

INdepth

a closer look at
417 businesses

photo by Cathy Moore



Pictured are Front row: Katie Gregg, Hunter Puckett Middle row: Morgan Garner, Jack Jones, Chas Meek, Helen Halter, Will Curtis, Samantha Yates Back row: Andrew Hennessey, Natalie VanPelt, Amy DeMelo, Director of Schools, Elliott Scott, Sarah Bowman

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SPRINGFIELD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A VALUE-FILLED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Springfield Catholic Schools offer students a value-filled educational environment backed with a reputation for academic excellence. Their school report card includes some impressive statistics: Ninety-eight percent of Springfield Catholic High School students attend college, compared to a statewide average of 39 percent. The average ACT score for a Springfield Catholic student is 25.8, compared to a state average of 21.6 and a national average of 21.1.

How do they do it? Amy DeMelo, Director of Schools, attributes their success, in part, to collaboration and commitment. “Our parents and teachers do a great job of working together to give our students the tools they need to be successful,” says DeMelo. “We’re all working toward the same goal.”

Collaboration and commitment are part of the students’ first-hand experience. Students at all levels in Springfield Catholic Schools participate in community service projects; the Student Executive Board organizes service opportunities. Past projects include events to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House; helping to serve food at The Kitchen; sending school supplies to “adopted” children in third-world countries; and hosting a Valentine’s Day dance for seniors at Mercy Villa. “Our students learn to support each other, and to support the community,” says DeMelo. “They learn to become responsible and just citizens of the world.”

These high expectations are present in the classroom, also. Students are challenged to approach their studies with motivation and preparation. They’re taught reading, science, math, history, religion and a host of other subjects by a dedicated staff of certified teachers that approach education with creativity. Many classes include a hands-on

element to help students understand the real-world applications of what they are learning. “Our teachers are selfless,” says DeMelo. “They work hard to give each child the best education they can.” More than 50% of SCS teachers have advanced degrees, and the faculty turnover rate is low.

Outside the classroom, students can participate in extra-curricular activities, including student council, drama, debate and sports. The “Fighting Irish” of Springfield Catholic Schools have earned a reputation as tough competitors in football, basketball, baseball, track, golf, volleyball and soccer.

Springfield Catholic Schools offers classes from preschool (age 3) through grade 12. SCS operates four elementary schools—St. Agnes Elementary, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Immaculate Conception Elementary and St. Joseph Elementary—and Springfield Catholic High School. Students attend Mass as a group. “We’re a Catholic school first,” says DeMelo, “but students of all faiths are welcome.” DeMelo says that having different faiths represented on campus helps students expand their perspectives, ask questions, and talk about their beliefs.

Catholic students receive a reduced tuition rate because the schools are supported by area Catholic churches, but tuition for all students is affordable. Tuition for Catholic elementary students is \$2481 per academic year (2 semesters); for non-Catholic students, the rate is \$3623. Tuition for Catholic high school students is \$3920; for non-Catholic students, the rate is \$5682. DeMelo says the tuition is an investment that pays big dividends: Springfield Catholic High School students received more than \$4.2 million in college scholarship funds last year.

Of course, the real payoff isn’t in dollars. It’s in the abilities, opportunities and possibilities that a Springfield Catholic School education creates for your child.