

Dear Parents and Students,

Twenty-three years ago I never had aspirations to become a principal; my job in the second grade was “safe”, and I loved teaching the Sacraments. When I was asked to take on the challenge of taking over a school that was in danger of closing, I rose to the occasion, even though I admit the first year was rough. Having “vision” is a word that I used to think was for those in the business world, but the thought of a plan, a vision for a solid educational curriculum, a strong staff that sought professional development opportunities with a desire to educate young minds, parents that had a desire for a Catholic education for their children, children who loved to learn and sought to be the best they could be whether it be in the classroom, the athletic field, or more importantly in service to the school, the community, and their church was powerful, and all of it fueled a desire to dream and achieve. It was this mission that led all of us to work to make Saint Joseph Grade School a place where Christ was the center of all that we had and desired for our children.

It has been a challenging, but very rewarding, twenty-two years, and I want to thank Father John DeRiso, our pastor, and the many teachers, parents, students, parish members, and also those who are no longer with us who took on the challenge and worked hard to bring us where we are today. Thus, it is with pleasure that I announce that the U.S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Program is honoring Saint Joseph Grade School for the 2011 school year. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels or make significant progress in closing the achievement gap. Since 1982, the U. S. Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Schools Program has honored many of America’s most successful schools. A Blue Ribbon School flag waving overhead has become a trademark of excellence, a symbol of quality recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. The staff and I are humbled and honored by this award and know that we could not have achieved what we have without your support and most importantly the children who have taken on the challenge and expectations we have asked of them. With great respect for all I would like to thank Father John, the School Board, the Pastoral Team, and all of you, for the privilege I have had in serving your children and bringing them the joy our faith brings to me each day.

Respectfully in Christ,

*Suzanne Wiwi*

Principal, St. Joseph Grade School

