

# Highlights from the Hub:

*Where the ICS Eagles Soar*



## A Gift That Keeps Giving

One of our literacy initiatives is to select and read “the book of the month” which the students respond to in their writing. This month our book is *The Carpenter’s Gift* by David Rubel, an inspiring story about hope, friendship and the spirit of giving.

The main character Henry learns about giving as he accompanies his father selling Christmas trees in Manhattan. One of the trees his father donates to a construction worker becomes the first Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. As the story unfolds Henry’s wish for a warm house to replace his family’s one-room shack comes true and the pine cone he plants to mark the event grows into a huge tree that he donates to Rockefeller Center. Eventually the wood from the tree is used to build homes for families in need! Truly a gift that kept giving!

As I reflect on this heart warming story I am reminded of the generosity of our ICS friends and benefactors who

give the greatest gift of all to our children—the gift of a quality Catholic education. It is here that our children learn to share and to help others, to be generous and to care for those who are less fortunate than they are. Their role models are people like yourselves who invest in their lives and give them hope for a future bright with promise and opportunity. As Henry in *The Carpenter’s Gift* learns the value of giving, so too our students, inspired by your spirit of sharing, treasure a gift that will keep giving!

Wishing all of you a blessed Christmas and a new year full of God’s choicest gifts to share with family, friends and those who are most in need. Thank you for touching the lives of the children of ICS!

Gratefully,  
Sr. Patrice Owens, S.C.C.  
Principal

## Announcements

### Upcoming Events:

Dec. 15th at 6:30 pm:  
ICS Christmas Concert

Jan. 30th—Feb. 3rd:  
Catholic Schools Week

March 15th:  
Career Day

### ICS extends a warm welcome to our newest staff members:

Rachel Ettenger  
Natalie Guerrier  
Alice Grinberg  
Colleen McCoy

Fr. Frank Mulvaney, CSSR  
Gabrielle Nguyen, SCC  
Chloe Panayiota  
John Rodier  
Rena Wexelberg-Clouser

In an effort to make ICS “greener,” we are converting to an electronic newsletter. Please send us your email address by visiting [www.ics151.org/alumni.html](http://www.ics151.org/alumni.html)

ICS now has a Twitter feed! Just follow @ics151family to receive ICS updates and announcements.

### Inside This Issue:

Derek Jeter Challenge	2
8th Grade Trip	2
Science Lab	2
Alumni Corner	2
Making a Difference	3
Dedicated Volunteer	3
After-School	3
Renovations	3
Help Support ICS!	4

## Support ICS Students

A gift of any amount can have a tangible impact on an ICS student’s education!

- \$8,000: Laptops for student classroom use**
- \$1,000: Scholarship support for an ICS student**
- \$500: Supplies for physical education, art, or music**
- \$250: Send a class on an academic field trip**

*You will find a contribution form on the last page of the newsletter. For more information please contact John Rodier, Director of Development, at (718) 585-4843 ext. 100 or [jrodier@icsfamily.org](mailto:jrodier@icsfamily.org)*

## ICS Students Read to Beat Jeter

This past baseball season, Yankees player Derek Jeter reached the historic milestone of 3,000 career hits. To celebrate their local hero, ICS students are undergoing their own “Derek Jeter Challenge” to read 3,000 books as a school. Children in grades 1 through 8 pledged to read at least 7 books in their free time by the end of the school year. Students have borrowed hundreds of fiction and nonfiction books from the school library, putting ICS well on its way to its goal. Eager students are diving into new books to fulfill their pledges, and everyone is excited to see when ICS will beat Jeter’s record!

## 8th Grade Volunteers at Wildlife Sanctuary

On Friday, October 21st, ICS 8th graders traveled to Bernardsville, NJ to spend the day with 8th and 7th grade students from ICS’ sister school, St. Elizabeth, and volunteer at the Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary. All morning long, students from both schools teamed up to clear trails, plant seeds, and even dredge ponds! Fortunately, the 7th and 8th graders were unafraid to get their hands dirty. “We all bonded,” said one ICS student, “and we helped each other do things like lift branches or pull cattails.” After finishing their outdoor tasks, the two groups walked to St. Elizabeth School for some friendly and lively basketball scrimmages. The rewarding trip will surely be a memorable part of our students’ 8th grade year.



## ICS’ State-of-the-Art Science Lab

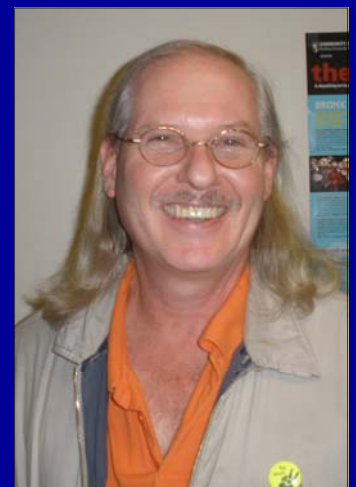
Immaculate Conception School’s science lab offers a valuable learning environment for students and teachers alike. Originally renovated from a standard classroom in 2006, teachers continue to utilize the lab’s special equipment and clean workspace to conduct lessons that would not be possible in a conventional classroom. Thanks to funding from the Louis Calder Foundation, ICS is also lucky to have the support of Jasmine Maldonado, a Science Coach from the New York Hall of Science. Coach Jasmine visits twice a month to help teach science lessons and conduct hands-on experiments with students of all ages. Years after its creation, the science lab remains a sound example of the unique learning opportunities that ICS is able to offer.



