

# THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

# SPIRIT '76 OF

1700 SANSOM STREET - SUITE 903 - PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 - 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXVI- NO. 2  
Fax 215-568-8270 - email ([nacst.nacst@verizon.net](mailto:nacst.nacst@verizon.net)) - web site ([www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)) - October 2015



## From The President's Desk

### *THE FRANCIS EFFECT*

It is hard to believe that over a month has passed since we celebrated Pope Francis Weekend. After such an incredible experience, we are all in, as a friend of mine calls it, "Pope partem depression."

For many of us, the iconic moment came early in the Pope's visit. It came, in fact, at the airport upon his arrival, when he left the Fiat to kiss and bless Michael Keating, Bishop Shanahan Music Director Chuck Keating's son. The photo has gone viral globally and Chuck and his family have received many donations to help with Michael's care and transportation needs.

This was one of those times when you were either right in the middle of things or you were glued to the TV or computer. The Association's Staff did receive Reserved Seating tickets from the Archdiocese for all the public Papal events. Irene and I traveled to Independence Hall on Saturday and to the Papal Mass on the Parkway on Sunday. We had a great view of everything.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

*FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .*

At Independence Hall, the Holy Father spoke about freedom, especially religious freedom, and the good that can be done by those who emigrate to our country. I was extremely happy to hear Pope Francis speak about the great struggle that led to the growth of the labor movement. He also emphasized more than once the need for all to respect the dignity and rights of others.

There was such a positive feeling, such a spirit, permeating the crowd at Eakins Oval before, during and after the closing Mass. We were, indeed, a family, a family come to celebrate with Our Holy Father.

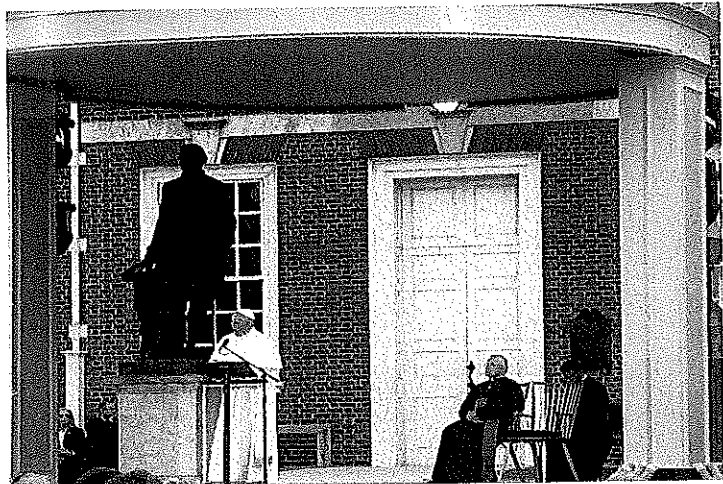
I'm sure we all hope and pray that "the Francis effect" remains with us for a very long time.



