



MATER DEI

Vita

A Tradition of Excellence in a Quality, Catholic, Caring Environment

VOL. 19 No. 1

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE —A MATER DEI TRADITION

In its 60-year history, Mater Dei has made academic success a high priority for its students. The combination of motivated students, involved parents, and committed faculty has created an environment for academic achievement that manifests with high ACT scores, more selective college choices, greater number of Illinois State Scholars, and overall increased aptitude and positive attitude.

This VITA is dedicated to the academic programs and successes at Mater Dei Catholic High School and how the tradition of academic excellence is sustained.



Our Parents, In Their Own Words

"My child's transition from grade school to high school has been extremely smooth! The personalization that Mater Dei offers has made all the difference."

"I am proud of the outstanding academics and Catholic experience my child receives at Mater Dei!"

"After one week at Mater Dei, my child said, 'I never knew teachers would care as much as these teachers do.'"

"My child's grades and attitude are better than ever because at Mater Dei he finally found his nitch."

"The faculty and staff have been helpful to not only my child, but me as well."

Comments were provided on the "Survey for Parents of Freshmen: 2013-2014"
(conducted in December, 2013).

MATER DEI GRADUATES ATTEND COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Each fall over 95% of the graduates of Mater Dei Catholic High School attend college on campuses all across the United States. Illinois colleges include Bradley University/Peoria, Greenville College/Greenville, Illinois College/Jacksonville, Kaskaskia College/Centralia, Millikin University/Decatur, DePaul University/Chicago, Eastern Illinois University/Charleston, Illinois State University/Normal, University of Illinois/Champaign, University of Illinois-Chicago, Lindenwood University/Belleville, McKendree University/Lebanon, Rend Lake College/Ina, Quincy University/Quincy, Southern Illinois University/Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University/Carbondale, Western Illinois University/Macomb, and John A. Logan College/Carterville.

Missouri colleges include Saint Louis University, University of Missouri/Columbia, Missouri State University/Springfield, Maryville University/St. Louis, Southeast Missouri State University/Cape Girardeau, Ozark Christian College/Joplin, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Ranken Tech/St. Louis, Truman State University/Kirksville, Fontbonne University/St. Louis, Missouri University of Science and Technology/Rolla, and Washington University/St. Louis.

Recent graduates are attending these Indiana schools: University of Notre Dame, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology/Terre Haute, Marian University/Indianapolis, University of Evansville, and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Schools in other states include Brown University/Rhode Island, Creighton University/Iowa, Vanderbilt University/Tennessee, Belmont University and Murray State University in Kentucky, University of Tennessee, University of Alabama, The Ohio State University, Seton Hall University/New Jersey, University of South Carolina, and Florida State University. We also have students currently attending the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY.

Each year our students receive numerous scholarship offers. The class of 2014 received a total of \$7.4 million in scholarship offers, a school record! 98% of the class of 2014 attended college after graduation. Mater Dei Catholic High School is committed to helping her students achieve their post-graduation plans. Whether the student's goal is a national university or service academy, a state university or a community college, the military or the work force, the faculty and staff at Mater Dei are available to assist students and parents with the college planning process.

KNIGHTS EARN TOP ACT SCORES

We are pleased to announce that our Class of 2014 achieved the highest ACT scores in Mater Dei History!

Composite: 24.4 English: 24.4 Math: 23.9 Reading: 24.6 Science: 24.0

For members of our Class of 2014 who enrolled in a college preparatory curriculum
(four years of English; three or more years of math, science, and social Studies)

Composite: 24.8 English: 25.0 Math: 24.1 Reading: 25.2 Science: 24.3

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

We are also pleased to announce that the percentage of students from our Class of 2014 who achieved the college readiness benchmarks established by the ACT surpassed the percentages of the state, as well as the percentages of Carlyle, Central, Centralia, Greenville, Highland, Lebanon, Mt. Vernon, O'Fallon, Salem, Triad, and Wesclin.

Through research with postsecondary institutions nationwide, ACT has determined that a minimum composite score of 21 classifies students as "Ready for College Coursework." In addition, ACT determined the following ACT College REadiness benchmarks in order to more precisely measure college readiness in each subject area: English - minimum score of 18, Math - minimum score of 22, Reading - minimum score of 22, Science - minimum score of 23.

