This summer, Take Note comes to you after a very long winter here in New York. We took a hit not only from the weather but also from the news that 27 of our grammar schools throughout the Archdiocese would close their doors. In addition, we lost 3 Catholic girls’ high schools, Pius V (Bronx), St. Peter (Staten Island), Our Lady of Victory (Dobbs Ferry). Rice High School for boys (Manhattan) will graduate its final class. Despite heroic efforts on the part of parishioners, school administrators, religious congregations, and the Archdiocese, the economic climate forced tough decisions which leave no one happy.

In the midst of this transformation, I can write that we are holding our own because of the wonderful team spirit among faculty and staff, the unwavering support of the Ursulines, and the overflowing generosity of our alums and donors. Our enrollment for the last three years has stabilized at the 350–360 level, allowing the school to remain intimate while optimizing our resources without unnecessary added expenses. Academics, Arts, and Service is not simply a slogan. It embodies our efforts to differentiate ourselves and market our strengths. To fortify our position, we have hired an alum, Julia Myers-Bartley ’85, with extensive experience in the media, to be our new PR/External Relations/Recruiter. In addition, we are finalizing a 30 second commercial to air on the local cablevision network beginning in the Fall!

Despite the fact that our tuition for 2011–2012 is more than reasonable ($6,850) for a quality, safe, Ursuline education, the fact remains that for many of our families, this is a financial burden they cannot sustain. I am deeply grateful to the Ursulines who have remained committed to their mission and to those alums who have stepped forward in an extraordinary way to support their alma mater. I constantly hear from alums who unequivocally state that their best educational experience was here. As I begin my fourth year here, we need to ensure that we can provide an equivalent experience for a new generation of young women.

I want to acknowledge the most generous offer of Dr. Steve Sweeny and the Board of Trustees of the College of New Rochelle to offer any high school Ursuline educator a free ride at CNR in obtaining a master’s degree. What a great inducement to professional development! We also had our first RCIA class with 2 students receiving baptism and first communion and 5 students obtaining a master’s degree. What a great inducement to professional development! We also had our first RCIA class with 2 students receiving baptism and first communion and 5 students receiving confirmation on Ascension Thursday. Msgr. O’Brien, the pastor of St. Philip Neri, has been most gracious in allowing us to undertake this initiative.

On a more mundane note, this winter we had to replace our gym windows ($19,000) and repair a broken water main underground ($16,000). Remember, the newer parts of our school are 60 years old! We were also able to win a gift from Ace Hardware to repaint our cafeteria in June.

We bid farewell to two wonderful, long time teachers, Pat Rooms and Laura Ravotti who have served the school faithfully and lovingly. In addition, we say good bye to Kate Ostrander, an alum, a teacher, and our Director of Recruitment/Admissions, whose love for her alma mater demonstrated itself in so many ways. In the words of our Alma Mater song: “March on to Victory.”

We are excited about the opportunity to tell our story to a wider audience this Fall and look forward to a robust recruiting season. Thank you for your support! Enjoy this issue of Take Note. We are proud of our publication and the women highlighted. If you are in the Bronx, stop by. You are most welcome.

Sincerely,

Fr. John A. Vigilanti, Ed. D.
Dear Parents & Alumnae,

Within the confines of this issue of Take Note, you will be provided with a brief overview of the varied and diverse successes achieved by AMSU’s students throughout the course of academic year 2010–2011. What you encounter will serve to substantiate Fr. Vigilanti’s claim that the phrase Academics, Arts, and Service is not merely a slogan. These three words are ones that we live by daily, words that reveal the fundamental nature of our mission, defining who we are and what we do.

Our students’ commendable academic achievements, their inspiring creative ventures, their overwhelming demonstrations of compassion, and their impressive capacity to lead and to serve offer living proof that the Ursuline tradition of education is alive and continuously cultivated at AMSU. We truly live the claim of our mission in providing our young women with a holistic education that endeavors to prepare them to be well-rounded and, therefore, ultimately successful in a diverse, global, and ever-changing society. Our balanced curriculum attests to our firm belief that each of our students is a unique individual who learns differently and who possesses different yet equally valuable aptitudes and abilities.

We remain especially proud of our students, of their accomplishments, and of our role in their formation; we are infinitely grateful for your support of our students and for your confidence in our ability to educate them well.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Harrison

Dear Alumnae & Friends,

I would like to highlight some significant endeavors which have made this school year a very special one.

This year’s freshman class was the first time we enrolled students through the Student Sponsor Partners (SSP) program. In 2009, six freshmen were part of a pilot effort, which was very successful. This year, 31 students entered as freshmen through the program. SSP covers only half of a student’s tuition, but with the assistance of our many generous alumnae and friends, the balance of their tuition was covered for this year. This coming September AMSU will welcome 21 young women through the program.

The events the Development Office puts together are coordinated to give alumnae the opportunity to reunite, reconnect and have a good time. This year on May 4th, for the first time, we held a “Ladies’ Night Out” event in New Rochelle. Vendors selling jewelry, scarves, handbags, hand lotions, etc. gave alumnae the opportunity to purchase Mother’s Day gifts. Alumnae who attended had a great time! We plan to hold the event again next May.

Our Annual Cinco de Mayo fundraiser continues to be a popular event. This year our winner, Jane (Scully) Reichle ’63, generously donated her first prize winnings back to AMSU. The school raised $15,000 after expenses!

