This past summer was groundbreaking as St. Ambrose Academy (SAA) completed its first Summer Academic Skills Workshop through a $10,000 grant from the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Inc. of Wilmington, DE. The workshop was designed to help students learn and practice non-cognitive skills like time-management, determination, resourcefulness, and conscientiousness to take the “luck” out of successful academic performance.

There were two class groups, one made up of sixth and seventh graders and another group made up of eighth, ninth and tenth graders. The skills taught were embedded in the context of studying specific subject matter. For the younger students, this involved the natural sciences and ornithology, and for older students, it included history and genealogy. Mass, prayer, and spiritual exercises were also at the core of the daily activities.

SAA faculty and staff had a chance to learn about the program’s successes over the summer.

“A lot of the workshop resonated very deeply with what a Catholic and classical education is all about,” said Dr. Constance Nielsen, director of classical education. “In addition to imparting content, a real education forms the whole person, and that involves training in the non-cognitive skills developed in the workshop,” she added. One SAA slogan is “teach ‘em to think.” This workshop did just that.
“...I am extremely thrilled that I get to see our students and wonderful teachers and staff members all day, every day during the week.”

As the 2014-15 school year began, those were the words of Ms. Ahrom Gahng as she starts her first year as a full-time teacher at St. Ambrose Academy (SAA).

Ms. Gahng teaches middle school pre-algebra, seventh and eighth grade physical science, and high school calculus.

She is originally from South Korea but came to Wisconsin as an exchange student at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee and later transferred to UW-Madison and graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics in 2012.

“I view teaching as a vocation from God and believe that my role is to strive to serve our community as a role model of faith and virtue for our students and to help nurture their minds, bodies, and souls,” said Ms. Gahng.

During the past two school years, she taught mostly high school classes part-time at SAA, but this year she’s teaching three middle school classes.

“As much as I miss having our high schoolers, I look forward to getting to know and interacting with our middle schoolers this year,” said Ms. Gahng.

She is also excited to have a homeroom with the school’s “adorable” sixth grade girls.

Ms. Gahng said SAA is a “special community” and “working here as a teacher is more than just my job. It’s more than teaching classes, attending meetings and grading tests.”

Many families undertake long commutes from Poynette, Sauk City or Monroe in order for their children to attend St. Ambrose. Then, there are others who choose to move close to St. Ambrose. Ted and Katie Brenner and their three children fall into this second category... even though their oldest child, Ruth, is only six years old!

But, the Brenners were hooked by our motto “Christ is everything for us.” Although they are not Catholic, the Brenners have recognized the faith formation that is at the heart of St. Ambrose’s mission. Katie shares that the Christian faith is lived out in the “daily rhythm of family life” in their home and at St. Ambrose. In both places, “prayer is at the forefront.”

Classical education is also important to the Brenners. Ted is a Technical Services engineer at Epic Systems Corporation. Katie is a biochemist at UW-Madison. They met while working on their master’s degrees at Stanford University. Education is something that Ted and Katie highly value... which led them to St. Ambrose. As St. Ambrose high schoolers do in their study of American History, Ted Brenner read the writings of Alexander Hamilton and noted Hamilton’s command of Greek and Latin. He wondered why many schools have abandoned ancient history and literature when so much of modern thought is based on the Greeks and Romans. Then, he found St. Ambrose Academy.

Finally, the Brenners value the closeness of the St. Ambrose community, a community they have embraced and which has embraced them... even now, with little Ruth only in first grade.

St. Ambrose Academy, Grades 6-12
602 Everglade Drive, Madison, WI 53717

Like us on Facebook!
facebook.com/St.Ambrose.Academy

www.ambroseacademy.org
School Office: (608) 827-5863

Faculty Focus: Ahrom Gahng

SAA Wish List

Can you help us with any of the following items?

• Ambassadors to share the school - be a friend!
• Printer and copier toner cartridges
• Pen drives (8-16 GB) for student and teacher printing
• $500 stipends for athletic programs
• Set of marker board lapboards

For more information or to help with any of these items, please contact Scott Schmiesing at the school office: (608) 827-5863.

Thank you for your generosity!