

## ***History of St. Andrew's Country Day School*** ***Founded in 1944***

To accommodate the rapid growth in Tonawanda, Saint Andrew's Parish was established in 1944 by Bishop John Duffy with Rev. Msgr. James F. Donovan as pastor. The first church/school building was completed in 1949 when classes for grades one through four began. Sister Mary Venard, SSMN, presided over the new parish school that expanded to include grades five through eight in 1959. Originally housing 16 classrooms and a cafeteria, the school expanded under the guidance of Msgr. Joseph E. Scheider to include the Msgr. Donovan Center, containing a double gymnasium, and McNulty Auditorium. Eventually, a Science laboratory, a library, a Cultural Arts Room, two classroom wings, a Reading Resource Center and a computer room were added.

The Felician Sisters began their ministry at the school in 1967, when two sisters joined the faculty of ten sisters of St. Mary of Namur and twelve lay teachers to serve the 829 pupils enrolled at the time. The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur withdrew from the administration of the school in 1972. At the invitation of Rev. Joseph E. Schieder, the Felician Sisters assumed the administration of the school. Sister Mary Edmundine Adamczak was the first Felician principal. The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur continued to be part of the teaching staff until 1977.

A Montessori School was established in 1973. An Absolute Private Charter under the Board of Regents of the State of New York was granted on June 27, 1975 and we became known as Saint Andrew's Country Day School, serving Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grades One through Eight. Msgr. Joseph Schieder was instrumental in obtaining the new name "Country Day" that came from the English System of education. The English form of education focused on the dignity of the child - to educate the whole child - intellect, soul, body, and emotions.

St. Andrew's Country Day School pioneered innovations in teaching excellence with: the introduction of the Montessori Method, closed circuit classroom television, foreign language classes, a reading clinic and a physical education program that includes an extensive extra-curricular program.

Rev. Msgr. Richard Graeber became the new pastor in 1976. As the years progressed there arose a need for an all - day Kindergarten Program. Thus, in 1987, three all day kindergarten classes were established. With all the innovative programs already established, Sister Mary Kevin Szeluga saw the need to work toward Middle States Accreditation and worked with the faculty on the Self - Study. The Evaluation Team of the Middle States Association came in the fall of 1988 and our Action Plan was forwarded and accepted. We officially received our Middle States Accreditation on April 21, 1989 and earned our most recent re-accreditation in 2012.

Rev. Charles Slisz was appointed pastor upon the retirement of Rev. Msgr. Graeber in 1998.

Rev. Charles Slisz served as pastor from 1998 to January 2006. In the spring of 2006, Rev. John P. Mack was appointed as the new pastor of St. Andrew's R.C. Church until the summer of 2008. Msgr. Richard Siepka was appointed to St. Andrew the Apostle Church beginning on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, and guided the beginning of the parish and school "revitalization". Msgr. Siepka is currently the Spiritual Director at Christ the King seminary in East Aurora, and the parish is awaiting its new shepherd.

In 1999, Mr. Eric Roy, the first lay principal of St. Andrew's Country Day School was appointed, followed by Ms. Lorraine Heine. Our next principal, Mr. Dennis Welka introduced both Smart Board Technology and the Socratic Teaching Method. He was followed by Mrs. Susan F. Ferrio, who previously served as Assistant Principal as well.

In August 2013, Dr. Kathy Dimitrievski became principal and has initiated several focus areas including collaborative instructional leadership, increased visibility & viability of our Catholic Identity, data driven, team-reviewed achievement status, and increased rigor and offerings in our performing arts curriculum. Focusing on a school climate of "love and respect", Dr. Dimitrievski is currently leading the school as it becomes one of the ten Diocesan STREAM pilot schools. The integration of science, technology, religion, engineering, art and mathematics has been scheduled into the class schedule, along with new curriculum to enhance the STREAM program, and to set St. Andrews apart. These offerings include Pre-Engineering with Project Lead the Way in Grades 7 and 8, and Faith & Family, a blend of home economics and faith, in all grades.

St. Andrew's Country Day School's current enrollment is approximately 200 students coming from varied backgrounds and outlying areas. In 2013, St. Andrew's Country Day School added the position of Advancement Director, with Mrs. Jean Kornacki taking leadership in that role. Each month, our school will be represented in the community to bring more students into the school to experience the St. Andrew difference. For example, our new St. Andrew's Country Day School International Folk Dance Club performed at the National Grid Family Entertainment Center at the Erie Country Fair this summer, and marched in the fair parade with our school banner. We had a marketing table where information about St. Andrew's was provided to the fair visitors.

In 2014-15, we have seen a doubling in the size of our Pre-K class, adding a new section to the school configuration. This is our foundation for future growth in classes.