

Teaching orders to be honored at diocese's major fundraiser March 11

One of the hallmarks of Catholic education is service to others. So it is fitting that the honorees at the 2014 Students-to-Leaders Catholic Education Dinner are the schools' first models of service to community the 26 religious teaching orders in the Diocese of Metuchen.

The dinner is scheduled to be held March 11 at the Palace in Somerset Park.

These religious sisters and brothers understand the importance of their vocation and are answering the call to shape a just and peaceful world for the future by passing down a legacy of academic excellence within a culture of caring.

Felician Sister Rebecca Piatek, who has the distinction of being the longest serving Catholic school principal in the diocese — nearly 34 years, all in Perth Amboy — has witnessed countless students come to believe in the power of self-giving through their Catholic education.

"My most cherished memories have to do with children who struggled to overcome difficulties — academic, social, emotional or physical," she said. "The dedication of the teachers to these students was indefatigable as they brought young minds through the learning experience while leading

them to be the best they could be as children of God and members of society."

Felician Sister Donna Marie Trukowski, who has served as principal of Bishop George Ahr High School in Edison for more than 25 years, credits her own Catholic education for inspiring her vocation and firmly believes that Catholic schools continue to play an important role in 2014.

"You cannot over-estimate the value of touching children's hearts in a caring and nurturing environment while providing them with a premier education," Sister Donna said. "Teaching young people to 'pay it forward' through service has lifelong rewards."

Examples of the long-term impact these religious men and women who devoted their lives to "teaching as Jesus did" have on their students extend beyond the diocese to college campuses, successful businesses and service-oriented organizations throughout the country.

One who remained local is Sacred Heart Brother Kevin Finnegan. A product of Catholic elementary schools and a 1974 graduate of St. Joseph High School, Metuchen, Brother Kevin served at a variety of academic institutions before returning to his

high school alma mater where he teaches algebra and communications.

"The feeling that comes to me is that of a circle being closed, and here I am back where I was inspired by the religious brothers who taught here and where I made some of the most important decisions of my life," he said.

The Students-to-Leaders Catholic Education Dinner is an annual fundraiser for the Foundation for Catholic Education, an endowment that provides tuition assistance for low-income families with children attending diocesan Catholic schools.

"All parents want their children to attend the best school possible," Brother Kevin said, "and so they make extraordinary sacrifices to send their children to a Catholic school that shares their values and functions as an extension of the family."

For families who find the finan-



Christian Charity Sister Mary Elizabeth McCauley is shown teaching second-graders Alexander Siegel, left, and Theresa Morrison at St. Francis Cathedral School, Metuchen.

— Tamara Hemingway photo

cial stretch particularly difficult, the Foundation for Catholic Education offers needs-based tuition assistance. Catholic education can be affordable and accessible for every child through the support of the 2014 Students-to-Leaders Catholic Education Dinner. For dinner reservations and information call 732-562-2452 or go to <http://diometuchen.org/fecdinner>.

— Sue Mantarro, Director, Diocesan Office of Stewardship

Please join us in honoring

OUR RELIGIOUS ORDERS - FIRST MODELS OF SERVICE
TO COMMUNITY IN THE DIOCESE OF METUCHEN
AT THE

*2014 Foundation for
Catholic Education Dinner*

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2014
THE PALACE AT SOMERSET PARK
COCKTAILS 6 PM - DINNER 7 PM

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

THE OFFICE OF SCHOOLS
732-562-2452 · EDUCATIONDINNER14@DIOMETUCHEN.ORG
[HTTP://DIOMETUCHEN.ORG/FCEDINNER](http://diometuchen.org/fcedinner)

