

Morning Star breaks ground for new high school wing



Participating at the groundbreaking for Morning Star School's new high school wing were Father Mark Waters of St. John the Baptist in Mayport, Deacon Scott Conway, superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of St. Augustine, Morning Star School Principal Jean Barnes, Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of the Diocese of St. Augustine and Father Lam Nguyen of Christ The King Church.

Morning Star School, the only special education school in the Diocese of St. Augustine, broke ground for a new high school wing Nov. 29 at its campus at 725 Mickler Road, adjacent to Christ the King Catholic Church in Arlington.

Bishop Felipe J. Estevez, Father Michael Houle, Episcopal Vicar of Finance and Development for the Diocese of St. Augustine, and Deacon Scott Conway, superintendent of Catholic Schools, participated in the ceremony.

The school's \$1.5 million capital campaign project includes eight classrooms – four for middle school and four for high school – as well as a media and technology center.

"Our high school program will partner with Bishop John J. Snyder High School to provide a full and rich high school experience including individualized academic

programs, job skills, life and social opportunities," said Morning Star Principal Jean Barnes. "What a blessing this will be to families all over Northeast Florida who search each year for an appropriate educational placement for their children."

The high school was launched last fall with the addition of ninth grade. The new wing to the existing school will accommodate 48 students and is expected to open by August 2017.

Morning Star School currently serves 118 students from kindergarten through ninth grade, who have a diagnosed learning disability, attention deficit disorders, high-functioning autism, and mild intellectual disorders. With its new wing, it will join two other special education high schools in Jacksonville and is the only one that provides a Catholic education.