

# SRL Academy is in the news!

The local Website that focuses on children and family news, BaristaKids, has a new feature on the innovative work St. Rose of Lima Academy middle school science teacher Cristina Wage is doing with the St. Rose science curriculum. The story is below. To read the story online go to the following address <http://kids.baristanet.com/2010/12/area-school-launches-students-into-space/>



## Area School Launches Students into Space

**BY Stacey Gill | Wednesday, Dec 01, 2010 1:30pm**

A space program, that is. And one that brings students as close to space as they can get without actually being astronauts. The 6th and 8th grade students of **St. Rose of Lima Academy in Short Hills** are spending the semester exploring space travel and cosmic life by connecting with and learning from actual astronauts.

The program is one of several science teacher Christina Wage has incorporated into the curriculum to create what she calls a collaborative classroom.

"We needed to expand the walls of our classroom," Wage said. And to that end she initiated her "classroom without borders" program three years ago to develop a more interactive and meaningful learning experience for her students.

This year, a significant one for space exploration with the planned completion of the International Space Station (ISS) and the end of NASA's current space shuttle program, Wage chose to work with the Canadian Space Agency through a program they offer called Yes I Can – Work in Space.

Hundreds of students from 36 schools worldwide – from Canada and the U.S. to Ireland and Australia – are participating, and all have extraordinary access to the Canadian astronauts, scientists and engineers.

Throughout the term students communicate with members of the Space Agency and each other in investigating real world space-related issues including technologies and robotics used in building and operating the ISS, the materials and process involved in constructing a space suit and the training required for a space mission. The students maintain contact with the Space Agency through emails, blogs and an interactive webcast, which is held five times during the term.

"They love it especially the webcasts," Wage said. The webcasts allow students to hold live discussions with the astronauts and scientists and enables them to see the other students participating from classrooms in different parts of the world. But the students' favorite part was going up in front of the camera during the webcasts.

Clearly, the webcasts are the highlight, but Wage noted the students also enjoy posting on their own blogs, commenting on other students' blogs and asking questions on or reacting to the scientists' blogs, which they do for a few minutes each class.

Wage stressed working with scientists in this fashion raises student engagement and provides authentic learning. "It makes it more relevant for the students.," she said, adding, "I find the text book really limiting."

With Wage's program, however, the sky's the limit.