

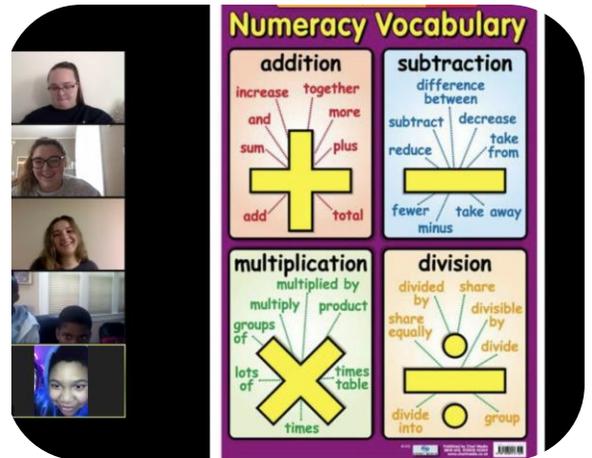
# St. John Fisher College and Nazareth Elementary Partnership

December 2020

Nazareth Elementary has been part of St. John Fisher College's Student Scholars initiative for several years. In this program, college students assist elementary school teachers in various ways, gaining valuable field experience while helping to teach the youngest members of our community.

We are grateful indeed to these amazing young men and women who have become part of the fabric of life at Nazareth Elementary.

Below, St. John Fisher College senior Ally Wichtowski reflects on her experience over the past four years volunteering at Nazareth Elementary.



*I am currently a senior at St. John Fisher College studying Inclusive Childhood Education and English. I have partnered with Nazareth Elementary as a volunteer since I was a freshman at SJFC, and I have loved every second of it.*

*In the past three years, I have worked as a helper in second grade, kindergarten, Extended Care, and now as a virtual tutor for fifth and sixth grade students. Since I have worked in so many positions within the school, I have gotten to know a number of faculty members and students, and I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the students learn and grow over the years.*



*I am very sad that I could not physically be at Nazareth this year, due to our college's strict social distancing guidelines and restrictions. However, I am so happy that I am still able to help serve the students of this community in a very new and different way. As a tutor for students who have opted to attend school virtually for the time being, I have been able to build unique relationships with them like never before. I get a glimpse inside what their life is like outside of school, while also having a more direct impact on their learning experience.*

*At the onset, I had some reservations as to how volunteering virtually would play out, wondering if tutoring via zoom would be as effective as in-class. However, my worries were unfounded - Sr. Margaret and 5th and 6th grade teachers Mrs. Gutknecht and Mrs. Olmo have been nothing but helpful and*

*supportive. I, along with the other SJFC students I tutor with, keep in contact with the teachers every week, communicating on how we can best support these students in our sessions. We have been granted access to their Google Classrooms so we can keep up-to-date with every lesson and assignment. Although this format is not what we are used to, we are making the best of it, and I am so grateful to still be able to be part of these students' lives, even if it is just through a computer screen.*

*As a former student and graduate of Catholic schools within the Rochester Diocese (Holy Family and Notre Dame in Elmira, NY), I have loved working with Nazareth Elementary, and I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to be a part of their family. The relationships I have made with the students and faculty are ones that I cherish, and I hope to maintain them even after graduation.*

*Upon my graduation this upcoming spring, I intend to stay in Rochester and pursue a Master's Degree, with the intent of becoming a special education teacher and eventually working in higher education at the collegiate level. Most importantly, I hope to remain a member of the Nazareth Elementary community and to continue to serve its amazing students in any way I can.*

[www.nazarethschools.org](http://www.nazarethschools.org)