County in the Robotics Competition was a highlight. St. Elizabeth and St. Maximilian both earned awards for their myCobot 280 programs — tying for overall Creativity. Students from Sts. Peter & Paul wrote a tasty program that fed many attendants pretzels & Nutella! The event fostered camaraderie and embodied the faith-filled mission of the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, uniting educators, students, and families in a shared celebration of STREAM and achievements in the Robotics Program. We are grateful for the support of the Office of Catholic Education and the Foundation for Catholic Education for hosting this wonderful event.

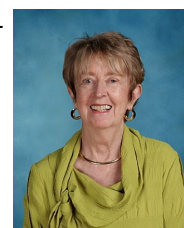


Assumption BVM School 7th grade teacher, **Mr. David Maicher**, has been honored with the prestigious **Citadel Heart of Learning Award**.

Mr. Maicher joined the ABVM professional team 2 years ago and in that time he has made an incredible impact on his students, shaping young minds with care, encouragement, and a passion for learning.

We are thrilled to have him as a part of the ABVM learning team. Congratulations, Mr. Maicher!

After 35 years of teaching in Catholic Education, **Mrs. Mary Riisen** is retiring. Her master teaching of English enabled her students to be very successful in high school and attend the colleges of their choice. The annual Christmas Nativity would not have been possible without her theater background. The show always presents the true meaning of Christmas with a different touch each year. For her dedication to Catholic education over the years, St. Norbert School has established a scholarship in Mrs. Riisen's name to be awarded to a talented 8th grader with strong skills in writing or theater for their freshman year at a Catholic high school. Mrs. Riisen was celebrated at a Mass in her honor on Saturday, May 31st at St. Norbert Church.



Council Member Spotlight

Sister Mary Agnes Ryan IHM brought a spark and enthusiasm to the Chester County Advisory Council during her 3-year tenure. We were blessed by her leadership on the Strategic planning committee and by her friendship with our members.

Born in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Sister is a gypsy and adventurer at heart. Her family eventually made their way to Philadelphia via Arizona. She attended Sacred Heart Manoa grade school in Havertown and Archbishop Prendergast High School before joining the IHM Sisters. With the sisters, she had postings in New Jersey, Florida, Virginia and North Carolina and roles that took her to Arizona and New Mexico. Sister loves visiting new places and meeting new people.

Sister's ministries were dedicated to religious education, information and formation. She has worked with both children and adults in religious education. For 16 years she was a Catholic school teacher, notably in the challenging 7/8th grades. Then sister transitioned to Diocesan roles working with adults- Catholic teachers and Parish Catechists. Her resume includes Director of Catechesis and Evangelization; Pastoral Associate; Parish Director of Religious Education; and Archdiocese Director of Elementary Religious Education.

After working with adults for many years, Sister's position on the Advisory council invited her to reacquaint herself with the challenges, joys and even the "lingo" of elementary Catholic education. "God has given me wonderful opportunities and experiences with His people: teachers, students, catechists and liturgists", says Sister, with a smile and a missionary's zeal.

Is the Lord saying it's time to settle down? wonders Sister. However she continues to apply her energies as the Director of OCIA at Saints Simon and Jude Parish. She spends her lunchtime on Wednesdays at the St. Agnes Day Room where it is rewarding for her to see the outreach and care for God's people. She's on the Board of St Agnes Parish Outreach, takes communion weekly to a homebound woman, and does a monthly communion service for men at the SCI Prison in Chester. Settling down does not seem to be in her vocabulary.

The Advisory Council wishes Sister Mary Agnes Ryan many blessings as she continues to serve the local Church. We are grateful for her missionary zeal here in West Chester, PA.



Council Chairpersons

Margaret Egan

Dr. Angela Rufo

Council Members

Rev. Steven Albero

Sr. Carol Anne Couchara IHM

Jennifer D'Amelio

Barbara Downing

Erin Downing

Rev. Stephen Leva

Lauren Ranalli

Sr. Mary Agnes Ryan IHM

Sam Venuti

Therese Waters

Patricia Welsh

Ex officio

Bernadette Dougherty

Anne Marie Fisher

Teresa Dellicompagni

Thank you to our Council Members who are concluding their terms this spring:

Rev. Stephen Leva Lauren Ranalli

Sr. Mary Agnes Ryan, IHM Sam Venuti Therese Waters

We appreciate your service to the Catholic students of Chester County.



Fourth Annual Golf Outing

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

The Union League, Liberty Hill Golf Club



On May 13, 2025, the 4th Annual Foundation for Catholic Education Golf Outing took place at the prestigious Union League Liberty Hill, where over 25 foursomes braved rainy weather to support Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Sr. Danielle Truex, IHM, principal of St. Peter the Apostle in Philadelphia, shared insights on the SPAT process and highlighted the vital partnership between St. Peter's, the Office of Catholic Education, and the Foundation for Catholic Education. The event's success has already sparked excitement for next year's outing, set for May 2026 – mark your calendars!



EITC Tax Credit Program

Redirect your PA Tax Dollars to Support Catholic Education!

- ✓ Individuals OR Businesses can join our Special Purpose Entity
- ✓ Direct your PA tax dollars to support families across the Archdiocese
- ✓ Receive a 90% tax credit for your contribution

For more information, contact: Kevin Kelly
KKelly@FoundationFCE.org or 484-477-6454

The Chester County Advisory Council is looking for new members

- * Do you have an interest in supporting and serving your local Catholic community?
- * Do you have talents in the areas of marketing, finance, education, legal, engineering or something that would help our schools?

Join us in fostering a brighter future for Catholic education today!

Please contact one of our chairpersons to learn more about the requirements for council membership:

Margaret Egan, email: margaretegan21@gmail.com

Angela Rufo, email: angela.rufo1@gmail.com

Have ideas for our next newsletter?

Contact

Angela Rufo

at:

Angela.rufo1@gmail.com

The Council works in conjunction with The Foundation for Catholic Education to offer the best education possible in our Chester County Catholic schools.