



Sun Times

News from Saint Francis of Assisi School
West Des Moines, Iowa

Volume 6, Issue 3

Trisha Lenarz-Garmoe, Principal ~ Denise Mulcahy, Assistant Principal November, 2004

Dear Parents,

Thank you for participating in the Columban Mission Jeans Day project. We raised \$452.00 to send to the Columban Fathers to further their mission work around the world. Additional thanks for the great participation, 93% of families, in our fall Home & School fundraiser. The money raised will go into "the pot" for next year's Home & School budget. In April of each year we budget the amount raised during the current school year for the upcoming school year – a wise budget design from our Home & School founders.

Your family should have received a mailing this month from Project HOPE (Help Our Parents Educate). Project HOPE is a diocesan tuition assistance program for those families needing assistance paying for a Catholic education. It has always been the philosophy of this diocese that Catholic education is for anyone who wants it, not just those who can pay for it. In the past there has been an annual Project HOPE raffle to help fund this program. This year a direct mailing has been sent instead. St. Francis School families have ALWAYS been very generous with their \$10 raffle packet purchases. Please consider giving this amount or more to this year's direct mailing approach.

Coming up is Catholic Charities Awareness Week. Please see the flyer in this month's packet for details of how SFS will be participating in the collections being held around the diocese. Additionally, on Election Day, students will be casting their ballots for their favorite Catholic Charities program. The top vote getting outreach program will receive our Jeans Day money this month.

With Election Day fast approaching, students have been engaged in age-appropriate election activities here at school. During our October professional development day at Dowling Catholic, all the metro Catholic School teachers had the opportunity to hear Dan Misleh, a rep-

resentative from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Social Development and World Peace office. He spoke on Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility. This, too, was an "age-appropriate" election year experience as the material presented chal-

lenged us as adult Catholics to reflect on and look across all the areas of Catholic Social Teaching in order to make an informed November 2nd choice. The seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching are:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community, and participation
- Rights and responsibilities
- Options for the poor and vulnerable
- Dignity of work and the right of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation

I found this this information to be good food for thought for prayer and discernment.

The State Department of Education will make their annual accreditation visit in mid-November. Representatives will accredit our new grade level as they do each year. This year's visit will also involve a Comprehensive Site visit. All accredited districts in the state undergo comprehensive visits periodically. This will be our first such visit since 1999-2000. Boy!! There have been a lot of changes around here since then.

We look forward to seeing you all at parent-teacher conferences next week. Thank you to our sixth grade parents for scheduling their conferences on Monday and Tuesday of conference week. The National Middle School Conference is very close by in Minneapolis this year and our new middle school team will be able to be in attendance for a few of the days. Thank you also to Home & School for help funding this professional development opportunity.

Thanksgiving Blessings to your family.

Trisha Lenarz-Garmoe



FACILITIES NEWS

We are all enjoying our new building so much! We are still learning about the building and where to find supplies, wall plugs, etc. We are also waiting to get the "all clear" so that the students can use all areas of the playground. We hope to be informed soon that the sod is established enough for playground use and that the field across the street to the north can be used on a regular basis.

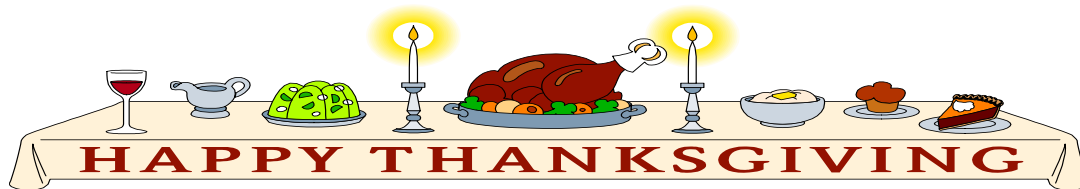
Score boards are UP and the bleachers are being installed at this time. Before long we have full use of the gymnasium!

STAFFING NEWS

We'd like to **WELCOME** two new employees to the Kids Care program! Welcome to Mr. Sean Watters and Ms. Bonnie Gilchrist who will join Kathy Rasmussen in our before and after school program.

