SETON SOUNDINGS

SUMMER 2026

MOTHER SETON SCHOOL 1810

Under bright blue skies and perfect summer weather, MSS students celebrated Field Day 2026 on June 5 with a day filled with laughter, teamwork, and friendly competition. From relay races and tug-of-war matches to water balloon tosses and a refreshing slip-and-slide, students of every grade enjoyed a memorable day of fun.

EXCELLENCE ROOTED IN FAITH

Dear Friends of Mother Seton School,

It is with great joy that I write to you as we close a successful 2025–2026 school year. From honoring the 50th Anniversary of the canonization of our patroness, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and dedicating the new St. Joseph's Chapel, to celebrating our 2026 graduates, **we have had a year of abundant blessings**, and we look forward to what the next year brings.

At Mother Seton School, **our Catholic and Vincentian mission shapes every aspect of school life**, inspiring us to treat one another with Respect, Serve with compassion and joy, and cultivate a community of Excellence through quality teaching and high expectations for learning. To help us in achieving our goals, we act within the framework provided by The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS). First published in 2012, the NSBECS describes **an excellent Catholic school as one with a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st-century skills, and rooted in Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.**

Over the past several years, **we have intentionally enhanced our curriculum to meet this standard.** Six years ago, we implemented a reading program grounded in the Science of Reading, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to develop confident, capable readers. Five years ago, we adopted the Singapore Math curriculum, which moves beyond memorization to foster critical thinking, deeper conceptual understanding, real-world problem-solving using multiple strategies, and an appreciation for how math is applied in our daily lives.

We are now seeing the results of these investments. **Students continue to demonstrate significant growth** on our DIBELS assessments, which measure foundational reading skills, and on our MAP assessments in reading, mathematics, and language usage. This year, for the first time, our seventh-grade students took the practice High School Placement Test (HSPT) in April. The HSPT is given to 8th-graders in the fall and used by Catholic and private high schools for admission and placement decisions. They performed at the national average overall, with many students already scoring well above it. **Our rising eighth graders are motivated to build on that success** when they take the official exam this fall.

Our values and the NSBECS standards of excellence derive from The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, compiled by Archbishop J. Michael Miller: "First and foremost, a Catholic school is characterized by excellence." Inspired by this vision, **our faculty spent time reflecting on these teachings and considering what excellence should look like in every aspect of an MSS education.** Those conversations helped shape not only our understanding of our core values and responsibilities to our students but also **the qualities we hope to instill in every graduate** who leaves our halls.

In the pages that follow, you will see the many ways our students, faculty, alumni, and supporters continue to bring that vision to life. **Thank you for being an essential part of the Mother Seton School community.** Your prayers, generosity, and encouragement make it possible for us to fulfill our mission and prepare our students to lead lives of faith, with excellence, respect, and service as their guiding values.

With hope and gratitude,

Kathleen J. Kilty

Kathleen J. Kilty, PhD
President

OUR MISSION

The mission of Mother Seton Catholic School, a vibrant, Christ-centered community, is to inspire students to strive for academic excellence and dedicate their lives to love and serve Christ in the tradition of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Vincent de Paul.

Sponsored by the Daughters of Charity

DAUGHTERS of CHARITY
PROVINCE of ST. LOUISE

MEET MOTHER SETON SCHOOL'S NEW PRINCIPAL: JOSEPH FANNING

I was specifically attracted to the principal position at Mother Seton School because it is a school that is truly beloved by both current and former students.

Mother Seton School is pleased to welcome Joseph Fanning as its next principal beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

Mr. Fanning brings more than 27 years of experience in education and leadership to Mother Seton School. His career includes serving as an English and Social Studies teacher, Assistant Principal at Montgomery Blair High School, Consulting Teacher and Pupil Personnel Worker for Montgomery County Public Schools, and, most recently, Staffing Coordinator for Montgomery County Public Schools. He holds a bachelor's degree in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, an MBA from the University of Notre Dame, and a master's degree in Teaching from Salisbury University.

According to Dr. Kilty, outgoing Principal and new President of Mother Seton School, Mr. Fanning was selected not only for his extensive educational background, but also for his commitment to Catholic education and leadership.

"As a graduate of Catholic elementary and secondary schools and an active member of his parish, Mr. Fanning brings a strong Catholic identity and personal commitment to the faith that will enrich our mission at Mother Seton School," Dr. Kilty shared in announcing his appointment.

Earlier this spring, sixth-grade student Elliott Brown had the opportunity to interview Mr. Fanning for *The Daily Bayley*, Mother Seton School's student newspaper. During his visit to campus, Mr. Fanning toured classrooms, met students and faculty, and experienced firsthand the welcoming spirit of the Mother Seton community.

