



Join Us in Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2024

Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2024 is January 28 – February 3. The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2024 is "Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community." All schools in the Diocese of Scranton will observe this annual celebration week with Masses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities, and our nation.



Students at **Holy Rosary School in Duryea** celebrated the Christmas holiday with a birthday party for Jesus.



As part of the 12 days of Christmas, the students at **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** collected scarves, hats, and mittens for CHOP, a local child hunger outreach program.



The eighth grade class at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre** presented The Living Nativity just before the start of Christmas break.



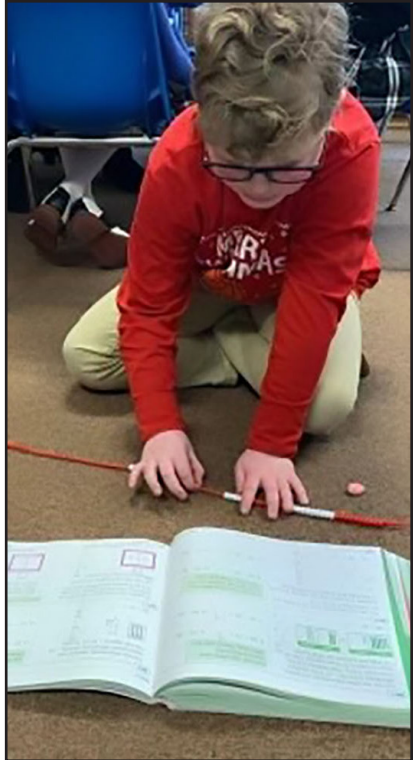
Children at Risk, a local charity, benefited from the generosity of the students at **Epiphany School in Sayre**. The students collected 54 pairs of mittens and gloves, 37 hats, 40 pairs of socks, and two blankets.



Students and administrators from **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre** made some special Christmas deliveries just before break, delivering cheer to local churches, fire departments and police departments.



Flutists Valerie Strohl, Alexandra Sartori and Mason Makuta, all students at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top**, shared their musical talents at the recent Christmas concert.



Students in second grade at **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** work on computational fluency in subtraction within 100!



Fifth grade students at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg** raise and lower the American flag that is just outside their building each day.



These smiling Falcons, students at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green**, had a blast at the Christmas Carnival presented by our Falcon Family Alliance.



The Living Nativity at **Good Shepherd Academy in Kingston** reminded students and their families, as well as members of the local community, about the reason for the season, the birth of our Lord.



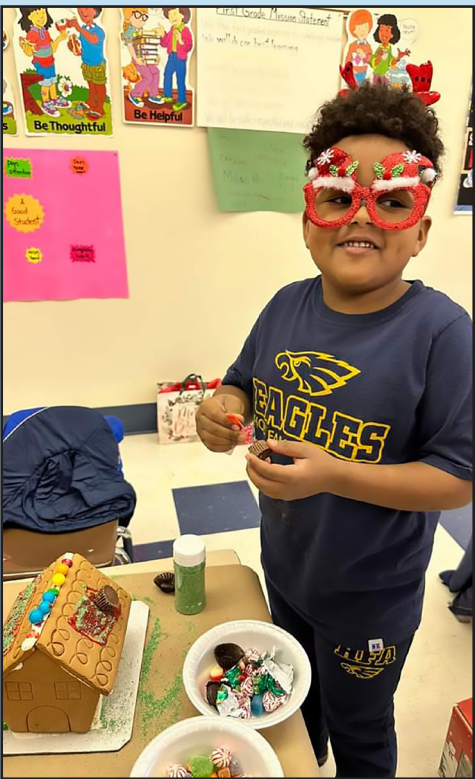
Mrs. Franzone's eighth and ninth grade English classes at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg** created snowflakes on which they wrote their prayer requests. The English 9A section is pictured by the "Blizzard of Blessings" display.



During their Christmas Spirit Week, some eighth graders at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** proudly show off their ugly sweaters.



The Pre-kindergarten class at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** received a visit from Father Arun Lakra as part of the school's Adopt-A-Priest Program!



It's gingerbread house creation time for students at **Holy Family Academy in Hazleton**.



Snow Day Fun! The Pre-kindergarteners at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** are now junior scientists after making snow by mixing hair conditioner with baking soda.



Students from **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School in Williamsport** help sort through some of the 1,200 pounds of food they and the elementary school students collected for the United Churches of Lycoming County Food Pantry.

New ECHO Apprentices bring gifts to parishes, schools and colleges

SCRANTON – After growing up and attending school in his native Ireland, Sean Savage's faith journey has brought him to Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top.

Savage is one of three new ECHO Apprentices from The University of Notre Dame that began serving local parishes and colleges in the Diocese of Scranton this August. Through an ongoing partnership with Notre Dame that started in 2021, the Diocese of Scranton has been assisting in developing the next generation of young adult leaders in the Catholic Church.

"I did a study abroad year at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C., and ended up, through a turn of events, transferring there for my senior year," he said. "One of my friends entered into the ECHO program at Notre Dame, which is the program I'm now a part of, and she told me about it because I was looking to study more theology and be involved in more theology in practice."

While at Saint Jude Parish, Savage is being mentored by its pastor, Father Joseph Evanko, and learning more about how to run a parish as well as work with – and minister to – adults and families.

"I am really interested in how to minister to adults as I have spent a lot of my life in ministry to young people, from elementary school children to college students," Savage added. "Being involved in ministry has given me the opportunity to develop gifts such as listening, leadership, public speaking, and teamwork."

The two other ECHO Apprentices that began their work this fall are Courtney Schmidt of Lake Forest, Ill., and Katherine Santarpia of Staten Island, N.Y.