Our reunions for the classes of 1s and 6s reunited over 250 AMSU sisters at the school and the Pines restaurant with class gifts totalling approximately $20,000. This fall, we plan to hold our third casino night, Salsa and Chips on October 28th. Please save the date.

As of June 30th, our annual fund has generated $1.2 million for this fiscal year. This is a tremendous accomplishment in these economic times. We are extremely grateful to have so many generous alumnae and friends who are dedicated to the Ursuline mission. We are $100,000 from our goal. There is still time to contribute if you have yet to make your gift. You may send in a check or donate online by visiting our website, www.amsu.org. Thank you for your support.

The Development Office is open year round, so if you are visiting the Bronx and would like to stop by, please give us a call.

Best Wishes,

Anna Ramos
First in Excellence and the Class of 2011 Valedictorian, Christina Ramos, is a member of the National Honor Society and is a first honors student.

Besides keeping a strong academic standing, while taking AP courses and honors classes, Christina volunteered at the Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy, where community involvement is encouraged, doing assistant work in the library and main office.

Christina was part of the Adopt a Student Program at AMSU, a program dedicated to matching students with a sponsor who generously helps fund a student's tuition. Christina describes her experience at AMSU as fulfilling, one she would have not been able to have without her sponsor Ms. Joan Cashman, a graduate of AMSU’s class of 1947.

Christina will be attending Marist College in the fall, where she received a full academic scholarship, with the support of the National Science Foundation, to study Computer Science and Game Design. Her hard work was recognized at the Bronx County Historical Society at a special ceremony on June 12th.

Second in Excellence and the Class of 2011 Salutatorian went to Ms. Angelica Ortiz. Like her class Valedictorian, Angelica, a member of the National Honor Society and first honors student, challenged herself academically.

During her four years at AMSU, Angelica was a member of the AMSU Vocalists, the Liturgy club, That’s Life, the Yearbook Staff, and Art Academy. She also took classes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at The Frick Collection Museum as part of Art Academy and has submitted her work and won several art contests, which include the LaSalle Art Contest and the CYO Art Competition.

Angelica volunteered her time at St. Brendan’s Parish as an altar server and as a Catechist assistant in the CCD Religious Education program.

Angelica joins her older sisters, Julissa Contreras ’09 and Mileyska Contreras ’07, as Academy of Mount St. Ursula alums, and will be attending Hunter College on a full academic scholarship, where she will study English and Studio Art.

Scholarships

Every Academy of Mount St. Ursula graduating senior class leaves her own individual mark on the school, but if there is one thing that all of them have in common is that they all show the results of an Ursuline education through academic success.

This year over 40 percent of the graduating senior class received academic scholarships for college from the schools themselves or through supporting foundations and programs. Nearly $3 million in scholarships were awarded to the Class of 2011.

This year’s Valedictorian and Salutatorian, Christina Ramos and Angelica Ortiz, both received full tuition academic scholarships to their respective schools, Marist College and Hunter College.

Hanna Shaikh and Abernita Misini, who will both be attending Pace University, both received academic scholarships from the school. Hanna received the Trust Recognition Award and Abernita received the Honors Scholarship, both covering $15,000 a year of their tuition.

Tanisha Golding received a $20,000 Board of Trustees Scholarship from Manhattanville College and Jasmin Reyes received a $17,000 Presidential award from the same college.

Nina Tirado and Damaris Polanco both received Posse Scholarships, to attend Dickinson College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Posse Scholarships, distributed by the Posse Foundation, identify high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes and pay for all four years of college.

Ivy league schools were also represented in this year’s graduating class. Fourth in excellence in her class, Kasha Watson, will be attending Cornell University in the fall and National Honor Society member Alicia Cortez will be attending Columbia University.
On May 19th, the Class of 2011, along with faculty, family and friends, took part in their Graduation Liturgy. Students were inducted into the National Honor Society and were honored for their participation in Academics, Arts, and Service.

The top four students, Christina Ramos, Angelica Ortiz, Kasha Watson, and Odera Okaneme, took part in the lighting of four candles symbolizing Scholarship, Character, Leadership, and Service. For Academics, nine seniors were honored by the St. John's University “Women in Science Society” program for excellence in Physics, Pre-Calculus, and Earth Science.

Class Salutatorian, Angelica Ortiz, received The New York State Office of the State Comptroller Thomas D. Napoli Award for academic excellence and leadership in improving school and community, and Valedictorian Christina Ramos was selected as a National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar based on the 2009 PSAT. She is one of 5,000 students selected from a pool of over 200,000 that took the exam.

Bria Holness and Rushel Dixon were named 2011 finalists in the national achievement scholarship program based on the 2009 PSAT. This means that they are among the top 3% of more than 160,000 Black Americans who took the test.

Stephanie Alvarez received the ninth annual award in memory of Joseph A. Mittiga, which is presented to a graduating senior who has shown good character, service to the school, church or community and has achieved excellence in religious studies.
The Academy of Mount St. Ursula Guitar Club is an after school activity which helps students train and showcase their talents in the art of playing guitar. Like many other artistic clubs at AMSU, its moderator enforces an academic aspect to their art. No matter what the setting or content, there is always an opportunity to educate students, as well as let them express themselves.

On May 17th, ten students from AMSU’s Guitar Club visited the Guitar Heroes exhibit at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. While the trip is one that was heavily inspired by the arts at AMSU, for Mr. Michael Henry, it was about giving his students an academic lesson outside of the classroom.