In his article, Elliott noted that Mr. Fanning is especially excited about "getting to know everyone." During their interview, Mr. Fanning explained that he believes one of the most important responsibilities of a principal is to know the students personally, support their learning, and ensure they receive the best education possible.

Elliott also learned that Mr. Fanning's journey to education began after an earlier career in law enforcement. After spending 27 years working in public schools, he found himself reflecting on the Catholic schools that shaped his own education and felt called to return to Catholic education.

"I was specifically attracted to the principal position at Mother Seton School because it is a school that is truly beloved by both current and former students" Mr. Fanning shared. "I was duly impressed by how many students and teachers are also MSS alumni. That type of dedication speaks highly about how deeply connected people feel to Mother Seton School."

We look forward to welcoming Mr. Fanning and are excited for the leadership, faith, and experience he will bring to our MSS community.

(Below) Elliott Brown and Mr. Joseph Fanning, our new MSS principal

The MSS Class of 2026 (l-r, Front) Abygail Saylor, David Lanning, Breanna Pasqualini, Juliette Stouter, Joselyn Neil, Austin Bidinger, Greer Hill, Ella Renner; (l-r, Back) Neria Joseph, Muna Jinadu, Jemina Nana, Gavin Hudacko, Olivia Reckley, Kiel Franco De Leon Santos, Wyatt Betz, Kelson Hovis, Ranye Nzekwesi, Kelsi Krauss, Jacob Sharp, and Kendall Boyd (not pictured: Noelle James)

Congratulations, Class of 2026!

On June 7, our eighth-grade students and families gathered together one last time to celebrate their graduation from MSS. These 21 students will be moving on to 9 different high schools in the fall. Congratulations to the students who received the following awards:

A Honor Roll *(students who have maintained A's in all core academic subjects for the entire school year)*
Jemina Nana, Ranye Nzekwesi, Jacob Sharp, and Juliette Stouter

President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement *(a national award given to students who achieved an A/B average in all core subjects throughout Middle School and have scored in the 80th percentile or higher on nationally normed standardized achievement tests)* **Muna Jinadu, Neria Joseph, Kelsie Krauss, Jemina Nana, Jacob Sharp, and Juliette Stouter**

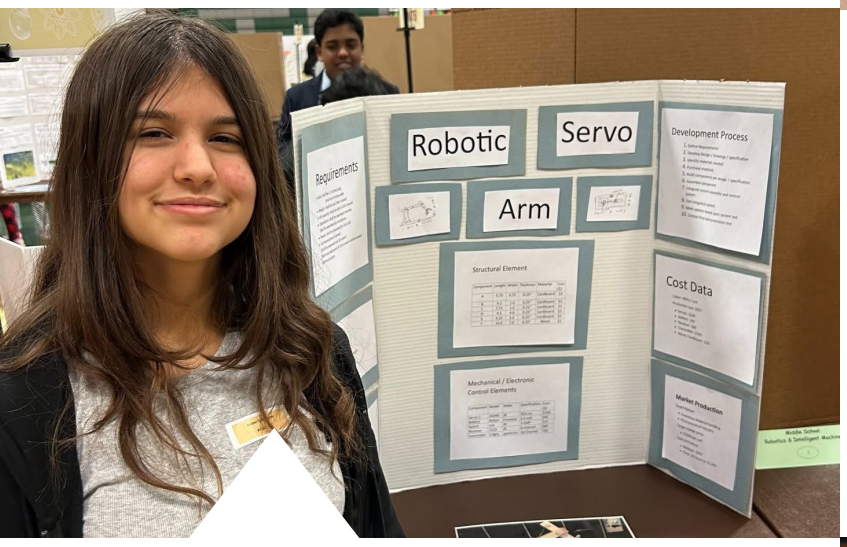
Mother Seton Spirit Award for Outstanding Christian Witness *(presented to a male and female student who exemplifies the mission and philosophy of MSS and our foundress, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. They are recognized for their prayerfulness and generous spirit, demonstrating respect and kindness, being a model of the gospel values of peace, charity, and their service to others)*
Neria Joseph and Kiel Santos

Kelson Hovis shares his lit candle with Jacob Sharp and Olivia Reckley lights Ella Renner's candle as part of the Service of Light Ceremony at the end of graduation. Students are encouraged to take the light of Christ and go into the world and shine.

(Below) Neria Joseph and Kiel Santos are the 2026 recipients of the Mother Seton Spirit Award for Outstanding Christian Witness

24 Tournament Grand Champion

Students in grades 4–8 put their math skills to the test in the 24 Challenge, using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to quickly make 24 from four numbers. Grade-level winners advanced to the final round, where Ethan Haines (right) was named Grand Champion and Kellan Boyd (left) earned runner-up.



Third Grade Wax Museum

Third graders brought history to life through biography projects and a Wax Museum activity. Each student researched a historical figure, wrote and presented a first-person speech, dressed as their chosen person, and created a handmade item representing an important part of that individual's life. (Below) Trenton Topper portrayed Wayne Gretzky from the Edmonton Oilers who won four Stanley Cups in hockey.