Schmidt, who graduated from the honors program at Creighton University in May, hopes to gain a deeper appreciation for how her Catholic faith has shaped her life, and share that love with others.



Three new ECHO Apprentices from The University of Notre Dame began working in the Diocese of Scranton this August. Pictured inside the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton, they are, from left: Courtney Schmidt, Sean Savage and Katherine Santarpia. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

The psychology and classical languages major is now working with students at King's College and being mentored by Father Brogan Ryan, C.S.C.

"I was really formed in a college campus ministry setting. It was something that was really impactful in my own faith life when I was an undergrad, so being able to turn around, and pull students into that and invite students into a deeper self-reflection and awareness of finding God's presence in the everyday is going to be really impactful for me," Schmidt said.

In her first few months on campus, Schmidt has found herself working with Sisters in Faith, the women's group on campus, as well as handling retreat preparations, helping to coordinate liturgies, and assisting with monthly campus ministry programming.

"It has been a whirlwind of meeting students which has been so wonderful," she added. "I'm the first female campus minister they've had in a couple years, so I've been able to connect with all the students that are used to only being with Father Brogan and Brother Jimmy."

Each ECHO Apprentice has committed to two years of service. They will initially spend nine months in the Diocese of Scranton working directly in their parish/college placement. Next summer, the three will return to Notre Dame for more

coursework, after which they will return for one more year at their assigned location.

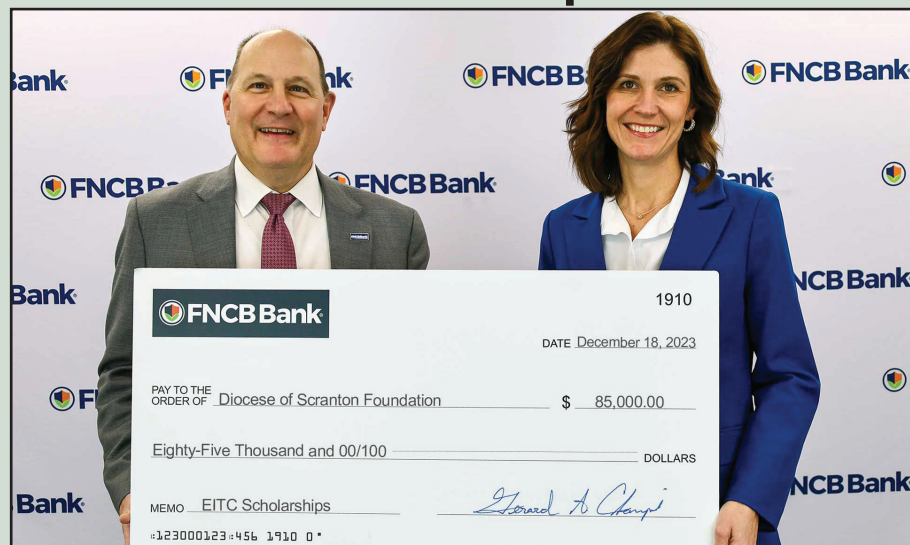
Santarpia, who graduated Magna cum laude from Bryn Mawr College with degrees in Spanish and political science, is working with the parish communities of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Kingston, and Holy Family, Luzerne, and is being mentored by Monsignor David Tressler.

"Everyone has been incredible, at the parishes and the Diocesan level. It has been meaningful to see how excited people are to have us here and how welcoming everyone has been," Santarpia said.

While at Bryn Mawr College, Santarpia coordinated weekly Mass, Bible study and prayer meetings as part of the campus ministry program.

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FNCB Bank donates \$85,000 to Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation



Gerard Champi, FNCB Bank President & CEO, presents a check for \$85,000 to Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Superintendent of Catholic Schools, on Dec. 18, 2023.

DUNMORE - FNCB Bank, based locally since 1910, has allocated \$85,000 through the Pennsylvania Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation. This donation aims to facilitate tuition assistance for students enrolled in pre-school, elementary, and high school programs throughout northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation annually extends tuition awards to over 1,000 families, a substantial portion of which is funded by contributions from FNCB Bank.

"This donation underscores FNCB Bank's commitment to supporting education and the local community," Gerard Champi, FNCB Bank President & CEO, said. "Our contribution aligns with the Diocese of Scranton's objectives, and we are pleased to assist in providing educational opportunities to many deserving students across northeastern Pennsylvania."

Since participating in the EITC initiative in 2010, FNCB has contributed over \$3,000,000 to local educational and scholarship organizations, underlining the bank's sustained commitment to fostering educational opportunities in the region.

FNCB Bank's commitment to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation is part of its broader Community Caring initiative that extends beyond financial contributions, encompassing volunteerism, donations, and outreach programs.



What: Rectory, Set, Cook! III: Collars + Scholars
Presented by: The Hawk Family Foundation

Introducing pastor chef-student chef partnerships in a one-two punch food fight vs. hunger AND homelessness!

All sponsorship dollars support Catholic Social Services' anti-hunger and anti-homelessness efforts! Half of all voting dollars also support the cause, and half return to the participating parish!

When: Debuts online on Fat Tuesday, Feb. 13, and runs through the six weeks of Lent.
What's new: Our largest pastor chef roster yet with 30+ priests participating plus several Catholic young people!

Follow Diocese of Scranton on social media for details on the Fat Tuesday launch party, which also will celebrate the **first-ever Rectory, Set, Cook! charitable beer release!**



There's still time to get your pastor on the kitchen team!
 For more information about how your parish can get involved, or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities, call Sandra Snyder at 570-591-5004 or email Sandra-Snyder@dioceseofscranton.org