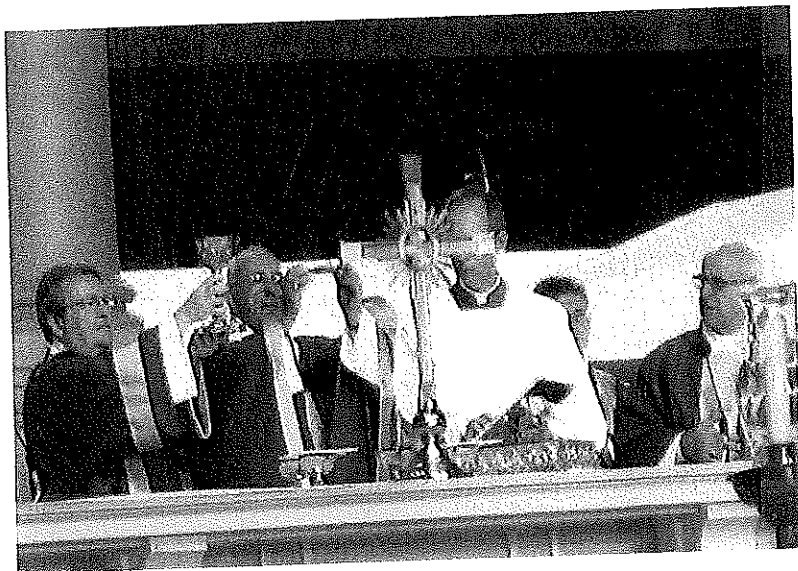
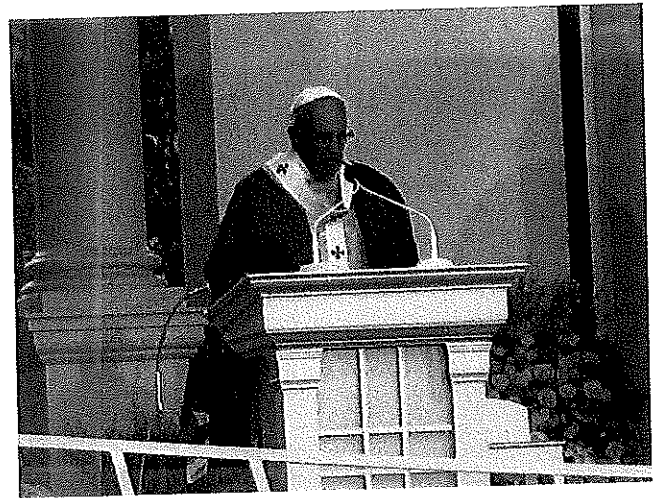
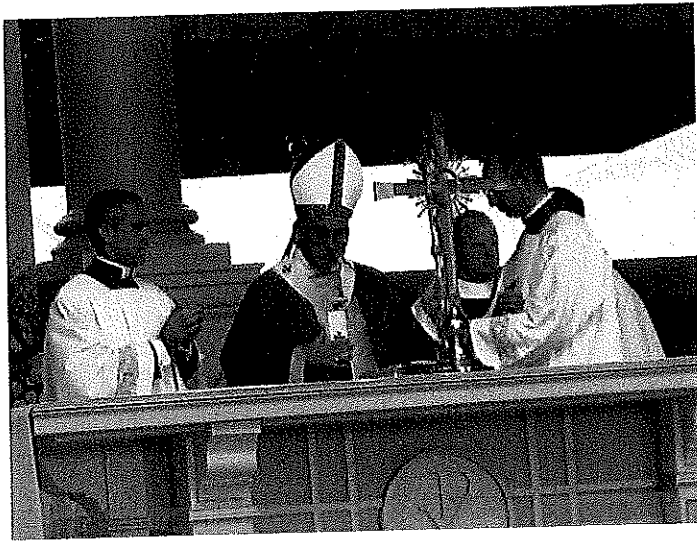
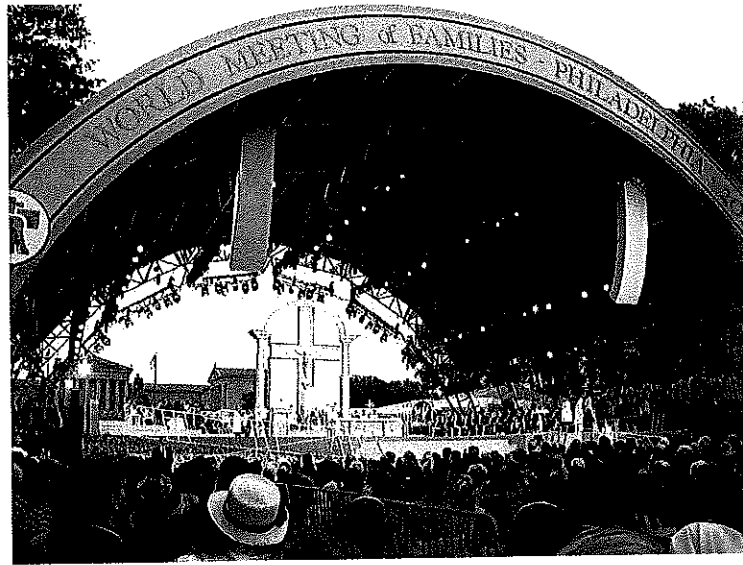
*Rita*

Ginny Crowther, Rita Schwartz, Carl and Irene Tori looking forward to Pope Francis' address at Independence Hall.

Pope Francis speaking at Independence Hall.



# World Meeting of Families' Papal Mass



From: ACT Legislative  
Representative

## Still No State Funding for Textbooks!

The *Letter to the Editor* to the right appeared in the Bucks County Courier Times on Sunday, October 18, 2015. It reminds us as teachers, who also benefit from state aid, that we too have an obligation to speak up for our students and insist that the State live up to its commitment concerning the many facets of educating its students.

Please take the time to read the *Letter to the Editor* and follow that up with your personal communication to not only Gov. Wolf but all of your legislative representatives in Harrisburg.

Your students and their parents will thank you. You might even encourage those students who are of voting age to take the initiative and contact Gov. Wolf on their own behalf.

Thank you,

Joe Schuler  
ACT Legislative Representative

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Free the school books

Since June of this year, the Pennsylvania Legislature has been battling over how best to balance next year's state budget. Most news stories have focused on Republicans vs. Democrats and the lack of compromise to pass a budget that both sides can find suitable.

Through these negotiations, everyone seems to have an opinion on who is right and who is wrong. Unfortunately, I am hearing on a daily basis from those who are truly losing out during this battle: Catholic school teachers and students.

