



# THE ST. JOAN OF ARC



# Gazette

MRS. CAROLINE ROBERTS  
SJA SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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ALL ABOUT OUR SCHOOL...

## A Hit and WIN

By OLIVIA BRIGGS — 8TH GRADE STUDENT AT ST. JOAN OF ARC

On September 28th, 2017, fifteen students gathered in the classroom of Saint Joan of Arc's beloved history teacher, Mr. D'Alonzo. These students were there because a new challenge was awaiting them. The challenge was to compete to be chosen as a member of this year's St. Joan of Arc Brain Brawl team. The Brain Brawl is a competition of the smarts; it's similar to Jeopardy. In the competition, students from nine schools battle it out through gut-wrenching questions. Every time a team answers a question correctly, points are added to their overall score, but answer a question incorrectly and points are deducted. Back to the day of September 28th, 2017: The way Mr. D'Alonzo would choose a five-person team from these fifteen candidates was by way of a test. Contained in the test were brain-shattering questions chosen specifically to determine which student could handle the rigorous academic questions asked at the Brain Brawl. These fifteen students were invited to take the test because each is an outstanding student. The data used to make this determination were IOWA test scores, teacher recommendations, and overall grade point averages. As Mr. D'Alonzo looked over the completed tests, five of the fifteen students stood out. Joseph Ronan, Gabrielle Rodriguez, Chase Mancini, Elliot Wright, and Nicole Poulin had officially earned a spot on the St. Joan of Arc 2017 Brain Brawl team.

Next, the students began their six-week preparation for the competition. Each week leading up to the competition, Sister Josephine prepared the students in math, Miss Christian prepared the students in science, and Mr. D'Alonzo organized the team, prepared them in social studies, current events, and Brain Brawl strategies. The training took place during lunch and after school. These students were also given items to study on their own, such as memorizing most of the presidents or just reading a myriad of books. Nicole



## BRAIN BRAWL



Poulin said, "My dad is out-of-this-world brilliant. He asked me questions about U.S. History, Greek Mythology, and random things. Mr. D'Alonzo says, "Often something special occurs when you are on a team that wins a prized academic or athletic competition, the team is forever bound. They're locked together because they battled through adversity to reach a special winning moment. Since this is the second time I have been coach of this event, I saw it happen with last year's team."

On October 19th, "the five" walked into the Cardinal Gibbons' Media Center, the site of the competition. Their parents and other relatives accompanied them. "I expected to feel more nervous but all the preparation led to self-confidence and gave me a sense of hope," says Gabrielle Rodriguez. She also said that once the team was all together at a table discussing their strategies and reviewing random questions they all began to settle down and the nervousness went away somewhat. St. Joan was in the finals against its toughest competitor, St. Marks; they too had navigated their way into the finals. Soon after the match began, St. Joan's took the early lead. Then, St. Marks tied the match and took the lead. The lead then changed hands throughout the match, until the score was knotted at

2000 apiece. There they were, the teams were tied with one question remaining. A sense of awe whizzed throughout the room as the realization hit — this was it... With faces being pushed up against the glass and conversations beginning to get hushed, the last question of the last round was read. Hitting the buzzer, Joseph Ronan answered the final question. The judge shouted, "Correct," and the St. Joan fans erupted with joy. These five students had won, and they would never forget the joy of winning and of being proud representatives of our school. The team, Mr. D'Alonzo, and the parents were ecstatic. The team was greeted by its fans, which led to high fives and hugs all around. Mr. D'Alonzo said, "Since it was such a tough competition this year, it was even sweeter to win."



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# ROTATION STATIONS in the St. Joan Classroom

By CAROLINE ROBERTS — SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AT ST. JOAN OF ARC

What is blended learning? According to edglossary.org, “the term blended learning is generally applied to the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students. “Online learning may be a minor component part of a classroom-based course, or video-recorded lectures, live video and text chats, and other digitally enabled learning activities may be a student’s primary instructional interactions with a teacher. In some cases, students may work independently on online lessons, projects, and assignments at home or elsewhere, only periodically meeting with teachers to review their learning progress, discuss their work, ask questions, or receive assistance with difficult concepts. Again, the potential variations are numerous.”

