

# FAIRFIELD COUNTY Catholic

Largest newspaper in Fairfield County

THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

Volume 26, Number 1

January 17, 2009

www.bridgeportdiocese.com

*Dr. Joann Borchetta*

## Saint Cecilia School head is best in N.E.

By PAT HENNESSY

On the eve of the observance of Catholic Schools Week (January 25-31), the Diocese of Bridgeport received cause for an early celebration. Dr. Joann Borchetta, principal of Saint Cecilia School in Stamford, has been named the "Distinguished Principal" of 2009 for the New England Region (Region 1) by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

She is, in effect, the best Catholic school principal in New England.

**Inspiration**  
"You have been a source of great inspiration as principal during your 20 years at Saint Cecilia's," wrote Patricia Berthiaume, New England NCEA Representative, praising Dr. Borchetta's contribution during a total of 40 years in Catholic education.

The prestigious award is presented annually to principals in each of 12 regions of the United States.

Dr. Borchetta will receive her award on April 14 at the NCEA annual convention in Anaheim, CA.

"I am so pleased that this prestigious award will be given to one of our principals," says Dr. Margaret Dames, superintendent of schools for the

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DR. JOANN BORCHETTA, award-winning principal, is quick in her praise of Saint Cecilia School's staff, students, and parents. Saint Cecilia's motto for this year spells out their attitude: "What we lack in facility, we make up in spirit and community."

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diocese. "Joann has demonstrated outstanding leadership and has been a source of inspiration as principal during her twenty years at Saint Cecilia School. She exemplifies the service and commitment of all 39 principals in the diocese!"

Last year, Patricia Brady, principal of Saint Thomas Aquinas School in Fairfield, was also recognized by the NCEA, for her previous assignment outside of the diocese.

Dr. Borchetta holds her bachelor's degree in English from the College of New Rochelle in New York and her master of arts in literature from Fordham University. She received her sixth-year certificate in educational administration from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield. She holds her doctorate in instructional leadership from Saint John's University in Queens, NY.

### Experience

Dr. Borchetta began her career as a teacher at Greenwich Catholic School in 1976. She later served as a reading specialist in Catholic and local public schools while raising her children. During that time, she taught religious education and headed the youth group at Sacred Heart Parish in Byram.

In 1988, Dr. Borchetta was named principal of Saint Cecilia, which educates 290 students in grades pre-K through 5.

Dr. Borchetta and her husband, Peter (the former principal of Trinity Catholic High School in Stamford), are the parents of four grown children, all of whom attended Catholic schools. The couple are mem-

bers of Saint Mary Parish in Greenwich.

In addition to the NCEA, Dr.

*"Saint Cecilia School is a real community."*

Borchetta is a member of the Connecticut Association of Schools, the National Association of Elementary

School Principals, and the New England Association for Schools and Colleges (NEASC), where she served on the Commission on Independent Schools for six years.

### Improvement

"The NEASC works for schools' improvement," Dr. Borchetta explains. She was part of the group of administrators recommending or delaying accreditation.

While she is pleased by the NCEA award, Dr. Borchetta is quick in her praise of Saint Cecilia's staff, students, and parents. Saint Cecilia's rousing motto for this year spells out their attitude: "What we lack in facility, we make up in spirit and community."

"We're a real community," Dr. Borchetta says. "We start every morning before school with staff prayer in the teachers' room. We talk and share prayer intentions and pray for each other. When parents come in here, they sense it right away. They feel the spirit, they feel the warmth."