Although the cost of Catholic education is paid for through tuition, the textbooks for non-religious subjects are paid by the state just like in public schools. Without a budget passed, schools that operate on a shoestring budget have been unable to afford to purchase these books.

Many public school districts have taken out loans to purchase supplies in the interim, resulting in millions of dollars in interest building up throughout the state. Catholic schools are not able to take out these loans because of interest that they do not have the money to pay for.

Every day I hear from teachers and principals who must photocopy lesson plans and worksheets in order to be able to teach. This is a massive waste of money and affects the systematic teaching required to effectively educate our children.

Last week, the Pennsylvania Senate passed Senate Bill 1000, an interim budget that would allow for funding of essential state programs such as motor vehicle licenses, state store operations, and funding for school supplies for all schools in the Commonwealth. This funding would include public, Catholic and private schools.

Governor Wolf has adamantly stated that we will not sign off on any funding that is less than a full budget and he stood by this claim

two weeks ago when he vetoed line items that could have funded these supplies.

I encourage you to contact Gov. Wolf and tell him to stand by his campaign promise of focusing on education. Signing off on SB-1000 would free our teachers up to teach and give students in all schools the tools to succeed immediately.

**Bill O'Brien, executive director  
Business Leadership  
Organized for Catholic Schools**

## IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS ON PERSONAL CHOICE

As of November 1, 2015, there will be an annual deductible on certain services provided under Personal Choice. The annual deductible will be \$100 per individual or \$200 per family.

The services that will be affected by the deductible are Laboratory/Pathology, Chemo/Radiation/Dialysis, Outpatient Private Duty Nursing, Skilled Nursing Facility, Hospice, and Home Health Care.

The deductible resets each year in January. For this year only, anyone meeting their deductible in November and December will have it roll over into January so you will not be responsible for meeting the deductible again, if you meet the deductible during November or December of 2015.

**Services that require a copay such as an office visit do not require the deductible to be met.**

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TEACHERS WHO ARE SWITCHING MEDICAL PLANS CAN GO TO THE IBX WEBSITE AT [WWW.IBX.COM](http://WWW.IBX.COM) AND PRINT OUT A TEMPORARY IDENTIFICATION CARD WHICH CAN BE USED UNTIL YOUR PERMANENT CARD ARRIVES IN THE MAIL. YOU WILL NEED TO CREATE A USER NAME AND PASSWORD, IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY A REGISTERED USER ON THE IBX WEBSITE.

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### VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN – DAVIS VISION

The plan year for teachers currently enrolled in the Voluntary Vision Plan ends on December 31, 2015. If you have not used the plan this year, try and do so before your benefits expire. Enrollment information for the Voluntary Vision Plan through Davis Vision will be emailed to teachers on Wednesday, November 4, 2015. Teachers wishing to enroll into the plan will need to submit a completed application form along with payment by Monday, November 30, 2015 to the ACT Office. Benefits for the voluntary vision plan will go into effect on January 1, 2016.

## NOVEMBER 1 BEGINS THE NEW MEDICAL PLAN YEAR

### THINGS TO KNOW CONCERNING YOUR INSURANCE PLAN

#### **PERSONAL CHOICE PLAN (GROUP NUMBER 10101056)**

If you signed up for Personal Choice during the open enrollment period, your coverage goes into effect on November 1, 2015. You should receive your identification card in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, if you need to use the plan, give your provider the group number listed above, and use your social security number for an ID number. The provider should be able to contact Personal Choice and verify your coverage with that information.

#### **Brief Outline of In-Network Coverage:**

Preventive Care for eligible services covered 100%; Doctors' office visits-\$30 copay; specialist-\$40 copay; urgent care-\$40 copay; emergency room \$125 copay; outpatient surgery \$125 copay; inpatient hospitalization \$200 copay; radiology-\$40 copay; speech, physical & occupational therapies-\$30 copay visits 1-30 and \$40 copay visits 31-60.

The following services are covered 100% **after meeting a \$100 individual deductible or the \$200 family deductible:** Laboratory/pathology; home health or hospice; skilled nursing; chemo, radiation, and/or dialysis; outpatient private duty nursing.

Prescription Drugs are covered as follows: Generic on Preferred Drug List \$15 copay (\$30 mail order) Brand on Preferred Drug List \$30 copay (\$60 mail order), Non-Preferred Not on Preferred Drug List \$45 copay (\$90 mail order).

#### **KEYSTONE EAST HMO (GROUP NUMBER 10101054)**

If you signed up for Keystone East HMO during the open enrollment period, your coverage goes into effect on November 1, 2015. You should receive your identification card in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, if you need to use the plan, give your provider the group number listed above, and use your social security number for an ID number. The provider should be able to contact Keystone and verify your coverage with that information.