The Guitar Heroes exhibition at the Met is a temporary exhibit and contains many important instruments from the 15th century to the present day. Many of the modern guitars are the creations of world famous New York luthiers (guitar builders); one luthier in particular, Mario Maccaferri, was from the Bedford Park area. The Guitar Club students were engaged and amazed by the beauty and craftsmanship of the instruments in the exhibit.

Within AMSU’s walls, students practice the craft of guitar playing, and perform and showcase their talents during Open Mic events. This year, the students were also treated to a crash course in guitar by The Juilliard School Guitar Masters, who came to AMSU on May 12th. The two fellows from the Norma Galblay McCabe Guitar Fellowship of the Juilliard School of Music educated the students on different classical styles of playing.

After students made their presentations, their posters were put on display in the school’s science labs to be judged by their teachers. Dr. Suroj Tiwari, department chairperson, Ms. Rosemary Sitler, Ms. Ruth Tavares, and Mr. Aroon Rampersaud all orchestrated the projects and judged them with the help of other faculty members to select the winners.

Some of the winning projects included two forensics projects about physical evidence in a crime scene investigation and another presented certain celebrities and the role drugs may have played in their deaths. The winning projects were then displayed in the school hallways and the winning students received certificates from the Science Department.

The month of March at AMSU was partially dedicated to the Sciences with the school’s first ever Science Poster Week. The Science Department required every student to give an oral presentation with a poster board to support the topic of their choice, as a way to promote research and group work.

AMSU’s Science Department offers Biology, Biology Honors, Chemistry, AP Chemistry, Earth Science, AP Physics, AP Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, and Forensics. Each day of the week was dedicated to presentations, according to grade level, beginning with freshmen and their Biology projects and ending with seniors, whose projects varied in AP Biology, AP Physics, Anatomy and Physiology, and Forensics.

Students were given the opportunity to perform for one of the fellows, who then critiqued their performance and helped them improve in their styles. The other fellow introduced students to different approaches to their music.

“Such a trip was an opportunity to use the incredibly rich fabric of New York City as an enhancement to the learning that goes on within our school.”
—Mr. Michael Henry
Although the Academy of Mount St. Ursula brands itself as an institution dedicated to Academics, Arts, and Service, the school supports other programs, such as sports, which are also a very important part of what makes AMSU special.

For years, AMSU has catered to its athletic students with the school athletic program, which consists of three sports, basketball, softball and volleyball, at the Junior Varsity and Varsity levels. Students who participate in sports have to dedicate a portion of their after school time to team practices and games. While no championships were won this school year, there is no doubt that the students work hard and really enjoy being part of the AMSU Lady Bears.

“My favorite game this past season was our first game,” said Senior and Team Captain Bria Holness, who plays on all three teams. “Everyone was united and played hard as a team. All of our hard work paid off in the end when we won the game, which was the beginning of a good season.” This year, the basketball team overcame one of their biggest challenges, by defeating Sacred Heart during overtime, where Freshman Caitlin Harrison, who also plays softball and volleyball, scored the winning point.

While scoring and playing as a team is what helps win games, the true advantage of being on an AMSU team is not solely about winning, but about the sisterhood that the school’s Ursuline values instills in its students.

Senior Taylor Thomas, reflected on the bond students make as part of a team. “I joined the AMSU sports teams because I love playing with my teammates, who I consider to be my sisters. Playing with them throughout these four years has given me memories that I would never change.”
Five months into the school year, students were sprawled on the floor with paint on their hands, dancing on stage, practicing vocal techniques by the piano, and memorizing lines in a corner.

This was a weekly routine for the AMSU players as they prepared for their anticipated production of *The Wizard of Oz*. They not only dedicated their time, but also their talents, to make sure that this year’s production was a success.

The Players included students from all four years at AMSU, as well as gentlemen from Fordham Preparatory School and Mount St. Michael Academy. Under the guidance of Director Ms. Jeannine DiBenedetto, Musical Director Ms. Laura Ravotti and Choreographer Mr. T.J. O’Sullivan, the entire cast took their time to help paint sets, put together costumes and organize props. Whether a lead or a small role or in the chorus, the entire cast contributed to the dedicated preparation that putting on an AMSU production requires, and overcoming harsh winter weather conditions and illness.

The lead roles of Dorothy, the Tin Man, Scarecrow, and Wicked Witch of the West went to AMSU Juniors Alexandria Taliaferro, Aleysha Taveras, Nicole Smith and Senior Christina Moran respectively. The Cowardly Lion was played by Fordham Prep Senior Thomas Lo Presto and the role of the Wizard went to Junior Patrick Grogan, who also attends Fordham Prep. The supporting roles and the chorus also consisted of several Fordham Prep and Mount St. Michael students.

The leads also gave some of their time to meet and greet alumnae and parents, during the Sunday, April 10th matinee. The guests were treated to a luncheon, organized by the Development Office and had the opportunity to take personal pictures with the cast.

**During a Particularly Difficult Winter Filled with Ice, Snow and Illness, the Cast of *The Wizard of Oz* Persevered Through It All,** said **Director Ms. Jeannine DiBenedetto.** They are the Little Cast That Could!
The result of a strong and continuously improving arts program at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula was evident on the night of Friday May 6th, when the school hosted "An Evening of Song and Dance."

For the third year, the AMSU Vocalists and the Urban Voices, a choral music initiative that is part of the Metropolitan Opera Guild, which encompasses the entire sophomore class, hosted this year’s Spring Concert. The night also included performances by the Umoja Dare Step Team, and the AMSU Dance club, who partnered with the boy’s Salsa Club from All Hallows High School.