We would also like to **WELCOME** Mrs. Roberta Harvey to our building! Mrs. Harvey will be our long term sub for Mrs. McCarthy while she is out on maternity leave.

GOOD LUCK to Ms. Julie Harpole, Miss Becker's student teacher! Ms. Harpole was here at St. Francis for the first few weeks and we enjoyed having her in the building!



Something NEW from Project HOPE!

Each year Project HOPE has given many families tuition assistance to our area Catholic Schools. This year we are asking families to help out with a **direct gift to Project HOPE**. This direct request will replace the raffle and extra collection that has traditionally occurred during the month of January and Catholic Schools Week.

Please be generous in your support of Project HOPE. Your gift will help support a long standing tradition of helping to provide Catholic education to those in need.

Please respond by November 19 to facilitate scholarships for this year!

VOLUNTEER S.O.S.!

Volunteers are desperately needed in the lunchroom on Thursdays and Fridays.

Please contact Marilyn Blankenship if you are available for either of these days, 987-8758.



DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND BAKE SALE

The Dowling Catholic High School Parent's Guild would like to welcome everyone to the 43rd Annual Pancake Breakfast and Bake Sale on Sunday, Nov. 7 from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Polk County Convention Complex. This is a great opportunity to meet and greet family and friends, and to be entertained by Dowling's musical ensembles. There will also be many school activities and organizations from Dowling represented. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults and \$2.50 for children 12 and under. You can purchase your tickets from a Dowling student, at the door, or you can call the Dowling Catholic Parent's Guild office at 222-1029. We look forward to seeing you there!



Guidance Corner by Mrs. Julie Heckle

Today marks the end of Red Ribbon Week. We have had a great week filled with lots of learning and fun. Make sure to ask your child about the "Be Brave Not a Bully" assembly we had on Monday. Our focus this week was "Respect Yourself". The students learned ways to keep themselves and others safe and healthy by choosing to be drug free and choosing not to bully or tease.

During the month of November all grade levels will continue to learn about our "I Was Only Teasing" program. I have worked with the students on how to tell the difference between bullying and a normal conflict. Use the chart below to assist your child in understanding this important concept.

Normal Conflict

1. friends
2. happens once in a while
3. accidental
4. both people feel bad
5. not trying to get something
6. remorse: takes responsibility
7. effort to solve the problem

Bullying

1. not friends
2. repeated negative actions
3. purposeful
4. only the victim feels bad
5. trying to get one's own way or material things (power)
6. no remorse: blames victim
7. no effort to solve the problem

Happy Halloween!! I hope all of you have a safe, fun filled weekend.

On Our Palettes by Mr. Jason Southward

The Des Moines Art Center's fourth annual Day of the Dead Celebration festivities are dedicated to the rich Latino heritage of the greater Des Moines area and honor Latino leaders — Maria "Mary" Ramirez Ortega (1913–1987) and Jesus "Jesse" Mercedes Mosqueda (1921–1989). Each will be honored with an ornate altar in the lobby and a theatrical performance in Levitt Auditorium. Since Day of the Dead combines both indigenous and Christian symbolism, it is appropriate to include a native blessing, which will be led by Iowa State University professors Devery Fairbanks and Jerry Garcia, and community leader Ila Plasencia. Throughout the afternoon, the Mariachi Zapata band from Omaha will perform traditional mariachi music. Celebrate Latino culture at this free, family-friendly event for people of all backgrounds and ages. Families may make a skeleton mask or comical skeletons participating in everyday activities. There also will be performances and artwork created by students in the elementary Spanish program from the West Des Moines Community School District.



Picture Retakes

Wednesday, Nov 10

Bring your picture packet back on that day if you need retakes.

(Fee will be charged for optional re-takes)



Mission Results!

Thank you! Our recent Jeans Day brought in \$452.49 for the Columban Fathers Mission! We appreciate your generosity in supporting this very important mission around the world!



FAMILY PACKET ONLINE!

