



Union Catholic High School

Union Catholic Enhances Curriculum By Introducing Wireless Technology

By **KIM KINTER**
Specially Written for Our Towns

Freshmen at Union Catholic High School, located at 1600 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains, are going wireless this year.

By just sliding a card into their laptop computers, the 200 new freshmen can immediately access the school's network, which includes the Internet and e-mail, along with printing capabilities. Students previously could access the school's network only by plugging into one of two computer hubs contained in each classroom of the school.

In the third year of a program incorporating the use of laptop computers as a regular part of the curriculum, the private, parochial school is introducing the Lucent Waveland Wireless card that enables students to access their computers without having to plug into hubs and tote along 14-foot cords.

Karen Piasecki, the new Director of Technology at Union Catholic High School, said the school first tested the card before making it widely available to students.

When teachers are walking around the classroom, talking and making presentations, wires strung along the floors from the computers to the hubs can be dangerous and awkward, Ms. Piasecki said. With the card, the need for the wires is eliminated, she pointed out.

For the first time since Union Catholic High School embarked on its technology program three years ago, the school has required all freshmen this year to purchase their own Toshiba laptop, which includes the wireless card.

Each computer, which also includes an Encarta electronic encyclopedia, the Microsoft Office 2000 software package, e-mail account and in-house school loaner and repair program, costs \$2,075. For those students and teachers who already have a laptop, the card can be purchased separately for \$285.

Union Catholic first began participating in the joint Microsoft and Toshiba program, called "Anytime Anywhere Learning," during the 1997 academic year.

When the program first began, only accelerated students were required to purchase the Toshiba laptop computers, according to Ms. Piasecki. The second year, accelerated, remedial and honors students were asked to purchase them, and regular academic students had an option to buy the units.

Just under 500 of the 700 students attending the high school now have their own computers, she said.

Now, Union Catholic positions itself as the "premier" Catholic high school for the integration of technology into its curriculum.

It's come a long way since the school first opened its doors 37 years ago as Union Catholic Regional High School, welcoming 184 boys and 142 girls to begin their studies in a two-story, partially completed building.

It remains a co-educational institution of 700 students, representing numerous area communities, that blends traditions and customs into one campus.

The high school has a history of providing education in the Catholic tradition. Literature on the school points out that Union Catholic seeks to create an environment that will nurture the maturation of the whole person — spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.

With a diverse student body, the school's faculty strives to foster the special talents of each individual, and to provide a program of studies and services both relevant and meaningful to a student's needs.

Tuition for the 1999-2000 school year is \$5,556. There is a tuition reduction of \$500 for each student when two members of a family are enrolled in the school and \$1,000 for each student when three are enrolled. There are also rebates for those who fully pay their tuitions by certain dates.

Union Catholic is currently a member of the Mountain Valley Conference. As a member, the following sports are offered during the fall season:

Varsity Boys' and Girls' Cross Country; Junior Varsity and Varsity Boys' and Girls' Soccer; Varsity Girls' Tennis and Varsity Girls' Gymnastics.

Winter sports include Boys' Freshman, Varsity and Junior Varsity Basketball; Junior Varsity and Varsity Girls' Basketball and Varsity Boys' and Girls' Bowling.

Spring sports offered are Freshman, Junior Varsity and Varsity Boys' Baseball; Junior Varsity and Varsity Girls' Softball; Varsity Boys' Tennis; Varsity Boys' and Girls' Golf; Varsity Boys' and Girls' Track and Junior Varsity and Varsity Girls' Volleyball.

For further information about the school, please call Anne Wischusen, Director of Institutional Development, at (908) 889-9475, or view the school's Web site at www.unioncatholic.org.



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