#### **Brief Outline of In-Network Coverage:**

Preventive Care for eligible services covered 100%; Doctors' office visits-\$30 copay; specialist-\$40 copay; urgent care-\$40 copay; emergency room \$125 copay; outpatient surgery \$125 copay; inpatient hospitalization \$200 copay; radiology-\$40 copay; speech, physical & occupational therapies-\$30 copay visits 1-30 and \$40 copay visits 31-60.

The following services are covered 100% Laboratory/pathology; home health or hospice; skilled nursing; chemo, radiation, and/or dialysis; outpatient private duty nursing. **(no deductible; no copay)**  
**Note:** When receiving any of the following services, lab, radiology, therapy, durable medical equipment, **you must go where your PCP sends you.**

Prescription Drugs are covered as follows: Generic on Preferred Drug List \$15 copay (\$30 mail order) Brand on Preferred Drug List \$30 copay (\$60 mail order), Non-Preferred Not on Preferred Drug List \$45 copay (\$90 mail order).

**MEDICAL RATES  
FOR THE 2015-2016 PLAN YEAR  
(NOVEMBER 1, 2015-OCTOBER 31, 2016)**

**PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS OVER 22 PAYS**

(Beginning with the November 13, 2015 pay and ending with the pay of September 2, 2016)

	<u>PERSONAL CHOICE PPO</u>		<u>KEYSTONE EAST HMO</u>	
Employee	\$ 78.61	(* \$7.65)	\$ 50.66	(* \$1.53)
Employee & child	\$159.04	(* \$15.48)	\$103.17	(* \$3.11)
Employee & children	\$177.50	(* \$17.29)	\$115.40	(* \$3.47)
Employee & Spouse	\$189.36	(* \$18.45)	\$123.07	(* \$3.70)
Full Family	\$207.53	(* \$20.22)	\$134.80	(* \$4.06)

\*Increase over last year

**PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS OVER 17 PAYS**

(Beginning with the November 13, 2015 pay and ending with the pay of June 24, 2016)

	<u>PERSONAL CHOICE PPO</u>		<u>KEYSTONE EAST HMO</u>	
Employee	\$101.74	(* \$9.91)	\$ 65.56	(* \$1.98)
Employee & child	\$205.82	(* \$20.04)	\$133.51	(* \$4.02)
Employee & children	\$229.71	(* \$22.38)	\$149.34	(* \$4.50)
Employee & Spouse	\$245.05	(* \$23.87)	\$159.27	(* \$4.79)
Full Family	\$268.57	(* \$26.17)	\$174.45	(* \$5.25)

\*Increase over last year



**UNITED CONCORDIA**  
 Insuring America's Dental Health

# CONCORDIA FLEX

## Dental Benefits Summary for Association of Catholic School Teachers

Network: Advantage

GROUP NUMBER 252132000

*Representative listing of covered services -- certificate of coverage provides a detailed description of benefits.*

Benefit Category <sup>2</sup>	Plan Pays <sup>1</sup>
<b>Class I – Diagnostic/Preventive Services</b>	
Exams	100%
Cleanings & Fluoride Treatments	
X-rays	
Space Maintainers	
Palliative Treatment (Emergency)	
<b>Class II – Basic Services</b>	
Basic Restorative (Fillings, etc.)	100%
Simple Extractions	
Endodontics	
General Anesthesia	50%
Surgical & Non-surgical Periodontics	
<b>Class III – Major Services</b>	
Oral Surgery	N/A
Inlays, Onlays, Crowns	
Prosthetics (Bridges, Dentures)	
Repairs to Inlays, Onlays and Crowns and Prosthetics	
<b>Orthodontics (dependents to any age)</b>	
Diagnostic, Active, Retention Treatment	N/A
<b>Program Maximums/Deductibles</b>	
Annual Calendar Year Maximum (per covered person)	\$1,000
Lifetime Orthodontic Maximum (per covered person)	N/A
Annual Program Deductible (per person/per family)	N/A
<b>Non-network Reimbursement</b>	<b>Advantage MAC</b>

- The listed network percentages represent the portion of United Concordia's maximum allowable charges (MACs) for which the plan will be responsible. Network providers agree to accept United Concordia's MAC for covered services as payment in full and also agree to file claims for you. If you or your family members receive services from a non-network provider, United Concordia will apply the percentages shown to the [non-network reimbursement] for covered services and you will be responsible for the difference, up to the provider's charge. United Concordia's standard exclusions and limitations apply.
- Unmarried dependent children covered to age 19. Unmarried dependent students covered to age 23. Disabled dependents covered to any age.

### CONTACT UNITED CONCORDIA

Phone 1-800-332-0366  
 Customer service representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Mail United Concordia, PO Box 69420, Harrisburg, PA 17103-9420

Web [www.unitedconcordia.com](http://www.unitedconcordia.com)  
 Once enrolled, register to use My Dental Benefits for 24/7, secure access to benefit information including eligibility, claim status, procedure history, ID card requests and more!



