

Saint Mary's Catholic School



Multifaceted Marketing Project

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN BELEN, NM, has been a large part of the Belen community for 87 years. However, when tuition was increased in order to make teacher salaries more competitive a few years ago, enrollment dropped. Thus began a multifaceted marketing project to revitalize the school.

The school newspaper was published with the parish bulletin every month so that parishioners would know what was happening in the school. The principal selected a Featured Teacher and a student of the month, with their photos and biographies appearing in the community newspaper each month. Once a month students from Saint Mary's—in uniform—participated in the liturgy, singing, and other parts of the weekly parish Mass. A comprehensive website was designed and a new logo was developed for all materials.

The school schedule was modified by 15 minutes to accommodate the train schedule, and now 35 students ride the train with parent volunteers each day.

In the summer, with the help of a small grant and some generous community members, the front entry of the school was remodeled with a new window and decorative plaster. This helped the school look friendlier and more modern.

In the second year of the project it was decided to ramp up the school's community basketball tournament to get more participants. A new booster club was formed and advertising and sponsorship were increased. The number of teams that participated jumped from 9 to 14.

For years the school wanted to tap into a small town to the north, but transportation was a roadblock. The pastor suggested looking into students using the New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter train. The school schedule was modified by 15 minutes to accommodate the train schedule, and now 35 students ride the train with parent volunteers each day.

Award Category: An innovative project in marketing a Catholic school

Location: Belen, New Mexico

Archdiocese: Santa Fe

Principal: Melodie Good

Students: 141

Grades: PreK-8

Website: stmarysbelen.com