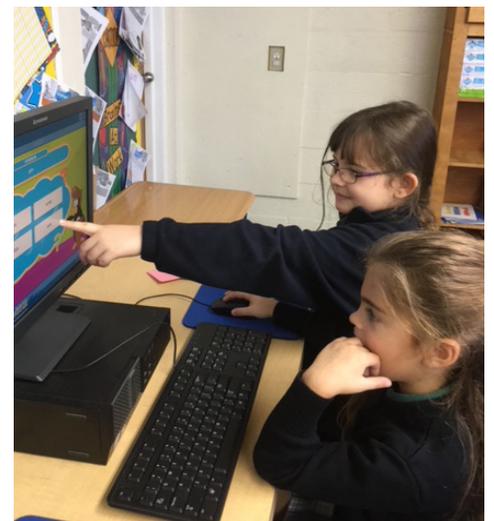


At St. Joan of Arc School the blended learning model that numerous faculty members are striving to administer is a station rotation in order to better personalize instruction, provide enrichment, exploration, adaptive student learning, opportunities for pursuit of interests, and optimized skill practice. The rationale for this push is that according to Bloom, 1984, “tutorial learning” achievement yields much greater achievement than in a “conventional classroom” or even “mastery learning” program. Via blended learning, the teacher is considered the coach. There are three main stations: online, a teacher lead group, and a collaborative activity station (students work with each other and each

student is assigned a specific role). In classes with younger students, there often is an additional floating adult assisting in the process. What requires a lot of preparation on the teachers and their expertise is coaching, data reflection (IOWA, MAP, STAR), Socratic dialogue, debate, conversation and correction, and guiding students to discover the connections to other content knowledge. Also, the online component requires effective differentiated instruction. The teacher assigns the appropriate online level and activity per child. This academic school year, we have made a concerted effort to have more student individual goal setting in reading and in math starting in 4th grade (student/ teacher “data chats”) as well as more teacher/ parent conferences. For example, at our January 2018 teacher workday, we invited middle school parents and students to come to the Sports Arena to individually meet with our faculty.



Lastly, as part of our Florida Catholic Conference reaccreditation process, we are excited to share that the St. Joan of Arc Team is working on getting our FCC STREAM Certification (Florida Catholic Conference Science Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Math). St. Joan educators must be able to demonstrate at all grade levels the integration of all these subjects through interdisciplinary project-based and inquiry-based learning. Both the teachers and the students make evident the “authentic use of technology” as an integral part of learning and teaching as well as the use of data to make informed instructional decisions.



# St. Joan's NEW SOCCER CLUB is off to a GREAT START

By MEAGHAN BRESNAHAN



Have you walked past the soccer fields lately? You may have noticed a few new faces — and a whole lot of laughter.

Thanks to the new Soccer Club, St. Joan of Arc's youngest students have the chance to build lifelong skills they can apply both on and off the field. And they're having fun doing it.

St. Joan of Arc's newest enrichment offering is off to an auspicious start, thanks to a little coaching magic from Joga Bonita Brazilian Soccer Academy, a local soccer program grounded in Brazilian tradition, sports psychology, and social development.

St. Joan of Arc has long offered a wide range of sports programs to students. In an effort to expand options for younger students (Pre-K3—3rd grade), they reached out to Jogo Bonita and connected with their head coach, Guga Alencar.

Coach Guga brings tremendous talent to the field — but he also brings a compassionate view of coaching and social development.

Guga left Brazil in 2000 to play soccer for Florida Atlantic University on scholarship. "I started working at FAU's summer camps to gain experience as a coach," explained Guga. "I was in love with the culture exchange that happens during soccer, especially in Florida where people are from all over the world. I saw a great opportunity to bring what I've learned from Brazilian tradition to the States." Guga opened Joga Bonita to bring Brazil-style play to young athletes. That meant introducing traditional Brazilian technique and tactics, but also introducing a culture of fun. "I think we need to learn to fall in love with something to build a career out of it," explained Guga. Whether that love translates to soccer, science, the arts, or engineering — learning to experience fun in moments of physical and mental challenge can cultivate a sense of resilience.

"Sports give young children an advantage," explained Coach Guga. "They learn to face tough situations that many children don't experience until much later on. How to win. How to lose. How to receive compliments and take direction." This advantage, Coach Guga explains, can follow them all the way to their careers.

The Jogo Bonita philosophy is to create a fun and entertaining atmosphere centered around learning. "We need kids to leave happy, challenged, and wanting to come back," said Guga. He also expressed the importance of age-appropriate program design. "We make sure there's not too much competition at this early age. We focus more on coordination and cooperation." While a competitive environment can help motivate older students to achieve, it can prevent younger players from

building a fondness for the game. For the younger groups, Guga focuses on helping kids find the fun in challenging activities, like coordination drills.