Percentage of Students from the Class of 2014 who met ACT College Readiness Benchmarks

	Composite minimum 21	English minimum 18	Math minimum 22	Reading minimum 22	Science minimum 23
Mater Dei	80	85	68	68	67
Carlyle	45	58	37	35	33
Central	57	68	44	48	43
Centralia	37	50	28	27	23
Greenville	52	74	42	49	34
Highland	51	62	45	48	34
Lebanon	46	64	36	49	37
Mt. Vernon	37	54	27	32	28
O'Fallon	68	79	59	60	50
Salem	35	54	30	35	25
Triad	56	70	49	46	37
Wesclin	61	73	59	40	40

NOTE: Data was obtained from the "2013-2014 Illinois School Report Card" for each school.

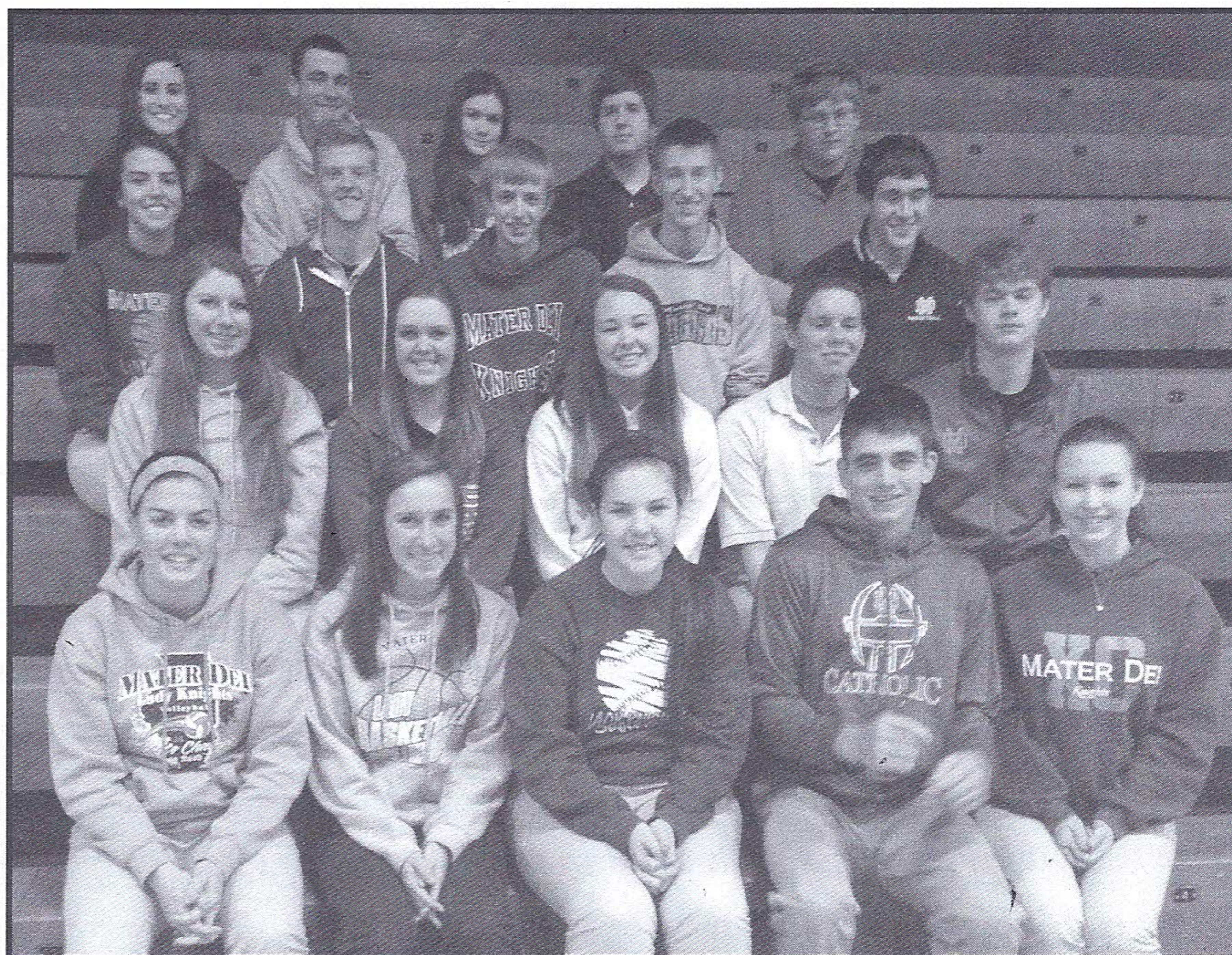
History of Average ACT Composite Scores

Class	MDHS	State	Class	MDHS	State	Class	MDHS	State
'97	22.2	21.2	'03	21.4	20.0	'09	23.1	20.8
'98	22.3	21.4	'04	22.0	19.6	'10	23.3	20.7
'99	21.9	21.4	'05	22.0	20.1	'11	23.5	20.9
'00	22.2	21.5	'06	22.0	20.3	'12	23.7	20.9
'01	22.4	21.6	'07	22.3	20.3	'13	22.8	20.6
'02	21.7	20.1	'08	22.7	20.7	'14	24.4	20.7

ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS 2014-2015

Illinois has the distinction of recognizing the outstanding achievement of the top high school students by naming those students as Illinois State Scholars. Each year the percentage of Mater Dei seniors named Illinois State Scholars exceeds the state average of 10%. The Mater Dei Class of 2015 boasts 20 Illinois State Scholars which represents 18% of the class.

Illinois State Scholars receive a Certificate of Achievement and a congratulatory letter. The list of State Scholars is available to colleges, high schools, General Assembly members, and media. Eligibility requirements include rank in the upper half of the class and scores on the ACT or SAT exam. Students who achieve a score at or above the 95th percentile for Illinois students on the ACT are included regardless of class rank.



(Front row) Shannon Schuetz, Grace Chiarolanza, Kennedy Rensing, Sam Toennies, Claire Langenhorst, (second row) Morgan Dermody, Elizabeth Dorries, Kristen Richter, Chad Von Bokel, Grant Johnston, (third row) Emmerynn Wheelan, Josh Albers, Alex Schriewer, Ben Feldmann, Ben Lampe, (fourth row) Laney Huelsmann, Eric Deering, Elizabeth Medlin, David Kreke, and Brady Weis.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT READING GOAL

The Mater Dei Faculty Council recently voted to retain the school improvement goals originally adopted in 2007. One of the approved goals, to improve the reading skills of all students by initiating additional reading activities, led the faculty to discuss and implement strategies to supplement student reading and enhance reading comprehension.

In regard to our reading strategies, we provide a ten-minute silent reading period at the beginning of our daily study hall. This period is designed to provide students with time to simply enjoy reading! Thus, we recommend that students possess a book each day for we request that they do not read textbooks or assignments. Starting in January 2009, we expanded our reading program to include a timed reading, which includes an assessment of the passage. This activity, which develops both reading and comprehension skills, occurs during each period 4/5 study hall.

In regard to our writing strategies, we adopted a "Word of the Week," which is featured by each teacher throughout the week. Our Faculty Council also adopted both a writing rubric and a standardized writing style sheet that our faculty and students are expected to use for writing assignments. Finally, our teachers have been asked to include an essay question on every test in order to provide our students with opportunities to practice their writing skills.

MATER DEI EMBRACES THE FUTURE: BYOD

As our students prepare for their future and living in a world that will no doubt bring more change and advancement in technology than any of us can imagine, members of the Mater Dei faculty and staff are also moving forward with their plans to institute a "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) environment to Mater Dei. The basic philosophy behind the initiative is to teach our students in their world, not ours! The Father of the American Education System, John Dewey, stated, "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's students, we rob them of tomorrow."

Mater Dei's plan is a simple one: Allow technology to enhance, improve, and support the day to day educational process that we are engaged in with our students. It is the belief of the administration that the BYOD program is the best option for our school community to move forward in regards to our technology goals for the parents, the students, and the school.

With the support of many of our donors, especially the Mothers and Friends Club, the infrastructure is in place to provide the access for all our students and staff to utilize the benefits of those educational devices in and out of the classroom. Mater Dei has also been blessed to be part of the Davis Foundation Technology Grant Program, which has sponsored special projects and "fun activities" for our school community.

As most of you are aware, Mater Dei has offered its parents and students on-line grading, classroom websites, electronic lockers and gradebooks for over ten years. With PlusPortals (and Edline before that) our families can view students' grades as they currently appear in the teachers' gradebooks. As we progress, our curriculum management system, known as Schoology, will be utilized by all our teachers in all our classes. Teachers can upload all their learning resources such as articles, books, videos, rubrics, timelines, instructions, tests, quizzes, and research to Schoology for students to access. It provides an online environment to promote learning within a safe monitored platform.

This winter the Mater Dei administration is preparing for Electronic Learning Days, days that will provide at least five hours of academic work that can be completed on-line and at home, when the weather is not conducive to having our students and staff gather at school.