Beginning in January, 2005 the monthly Family Packet will go high tech! We will have all packet information on the school website which you can access from home! Just visit www.saintfrancisschool.org. You will find the newsletter, family calendar, menu, volunteer schedule, SCRIP order form and MORE!

REMINDER: All items to be included in each month's packet **MUST** be OK'd through the school office.. Please contact the school office for assistance or if you are unable to access the internet from home or office: 457-7167.



Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

The Scholastic Book Fair will be visiting our school the first week in November and will be set up in the Media Center. Parents may visit during the day (although they should be aware that classes will also be visiting at that time) and during Parent/Teacher conferences. Since the fair virtually “shuts down” normal circulation for a week, this is the only book fair we will be having this year. It is an enormously important fundraiser for our library so please visit the book fair!

Many thanks to the grandparents and extended family of our student body for the donations made to “The Generations Reference Library” fund. At this writing \$4,585 has been donated.

- The library has ordered the World Book Encyclopedia 2005,
- the Student Discovery Encyclopedia,
- the Encyclopedia of People and Places,
- the World Book Dictionary,

- a World Atlas,
- a 23 volume set of Christmas Around the World,
- a 30 volume set of Animals of the World,
- a four volume geography set on maps, rivers, oceans, and weather,
- a 12 volume Science and Nature Guide,
- a four volume set on World Ecology,
- Butler’s Lives of the Saints (4 volumes),
- a 12 set immigration series called Coming to America, Bartlett’s Famous Quotations,
- and the Merriam-Webster Biographical Dictionary.

When these books arrive, we will boast one of the finest reference sections of any school library. Thank you so very much for your generosity!



Keep reading aloud to your children!

We will see you at the Book Fair!





Gym Shorts by Mr. Mike Hazel

October is known as sport's greatest month—college and pro football is in full swing, pro basketball and hockey are stirring, and my favorite, the World Series. But as October comes to a close, we have a seasonal transition; and with the changing of the leaves, we have seen changes in our gym! Exciting new additions include our new dual scoreboard system, Bose sound system, and currently being assembled are our new retractable, portable bleachers. What a great way to kick off November with our new-look facility!

Besides our gym changes, we've also seen many terrific new additions to the PE equipment room. Many exciting new manipulatives have arrived thanks to all of you who have helped Home and School raise funds for our program. The kids are thrilled to have such fun equipment to play with. Thanks so much!!

K-2 students have recently finished a baseball activities unit, working on soft toss, tee work, and live batting practice. All activities culminated with Whiffle ball. In November, K-2 students can look forward to units involving soccer and kicking skills, as well as a unit on rhythm and dance. We will be performing folk dances from countries around the world.

3-5 students are in the middle of their folk dance unit. Mrs. Angie Murphy and I will be working on a traditional Philippine dance called Tinikling. It is a rhythmical dance that has participants jumping a variety of patterns through a series or mesh of bamboo poles (we'll be using PVC). After dance, we will look to units in parachute activities, fitness, and baseball activities. Also, for 6 Tuesdays starting November 2, our 3rd grade students will be in a martial arts unit taught by the professionals at Ferrell's U.S. Martial Arts Inc. Lance Ferrell and his staff are providing this service FREE! What a tremendous addition to our curriculum!

6th grade students have embarked upon a collaborative project with Norwalk High School's Lifetime Fitness class. By filling out a simple questionnaire, our students will receive a personalized health/fitness program developed by the Norwalk students. This kicks off our plan to implement what is known as the "New PE." Thanks again to the fine efforts of Home and School, we have been able to purchase enough heart rate monitors for an entire class. Soon the 6th graders will be using these monitors to accurately assess the amount and level of physical activity each child engages in per class period. This is a very expensive portion of our equipment, and we are fortunate to have such a great opportunity. There is no better way to determine what is physically best for each individual student than by use of heart rate monitors.

It is getting colder, but never an excuse to be sedentary.
Follow the **GYM** principle: Get Yourself Moving!!

PARENT REMINDERS...

