

Reilly Scholarships Awarded

Winners of the 2010 John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarships have been chosen from a field of more than 20 nominated high school seniors.

The scholarships are awarded annually to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members.

The students will receive \$1000 in each of their four years of study, making each scholarship a \$4000 value over each student's course of collegiate studies.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2010 Reilly Scholarship:

Matthew J. Bocchese, CTU,
Vineland NJ

Michael E. Tori, ACT,
Philadelphia

Kristin A. Woznick, AJCSTA,
Altoona PA

The scholarships are awarded in remembrance of John J. Reilly, the founding President of NACST.

NACST Convention

The 32nd Annual NACST Convention/Conference will be held **October 8-10, 2010** in Baltimore.

Keynote speaker at the Convention is the Reverend Patrick Sullivan, CSC, Executive Secretary and Chaplain of The Labor Guild in the Archdiocese of Boston. For more than fifty years Sullivan has taught, written and otherwise worked on labor issues in US universities and national organizations. He is currently a lecturer at the Sociology and Public Policy and Research Institute at King's College. Information about The Labor Guild is available at laborguild.com.

Kim Bobo, Executive Director of Interfaith Worker Justice will also present to convention delegates. Bobo has served as a trainer for the Midwest Academy and Director of Organizing for Bread for the World. She writes a column for the online magazine *Religion Dispatches* and is co-author of *Organizing for Social Change*, a best-selling organizing manual. Information about the Chicago-based organization Interfaith Worker Justice is available at www.iwj.org.

The Convention business includes the Reports of Locals, the annual State of the Union president's report and local union issues.



The COACE Executive Board during a recent meeting with NACST President Rita Schwartz

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from the President...

LABOR DAY 2010: BLESSED ARE...

Recently, I attended the funeral of a retired teacher from one of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan high schools. Her son eulogized his mother's life through the use of The Beatitudes. As I sat there listening to the recitation of the multiple "Blessed are's", I homed in on "those who hunger and thirst for justice." I thought of the multitude of teachers at work in non-unionized Catholic elementary and secondary schools, those who contact the National Office with a litany of incidents involving unprofessional and, often, unChristian treatment by administrators. They wonder if they can make things change. They ask if NACST can help.

One recent e-mail is excerpted below.

Many teachers feel that our current situation is one in which we are treated as tools to get a job done and nothing more. Our thoughts, feelings, professional opinions and experience are completely immaterial. Many of us have committed our entire careers to the ministry of Catholic Education and we have sacrificed much to do so because we believe in it. Our years of dedication and commitment seem completely unimportant to our current administration and it has been made very clear that we are replaceable, our jobs can easily be filled by inexperienced teachers who will be paid much less. Of course, we feel used and devastated to be treated in this disrespectful way.

I continue to think and feel that much of what is taking place at school is fundamentally wrong. I have done some reading on Catholic labor policies including encyclicals and other documents on social justice. I believe that there seems to be some basis for my belief that the current treatment of the teachers at my school is not in accordance with many of the basic principles of Catholic social teaching.

As Labor Day approaches, in addition to those seeking union representation for the first time, I call to mind the former members of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers who no longer enjoy union recognition and collective bargaining. These teachers have seen their negotiated contracts and their hard-won rights and benefits unilaterally stripped from them by their employers. These include elementary and high school teachers in the Diocese of Scranton-Wilkes Barre and high school teachers in the Archdiocese of Boston and the Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend, IN.

Of equal concern are the elementary teachers who attempted to organize in the Archdioceses of St. Louis and Philadelphia. These dedicated men and women were stonewalled by Archdiocesan officials. These same officials had recognized and were negotiating with high school teacher unions in their archdioceses. Sadly, the Church saw nothing wrong with this blatant double standard.

My Labor Day message for 2010 is that the quest for justice will continue. You can be momentarily discouraged, but you can't give up. As we all know too well, anything this important is never easily obtained, but it will happen if we stay with it.

I wish everyone a happy and successful school year, a school year in which justice will no longer be delayed or denied, a school year in which the Beatitudes will truly live.



from the Editor...

Lesson from a School Revived

In January 2010 the Diocese of Camden NJ announced the closing of Wildwood Catholic High School [WCHS], a small parish sponsored school on the southernmost coast of New Jersey, at the end of the school year.