The Urban Voices, led by Music Director Ms. Laura Ravotti and Choral Artist Mr. Courtney Carey, opened the show with an A Capella performance. They performed six musical numbers, one of which was composed by some of the students. This was followed by the dance portion of the show, which included a Latin number by the AMSU Dance Club and All Hallows, under the guidance of AMSU club moderator Mrs. Anna Ramos. The show closed with a routine by the Step Team, who competed in the MSG Varsity Talent show this past year, under the guidance of Director Sandy Manessis ’00.

The AMSU Vocalists, who performed songs from Coldplay, Stevie Wonder, Roberta Flack, and Madonna, closed the show. The night was even more special to the AMSU family, because it was the last performance for Musical Director Ms. Laura Ravotti, who has been at the school for a decade and established the AMSU Vocalists.

The music program continues to flourish at AMSU, said Ms. Ravotti. Both the Urban Voices and the AMSU Vocalists did an outstanding job with their performances. It has been a wonderful decade for me and I will miss Ursula very much. I have every hope that the music program here will continue to grow and develop.
Students of the MSG Varsity Club at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula are using their skills and talents, along with the support from MSG Varsity, to document what they know best, their school.

The club, which began last year and includes seventeen members of AMSU’s junior class, submitted their entries for the MSG V Awards. It is a competition that recognizes student media projects in various categories.

The students submitted work in three different categories, which included: Best Editing and Best Original Production. For the third category, the students made a small documentary-like feature, that informs the viewer about their school history, the academic and extracurricular opportunities available, and student life, titled “The Story of Our School.” Students also submitted a montage of Ring Day events and a behind-the-scenes look at one of AMSU’s Open Mic events.

“I’m very proud of how dedicated the girls have been to filming their fellow students at school events, and editing projects to showcase the talent here at AMSU,” said Ms. Rosemary Sitler, club moderator. “The club has grown since September. It has allowed the girls to focus more on a specific part of the creative process that interests them the most. They include filming, editing, interviewing, or taking still photographs. It’s been a pleasure watching them challenge themselves and come together as a team to find new ways of expressing their creativity.”

This year, the Academy of Mount St. Ursula’s Umoja Dare Step Team was chosen to participate in the MSG Varsity Talent Show.

The team submitted their audition video to MSG Varsity and was chosen among other dance groups to compete in the dance competition. For the March 29th taping of the show at SUNY Old Westbury, the team had to perform two 2 minute back-to-back performances and chose the performance they wanted to submit for the competition. The winner would receive a professional video shoot with hair and makeup.

“The girls were super excited and proud to be a part of this. They have worked really hard and were so committed to being the best that they can be,” said Ms. Sandy Manessis, Step Team Coordinator and AMSU alum. “They have created a team that is much respected by the AMSU community with Ms. Harrison as our biggest supporter. We all feel great about having unconditional support from our school and to showcase our talents.”
The strength of an arts program is only evident through the talent and dedication of its students. Academy of Mount St. Ursula students have proven just that. Under the guidance of Mr. Gary Horn, AMSU’s resident artist, the Art Academy has helped many students flourish, allowing them to exceed in expectations and be rewarded for their efforts.

Every year, students work on special techniques that help them improve their skills. After taking Basic Art freshman year, students are free to take Art Academy, which is held after school in an "unofficial" 9th period class. Students receive credit for their work and can continue to take the advanced levels.

Students work on individual projects such as portraits, landscapes, and still life paintings, as well as sketches and more abstract work. Seniors work on a senior project of their own. Over the years students have been submitting their work to art contests such as the LaSalle Art Competition and the CYO Contest.

This year, AMSU students took first place in several categories, with senior Angelica Ortiz taking first in Landscape for the LaSalle Competition and in the CYO 11th and 12th grade division. Sophomore Jasmine Constantino took first for the 9th and 10th grade division. Junior Victoria Hasbun took first in the portrait category and freshman Asia Alexander took first in the still life category in the LaSalle Competition. Sophomore Irina Arias took second in the LaSalle portrait category.

Aside from entering art competitions, students also take art lessons at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick Collection Museum, as well as receive the opportunity to participate in internships, as Senior Nirvana Santos did this year at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

The Art Academy students have represented AMSU well this year, during open houses and their dedication to academic learning in visual art. They have produced outstanding work, which demonstrates in competition that AMSU is home for a community of artists. Together we strive for a higher level of excellence and to achieve more in the future.

Mr. Gary Horn
Ashley Scott, class of 2012, was honored for her exemplary volunteer service with a President's Volunteer Service Award this school year. The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered a significant amount of their time to serve their communities and their country, was presented by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program on behalf of President Barack Obama. Ashley participated in the Spirit of Community program as a representative of AMSU.

After local honorees were named, state level judges selected state honorees, Distinguished Finalists and Certificate of Excellence recipients. Volunteer activities were judged on criteria such as personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact, and personal growth.

Ashley works with children from different communities and assists in their development by guiding them and taking part in different recreational activities. She also teaches them about internet safety and the proper way to use it. Ashley hopes to study psychology at Cornell University or Stony Brook University.

Vanessa Campos, a graduate of Our Lady of Refuge Elementary School and Freshman at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula, received The New York Yankees Leadership Award for her work with Fordham Bedford Community Services.