- Please check the Lost and Found when you are here for conferences.
- Please, please, help your child/ren learn responsibility through natural consequences when they forget their lunch, backpack, band instrument, gym clothes, etc. Experience tells us that a few times of natural consequences helps children learn to be responsible. This is part of their preparation for life!



TECH TALK by Mrs. Diane Nitzel

I can't believe another month has gone by! I've been able to see a lot more of the students this month. I'm even getting to know several names. I was also able to attend the Iowa Technology Conference this past month. It was great! I really learned a lot, from new project ideas to how to write a good Technology Plan. Of course there were vendors there too showing us the latest and greatest in educational technology.

I've had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with the 6th graders this past month. They have had several reports and stories to type. The 5th Graders worked on their President Report and did a fun math exercise in Excel. The 4th Graders started keyboarding using the Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing program. 3rd Grade came to the lab to do a fun exercise with an online clock and later came in to write a friendly letter in Word. 2nd Grade made their title page for their Fortunately books. 1st Grade came in to go over the computer lab rules and learned how to log on to the computers. Finally Kindergarten came in to do their Lost Letters Project.

I would like to take this time now to make a few comments about floppy disks. Floppy disks are soon to be a thing of the past, and the cheaper they get the cheaper they are. We have had several problems with students saving projects to floppy disks, and the floppy disks going bad at some very inopportune moments. Please be sure that when your child is working on projects at home that they save their work to the hard drive first. This ensures they have a good usable copy saved to a reliable media. The new computers in the new computer lab are equipped with CD burners and USB ports in the front. This allows for the options of using re-writable CDs or removable USB drives (a.k.a. Jump Drives or Thumb Drives). If you send your child with a re-writable CD please make sure it is formatted before they bring it to school. It would also be wise to keep your virus program up to date to ensure viruses are not passed back and forth.

Now that both labs are up and running, things are getting pretty hectic in the technology department. I am looking forward to an exciting November with election projects and Thanksgiving just around the corner. Keep checking the St. Francis website for information. I'm hoping to put some links to several helpful websites on the technology page soon.

Musical Notes

by Mrs. Angie Murphy

Time to mark your calendars with all of our musical events!

Our Before School Choir will be busy in December. On Sunday, December 5th the Before School choir has been asked to sing at The Advent By Candlelight. Details of this event will come as soon as I receive them from the committee. This is a wonderful opportunity to show our church community the talent of our school children. I hope to have as many choir members there as can be.

Also during December we will be going on a Choir Tour Day. We will leave St. Francis of Assisi at 10:00 to sing for Valley West Mall, Fountain West Nursing Home and Jordan Creek Town Center. The choir will arrive back at school around 1:00 p.m. We hope you can join us. Details T.B.A.

On December 7th we will have the K-3 concert. The concert information is in the calendar and on the web under "Music Performance." I am trying something new this year in hav-



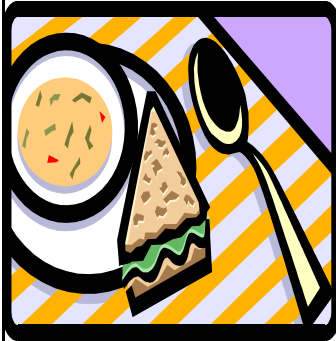
ing the First and Kindergarten students sing together. I am working with the students to only wave once to Mom and Dad and then to focus on me. Please help by not waving to your child during the performance. I try to give plenty of time for pictures after we sing.

The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade will sing on December 14th. We will start with the Fourth graders and end with the musical. The musical is "The Wonder of Christmas". The play is about a boy who finds the true meaning of Christmas. I hope you will be able to attend these performances.

Have a quiet and restful thanksgiving.

*Sing a new song to the Lord,
who has done marvelous deeds!*

News from the Lunch Line by Mrs. Barb Wisnieski



We're happy to report that we are off and running in the School Lunch Program!!