Teachers at the school have been working under contracts negotiated by their collective bargaining agent, the Catholic Teachers Union [CTU], since the union's inception in 1984.

In a scenario all too common throughout the nation today, the reasons cited for the closing were declining enrollment and financial shortfalls.

For many schools faced with an announced closing, the school's demise would have been accepted as a *fait accompli*, with parents finding alternative institutions to educate their children.

WCHS stakeholders (alumni, parents, students, teachers, school administrators) proved not to be like many others.

School stakeholders formed a "Save Wildwood Catholic" organization and were able to raise enough funds and pledges to present a comprehensive five-year school development plan for diocesan consideration.

Diocesan officials reviewed and approved the plan, then announced that the school would not close at the end of the 2009-2010 school year, but the school would be given the opportunity to implement the plan's provisions - for at least one more school year.

During the spring, negotiations were held between the union and school administrators.

The union and school agreed to new staff organizational models as the teaching faculty was reduced from nineteen to twelve positions.

The school opens this month under the new structure, with a new contract and the support of the local community.

The process was not without sacrifice.

With their commitment to the school teachers agreed to freeze their wages at the 2009-2010 steps, with increases in the other three years of the four-year contract.

The diocesan Superintendent, in accordance with CTU contracts at WCHS and other diocesan schools, placed tenured WCHS teachers in openings at other schools and in positions for which they were qualified which were held by non-tenured teachers. Five non-tenured teachers ultimately lost their jobs in the schools.

The union and superintendent worked together to make sure the process went as smoothly as possible.

Affiliated Locals

Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)
Michelle Kirk

Association of Catholic Teachers
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)
www.act1776.com
Rita Schwartz

Catholic Teachers Union - NJ
(Diocese of Camden NJ)
www.ctunj.com
Bill Blumenstein

Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators
(Diocese of Columbus OH)
www.couce.com
Kathleen Mahoney

Cleveland High School and Academy Lay Teachers Association
(Diocese of Cleveland OH)
Michael DeSantis

DELTA
(Diocese of Worcester MA)
Jonathan Meagher

Diocesan Elementary Teachers Association
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)
Sue Manzella

Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers
(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)
Russ DelVecchio

Greater Hartford Catholic Education Association
(Archdiocese of Hartford CT)
Paul Fitzpatrick

Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association
(Diocese of Greensburg PA)
Kreg Mendus

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Wildwood Catholic

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Affiliated Locals

NACST @ St. John Vianney
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Judith Cumbia

**Queen of Peace H.S.
Lay Teachers Association**
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Donna Giovia

St. Denis Teachers Association
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Janne Durata

**St. Joseph's Teachers
Association**
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Darlene Fisher

**St. Louis Archdiocesan
Teachers Association**
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)
Patricia Spellman

**St. Rose
Teachers Association**
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Sean McDonald
Bonnie Scherr

**Scranton Diocese
Association of
Catholic Teachers**
(Diocese of Scranton PA)
www.sdaact.com
Michael Milz

**Secondary Lay Teachers
Association**
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)
Doug Bowers

**Union County Catholic
Education Association**
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Marc Berger

**Youngstown Confederation of
Diocesan Teachers**
(Diocese of Youngstown OH)
Barbara McVicker

The union and WCHS school administrators, with some initial misgivings allayed, worked together to ensure that the teachers' labor rights would be an integral part of the revitalized school.

At a time when school closings are becoming more common, the Wildwood Catholic experience is an example of how a local community's commitment to effective action and goodwill among school stakeholders preserve quality Catholic education.

Teachers, parents, alumni, school administrators, diocesan personnel and the union worked together to reverse the announced closing.

One lesson learned is simple: the inclusion of all interested parties in the process resulted in a school re-energized with the labor rights of teachers intact.

Contrary to the expressed statements of some involved, participation of the teachers' bargaining representative did not inhibit or derail the process.

The Wildwood Catholic experience offers a counter argument to those who place the blame for economic hardship on employees and unions.

The presence of unionized teachers in schools at which administrators, whether diocesan or local, have decided to close, serves the common good to provide students with quality Catholic education.

Among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labor unions.

These unions should be truly able to represent the workers and to contribute to the proper arrangement of economic life.

(#68, Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II)