Mrs. Roxanna Chowdhry-Velasquez '94, Director of Programs at Fordham Bedford Community Services, nominated Vanessa in November because of her strong volunteer work and dedication to helping out the community. Vanessa was awarded $750 on Tuesday March 15th during the local community board meeting.

Vanessa also volunteers at her parish of Our Lady of Refuge, has already completed her service hour requirements at AMSU, but continues to volunteer for the Fordham Bedford Community Services, where she was also a participant in the programs as a child.

"I feel honored and happy to have won such an award. It really helped me contribute to my school tuition, which made me feel proud," stated Vanessa.

Shaynique Grayman, a junior, dedicates her time to a variety of causes. She not only has volunteered at the Little Angels Day Care, but also has helped with the cleaning up of several Bronx parks for the last three years. Shaynique also received the opportunity to travel with YMCA Global Teens to the Dominican Republic to do community service there and further understand the importance of AMSU’s motto of Serviam, while getting to contribute to a community outside of her own. She has referred to the experience as a life changing one.

"Service is very important for AMSU students to take part in. It really helps us appreciate what we have, as well as become more responsible and giving," stated Shaynique.

Shaynique is on the Volleyball team, is part of the French Club, Spanish Club, Gaelic Club, Dances of Diaspora, an Ambassador, and is Vice President of the Italian Club.

“At a recent assembly Sr. Mary Alice Hannon, Director of POTS, invited AMSU students to volunteer and she said, ‘When you do, look our people right in the eye, and your lives will be changed forever.’” —Sr. Alice Marie Giordano, osu’52
It has been a very active year for the students at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula. They have taken the time to make others aware of issues, such as poverty, human trafficking, and women’s rights, that affect people every day all over the world. On June 3rd, AMSU students added pro-life issues to that list, as well as a continuing participation with the United Nations.

Several students, along with That’s Life moderator Mrs. Kelly and Religion teacher Mr. Soliman, attended this year’s pro-life conference at the United Nations. The students participated in a contest where they were asked to submit an essay, song or video on pro-life issues affecting young people today.

The winners won a trip to Madrid, Spain for this summer’s World Youth Day, and although none of the AMSU students won, junior Alexandria Taliaferro received an honorable mention.

The list of speakers included two representatives from the Sisters of Life and Michael Hannon, President of Columbia Catholic Ministry, who tackled several issues including morality and sex. Several members of the youth who attended gave accounts on life issues they’ve tackled, which ranged from adoption to mental health issues. Senior Alicia Cortez was the only high school student chosen, among college-aged youth, to share her testimony.

The attendees were also treated to a performance by Latin singer Jose Feliciano and students had the opportunity to greet him and take pictures with him.
Part of the Solution is what POTS stands for and what members of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula’s That’s Life Club has made their mission. The school won the first place prize of $2,500 for POTS, which was the charity of their choice, in MSG Varsity’s Charity Champions contest.

During the school year, That’s Life hosted several events to help raise money for their charity. This included a Halloween Candy drive for the children of homeless families, which was organized and spearheaded by the club’s officers, Hannah Shaikh, President, Stephanie Alvarez, Peggy Adu Kyei and Kiara Jenkins. It had the full support of students in the school. To make this good deed even more fun, students engaged in a contest to discover which grade could raise the most bags of candy.

Senior, Peggy Adu Kyei, Vice President of That’s Life, stated, “I used to look at the hungry and needy and feel that I couldn’t make a difference in their lives. After working to raise money with the varied activities in That’s Life, I saw how making a difference could be a fun experience. We had so much fun creating interesting and exciting events for the students to participate in while raising money for POTS. I didn’t feel like it was a chore and I’m happy that we were able to help the needy in our own neighborhood.”

For Thanksgiving, the students hosted a Food Drive to send to POTS for the holidays. The school’s own Thanksgiving feast helped raise an additional $200. Apart from the two bake sales that were held, the club hosted “Afternoon at the Movies,” which included showing a film in the school’s library. Although there was no entrance fee, a minimal amount was charged for snacks, raising another $200. The club’s final fundraiser included weaving friendship bracelets which were then sold to fellow classmates.

“We are just very happy to be able to give to this organization,” said moderator of the club, Mrs. Joanne Kelly. “As a historic member of the Bedford Park community, we have seen how the POTS kitchen has helped so many in our neighborhood. They are an inspiration to our school community and to our students; it is only fair that we should try to return the favor.”

In June, students were present for an assembly with a representative from Congressman Serrano’s office, who is also an AMSU alumna (Maryann Rosa ’06), and awarded the check to a representative from POTS.
RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On March 26th, six students from the Academy of Mount St. Ursula—Sasha Medina, Simone Cyrus, Tanisha Golding, Aleysha Taveras, Ann lady Jorge and Maria Rymerge, attended a meeting on the topic of Human Trafficking at Fordham University.

The event featured several speakers including, Rachel Lloyd, the founder of GEMS—Girls Education and Mentoring Services. The students were able to listen to several stories and accounts about human trafficking, and how it affects people all over the world.

The students were so moved by the overwhelming problem of this modern day form of slavery, that they decided to bring the message and continue to lead by example, through Serviam.

Kate Ostrander ’97, Director of Admissions, and AMSU Ambassadors, collected donations from faculty and students, some of which were exceedingly generous. They, in turn, received a red and white ribbon as a symbol of their support of Japan.

When Haiti was struck with the massive earthquake in January 2010, people around the world were taken by surprise and gave generously. When the news of Haiti reached AMSU students, it was decided that monies initially raised in a friendly school competition, would instead be donated towards Haitian relief efforts.

