



SUN TIMES

NEWS FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

"Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child."

Volume 8, Issue 5

Roberta Harvey, Principal

Denise Mulcahy, Assistant Principal Jan 2007

Dear Parents,

Hurry! The Lord is near! We celebrated a very busy, eventful Advent season at school. Our weekly reflections upon "Fulfill the Promise" centered around the themes of love, justice, and joy. We shared ideas and ways of practicing these themes during Advent. We discussed what these ideas looked like in action. Actually, we were unable to celebrate the fourth theme (peace) together due to our dismissal on Wednesday, Dec. 20 for our Christmas Holiday. But please know that peace is our wish for all our children, their families, and our entire parish this entire holiday season.

Hopefully a sense of peace and Christ's love came to you and yours as you participated in many of our Advent service/mission projects these past few weeks. The tree in our entry way was heavily laden with mittens, hats, and socks to help warm those who sometimes feel forgotten in their cold, hard world. The "Bare Essentials" campaign will help those in crisis or homeless situations feel Christ's love extending from Him through His community of believers. And lastly, our Jean's Day on Dec. 20th will bring special joy for a seriously ill child through contributions made to the *Make a Wish* Foundation. To bring or give peace to anyone is, indeed, a true blessing. Thank you, Lord, for the willingness and resources we have at St. Francis of Assisi School that enables us to bring peace to others. May our mission grow and serve Christ all our days...from our own Des Moines area to the ends of the earth!



We so enjoyed our musical presentations this month. The Vocal Music Concert for Grades 3-5 and Informances by students in grades kindergarten, first, and second created joy and wonderful memories for us all. Thanks to Mrs. Randall and her students! We certainly can't forget those instrumental students and their wonderful Band Concert on Tuesday, Dec. 19. All their hard work and pleasure was evident to the supportive crowd that was gathered. Thank you, Mr. Purviance, and your fine Middle School Band for sharing the holiday spirit with us.

We look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ with our community. All the waiting and preparations can be culminated into wonderful church and family activities. So enjoy your holiday parties, family gatherings, and other special events. Take time to be filled with joy and enjoy the miracle of life and the promises of life in Christ.

On behalf of the staff and students at St. Francis School, we wish you a blessed Christmas season and a healthy, happy 2007.

Kindest regards,

Roberta Harvey

Roberta Harvey,
Principal



EXTREME WEATHER NOTIFICATION!

KCCI has a service that is popular with parents for communication about weather-related school delays and closings.

You can go to the following website and sign on to receive email notifications of delays and closings. Once the delay/closing information is called into KCCI, it is linked to the KCCI website: <http://www.kcci.com/closings/index.html>

Once you reach the website you will be asked to provide your email address. You will get a drop down menu of schools. Just click on St. Francis of Assisi and you're set.

LABELS for Education~

Please continue to send in your Campbell's Soup labels and Box tops for Education.

Labels may be sent at anytime to your child's homeroom.

Thank you for supporting SFA!

Directory Corrections!

Mike S. and Kathy Ketcham

1690 SE Bell
Waukee, Iowa 50263
978-4846

**Bob and Stacey
Ketcham**

1725 SE Hawthorne
Ridge
Waukee, IA 50263
987-2312



**Catholic Schools Week 2007
January 28-February 3**

Please send a full deck of cards to school with your student on Monday, January 29, 2007 for a fun-filled CSW activity! The cards will stay at school all week.



Guidance Corner by Mrs. Julie Heckle

Our first "Mix It Up @ Lunch" day on Thursday, December 7, was a success. The noise level in the cafeteria showed that the students were definitely "Mixing It Up". In guidance class, many students reported that they spent time talking to at least one person they did not know very well.

Conflict resolution and friendship has been the topic for many grades in Guidance this month. Kindergartners are learning a variety of ways to solve problems with friends and siblings. First grade students are learning the "I-Care Rules" from the book Peace Making Skills for Little Kids. Second grade students recently wrapped up their unit on Friendship. Third and Fourth grade students are beginning to put their conflict resolution skills into action. Fifth grade students are spending time reflecting on friendship issues, such as acceptance, rejection and cliques.

I want to thank all of you for the cards and gifts I received this Christmas. Your generosity is overwhelming. I hope you and your family have a peaceful and relaxing Christmas break. We all need time to rest and prepare for the start of a new year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

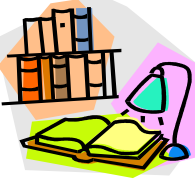
MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE
for Grades 7th & 8th
Sacred Heart School
January 19
7pm-9:30pm
\$6.00
School ID's
required

SCRIP CLIPS

Thank you for your support of our Scrip program during 2006!

The Scrip order dates for January will be: Jan. 8th
 Jan. 16th (Tues.)
 Jan. 22nd
 Jan. 29th





Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

Third grade students are exploring spine labels and the card catalog to develop independent search skills in the media center.

Fourth grade students are using the skills taught in library orientation classes to research and cite sources as they construct their immigration posters.

Fifth grade students are discovering the differences between fables, myths, and legends and are reading examples of each to round out their genre logs.

Thanks to everyone who helped with and shopped at the Scholastic Book Fair. The book fair is a complete success and earned \$2,582.36. What a boon to our library! This money will be spent for new fiction and nonfiction materials.

Thank you for your support of the Saint Francis of Assisi Library.



iNoticias en español! by Mrs. Shelly Power

Fourth, Fifth, and Seventh graders all are studying family concepts in Spanish class. Students are learning to describe their own family and discuss family member relationships. In class students play learning games, such as the dice game, and participate in partner activities that focus on using the new vocabulary contextually. Also, students will write paragraphs in Spanish about themselves and their families using learned vocabulary and sentence structures. (Señora Power has enjoyed getting to know SFA families as students learn to discuss their siblings in Spanish!).

*****All fourth, fifth, and seventh graders are to have brought one family picture to school to be placed in their Spanish folder. This photo needs to have at least two to three people in it (immediate family, siblings, and/or extended family is fine) for students to write about and share.**

First, second, and third grade students completed their first listening assessment. Students wrote down the number from 1-20 they heard, drew pictures of named landforms, and completed a *Sí/No* section. This winter students will learn weather expressions, calendar phrases, and clothing words. We will dress *Froggy* for the weather in Spanish!

iFeliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo!

READING RECOVERY/READING SUPPORT

by Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Focus on Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately, quickly, expressively, with good phrasing, AND with good comprehension. So a fluent reader is not just a fast reader. Fluency is not something we wait and focus on after the student becomes a reader. Attention to fluency needs to be given throughout the learners' reading program. Questions we ask about a person's oral reading are, "Is he/she reading at a good pace?" and "Does it sound like reading?"

We can encourage fluency in young, developing readers by the language we use. To encourage fluency, we might say the following:

- Can you read this quickly?
- Put your words together so it sounds like talking.
- Read from punctuation to punctuation.
- Don't stop at the end of the line unless there is punctuation there.
- Read the darker (or bigger) words louder, but not TOO loud!
- As you think about the characters in the story, how do you think they said their sentences?

Fluency includes automaticity. Automaticity allows students to quickly, accurately and effortlessly recognize words. However, fluent reading is more than just speed and word recognition. Fluent reading also consists of the ability to read expressively with appropriate phrasing and intonation. Being a fluent reader has as much to do with getting meaning from print, as it has to do with paying attention to the words on a page.

The familiar reading component of the Reading Recovery lesson provides a daily opportunity for the students to participate in the practice of phrased and fluent reading. Bringing familiar books home to read to parents creates yet another opportunity to practice reading fluently.

Sometimes, children need a demonstration of the book being read. An effective way to communicate how fluent reading sounds and how the children should sound when reading is to reread a familiar book for them. By reading an entire story, children can hear how the parts of the story flow together and decide if it's fluent by how it sounds.

Another method used to work on fluency is to use repeated readings. The instructional method of repeated readings stresses practice as a way of working on the components of reading fluency – accuracy, rate and expression. Currently, the material we use for our repeated readings comes from our guided reading books and from Reader's Theater scripts. Even as we focus on fluency, we continue to emphasize comprehension. Students are reminded to think about the content of the stories and scripts as they are reading them. Students are always encouraged to read for meaning.

Happy Reading & Happy Writing!



ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin

Froehliche Weihnachten und Alles Gute zum neuen Jahr!

Or in other words,

Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noel!

GEOGRAPHY: Fourth through seventh grade students have been preparing for the Third Annual SFA Geography Bee. By the time you receive this, a winner will have been identified and will be preparing to take a written test from National Geography Society to qualify for a spot at the state geography bee in March.

We will wish our winner well but also want to let you know that we have over 30 students who have been working hard, meeting with me and Mr. Shea, 6th grade social studies once a week, to develop their geography skills. They are all winners in expanding their knowledge of the world..

KINDERGARTEN: This month I have met with all the kindergarteners once a week. We have been exploring some of the lesser known customs of December holidays. We began with Hannukah, then St. Nikolaus' Day and traditions such as the Christmas tree and carols from Germany and will finish up with Kwanzaa.