County Science Fair Winners

Four MSS middle school students competed at the Frederick County Science and Engineering Fair. Isabella Gallaugher (above) received the Shepherd University Multidisciplinary Award, the Society of Women Engineers Outstanding Engineer Award, and third place in Robotics and Intelligent Machines. Claire Yu won first place in Materials Science and the Qiagen Award, while Brooke Buser placed third in Behavioral Sciences. Ethan Hanes also represented MSS.

Student Council Plants Tree

Student Council planted a Redbud and Swamp White Oak to add shade to the back playground. Purchased with funds raised through Spirit Week and bake sales, the trees were blessed by Deacon Cosentino. Special thanks to Clear Ridge Nursery, Mrs. Patterson, the DOC facilities team, and Mrs. Tayler.

CELEBRATING VINCENTIAN VIRTUE

Congratulations to our Vincentian Virtue Award recipients for the third trimester. This quarterly recognition is very special and is presented to one student from each class and one staff member who exemplify behavior that is Christ-like and consistent with the Vincentian virtues of respect, compassion, integrity, gentleness, inclusivity, and excellence.

2nd Trimester Recipients (l-r Front) Kennedy Gauer, Sophia Brown, Laney Stewart, Tommy Yu, Emersyn Keith, Layton Field, Atticus Lamb, Elizabeth Edler; (l-r Back) Samantha Bowers (PK Teacher) Logan Fritz, Ava Wheatley, Alison Neal, Claire Pezold, Anthony Vignola, Morgan Fogle, Rose Rasher, Camine Vignola, and Ella Renner (grade 8, not shown)

SLLC Featured at NCEA

Dr. Kilty and Assistant Principal Lexi Burns presented to a standing-room-only crowd at the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) conference in April, sharing how our Seton-LaCroce Learning Center supports students with language-based learning disabilities. Their session highlighted intervention strategies, collaborative teaching, and practical tools schools can use to help students thrive academically and emotionally.

Walkathon Success!

Students walked a combined 1,762 miles in this year's Walkathon, raising over $15,000 to support PK4 teacher Mrs. Glazier and her family as baby Della continues receiving care in the NICU at Johns Hopkins. Proceeds were to help ease transportation, meal, and caregiving expenses. Our students did a great job showing their Seton Spirit in action!

Scan the code to watch our Walkathon video

LEGACY:

HONORING OUR PAST & CREATING SPACE FOR THE FUTURE

AREAS OF NEED

Mother Seton School is moving forward with the **renovation of the Mother Seton House** to meet urgent space needs across our growing campus. This project will create much-needed room for learning and enrichment while improving safety and access between buildings. Your gift today will help us move this critical project from plan to reality for our students.

Naming Opportunities

» Art Studio

» Music Room

» Enclosed Connecting Corridor

New Art Studio

Our new art studio is being designed to provide space and storage giving students a focused environment to create, explore, and express their creativity through a variety of media and projects.

New Music Room

Student learning will be enhanced in a dedicated music room with improved acoustics and space for instruments, giving students a focused environment to learn and perform.

REDUCE YOUR TAXABLE INCOME

Are you currently taking **required minimum distributions** (RMDs) from your individual retirement account or 401(k)? You may be able to make a **qualified charitable donation** (QCD), which is a tax efficient way to donate to Mother Seton School and reduce your taxes. Your financial institution makes the donation directly to Mother Seton School. **By sending the payment directly to the school, you reduce your taxable income.**

If your spouse is also taking RMDs they can use a QCD for the same charity as well.

We encourage you to speak with your financial advisor or institution to see if a QCD would benefit you and Mother Seton School.

Become a Member of the Mother Seton School Society

» Include Mother Seton School in your will

» Establish a gift annuity or charitable trust (We can help you!)

» Name Mother Seton School as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, pension plan, or IRA

Benefits of Mother Seton School Society Membership

» Recognized on the Mother Seton School Society members plaque

» Invited to special events

» Enrolled in yearly and special masses said at the Basilica of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

If you are interested in finding out more about these naming opportunities, the MS House Renovation, or MSS Society Membership, please contact Jennifer Buchheister at 301-447-3165 or by email: advancement@mothersetonschool.org.

MOTHER SETON SCHOOL

A Pre-K – Grade 8 Catholic School for All

100 Creamery Road
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 1 **First Day of School**

Sept. 18 **Grandparents Day**

Oct. 2 **'Angels Above' Alumni Golf Tournament at Gettysburg National Golf Course**

Oct. 8 **Blessing of the Animals**

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH MSS

Please contact the Advancement Office and share your news with us!
Contact Jennifer Buchheister at advancement@mothersetonschool.org

Follow us on: