It has been both a busy and productive time for the Graduate Support Department at Mother Seton Academy! MSA is helping current students to prepare for high school, helping graduates prepare for college, and hosting recreational programs.

Bro. Stephen Strausbaugh, Graduate Support Director, teaches a High School Seminar class every Tuesday morning. In class, students prepare for the transition into high school and learn about student life and expectations once they enter ninth grade. Students practice writing essays and participate in mock interviews to help them prepare for and become more comfortable with the application process. "The mock interviews showed me that we have a very sharp and articulate group of eighth grade students," said Bro. Steve. Representatives from at least ten Catholic and private schools have presented his class with reasons to consider each particular school.

Starting in October, eighth graders and their families visited school fairs and open houses to acquaint themselves with various high schools and what each has to offer. Each of our students participated in two ‘shadow’ days where they followed a freshman for the day at a school they were interested in attending. This type of experience is a necessary component in helping the student make a good decision regarding which high school they will choose. Then, in November and December, Bro. Steve met twice with each eighth grade student and their parent/guardian to discuss high school options and assist, when necessary, with the many forms that need to be completed. "From this experience I gained a new understanding of the necessity and value of parental concern and involvement," stated Bro. Steve. "This is an exciting time for our families who look forward to February 19, when students receive acceptance letters from the Catholic and private schools and March 31 when they receive acceptance letters from City, Poly, Western and charter schools."

Graduates of Mother Seton Academy continue to benefit from the Graduate Support Program and our partnering schools and organizations. During the fall, The Baltimore Urban Debate League, Ignatius Loyola Academy and Mother Seton Academy co-sponsored a free ten week SAT prep class for interested seniors. Another free SAT prep class begins in late February and concludes in May. On January 31, a FAFSA Workshop (college financial aid) will be held at Walbrook High School.

Alumni from Mother Seton Academy and other area schools participated in a college fair in Washington, DC in December and The Guidance Department of Mount Saint Joseph High School has invited all junior alums and their parents/guardian to another College Night on February 19. The five members of the department explained to students and their families what they need to do now in order to get ready for college.

Bro. Steve also tries to provide some fun and fellowship for our graduates. In December, he, along with seventeen alums, Mr. Jonathan Luca, and his mother, Ann, participated in an afternoon of ‘paintballing’ in White Marsh. “We had a great time! The adults decided to stay behind the netting – but everybody enjoyed the salad and pizza! We hope to have another gathering of alums this spring,” said one of the graduates from the trip. Bro. Steve encourages all graduates to keep in touch with the Graduate Support Department and let him know if they have any ideas for future events. He also reminds Graduates from all years and their families to add the annual MSA reunion to the calendar; it will be held on June 27, 2008.

ATTENTION MSA GRADUATES
Welcome to the first edition of the Mother Seton Academy Graduate Support Newsletter. Here you will not only be able to find upcoming events and opportunities, but also submit stories and articles. If you would like to submit suggestions or stories, assist with production or mailings, or would just like more information, please call Bro. Steve at 410-563-2833.
Looking forward to College
Tips and Suggestions
Priscilla Chapman

I started looking at colleges before I was even in high school. Since I have three older brothers, it seemed like college was always a topic in our house. Someone was always receiving mail from colleges or my father was looking up an unfamiliar college in one of the many reference books. A few years back the process seemed very simple, but now that it’s my turn I realize that finding the right college is very difficult.

The way I approach the college search is very simple. First I think about what career I want to have and what type of college I want to attend. Once I have an idea of what I’m looking for, I start gathering information about the different colleges. Since my freshman year, I have been attending college fairs. At these fairs, I look for colleges that have my major, but I also collect information on schools that do not have my major but look interesting to me. Once I have all the information on these many colleges, I start eliminating colleges from my list. The basic factors you have to look at are location, financial aid, majors, academics, school size, single-sex or co-ed, and the campus. Once you take all these factors and any others that you feel are important to you into consideration, then you can take a college off your list – you can always put a school back on later. Once you have a list you can start visiting colleges to get a feel of what the school is like. Be sure you keep notes while you go through this process.

One thing that my parents and I are doing is we each get to make a list of five schools that might be good for me. Then I get to narrow down the list from fifteen schools to five schools, and those will be the five schools that I will be applying to. One thing to keep in mind is to always have a reach school and a safety school. That way if you don’t get into the reach school you always have that safety school to fall back on. My method of finding the right college is only one way of doing it. There are many ways. Just be sure to find the way that works for you. The college process should not be hard and stressful. It's actually kind of fun. Just remember not to wait until the last minute because you do not want to be stuck with a college you don't want to go to.

Mother Seton Academy Prepared me for High School
Roy Diaz

How has Mother Seton Academy prepared me for high school? Well, experiences with the entire faculty at MSA were stellar. Each one of the staff members at MSA taught me a different value, whether the value was respect for fellow classmates and teachers, or studying hard and stay at the top of my class, or having faith in myself. The teachers have played a huge part in my life because they taught me so much about each school subject and helped me with my homework whenever I needed it. Each teacher incorporated materials that encouraged students to reach higher. For instance, Sr. Ann Claire incorporated new, advanced vocabulary into each of her lessons. Mother Seton taught me new subjects, such as Speech and Religion. All of this knowledge and these values came into play as soon as I entered high school. Over the years MSA has grown into one big family, not related by blood but by spirituality.

Another aspect of my middle school years that was important to me was the friendships I developed over the years. These friendships and bonds I acquired during my three years at MSA have shown me that friends are important to keep throughout life. They have shown me to care for myself, work hard, and not to care what other people think. Friends help you when you do not feel good about yourself. The bonds with my friends were so strong that when we graduated I was very sad to see my companions go their own ways. I still keep in touch with my friends from MSA.

My first days at Archbishop Curley High School were easy and hard at the same time. I managed to pull through, and it was all thanks to MSA. All my teachers at MSA told me to keep my notebooks because I would need them for my high school years and even my college years. When I needed help on my schoolwork I just opened my old notebooks and looked for help. It worked like magic. This method of looking back for guidance, asking for help when I need it, and dedicating enough time for studying proved effective. This was definitely shown on my report card. I had an A in every class I took. My GPA was 3.9. That is why I give thanks to MSA which in my opinion is the best middle school.

After being in Archbishop Curley for a while I remembered that I was required to, and wanted to, do community service hours, so I ruminated briefly over what I should do. An idea popped into my head – I would return to Mother Seton Academy. So I came back to MSA and tutored students in grades 6-8. I am just glad that I am able to help MSA in any way possible and to show my gratitude to all those involved in MSA.

Please join us for the
14th Annual Cardinal Cup Run
Saturday, April 26, 2008
Call 410-563-2833 for details and to reserve your spot