As we welcome change, let us reflect on an old Chinese Proverb, "Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time."

Dennis Litteken
Principal

MATER DEI OFFERS DUAL CREDIT COURSES

Over the last few years, Mater Dei has provided additional opportunities for students to earn college credit through the Dual Credit program with Kaskaskia College. Many Mater Dei students graduate with 15 or more college credits, allowing some to earn their college degrees a semester early, saving significant money in tuition and fees. The college credits students earn through this program appear on the Kaskaskia College transcript and are transferrable to four year universities. Mater Dei students are not assessed fees for the dual credit courses.

Students earned 2,093 hours of college credit during the 2013-2014 school year. Mater Dei currently offers dual credits in English Composition 101, English Composition 102, Speech, Accounting, Psychology, Sociology, Marketing with Small Business Management, Chemistry 2, Physics Honors, CISCO Routing & Switching, Advanced Computer Applications, Weightlifting & Conditioning, and Building Trades.

MATER DEI CURRICULUM ADJUSTS TO THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS

Mater Dei Catholic High School offers a comprehensive program serving students of varying talents and abilities. To insure that all students' needs are met, Mater Dei reviews its course offerings annually and adjusts the curriculum as necessary. The Faculty Council, consisting of the department chairs, Mr. Litteken, Mrs. Foote, and Mr. Darr, is responsible for evaluating the curriculum and approving any revisions. The Mater Dei curriculum is designed to challenge all students and prepare them for college or the work force. Since nearly all Mater Dei graduates attend college, providing students a curriculum that makes them competitive in their college search and scholarship eligibility is of utmost importance.

Several curriculum changes have been made over the past few years to benefit Mater Dei students. The Religion Department realigned the topics covered during the four years and the courses are now referred to as Theology courses. The English Department added honors level classes in American Literature and Composition. The Math Department added a semester course in Statistics, giving students another option for earning four credits in Math. The Physical Education Department added a Weightlifting and Conditioning course which is also a dual credit class.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES AS STATED IN THE MATER DEI 2014-2015 CURRICULUM GUIDE:

1. To nurture intellectual development according to individual talents, needs, and abilities.
2. To develop the ability to think critically and creatively.
3. To enable students to communicate effectively.
4. To prepare students with the academic background necessary for post-secondary education or immediate entry into the workplace.
5. To instill an appreciation for mental discipline and lifelong learning.

MOTHERS AND FRIENDS AUCTION

Knight at the Ballpark

The Mothers and Friends organization will host its annual dinner auction on March 21, 2015. This year's event, **Knight at the Ballpark**, is in the planning stages.

In a cost-saving move, the auction letter that contains the raffle, donation, and reservation forms will not be mailed this year as the auction committee hopes to use the school website, Facebook, and other print and social media to spread the word about the auction. Please go to the Mater Dei website at materdeiknights.org to print the donation form, raffle sheet, and invitation, or for more information about the event.



HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS

The Mater Dei community is invited to submit nominations for the Mater Dei Hall of Honor. The Hall of Honor seeks to recognize members of the Mater Dei community whose lifetime achievements or service to Mater Dei exemplify the Mater Dei mission.

A nominee must have graduated from Mater Dei, St. Mary High School-Carlisle, or St. Dominic High School-Breese at least twenty years prior to nomination OR have provided significant service to Mater Dei on a continuous basis for at least twenty years prior to his or her nomination. Nomination forms are available in the Mater Dei main office or by calling Mater Dei at (618) 526-7216.



GRANDPARENTS MASS

Mater Dei was buzzing on November 5 when students welcomed their grandparents for the annual Grandparents Mass. Over 375 grandparents attended the event, which included the opportunity after Mass for grandparents to receive a tour of the school given by their grandchild(ren).

Mater Dei Catholic High School
900 N. Mater Dei Drive
Breese, IL 62230

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SAVE THE DATE

December 26, 27, 29, 30 – 54th Annual Christmas Tournament

January 24 – “Knight at the Races” Music Department Fundraiser

February 8 – Band Parents Chicken Dinner

March 8 – Winter Concert

March 21 – Mothers and Friends Dinner Auction, “Knight at the Ballpark”

March 27, 28, 29 – Spring Musical, Disney’s *Tarzan*

March 29 – Fathers and Friends Breakfast

April 25 – Prom

May 1 – Hall of Honor Induction

May 17 – Spring Concert

May 22 – Graduation

May 30 – Golf Tournament