In early 2011, Japan was hit with a devastating earthquake and tsunami that destroyed and affected many lives. Once again, the AMSU community put their talents and ideas together to help and continue to lead by example, through Serviam.

In the end, the school collected $500 which was then donated to the Red Cross to send to Japan. AMSU’s That’s Life Club also got to work and made friendship bracelets as a sign of their unity and support for Japan. Also, in keeping with tradition, the That’s Life Club members and guests made 1,000 origami cranes to send to the Ursuline school in Japan, which was in need of support from its sister in New York.

When the attacks occurred on September 11, 2001, the Academy of Mount St. Ursula received tremendous support from other Ursuline institutions in the United States and other parts of the world. It was during this time, that AMSU received a gift of 1,000 origami cranes from the Ursuline School in Japan, as a way of showing their support.

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AMSU Events

SSP students at the New York Stock Exchange

Ladies’ Night Out

Senior Brunch

Benefactor’s Breakfast

Benefactor’s Breakfast

Career Day

ACE Hardware and AMSU Volunteers paint AMSU Cafeteria

Graduation

Graduation
Career Day 4/13
During one of this year’s Enrichment Days, the Junior class attended Career Day in the AMSU auditorium. They had the opportunity to hear current professionals in a variety of fields, some of whom are alums, talk about their professions and advise the students on their career and life choices.

Ladies’ Night Out 5/4
Alumnae, faculty, and friends met at the Davenport Club in New Rochelle to celebrate the women in their life for AMSU’s Ladies’ Night Out. The event, which was in close proximity to Mother’s Day, included dinner and shopping with a selection of jewelry, accessories and crafts available for purchase.

Benefactor’s Breakfast 5/19
Students gathered in the AMSU convent to have breakfast with their sponsors as part of several financial assistance programs at AMSU. The seniors gave personal accounts of their experiences while studying at AMSU and gave thanks to their sponsors for giving them the opportunity they would have not been able to have without their financial and moral support.

Prom 5/26
The AMSU class of 2011 met at Glen Island Harbor Club for a night of dinner and dance as part of their Senior Prom. Most of the senior class were in attendance as were several faculty members.

SSP Tour of NY Stock Exchange 6/2
Four AMSU students, who are part of the Student Sponsor Partners program, joined Executive Director of Development, Mrs. Anna Ramos and school President Fr. John A. Vigilanti on a trip to the New York Stock Exchange to meet their mentors.

Ace Hardware Paints Cafeteria 6/4
On June 4th, the Academy of Mount St. Ursula received a $2,000 paint makeover through Ace Hardware’s Helpful Hands campaign. Joined by several student, parent, and staff volunteers, Ace Hardware repainted the school’s cafeteria in efforts to create an environment that invites creativity and motivates learning for students.

Faculty Dinner 6/7
With the end of the year in sight, the AMSU faculty and staff met at the Pines Restaurant for the annual faculty dinner. The dinner included bittersweet farewells to several members of the faculty who will not be returning in fall 2011.

Senior Brunch 6/8
All graduating seniors were invited to attend the annual Senior Brunch at AMSU. The seniors had an opportunity to mingle with classmates before graduation and signed each other’s yearbooks. They also received their official AMSU Alumnae Association cards.

Graduation 6/11
Seventy-five seniors walked across the AMSU stage to receive their diplomas on their graduation day. Several students were also awarded Academic, Arts, and Service awards.
On April 30th and May 21st, many Academy of Mount St. Ursula graduates gathered for their alumnae reunions hosted by AMSU at the campus and at the Pines restaurant.

The April reunion, held from 1–6 pm, included a cocktail hour, a luncheon, and mass. This was the first time in many years that several of the alumnae had seen one another or had visited the AMSU campus since graduation. Several alumnae helped coordinate contributions toward a class gift, with the classes of ’66 and ’86 collecting over $2,500 each, and the class of ’61 raising $10,000.

The program included the presentation of the Serviam Awards. The award is given to select alumnae who have shown great leadership, concern for others, and dedication to the school’s mission. Both Carole Kakos ’61 and Kerri Gould Reynolds ’86 were presented with the awards by AMSU’s Executive Director of Development, Mrs. Anna Ramos.

The May reunion consisted of more recent graduates from the classes of years ending in 1’s and 6’s after 1986. The alums were treated to a dinner and were able to catch up with their fellow classmates, as well as current and past AMSU teachers and faculty. The alums also had the opportunity to participate in a raffle to win a basket of AMSU merchandise. The winner was Sarita Hatcher ’01.
1. Members of the Class of 1961 celebrate their 50th anniversary.

2. Class of 1956 gathers in the convent parlors.

3. Classes of 1946 and 1951 enjoy the alumnae luncheon.

4. On their 35th anniversary, the Class of 1976 gathers outside for a photo.

5. Members of the Class of 2001 had a great turn out at the Pines.

6. Celebrating their 15th reunion, members of the Class of 1996 take a photo at the Pines.

7. Members of the Class of 2006 with Ms. Sandy Manessis ’00, their former Math teacher.

8. Ms. Sandy Manessis ’00 and her sister, Maria Manessis Ramos ’91, pose with Sr. Barbara Calamari, osu.

Faculty and Staff Updates

Mrs. Patricia Rooms
joined the Academy of Mount St. Ursula’s faculty as a member of the Business Department in September 1980. From 1980 to 2011, she has shared her teaching talents and has been an example of dedication and grace within the school community.

