

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Mount Saint Mary Academy Student Pays Tribute to Mom on Mother's Day

By KATE MCGEE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Sunday, May 8, is a day devoted entirely to a special group of people: mothers. Mother's Day has been an American pastime since 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson made it a national holiday. Since then, it has been tradition on the second Sunday of May to celebrate our mothers and all they do for us.

Personally, I think my mother is an extraordinary woman: a role model, teacher and friend. She has encouraged me to do the best I can, and no matter what I do I know she will always love me. Anyone who knows my mom well would say she is outrageously funny, making outlandish comments that can make you laugh until you cry. Her quirky mind invents some of the unforgettable things, like cutting my sandwich into a "K," and planning the most memorable birthday parties.

My mother, although funny, has also taught me some of the best life lessons. Not only has she taught me how to buy a \$50 toaster for \$9.99, but also lessons about friends, family and my own personal happiness.

Once we were at a party where I was sulking around and refused to talk to anyone. My mom came up to me and simply said, "Kate, you make your own happiness." These words are important to me because they taught me an important life lesson that is still with me today.

All mothers give their lives for their children. Driving from swimming, to piano, to my friend's house, my mom dedicates her life to her children. Without her, our lives would be complete chaos, and completely boring.

So this Sunday, spend some time with your mother. If your mother is deceased, think about her and all the things she has given you and taught you. You only have one mom, and as corny as it may sound, I wouldn't trade mine for the world.

CONCEPTS & THOUGHT



GOODBYE AND THANK YOU...Retiring Board of Education member Arlene Gardner, right, received praise from her colleagues at the April 12 meeting. Current Board President Anne Riegel presented Ms. Gardner with an official resolution from the Westfield Board of Education.

Arlene Gardner Recognized For Nine Years on School Bd.

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Board of Education honored Arlene Gardner, who recently retired from the board, with a resolution in appreciation of her three consecutive terms serving the Westfield community.

In the resolution presented to her by current Board President Anne Riegel, Ms. Gardner was thanked for her leadership, foresight, and sensitivity, particularly as Board President from 2001 to 2004 and also serving as Chair of the Policies

Committee for five of her nine years on the board.

The resolution also referred to Ms. Gardner's initiatives, which encouraged cooperation between the school district and the town government and her efforts to promote communication to and from the public.

She was also remembered for "her exceptional analytical skills during nine years and hundreds of volunteer hours."

In citing Ms. Gardner's many responsibilities on the board, Ms. Riegel said, "Arlene Gardner demonstrated her dedication to the children of Westfield and her genuine concern for the Westfield community while serving as liaison to the Parent-Teacher Council, the New Jersey School Boards Association, the Westfield High School PTO, Edison PTO, and Tamaques PTO; as well as Chairperson of Town Relations; Chairperson of Board/Staff and Negotiations; and member of the Curriculum, Instruction and Programs Committee of the Board of Education.

Mary Dura of Wilson School Awarded Philhower Fellowship

WESTFIELD — Mary Dura, first grade teacher at Wilson Elementary School in Westfield, is the 2005 recipient of the Westfield Rotary Club's Philhower Fellowship in recognition of outstanding teaching at the elementary school level.

Kenneth Ciarrocca, President of the Rotary Club, presented Mrs. Dura with the award at the Rotary Club luncheon on April 19, at which Mrs. Dura was the guest of honor. She was also honored at a reception at Wilson School on May 3 prior to the Board of Education meeting.

Mrs. Dura began her teaching career in the school district in September of 2000 at Wilson School as a first grade teacher. She has taught students from kindergarten through high school and has over 20 years of teaching experience.

A graduate of Gwynedd Mercy College in Pennsylvania, she received a master's degree from Fordham University.

Included in the many Philhower nominations received on her behalf were comments from parents who commended Mrs. Dura's "ideal mix

of skills and character traits that give joy to children and comfort to parents... She is the teacher we all wish we had."

A parent of a current student stated, "Mrs. Dura is an absolute marvel. The combination of intellect, energy, optimism and compassion that she brings to the classroom each day is truly amazing."

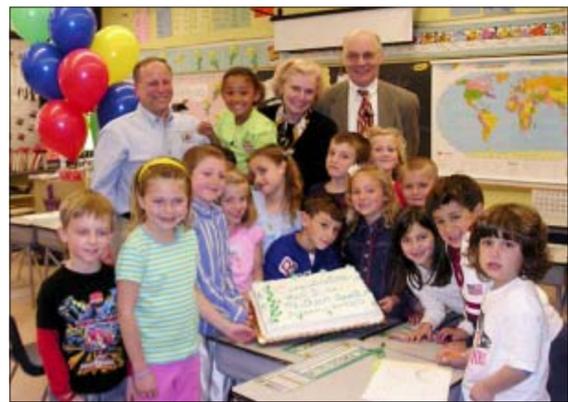
Another letter stated, "Mary is an individual that when you meet her, you feel as though you have been touched by an angel."