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR DENTAL PLAN AND PERIODONTAL COVERAGE

## CONNECTING ORAL HEALTH TO OVERALL WELLNESS THE PERIODONTAL LINK

In 2012, United Concordia joined with Highmark Health Services to conduct the largest study of its kind to better understand the link between oral health and medical costs. They examined 1.7 million people over a three-year period and found that significant health care cost savings were possible when individuals with certain chronic conditions addressed their gum disease. For example, they found that there was a 33% drop in hospitalizations, a 13% drop in doctor visits and an overall savings of \$1,814 annually when gum disease was treated and managed in individuals with diabetes.

Periodontitis is an epidemic. Researchers know that those bacteria are able to travel the body's pathways through the bloodstream and respiratory system because they have found oral bacteria in other areas of the body, such as the arteries, lungs, and brain.

As a result of this three-year study, United Concordia Dental created **Smile for Health Wellness** to help close the gap between oral health and total body health. By preventing and treating periodontal disease, the cost relating to infection and inflammation was greatly reduced. And as a result, there was also a positive effect on the overall health for individuals with certain chronic diseases.

**Under your dental coverage with United Concordia, periodontics is covered at 50%. However, teachers with any one of the following chronic diseases will have periodontics covered at 100%.** These chronic conditions are as follows: Diabetes, Heart Disease, Cerebrovascular Disease (stroke), Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, Organ Transplants, Head and Neck Radiation Therapy.

In order for you to receive 100% coverage on Periodontics, you will need to go to the United Concordia website at [www.UnitedConcordia.com](http://www.UnitedConcordia.com). Sign in or create a *My Dental Benefits* account. This is where you will sign up for the Smile for Health Wellness Program. Once your medical condition is verified, United Concordia will turn on the added periodontal coverage. You may also contact United Concordia at 1-800-236-9168 for additional information.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR UNITED CONCORDIA DENTAL PLAN

This is a reminder that teachers and their family members who are covered under the dental plan have access to the Concordia Advantage dental network, which offers discounts for all services — covered or not.

This means you can:

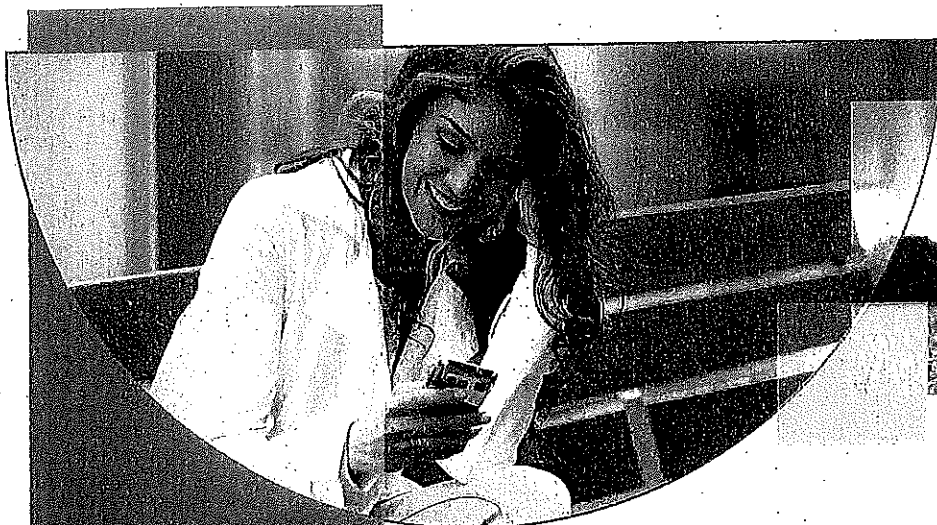
- 1 - Receive non-covered services at a discount
- 2 - Save on services that exceed your \$1,000 annual maximum

If your dentist has signed on to the above agreement and you are in need of dental work that is not covered under our dental plan, it is recommended that you get the treatment plan in writing on letterhead. The treatment plan should include procedure codes for each service and the amount being charged. Once you have the treatment plan in writing, you can contact UCCI at 1-800-332-0366 and find out what their allowance is for each procedure code. This is the maximum that your dentist should charge you for that service if he has signed onto the extended agreement.

You can check to see if your dentist is participating in this agreement by logging on to the United Concordia website at [www.ucci.com](http://www.ucci.com) and clicking on the link “**find a dentist**”. If your dentist has a black square next to his name, then he has agreed to charge his/her patients the United Concordia allowance.

If you have experienced any problems concerning this agreement, please send an email to the ACT Office outlining your problem. The email should contain your dentist’s name and address, the date of service, the procedure codes billed, and the amount you were charged. We will forward this information to our dental representative at United Concordia.

**Reminder:** Each January you and each of your family members have \$1,000 in dental benefits to use for the calendar year.