- The Fall Menu has been well received by students and staff
- The new lunch tables finally arrived at the end of September and have made a big difference in the space/traffic flow issues in the cafeteria
- We have been blessed by a hardworking group of serving and cafe volunteers who have made a huge difference in the operation of our program

Thanks for the positive comments about school lunch this year. We have tried to provide a variety of menu items, which balance both taste preferences and good nutrition. (And, if a meal passes the approval of the picky 1st and 2nd graders, we know we're on to something!! I have a 2nd grader myself, so I know!) We are working with a subcommittee of the Menu Planning Committee to assess the fall menu cycle, and we will be using this information in planning upcoming menus. Nutritionally speaking, we are using 86% lean ground beef in all recipes, and have substituted part ground turkey for ground beef in others. We've tried to introduce more fruits and vegetables in different forms on the menu (how many days can you eat baby carrots??). There are some days we truly are cheerleaders in the cafeteria... "Trying new foods!" Most kids are receptive to trying at least a bite...especially after we sing and dance!

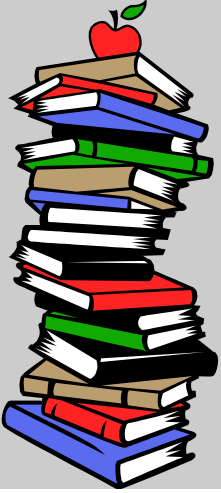
I had the opportunity to attend a conference in September about diabetes. Research shows that Type 2 Diabetes is becoming an epidemic in this country due to lifestyle factors. Not only are we seeing an increase in prevalence of this form of diabetes, but we are seeing it diagnosed at a much younger age than ever before. Prevention is key: we are already seeing public health initiatives which promote lifestyle changes aimed at children in an attempt to slow this epidemic. The National School Lunch program is one of the largest federally funded programs for children, and regulations will become tighter accordingly. Education is a critical component to change...we will continue to integrate nutrition education into our school lunch program with planned activities throughout the year.

Some families have requested recipes for their favorite school lunch menu items: we will adjust these recipes from 300 servings to 4 servings and include them in the newsletter when space allows.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us!!

(We have a number of OPEN positions in the November Cafeteria Volunteer Schedule. If you are able to help on one of these days, we would greatly appreciate it. No need to call...just show up in the cafeteria by 11:30am).





READING RESOURCE

by Mrs. Sarah Harmeyer and Mrs. Libby Hartleib



Enrichment News by Ms. Chris Joslin

On Tuesday, October 18th I was flying between 4th grade classrooms to watch all three renditions of the class play, "Because of Winn-Dixie". From what I saw from each one of them, we are destined to have Oscar winning actors, actresses, set designers, lighting techs, costume designers, directors and stage hands coming from our school sometime 20 years into the future. Most importantly it was a wonderful opportunity for the students to work together on a project and to understand the components of a play. I got to work with a wide variety of actors and actresses to polish their lines, their delivery and expressions. It was a joy to coach them all and I wish I had time to meet with the support crew too. I

look forward to watching the videos of all three in their entirety soon.

Many of you received the information from the Blank-Belin Institute in Iowa City on an above level test that any child scoring over 95% on any category of the ITBS test scores is eligible to take. This is something that is your choice in taking. It will make them eligible for other opportunities from the Blank-Belin Institute in the future, depending on their test scores.

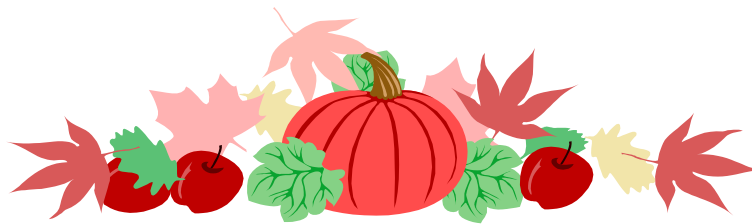
Next month I will be focusing on 5th grade activities. They have been involved in the D.A.R.E. Program during the time I have available for them and I feel that that is an important program for them.

