

St. Peter School emphasizes science, technology lessons

By Alena Competello
The children attending St. Peter's School in Point Pleasant Beach this year will be exposed to an increased emphasis on scientific learning, according to the school's science coordinator, Lauren Coletta.

The students were first introduced to a new science lab at the school during the 2007-08 school year. This year, the school is expanding its science program, Ms. Coletta said.

Each class, from kindergarten to eighth grade, will visit the science lab once a week for hands-on exploration, inquiry and experiments, Ms. Coletta added.

The school follows the curriculum guidelines of the Diocese of Trenton and the implementation of the science lab "supports that curriculum," commented Ms. Coletta.

"The kids love it," she noted. "This is something we will continue to develop."

The junior high school students, especially eighth-graders, will be introduced to "a strong dose of environmental science," Ms. Coletta remarked, noting that the school's location in the heart of a coastal area lends itself well to a marine biology course.

In the course, eighth-graders will study the problems of the environment, she explained. The students and their parents will also learn how to be kind to the environment, and be encouraged to do so, Ms. Coletta added.

Last year, the students were able to work with the Department of Environmental Protection and Rutgers University, home of the Jacques

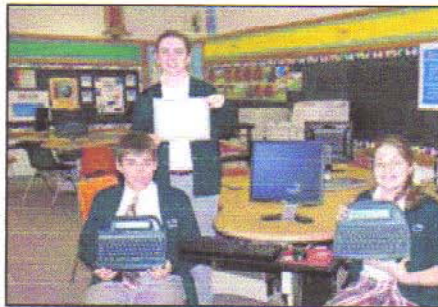


Photo Courtesy of Lorraine Knepple
St. Peter School eighth-grader Michael Colucci [sitting, from left] and Taylor Brown, proudly displayed their new Alpha key boards as Jillian Dugan held a certificate of appreciation issued to the school for donating its old Alphas to the less fortunate.

Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, said Ms. Coletta.

The science program taught at St. Peter School connects the students to "the world outside their doors," Ms. Coletta noted.

"We want them to trans-

fer what they are learning in school to the outside [environment]," she stressed.

The technology teacher at St. Peter School, Carl DePazza, noted that the science program will also be aided by the installation of new computers with

Internet capabilities.

Furthermore, Mr. DePazza said, the school has purchased new electronic microscopes that will allow the students to capture the images they see through the scope and display them on their computers.

The new, expanding technology being introduced in the upcoming school year will not only benefit the science program.

Teachers will be using SMART board technology this year, Mr. DePazza said. The SMART boards, support "interactivity with students [and teachers]," he explained.

According to the SMART Technologies Web site, SMART Boards are "interactive whiteboards" that allow students to participate in hands-on learning.

A professional training

group, Eduscape Partners, will instruct the teachers on how to use the technology in early November, said Mr. DePazza, noting, however, that the technology will be used from the beginning of the year.

In the 2008-09 school year, seventh-grade students will also enjoy the technological benefits of "alphasmarts," the miniature laptops which were introduced to the eighth-graders last year. About 60 students will have access to these laptops 24/7, Mr. DePazza remarked.

The students can "sit and take notes on the laptop ... transfer the notes to a Word document or Excel document ... edit them and add pictures and have a nice presentation" to present at any point during the year,

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said Mr. DePazza.

Mr. DePazza also reported that St. Peter School has gone wireless. All of the teacher's laptops were upgraded to wireless technology, which allows them to use the laptops from anywhere in the school, he noted.

Furthermore, "a teacher can bring the laptop to the

student's desk to make a point... without disrupting the rest of the class," commented Mr. DePazza.

St. Peter School's library system has become "fully automated," Mr. DePazza noted. "There will be no more manual cards in the library."

Finally, the school has expanded its student software library, Mr. DePazza said. "Every student has their own private file to store work," he added.

New titles have been provided for the subjects of math, science, reading and writing. What is most beneficial about these new titles, Mr. DePazza remarked, is that they cover all grades.

"The software grows with them [the students] from grade to grade," he said. "Students have continuity [with the software] and are presented with challenges as they go from grade to grade."