Online and in person,  
we're there for you

## Manage Your Benefits and Oral Wellness

Your time is valuable—and you'd rather not spend it managing dental insurance. That's why United Concordia combines online and personal service to make dental insurance easy.

### ... on Your Smart Phone

Download our FREE apps at the App Store or Google Play. Just search for "United Concordia."

#### Member App

- Find a dentist near you
- Learn about oral health and wellness
- Access your benefits information
- Get a virtual ID card

#### Chomper Chums™ App for Kids

- Use the two-minute brushing timer
- Develop proper brushing habits
- Encourage healthy eating
- Interact with fun animal characters

### ... on Your Computer

Visit [UnitedConcordia.com](http://UnitedConcordia.com) to access these and other helpful tools.

#### Online Services

- Update your profile
- Manage your policy online with **My Dental Benefits**
- Find a dentist
- Connect on social media



Scan now to download:

#### Member App



#### Chomper Chums™ App



### ... over the Phone

Call 1-800-332-0366 to speak to dental professionals and get benefits information.

#### Award-Winning Customer Service

- Tenured, US-based representatives with specialized knowledge
- Little to no wait
- 24/7 interactive voice response system
- 97% of calls resolved on first attempt

No matter how you prefer to manage your dental benefits, we have quick and easy options to meet your needs.

Dental plans are administered by United Concordia Companies, Inc. and underwritten by United Concordia Life and Health Insurance Company, United Concordia Dental Corporation of Alabama, United Concordia Insurance Company of New York, United Concordia Insurance Company, United Concordia Dental Plans, Inc., United Concordia Dental Plans of California, Inc., United Concordia Dental Plans of Kentucky, Inc., United Concordia Dental Plans of the Midwest, Inc., United Concordia Dental Plans of Pennsylvania, Inc., and United Concordia Dental Plans of Texas, Inc. For information about which companies are licensed in your state, visit the "Disclaimers" link at [www.UnitedConcordia.com](http://www.UnitedConcordia.com). Administrative and claims offices are located at 4401 Deer Path Road, Harrisburg, PA 17110.



## More Notes of Thanks!

**From: John J. Reilly Scholarship Award Winners**

**“Each year, the Association’s Executive Board awards a \$500 Scholarship to the 9<sup>th</sup> grader in each Archdiocesan high school and at Holy Cross Academy, Delran, New Jersey who has the highest general average as of the end of the first semester. If that student is already on scholarship, it is given to the highest student not receiving financial assistance. The \$500 Scholarship is sent to each school to be applied to the student’s 10<sup>th</sup> grade tuition.”**

Dear Ms. Schwartz,

In a time of many worthy requests for your charitable dollar, please accept our grateful appreciation for your recent donation of **\$500.00 for the 2015-2016 Annual Fund**. We will apply it, as directed, to the tuition of Clair Ussai. As the Lansdale Catholic High School community implements our strategic plan for the future, your financial and spiritual support allows our school to continue with its mission of truly being *“A learning community, teaching values for life, through a formative Catholic education.”*

We at Lansdale Catholic rely heavily upon the generosity of our alumni, parents, and friends with the investment of their Annual Fund gift. Because of your financial commitment to Lansdale Catholic, our administration, faculty and staff stand ready and willing to meet the challenges of educating students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In the words of Saint John Paul II, *“Few efforts are more important for the present and future well being of the Church and of the nation than efforts expended in the work of education.”* May our Patroness, St. Therese of Lisieux, continue to intercede for us, as we do our very best to meet the needs of all our region’s students.

Remembering you and all our benefactors in our daily Mass and Eucharist,

*James W. Casey*  
President

*Robert Lanahan*  
Director of Institutional Advancement  
and Major Gifts

(Continued on Page 13)

## More Notes of Thanks!

(Continued from Page 12)

Dear Rita,

On behalf of myself and Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School, I would like to thank you and the Association of Catholic Teachers for your generous gift to our students.

Per your instruction, your gift of \$500.00 received on 8/14/2015 was awarded to Theodore Greiner for the school year 2015-2016.

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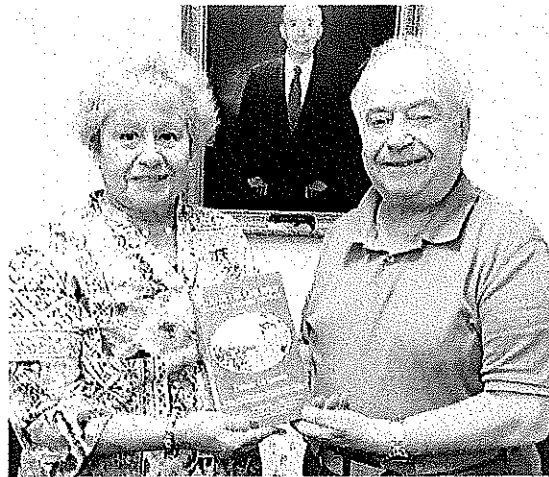
Thank you again for enabling such worthy families to send their child to receive a quality Catholic education. I write with great certainty that these students will be the great contributors to their communities in the future.