A parent of a former student wrote, "While Mrs. Dura is to be commended on her wonderful teaching skills, what really sets her apart is her ability to create an atmosphere where learning is a joyful experience."

Former students, now in the second grade, also submitted notes in which they nominated Mrs. Dura.

One seven year old wrote, "Mrs. Dura taught us to always do our best and not be afraid of making mistakes because we learn from our mistakes. She said her favorite thing is an eraser."

Wilson Principal Dr. Andrew Perry



FANTASTIC TEACHER...Mary Dura, a Wilson School teacher and this year's Westfield Rotary Club's Philhower Fellowship winner, was quickly surrounded by her students and Principal Andrew Perry when Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley brought flowers and balloons to her first grade classroom to announce the award. Board member Julia Walker and Wilson PTA representative Susan Taylor brought congratulations from their respective organizations as well as a celebration cake to honor Mrs. Dura.

commented, "Mary Dura is a Teacher, with a capital 'T.' Her knowledge, experience, caring and guidance come from a radiant heart. The Philhower Award was created with a teacher like Mary Dura in mind."

Superintendent of Schools and former Rotary President Dr. William Foley congratulated Mrs. Dura for becoming the 13th recipient of the Philhower Fellowship. He also thanked the Rotary for "its recognition of this meaningful profession."

In accepting the award, Mrs. Dura stated that she felt very lucky for the privilege of teaching such wonderful children, for the parents who bring her these smiling children, for her colleagues who keep "my head above water" and for Dr. Perry for opening the door to Wilson for her everyday.

"The Philhower Fellowship was established in 1993 by the Rotary Club to honor former Westfield Educator and Rotarian Charles Philhower and to recognize the importance of teaching in the elementary grades," explained Dr. Foley.

ENRICHMENT CENTER CAN HELP THE REPORT CARD BLUES

The Enrichment Center, located at 424 Central Avenue in Westfield and 161 Washington Valley Road, Suite 208, Warren, and now the Shoprites in Clark and Woodbridge, suggests that parents trust their own instincts when it comes to their children. If you feel that something is amiss or that your child is not performing to grade level or if you feel that your child is advanced but is not performing to ability, seek help.

The Enrichment Center can help. The staff of over 125 state certified and experienced teachers is available to offer help. Mrs. Elaine Sigal, owner and director of The Enrichment Center, says, "In today's economy it is impossible for any school to meet the needs of every child. We offer classes for the child who needs remediation, for the child who needs more accelerated work, and for the child who just doesn't do the work. Our students range in ages from 3-19." The Enrichment Center also offers educational testing to determine

learning difficulties, reading difficulties and math difficulties. The results are only given to the parents with suggestions for improving the situation.

The classes and private tutoring offered by The Enrichment Center are offered only by state certified experienced teachers. The Enrichment Center is unique in that short-term tutoring is available.

Students can bolster reading, writing and math skills or study about pirates and knights, these subjects being just a few offered. The large number of students successfully attending The Enrichment Center for PSAT, SAT I, and SAT II training attests to the fact that the program works. College Advising is available.

Call Westfield (908) 654-0110 or Warren (732) 748-2020 or Shoprites (877) 668-3224 today. Trust yourself as a parent to know if your child needs more! Go to www.TheEnrichmentCenter.com and find out about The Enrichment Center Difference.

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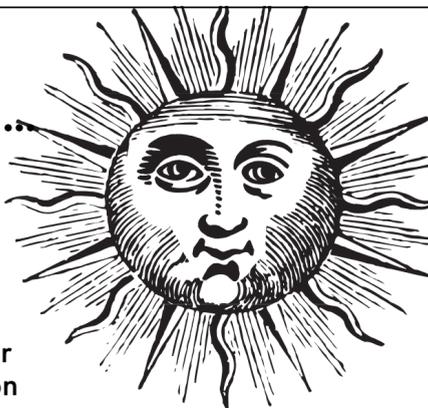
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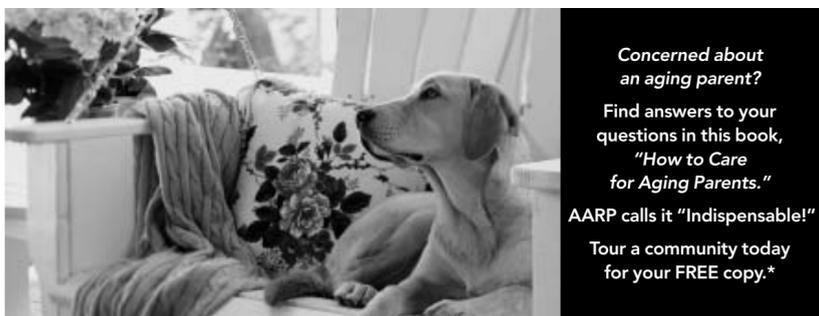
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