

## STREAM-ing Back to School

KENMORE — Teachers and students alike are excited to head back to school at St. John the Baptist School. Faculty have been hard at work this summer learning about and preparing new technology and equipment that was recently secured through the Diocese of Buffalo's Upon this Rock STREAM Grant. This \$9,000 grant, coupled with the support and fundraising from the St. John's annual appeal and Home School Association, has allowed the school to acquire new robotics equipment, a portable video studio, interactive touch board, five iPads, and new technology curriculum, among other items.

As a STREAM school, St. John's has made a marked commitment to teaching and incorporating critical and creative thinking, community partnership, real-world experiences, and technology into the classroom. This new equipment will be instrumental in moving this commitment forward.

To help begin this process, faculty introduced some of the new technology to students who were on campus for some of the summer programming. "Students were instantly excited when they saw the Dash robots and the iPads," remarked St. John's STREAM coordinator, Mary Makar. "They couldn't wait to get started." This technology is more than just playing a game on a tablet, however. This pushes

students beyond what they are used to doing with this technology. They need to work with their classmates and stretch their brains in new ways in order to correctly code the Dash robots to complete the various tasks.

Not only do the students need to develop new thinking skills, they also are required to work collaboratively with their classmates. "Seeing our older students help and guide our younger students in how to use the new technology was so special," noted St. John's fifth-grade teacher, Johanna MacDonald. "Both sides were really learning a lot from the interaction and now feel more confident in using the robots." By fostering these opportunities for collaboration between students at different grade levels, both the older and the younger students benefit and build upon yet another STREAM principle of hands-on, experiential learning.

St. John's is deeply grateful for all the donors to the Diocese of Buffalo Upon this Rock campaign and its annual appeal fund who made the purchase of this new technology possible. By jumping feet-first into experimenting with this new technology, the teachers are prepared for integrating it into their classrooms in the fall and the students are already looking forward to utilizing it when school starts in September.