In her beginning years as a business teacher, Mrs. Rooms taught Introduction to Business, Accounting, and Business Law. To complement these courses, she involved her classes in the Junior Achievement Program to learn how to start a business and prepared her law classes for citywide Mock Trials. Her ability to adapt to changing times and needs led Pat Rooms, as she is known by colleagues, to introduce computer capabilities to freshmen and the MOUS course to seniors who gained certification as Microsoft Office specialists. More recently Mrs. Rooms taught Public Speaking and Street Law to seniors.

A wonderful role model for both faculty and students, Pat has played an integral role in orchestrating the cultural pursuits of Umoja Dare and International Night. As a woman of faith, a challenging teacher, and a supportive colleague, Mrs. Patricia Rooms has collaborated to promote the mission of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula within the Ursuline tradition for thirty-one years.

Brava, Mrs. Rooms! We will miss your cheerful morning “hello,” your expansive smile and your confident, graceful approach to every day’s activities at AMSU.

— Sr. Barbara Calamari, osu

Ms. Milesssa Contreras
returned to AMSU as an intern to assist in the External Relations office in 2009. This year, she came on board as a part-time employee as a Development Assistant to write press releases, work on the Take Note and act as our own personal photographer. Milesssa ’07 has been a wonderful asset to our staff. We wish her lots of luck in all she does. She will be missed!

— Mrs. Anna Ramos

Ms. Shara Grau
has only been at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula for one year, but she has had a big impact on her students. Ms. Grau had the difficult task of teaching sophomores both French 2 and 3 and preparing them for the Regents in June. She has done a great job not only teaching these young ladies, but also introducing them to French culture, movies and food. Shara went beyond her duties by organizing the French Club and staying after school to tutor. Ms. Grau was a great asset to our school and she will be missed.

— Ms. Linda Peri

For the past 10 years, Ms. Laura Ravotti has blessed the halls of AMSU with the “Sound of Music.” You could always see students and faculty stopping by the auditorium or by the lockers around the corner from Room 100 to listen to the angelic sounds of students being led in song by Ms. Ravotti. She directed 13 spring musicals, including “The Wizard of Oz,” “Grease” and Rodgers and Hammerstein’s “Cinderella.” Ms. Ravotti built our music programs from the ground up, and has influenced so many students and faculty to pursue their musical dreams. She will never be forgotten.

— Ms. Jeanne DiBenedetto

In my seven years as a member of the English department, I can honestly say that Ms. Keri Masick is one of the most devoted, caring, and conscientious teachers I’ve ever had the pleasure to work with. Ms. Masick’s unwavering commitment to her students is just one of many reasons why we are so fortunate to have had her as part of our AMSU family and why we will miss her. We wish Ms. Masick tremendous success for the future and want her to know that she will always have a home here at Ursula.

— Mrs. Joan Sipe

Congratulations!

Mrs. Joanne Kelly will assume the position of Assistant Principal for Academics and Admissions beginning July 1st.

Ms. Jeanne DiBenedetto will take on the role of Director of Student Affairs and Event Coordination. She will also teach a new theater course being offered at AMSU in the fall.

Mr. Leo Soliman will no longer be teaching foreign language. He will now take on several more religion classes in the fall.

Take Note - 20 -
Ms. Kate Ostrander began her career at AMSU as an incoming freshman student in the fall of 1993. Alumna and salutatorian of the class of 1997, Kate went on to pursue her love of English at Fordham University. When she arrived again at AMSU, nine years ago, this time it was as a member of the teaching faculty. A creative and dedicated educator with an unrivaled passion for her discipline, Kate’s literary lectures, and the great speed with which they were delivered, soon became legend. After six years of teaching, Kate moved on to serve her alma mater in a different capacity, as the Director of Admissions and Recruiting. Her easy manner and her enthusiasm for her alma mater earned her much respect from prospective students and their families. Friendly and companionable, thoughtful, generous, kind, and caring—both a colleague and a friend—this is the Kate Ostrander that the AMSU community knows and loves. I know I speak for many when I say that Kate will be dearly missed when she moves on to the Collegiate school; Kate, we wish you much happiness and success in this and all future endeavors; knowing you personally has been all ours.

— Ms. Lisa Harrison

I had the pleasure to work with Mr. Glenn Stordeur in the Social Studies Department for the past four years. His passion for teaching is surpassed only by his outstanding knowledge of his subjects. He has taught several sections of Government/Economics, U.S. History, and Global History with a commitment to excellence. Mr. Stordeur has instilled in his students an appreciation for government and public service while nurturing their interest in policy and the political process. He took on the leadership role of Director of Student Affairs and Event Coordination and has organized many activities and events. In addition, his mentoring of student government has produced outstanding future leaders. I wish Mr. Stordeur all the best in his future endeavors. He will be greatly missed.

— Mrs. Marie Fabrizio

We will miss you!

Julia Myers-Bartley ’85, Director of External Relations/Recruitment

Home is where the heart is—and for Julia, AMSU is home. Julia is very excited to return to AMSU as a Director of External Relations/Recruitment. For her, AMSU is a place she holds very dear and credits for her strong foundation.

