

St. Pius X to host Montessori primary program

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien announced May 18 that St. Pius X Catholic School in Rodgers Forge will become the first school in the archdiocese to offer its students a Montessori education. The school will introduce a primary program for children ages 3-6 in the 2011-12 school year.

The school will partner with Baltimore's Loyola University Maryland, which has a top Montessori graduate program.

"We are excited to offer this program to students in the archdiocese because of its track record of success in educating today's student and because it gives Catholic parents who desire both a Catholic and Montessori education for their child, a great option," Archbishop O'Brien said. "We are especially grateful to be working with Loyola University and consider our partnership a vitally important one for the future of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Baltimore."

St. Pius will recruit and train teachers certified to teach in the Montessori program. Loyola's Center for Montessori Education houses the oldest Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)-accredited training center in North America, the Washington Montessori Institute.

The Montessori method of teaching was developed by an Italian physician in 1907 and utilizes a comprehensive approach that allows children to proceed at their own pace and focuses on all aspects of human development - intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual - with the goal of making learning a process of discovery.

“St Pius X School is extremely excited about being selected by the Archdiocese of Baltimore as the site for this innovative program,” incoming Principal, Maggie Dates said. “The school is a dynamic educational environment and this additional program will be very attractive to young families.”

Peter C. Murrell Jr., dean of Loyola’s school of education, said the Montessori approach is similar to his university’s aim of developing the whole person.

Murrell added: “This partnership is a groundbreaking opportunity for us to not only enrich the school with the Montessori approach, but to create the kind of professional learning community that could lead the way in demonstrating how to revitalize schools through collaborative engagement, spiritual focus, and capacity building.”

Montessori classes place children in three-year age groupings: Primary (ages 3-6), and Elementary (ages 6-9 and 9-12). A certified Montessori teacher, assisted by a trained teacher assistant, is present to observe and present new activities to children as they demonstrate their need and readiness. The Catholic faith formation component of the program allows children to learn about the Catholic liturgy and Holy Scripture.

The first classes of the new primary Montessori program will be offered to 3- and 4-year-olds. In the second and subsequent years, the program will include students ages 3, 4 and 5.

Students in the Pre-K3 program at St. Pius X for the 2010-11 year will receive automatic acceptance to the Montessori program for the 2011-12 school year. Other 3-and 4-year-olds will be accepted as space allows.

It is anticipated that tuition and fees for the primary Montessori program will be similar to the current fee structure. Specific tuition and fees are set by the school’s

board and announced each year during Catholic Schools Week, typically late January.

For more information, visit Pius X's website at www.stpius10.org.