Each session begins with a fun, game-related activity. Then the group focuses on one or two techniques, like passing, dribbling, shooting, and running. The session finishes with a scrimmage game, giving students a chance to put their skills to the test. For younger groups, sessions last 35 minutes — older groups practice for 45 minutes.

While Guga has built an impressive program, he is quick to acknowledge the critical role of SJA parents in making the program a success. "I can't take the credit myself. The parents and school are very focused on making sure the kids show up ready to play. They walk them over to the fields after class and make sure they have snacks for energy." Parent support can play a big role in building confidence for students to try something new. "The kids feel comfortable seeing the parents there," explained Guga. "And everyone has a good time."

## SOCCER CLUB FACTS:

- Available to students from Pre-K3 to 4th grade
- Younger groups train 35 minutes; older students train for 45 minutes
- No equipment needed
- Volunteer parental supervision at all sessions
- Experienced coaching staff
- Sessions average 8-10 students per coach
- Visit [www.jbfutsalacademy.com](http://www.jbfutsalacademy.com) to learn more



# SERVE JESUS ALWAYS - by doing the right thing

By VALERIE BRYANT — SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AT ST. JOAN OF ARC



The acronym, "SJA" does not just stand for "St. Joan of Arc" for students this school year. For the 2017-2018 school year, it has become a part of our overarching school theme and a reflection of the school's mission to building the Catholic identity of its students. This year, "SJA" stands for "Serve Jesus Always - by doing the right thing."

The message of kindness, ethics, human rights and anti-bullying is incorporated in new ways into the school culture this year through guest speakers, classroom lessons and through a themed, Anti-Bullying Week.

Daily, students listen to the morning announcements, pray together, and recite the Anti-Bullying pledge, which includes in the last line - "Serve Jesus Always - by doing the right thing." Students at St. Joan of Arc are reminded daily to live out the way that Jesus intended us to. The message does not stop there and it can be seen throughout the school with the "Kindness Tree" where students can be recognized for individual kind deeds. A visual display can also be found of the Anti-Bullying pledge with everyone's signatures, and commitment, to not bully others.

Inside the classroom, teachers focus on these themes of kindness, ethics, human rights and anti-bullying as they relate to the Fruits of the Holy Spirit for that month. Students are

recognized through Student of the Month for traits displayed by the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Kindness, Gentleness, Goodness, Peace, Joy, Love, Patience, Self-Control, and Faithfulness. By focusing on these traits, St. Joan of Arc is reinforcing to its core that it is not just a school, but a Catholic one with a strong Catholic identity. By very definition, Catholic is universal, and therefore expanding our scope to include Human Rights Education in the curriculum. This started last year with the Human Rights Class in a Box - St. Joan of Arc was the FIRST Catholic School in the country to apply this program to all its students from Pre-K to 8th grade.

Saint Joan of Arc is committed to Bullying Prevention and Awareness, and that is why the school had an Anti-Bullying Awareness Week from October 23rd - October 27th. During this special week, students participated in various activities throughout the week to reinforce the message. On Monday, students signed the Anti-Bullying Pledge outside the front office. Tuesday was Random Acts of Kindness Day. For lunch on Wednesday, students sat with someone new at Mix It Up Day at lunch. Students were separated by birth month and did a (D)Ice Breaker activity. Every number on the dice corresponded with a different question to start conversations. On Thursday, students showed their commitment to not bully others by wearing blue. Finally, Friday was Unity Day and the



Pep Rally. Students showed off their school pride and spirit by wearing their green and gold. The teachers and students had a spirit competition. One student from every homeroom was given the award for being the most spirited. During the week, kindness and bullying lessons were taught in the classes. Students in early education were visited by middle school students who read, "One" by Kathryn Otoshi, a book about the power of "one" when it comes to standing up for yourself and others against bullies. Elementary school students received a special lesson taught by their middle school peers about bullying and the power of a bystander. St. Joan of Arc's Catholic School's mission has always been committed to building the Catholic identity of its students and by teaching them to be more like Christ. We have taken that commitment one step further this year and will continue to do so in years to come.

Have you heard of our \$100,000 donation Matching Challenge? Visit [www.stjoan.org](http://www.stjoan.org) Your support is needed!



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