Recently, Julia worked as an Associate Producer/Booker for FOX Business News and a Field Producer and Assignment Desk Editor with News12 Brooklyn. Prior to News12, she held various positions in the television industry such as: General Assignment Reporter with the NBC Affiliate—KSNT 27 News in Topeka, Kansas, a Booking Producer with MSNBC, a Field Producer with NBC Newschannel, a News Associate at WNBC-TV and also an Assignment Desk Editor with WCBS-TV.

Julia got her official start in the media business as a Promotions Coordinator at 103.5 WYNY Radio—the former country music station, now called WKTU Radio and a Sales Coordinator at 1010 WINS Radio. Before her career on the production side of the business, Julia worked as a Sales & Marketing Associate with NBC Network Sales and as a Regional Sales Manager with CNET TV/Radio.

During her tenure with NBC Network Sales, she had the incredible chance to work on NBC’s “Saturday Night Live,” and played an extra in an episode hosted by New York Yankees’ Derek Jeter.

Julia is a proud alum of St. John’s University. While at SJU, she and a few friends formed ‘The Voices of Victory’ Gospel Choir—which now has over 70 members and sings all over the world. She also attended The Technical University of Budapest in Hungary—where she studied International Relations, Hungarian, Art History of Italy, Greece and Austria. While in Budapest, she witnessed the Fall of Communism in the Former Soviet-bloc nation.


Julia is looking forward to spreading the word about AMSU—the wonderful history, education and tradition for amazing young women, that are ‘four years to last a lifetime.’


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Ms. Diana Mera recently became engaged and is now planning her wedding to take place this summer.

Mrs. Diana Papa and her husband, Ben, are expecting their second child. They are happy to give big sister Isabella a sibling.

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SAV E T H E D A T E

WALK TO CU R E DIABETES

SUNDAY OCTOBER 2, 2011
BRONX ZOO

$25 per walker
Team: Gabriel’s Hope
Team Captain: Sonia Haynes

Join our Students, Faculty, and alumnae in this cause.
Walk with us or become a sponsor.

For more information about aMSU participation,
please contact Ms. Katherine Corticcio:
KCorticcio@amsu.org

Register at:
www.jdrf.org/nyc

GABRIEL NEEDS YOUR HELP.

KAREN (WATSON) WRIGHT, CLASS OF 1971

KAREN (WATSON) WRIGHT, CLASS OF 1971 is a certified Holistic Health Coach and a member of the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. Through her health studies, Karen has learned how food and lifestyle may impact a person’s genetic predisposition to certain diseases.

Using her credentials, Karen is offering several health classes. One class includes lessons on what to eat and what not to eat to ensure radiant skin, how to reduce acne and other skin problems, and how to take care of skin on a daily basis.

Another class provides information on keeping your body fit, regaining control of your health and energy, being more productive, and improving your immune system.

Karen also offers corporate wellness programs via teleclass and webinar and has offered to contribute half of the cost of corporate courses back to AMSU. Contact the Director of Human Resources or Wellness Director at your company and tell them about Wright Health Coach. The corporation benefits by supporting its employees in health and wellness. The employees benefit from improved health and feeling appreciated and valued by their corporation. AMSU benefits from the contribution and you benefit by doing something great for your school and having access to a free teleclass of your choice.

As a form of giving back to her alma mater, half of the proceeds from the cost of attendance for her session will be donated to AMSU. For a 12 session program AMSU will receive almost $500 when a class is paid for by a corporation. If the class is paid for by individual attendees AMSU would receive $1,200. For a 5 session class AMSU will receive between $500 to $1,000. If you are interested in one of these programs please contact Karen at karen@wrighthhealthcoach.com.
**A TRIBUTE TO MRS. MARIA DELGADO**

Mrs. Maria Delgado, beloved Spanish teacher at Mount St. Ursula from 1966–1990, was a “class act” as so many of her student admirers described her. Her graciousness, wit, kindness, sincere concern for others and her excellence in teaching Spanish endeared her to all. Besides being a teacher of all levels of Spanish, Mrs. Delgado served as chairperson of the Foreign Language Department and a member of the Board of Trustees. She was an ultimate professional, a devoted friend to her colleagues, and for the school community, always sensitive to others and honorable in her approach to the Ursuline tradition of education.

When the alumnae learned of her battle with cancer resulting in her passing in March, e-mails came into the school fast and furiously. So in their own words, her students honor Mrs. Maria Delgado.

“Mrs. Delgado was beautiful and poised and so gracious. I remember her telling us that she lived in Riverdale in a white building. When I got my license (or rather a car) I passed a beautiful white building off Henry Hudson Parkway and just imagined that my beautiful teacher must certainly live in that beautiful building.”

“While at MSU, Mrs. Delgado was one of the teachers I felt closest to. Of Spanish descent myself, I looked upon her as a leading example of what an elegant and dignified woman should be. She was always kind, intelligent, funny, and was a great teacher because it was obvious how proud she was of her own Spanish culture and heritage, especially when it came to Spanish literature. ... She was a great lady, and a big influence on my development as a person and young woman during my high school years.”

“Mrs. Delgado was the teacher who had the greatest impact on me, and someone I still think about often. Through her example, she showed us that we had a responsibility to show the world that as Latin women, we were smart, responsible, and proud to be who we were. She was an incredible woman.”

“What a class act she was! She was warm and funny while remaining in control of her classroom. She had a great smile, a soft voice, and a friendly demeanor. What a wonderful teacher!”
Academy of Mount St. Ursula
Four Years to Last a Lifetime

330 Bedford Park Boulevard | Bronx, NY 10458 | www.amsu.org

Open House
October 23, 2011
12-3 PM