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Sincerely,  
Scott Fremont '98  
Director of Institutional Advancement

## Congratulations!

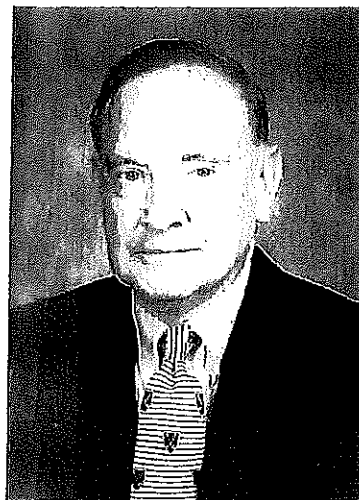
Congratulations to Donato "Desi" De Simone on the publication of his book, *Suffer the Children Growing Up in Italy During World War II*. Desi was a teacher at Bishop Neumann and St. John Neumann High School for many years.



ACT President, Rita C. Schwartz, receiving a copy of *Suffer the Children Growing Up in Italy During World War II* from the author, Donato "Desi" De Simone.

# Thanks for Everything!

As you all know by now, our dear Mr. Horn has passed away. Although we most certainly will shed some tears, there is no doubt that Mr. Horn would want all of us to remember him for what he was: A dedicated and brilliant teacher, a supportive mentor, a good friend, a wonderful storyteller, a witty and unique man, who lived his Catholic faith and to whom the entire McDevitt community (administration, faculty, and students) were truly his family.



Mr. Horn celebrated the mind as a sport, and his entire life was dedicated to the McDevitt community in one way or the other. He taught his students that even if excellence could not be achieved, it was paramount that they at least strive for excellence in all that they did. Because, if not excellence, then what?

He wanted each of the students to reach their best potential, and for those who truly listened to Mr. Horn, their lives will forever be impacted in a profound way.

And, as many of you who knew Mr. Horn for years, you also know that, although he was not part of the Union, he supported his peers. During a teacher's strike, he even stopped by with a donut and coffee run!

By talking about Mr. Horn, we celebrate Mr. Horn. That couldn't have been more evident than during the October, 2014 dinner held in his honor at the Union League, sponsored by the David T. Horn, Jr. Scholarship Foundation. In that room were former students of his, from all walks of life, from all over the country, but with one thing in common—they had all come out on a rainy Wednesday night to pay tribute to the man who had profoundly influenced them, either as an English/Humanities teacher or as the faculty moderator of the Churchillian Forensics Society.

Mr. Horn influenced the lives of tens of thousands of people and we will never forget him. He remains with us now and would be thrilled by the depths of his influence. Here's to you, Mr. Horn. Thanks for everything. We will miss you.

*Lida Kianoury*

Former Student and Alumna of  
Bishop McDevitt High School

# You Are Missed

It was my pleasure to teach with and to know Sue Davenport for more than 30 years. I first met Sue when she was student teaching at Little Flower while I was in the English Department. Mrs. June Sparks (the infamous Bunny O'Neill), Sue's mom, was in the Business Department during this time. It was a peripheral meeting, Sue's Math Department assignment being far away from the English realm, but we did have a mutual amiability since her mom had taken me under her wing. Sue went off to teach Math in her career and we would see each other rarely and randomly, but I was always kept up-to-date on the doings of her family and work. Sue taught all levels of Math to every student, regardless of their abilities and/or willingness to learn, but with her patient, gentle way, she gave them confidence and knowledge. She really loved Math.



It wasn't until I was moved to Bishop McDevitt that Sue and I could renew our friendship. I enjoyed her stories of her family's trials and tribulations, joys and successes, and the dubious pleasure of being owned by an independent-minded Westie. Sue is the only female I have encountered in my long and varied life that was color-blind—a fact that you would not think would come up very often in the teaching of history, but one that I would work into each of my classes more often than necessary.

Again, with her stationed in the Math Department and I, now in Social Studies, and later also in the Library, it seemed the rare encounter (retreats, luncheons, and meetings) where we could catch up on/commiserate about things. But then there was a series of several years where we were assigned to Caf Duty together.

Sue loved Caf Duty. She enjoyed the freedom of the interaction with the students; she relished the activity and possible mayhem of the entire situation. She preferred the moving about and all of the varied tasks which fall under the purview of Cafeteria Moderation. She taught me quite a lot about this phenomenon and we worked together seamlessly. By the end of each of our Caf Duty periods, the students had eaten, they had had a pleasant, less restricted interaction with both friends and faculty, and been treated respectfully. Everyone was in complete uniform, there had been no line-jumping or gratuitous scuffling, and the caf was left cleaner than before we had arrived there.

