

## **U.S. Department of Education Awards its Highest Honor to St. Joseph School, Herndon, VA**



St. Joseph School in Herndon, Virginia is pleased and proud to announce that it has been named one of 287 schools in the nation to be designated as a 2007-2008 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School (NCLB-BRS). Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the selection of award-winning schools on October 2, 2007. A special ceremony honoring the awardees will be held on November 12 and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Washington, D.C. The Blue Ribbon Schools award, the highest award given by the Department of Education, distinguishes and honors schools that make significant progress in academic achievement. Schools can apply under two different criteria: (a) that the students score in the top ten percent on state or nationally-normed tests; or (b) that a school with a large disadvantaged population has made significant academic progress as measured by standardized tests. St. Joseph School qualified because its students scored in the top ten percent in the nation on the Terra Nova series of standardized tests. The school, a Catholic elementary school in the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, is the only school in Northern Virginia to be recognized in 2007-2008 for this honor.

The NCLB-BRS award is open to public or private elementary, middle or high schools throughout the nation who meet a set of proscribed criteria regarding test scores and academic curriculum offerings such as foreign language. In addition, in order to be considered for the Blue Ribbon award, St. Joseph School had to complete a lengthy application and submit it to the Council for American Private Education (CAPE). CAPE officials conduct a rigorous selection process, and choose the schools that represent the best in private education to send on for evaluation by the Department of Education.

In announcing the 2007-2008 Blue Ribbon Schools awards, Secretary of Education Margaret Spelling said, "It takes a lot of hard work by teachers and students to become a Blue Ribbon school, and it's a privilege to celebrate their great efforts." St. Joseph School Principal, Mrs. Joan Cargill, who has served at the school for 30 years, expressed her appreciation and gratitude to all the students, faculty, staff, and parents, who have worked so hard to make St. Joseph School an outstanding Blue Ribbon School!

Established in 1978 to fill the need for Catholic education in the Herndon area, St. Joseph school has grown from approximately 140 students in grades K-6, to nearly 600 students in K-8 today. It has expanded its physical plant numerous times to meet its growing enrollment. Today's students enjoy the benefits of that commitment to exceptional Catholic education with state-of-the-art facilities, and a highly experienced faculty focused on providing a superior quality of education to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or religion.

The mission of St. Joseph School embodies the four basic principles of Catholic education: The Teaching of Catholic Doctrine, The Teaching of Academics, The Building of Community, and the Witnessing of Christ by Service to Others. It was through the execution of those principles that St. Joseph School was able to become a Blue Ribbon School. Through all the growth, change, and expansion of St. Joseph School, the one constant has been the 30 years of commitment to the school by Principal Joan Cargill. Mrs. Cargill views the Blue Ribbon Schools award as “a tremendous honor and tribute due to the selfless dedication of teachers and parents who believe that all children can succeed. St. Joseph School has consistently provided a learning environment focused on children’s needs. As a Blue Ribbon School we have an even greater commitment to continue to be a school of excellence and service going forward. Receiving this recognition on the school’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary is surely the best present and accolade that we could receive – it’s the icing on the cake!”.