Sixth grade has been active in Mock Trial and we go to competition on Monday, November 1. Please keep them in your thoughts as we will be competing against seasoned Middle School teams. The experience is well worth the effort and I am confident we will do well. Our volunteer attorneys, James Biscaglia and Sara Lamme of LaMarca and Landry, have been extremely helpful as has Mrs. Ricke who volunteered to be the team coordinator. We are really lucky to have such dedicated volunteers.

Once Mock Trial is completed, I will be starting a Geography special interest group as we explore the National Geographic Bee competition. This is open to students 4th grade and up. I would love to have a parent volunteer to help with this after school activity too.

We are also exploring a program called "Math Counts". Please let me know if you are a parent who loves math and who would like to help start an after school program in that area too. Again, there is a competition and whether we set our goal as that OR just want to explore math for the fun of it, we would need to decide that if there are parents interested. It is a Middle School activity but younger grades can also have non-competitive groups.

All this and the first quarter is just ending!!!! WHEW! Thanks again for your support and suggestions.



On the Beat! by Mr. Rick Purviance

The St. Francis 6th Grade Band members did a fine job performing at the Dowling Homecoming on Friday, October 1st at Valley Stadium. Despite the bone-chilling weather, they performed with the other middle school bands of the diocese, plus the Dowling High School Marching Band. The middle-schoolers first performed an arrangement of America the Beautiful by themselves, and then were joined by the Dowling Marching Band in performing the Star Spangled Banner and Dowling Victors. This was a new experience for the St. Francis 6th Grade Band members and they did a great job.

The St. Francis 5th Grade Band has been busy preparing for their open rehearsal for their parents. We have 53 in the band. This is the largest beginning 5th grade band that the diocese has had over the years. They are doing a great job both in lessons and in their large group rehearsals. An open rehearsal was held from on Thursday, October 28th in the band

Home and School News

The 2004-2005 directories and magnets have been distributed. If you think you may have paid for a directory or magnet and have not yet received them or would like to order more, please contact Diana Pieper (226-8596). If you did not order a directory and magnet, they are great tools. The directory contains a list of student addresses and phone numbers, class lists and contact info for our faculty. The magnet is a handy academic year calendar and is color coded to remind you of days off, early-outs, and vacations. The cost for the set of Directory and Magnet is \$5.00. Each additional directory or magnet is \$0.50 (you'll find they are handy in the car or at the office as well as at home). Get yours now while supplies last!

Hy-Vee has made a few changes in its coupon book, most notably the "dollars off" coupon. The new books we have received include **5 coupons for \$1.00 off a \$20.00 purchase** instead of the 1 coupon for \$5.00 off a \$50.00 purchase we have seen in the past. This will help all of us when we just need to pick up a few things. Now we can save with nearly any purchase!

The office has a very limited supply of Scrip during the week. If you must visit the office for scrip, please do so only between 9AM and 2PM. These times are less busy than immediately after drop-off or before pick-up. The office staff will greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter. For your convenience, Scrip is sold on Fridays before the school mass and at most weekend masses. We also take backpack orders on Mondays for distribution on Wednesday or Thursday. Please call Kara Pollpeter (327-1254) if you have any questions regarding Scrip.

We've had wonderful attendance at our meetings so far this year. If you have not been able to attend a Home and School meeting yet this year, our next meeting will be **November 15th, 7 p. m., in the Media Center**. Join us, there's always room for new ideas and people who want to be involved!

FALL FUNDRAISER!

Our fall fundraiser was a HUGE success! Our profit from this fundraiser is expected to be over \$24,000. Thanks to all the families for their hard work. Over 93% of the school families participated! At least 60 students will spin the prize wheel in early November for an extra prize! Also, if your child qualified, the out of uniform pass will be coming home soon to be used on November 22.

CONGRATULATIONS go to our Grand Prize winners. **TOP SELLER** this year is Jared Newton. Jared sold 105 items and has won \$300 cash. Second place went to Caroline Kassing, selling 80 items. She has won \$200 cash. Third place winner, Michael Johnson sold 71 items and won \$100 cash. The bonus drawings will be held on "spin the wheel" day.