What made this work was Sue. She had the plan, knew the routine, knew the students, and enjoyed the infinite variety of chaos which is known as Caf Duty. She made it a pleasure for me as well, and, in between the "tasks", we shared moments of camaraderie which were priceless. I am grateful for the time we spent together. She, in her gentle, quiet way, showed me not only how to be a better caf moderator, but also to be a better teacher and a better person.

I began missing her the instant she retired due to health reasons. Now, I shall miss her even more.

*Glenda M. Rieffel*  
*Bishop McDevitt High School*

## *Rest in Peace, Jim*



James Barilla was an intelligent, conscientious, and humorous teacher at both West Catholic Boys' and the merged West Catholic High School. At the Boys' school Jim's presence in the English department was valued for his challenging discussions with the students. This teacher valued the Socratic method of instruction and with grace and aplomb perfected it in his classroom. In 1989, when the two high schools merged, Jim's keen insights, clear sense of priorities, and sweet humor made him integral to the ease of this process. Taking any roster and enjoying any service, even cafeteria duty, marked the true humility and dedication of this teacher. Always the professional, Jim enjoyed the co-ed classes, and both the boys and the girls related strongly with this kind and upbeat teacher. After a few years in the "new" West, Jim introduced a stock market club as an extracurricular activity. This organization taught the students the value of the Wall Street Journal and how to read the future of the Market. Every Tuesday morning the students would meet in the Mac lab and study the trends and some even bought and sold stock. In addition to his English acumen, this teacher was instructing students to be young entrepreneurs.

In 2005, Jim became ill, but, always the tenacious teacher, he returned to school in September and assumed a full roster. In October of that year, his health gave out, and he made the decision to retire. On Jim's last day of teaching, a Friday, the school had planned a pep rally for the autumn sports. The students did not know that this was Jim's final day, and many of the administration and faculty wanted to make the announcement at the assembly. Jim negated this suggestion, and instead, he quietly concluded his professional career and exited via the back door of the building. With gentle grace and unspoken sadness, Jim left the classroom for the last time. True, there was an assembly later that year honoring this committed English teacher, but even there his comments were pithy and poignant, and he slipped into the sunset.

We who knew and worked with Jim realize that the teaching profession is poorer because of his passing. Nonetheless, those of us who possess the gift of faith believe that he and his beloved Anne are united in Paradise. Rest in peace, Jim, and know that your friends on Chestnut Street hold you deeply in our hearts.

*Sr. Ave Armstrong, SSJ*

*English Department Head*



# A Fond Remembrance

Jim Barilla could be described in many ways—as a witty raconteur, dead-on mimic, diehard Phillies fan, passionate trout fisherman—but perhaps the best description of him was English teacher. From 1970 until he retired for health reasons in 2006, Jim taught at West Catholic High School.

Most of the thousands of students he taught probably never realized Jim was a master linguist who could read and write Greek and Latin; he would never have boasted about such matters. Instead, he patiently but vigorously steered them through the often rocky shoals of Jonathan Swift and the Metaphysical poets, Chaucer and Shaw, always aiming to not only explain the texts but also to expand their worldview. Likewise, he delighted them by reciting Robert Burns' poetry with a perfect Scottish brogue and acting out the Canterbury Tales.



Jim's vocabulary and grasp of the English language were akin to Henry Higgins', but with none of Higgins' arrogance or haughtiness. Rather, he was West Catholic's own Mr. Chips; his humility and generosity with his time among the hallmarks that made him so beloved by his students. (He might be pleased to be compared to two of his favorite characters from British literature.)

Furthermore, Jim was involved with the students by moderating the newspaper for seven years, developing an outstanding and readable student publication. In addition, Jim had a passion for the stock market. He initiated a stock market club that sparked the interests of a diverse group of students. One remarked on Facebook that "he taught me to love the stock market." Obviously, Jim created this type of love and excitement in the classroom as well. Comments on Facebook reflect the appreciation they had for Jim: "he was the one who taught me to write"; "what an incredible teacher, what an incredible man"; "I remember him getting excited over Beowulf"; "I learned so much from him"; "You could see his passion for his subject matter and the way he shared what he knew was infectious."

Probably, very few students knew this about Jim and Anne, his wife. They were major benefactors to West Catholic over the years. Each year they gave generously to support the school and the West Catholic tradition.

Early in September, Jim died, much too soon, at 69. He will be fondly remembered by all who knew him as a wonderful friend and an unparalleled wordsmith and grammarian. But most of all, Jim was a teacher who appreciated the value of studying literature and enriched the lives of the students whose minds he helped mold.

*Vince Cancro and Carol Tulba  
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