

# Scholarship Fund Builds Hope for Students

▲ by Linda Busetti

Eighth-grader Kiana Jean-Mary's hope of attending St. Francis Prep H.S. was realized through a generous gift announced at the first "Hope Builders" Breakfast of the diocesan Alive in Hope Foundation.

Eight "Hope Builders" – supporters of the Alive in Hope Foundation – each invited nine friends to come to breakfast at the Grand Hyatt in Manhattan on March 12 to learn about the Foundation's work.

Since 1998, Alive in Hope has awarded over \$21 million in grants to individual students, parishes, schools and ministries in the diocese. The Foundation manages over 90 endowed funds created by individuals, foundations, organizations, parishes and schools.

Mary Macchiarola, who, along with her husband Dr. Frank Macchiarola, was honored at the Foundation's Bishop's Christmas Luncheon, was one of the Hope Builders.

Macchiarola has taught for most of her life in the public school system and, while raising her children, as director of religious education for 10 years at Our Lady Help of Christians, Midwood, and as a substitute teacher in Catholic schools.

"I have a passion for education," she said. She also has a passion for "giving back." As a child of Irish immigrants, she says, "I have been very blessed" to have received a Catholic education including Holy Cross School, Flatbush. She serves on the board of Flatbush Academy and was very sad when its closing was announced recently. She is concerned about the lack of a "Catholic school presence" in the area and that children "won't have what we had."

Among her invited friends was Joyce Genovesi, formerly of St. Bernard's parish, Mill Basin, who traveled down from Rye, N.Y. Genovesi taught for 25 years and shares Macchiarola's concern for preserving Catholic education.

At another table, Hope Builders Walter and Eunice Campbell were surrounded by friends and pastor Father John Amann from Holy Family parish, Canarsie. The Campbells memorialized their son George, who died in a 2006 car accident, by setting up a scholarship endowed in his name through the Alive in Hope Foundation.

Although they now live in Manhattan, Hope



Photo © Linda Busetti

▲ Msgr. John J. Bracken, chairman of the Alive in Hope Foundation, looks on after eighth-grader Kiana Jean-Mary and her mother, Cathy, learn a donor has provided a \$10,000 scholarship for Kiana to attend St. Francis Prep.

Builders Rocco and Danielle Papandrea, haven't forgotten their roots. "Our heart is in the Diocese of Brooklyn," said Rocco, a vice president for Global Wealth Management for Merrill Lynch.

They are both "products of the school system in the diocese," his alma mater being Holy Spirit School in Borough Park, which has since closed. Like other Hope Builders, Rocco says, "Giving back is the most important thing in our lives." Danielle serves on the board of Alive in Hope. He serves on the lay advisory board for Northside Academy in Williamsburg.

Hope Builder Roger Aguinaldo, who is on the board of The Net as well as managing director of Forest Hills Capital Management, is a trustee of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs School, Forest Hills, which his children attend. He invited business associates such as Howard Morgan to "learn about the cause of Catholic education which is near and dear to my heart."

Other Hope Builders were John Cosgrove, Kathleen McCormack, Esq., Michael V. Oneal, Gerard Trapp and Stephanie Whittier.

As attendees ate breakfast, Msgr. John Bracken,

chairman of the Alive in Hope Foundation, introduced a short video. In a voiceover, Tom Flood, executive director for Stewardship and Development, said, "We have all been gifted" and Alive in Hope provides the "opportunity to share." The video showed how Alive in Hope reaches out through evangelization, Catholic education, senior services, migration services and aid to parishes "in your own backyard."

"Our Catholic Charities is the largest supplier of social services in the State of New York after the government," Msgr. Bracken said.

He thanked everyone for coming, stressing "we believe in hope" and also in giving people the "opportunity to choose to go to Catholic schools."

As an example of how Alive in Hope provides that opportunity, Msgr. Bracken called to the lectern Kiana Jean-Mary from St. Clare School in Rosedale. Kiana, a well-spoken young lady, said that an Alive in Hope scholarship had made it possible for her to attend eighth grade at St. Clare's.

"Catholic education needs to spread," said Kiana, who hopes to become a doctor. "That's my plan." She acknowledged that her mom has made "great sacrifices" to keep her in Catholic school.

Msgr. Bracken called to the front of the hall Cathy Jean-Mary and then made the announcement that an anonymous donor had provided the funds for a \$10,000 scholarship to St. Francis Prep H.S., Fresh Meadows. Both Kiana and her mom covered their faces in disbelief. At the Bishop's Christmas Luncheon, where Kiana led the attendees in singing God Bless America, she had expressed the hope that she might go to St. Francis Prep in the fall. Now her hope was realized.

With tears in her eyes, Cathy Jean-Mary spoke about the sacrifices she had made so Kiana could have a Catholic education. She admitted that she had also done some things she wasn't proud of trying to make money to support her family, which includes her son and brother. She learned, though, "there are better ways to do something."

Afterward, Msgr. Bracken said, "Keep hope alive, that's what we do," and offered the friends who had come to breakfast, "an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others."

After the program, Aguinaldo's friend, Morgan, said he had been touched by the presentation and would "definitely support" Alive in Hope.

## Northside Catholic Academy Consolidates Into One Campus

Auxiliary Bishop Frank Caggiano is shown with students from Northside Catholic Academy following a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 Withers St., Williamsburg, the school's new home. The event marked the consolidation of Northside Catholic at Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Northside Catholic at St. Vincent de Paul into one newly renovated building. The ceremony was preceded by Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