## Alumni Corner

Marty Rogers is an exceptional graduate of Immaculate Conception School who remains dedicated to both the school and its neighborhood. Marty grew up on the same block as ICS, and even as a child he appreciated how vibrant and active the school was. Compared to when he was a student, Marty believes that ICS is “an even warmer place now,” with teachers and staff who care for their students and set positive expectations.

Today, Marty works as a Training Director for the Community Resource Center for the Developmentally Disabled (CRC), a nonprofit that helps arrange and maintain group homes for adults with developmental disabilities. Since CRC is housed on the fourth floor of ICS’s building, Marty is still able to do plenty of volunteering in the neighborhood, including working in the Community Garden and serving meals to the needy on Thanksgiving. CRC, ICS, and Immaculate Conception Parish all have a close relationship, and Marty remains involved in all three; as he put it, “you couldn’t have planned it any better.”



## Making a Difference

“Making a Difference” is Immaculate Conception School’s theme for the 2011-2012 school year. Teachers, school staff, and even guest speakers constantly encourage students to not only remember but truly embody this motto and goal. Many students are already making a difference in their classes by being courteous to their classmates, volunteering at after-school events, and engaging in many other meaningful actions both large and small.

The speaker at ICS’s first Honors Assembly of the school year was Marielys Divanne, a local community organizer. Ms. Divanne shared stories about times when she made a difference, not only from her current job but from her childhood as well. She engaged students by asking them what problems they saw in their own neighborhood and challenged them to brainstorm solutions. Ms. Divanne’s message, that even grade school students can instill real change, was meaningful for ICS students.



*Marielys Divanne speaks to ICS 4th-8th graders*

On Saturday, November 19th, ICS held a “Make a Difference Day” during which students helped paint the entire length of the second floor hallway. The event was supervised and funded by the Inner-City Scholarship Fund Junior Committee, and over two dozen students and family members came out to paint. The freshly-painted walls shine, and so do the proud students who participated every time they walk past their work.

## Volunteer Dedicates Time to ICS Students

ICS strives to offer a quality education to as many children as possible, but the school cannot achieve this goal on its own. In addition to teachers and staff members, many gracious volunteers dedicate their time and talents in order to help our students learn and develop. One of those volunteers is Stephen Serwatka, a CPA who holds one-on-one weekly meetings with a handful of ICS students once a week after school. Originally from the South Bronx, Mr. Serwatka began volunteering at ICS in 2008 as a way to give back to his old neighborhood. In addition to helping students with their homework, Mr. Serwatka spends time getting to know them and ensuring that they grow emotionally as well as intellectually. “I try to learn about their background,” Mr. Serwatka said, “and help them realize that they are in a good place here at ICS.” To better accomplish this goal, Mr. Serwatka will often mentor the same students for several years as they progress through ICS. Stephen Serwatka’s volunteer work builds community while improving students’ academics, and it embodies the school year’s theme of “Making a Difference.”

## After-School Enrichment

ICS’s varied after-school enrichment offerings are continuing to grow and expand this year. Students enrolled in the after-school program are participating in popular returning activities such as Sewing Club, Drum Club, and volleyball as well as in the new Board Game Club for first graders. In addition to participating in activities, students have ample time to finish their homework and play with friends. ICS is working to expand its after-school opportunities to its older students as well, with plans to form a competitive debate team and offer a special news literacy program in 2012. Engaging special activities like these ensure that learning extends beyond the classroom and showcase the skills and talents of our ICS students and staff.



*The Sewing Club shows off its handiwork!*

## Early Childhood Classroom Renovations

Thanks to a grant of \$36,795 awarded by The Partnership for Inner-City Education and the Louis Calder Foundation, Immaculate Conception School renovated its three early childhood classrooms last summer. The improvements included new whiteboards and cubbies to replace aging chalkboards and closets, child-safe power outlets and radiator covers, and new fixtures in the Pre-K bathroom. ICS is grateful to The Partnership for Inner-City Education and the Louis Calder Foundation for enabling us to upgrade and better equip our all-important early childhood environment.



NON PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**Paid**  
 Bronx, NY  
 Permit No. 1465

*Immaculate Conception School*

378 East 151 Street  
 Bronx, NY 10455  
 Phone: (718) 585-4843 ext. 100  
 Fax: (718) 585-6846  
 jrodier@icsfamily.org



## Help Make a Difference for ICS Students!

With your gracious support, ICS can continue to offer a rigorous education to the children who need it most.

- \$8,000: Laptops for student classroom use**
- \$1,000: Scholarship support for an ICS student**
- \$500: Supplies for physical education, art, and music**
- \$250: Send a class on an academic field trip**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

- My enclosed check is payable to **Immaculate Conception School** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Please charge my **CREDIT CARD** for the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) VISA MC AMEX  
 CC# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ CSC \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_
- Restrict my gift to the following use (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

You may also visit [www.ics151.org](http://www.ics151.org) and click on **Donate To ICS** to contribute online!

All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Securities and real estate also accepted. Your company may have a matching gift program, an easy way to double your contribution. Please mail this insert to the above address.