FIRST GRADE: A group of students are working on a research paper about birds. We are learning words such as carrion, prey, talons and migration.

SECOND GRADE: This special group is working on writing a letter of protest to the Department of the Treasury to remove Andrew Jackson's portrait from the twenty dollar bill. They wanted to do this after reading about Jackson's treatment of the Native Americans. They have discovered that currency design is a very complicated process. We hope to send off the letter before Christmas break.

Second Grade: PART 2: I will be sharing my travels in China as part of the "Christmas Around the World" unit. We will talk about China's ancient and modern culture.

FOURTH GRADE: I have been working with some students in exploring German and German customs. This is a group that meets before school.

FIFTH GRADE: We continue to work on math skills and language arts projects. Recently we have written 30 Second Mysteries to share with their classmates and are working on a reader's theatre about the sinking of the Titanic. They will be sharing with their classmates sometime in December. In January, I will work with the entire fifth grade when possible with Exchange City. They will also be helping at an Advent service of sharing joy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

CRIBBAGE: We have several parent volunteers who are teaching cribbage to Middle School students. Each Wednesday we are teaching groups of 12 students how to play the game. If any of you already know how to play, please teach your 6-8th grade student the rules of the games as we will have a cribbage tournament during Catholic Schools Week in January. We have had such a good response we may have to start meeting two days a week.

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY: We have two 7th grade teams participating in National History Day.

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: 8th graders meet with me to discuss photography techniques and are preparing for a gallery showing soon.

SHAKESPEARE: A small group of 8th graders are meeting to read MacBeth and to gain experience in memorizing speeches.

I wish you a memorable holiday season and a wonderful start to 2007!



Tech Talk by Mrs. Diane Nitzel

Wow! I can't believe that half a year has already past. The computer lab has been a very busy place so far this year and I'm sure that trend will continue. We have had several exciting projects this fall and I spent quite a bit of time going over Standards and Benchmarks that deal with moral and ethical issues relating to technology; terminology, functions, characteristics and uses of hardware; and understanding the role technology plays as a research tool and in problem solving and decision making.

In August Ms. Sprung's sixth graders created a memo using Microsoft Word. Mrs. Westholm's sixth graders created a Power Point slide on their assigned scientist. In September the 4th graders started learning how to type using our new Type to Learn 3 program. Mrs. Wallace's 7th graders researched Medieval life and then created various projects using technology. Kindergarten students learned how to use Kid Pix and then created a picture in Kid Pix for their Letters are Lost project. Miss Krzywicki's eighth graders created a magazine article in Publisher, and Mrs. Randall brought 7th and 8th grade in to create a Power Point on different genres of music.

In October, 3rd grade practiced telling time with an online simulated clock activity and then came in again the following week to type their Friendly Letter. Fifth grade came to the lab and researched the weather and then began to work on their Explorer Newsletter. Mrs. Wallace's 8th graders visited the lab to research. create a project that included typing summaries, creating a graph in Excel and finding pictures to create a collage. Miss Sprung brought her sixth grade class down to type their Press Release.

In November Mrs. Westholm's sixth graders learned how to create graphs in Excel, then the following week Mrs. Wallace's seventh graders created a web page on various key figures or events in history such as Queen Elizabeth, the Catholic Reformation, Spanish Inquisition etc. The web pages turned out very nice and we will hopefully be uploading them to Edline once we overcome some technical difficulties. Right before Thanksgiving first grade created a Thanksgiving Day Food pictograph in Kidspiration. After Thanksgiving, Miss Krzywicki's eighth graders started work on their video documentary highlighting the successes and/or failures in American History using our new video editing program Adobe Premier Elements. Mr. Southward's eighth grade Art students created artistic works using technology with Adobe Photoshop Elements.

In December the eighth grade designed their own comic page and colored it in using a variety of Photoshop tools and effects. They will also be working on creating an original piece of artwork for the Art Show using Photoshop. Miss Krzywicki's class continued to work on their videos and Mrs. Joslin's seventh grade TAG students began work on their Wizard of Oz video commercial.

The video projects have been quite a hit with the students and the teachers are saying that they feel the students are learning a lot about their topics in the process.

If you are planning on purchasing a new digital still or video camera for Christmas and don't know what to do with your old one, please consider donating it to the St. Francis School Technology Department. This would help make these types of projects more feasible and less time consuming if more than one group could video tape/take pictures at a time.

I hope all of you have a very happy and blessed Christmas.



News from the Lunchline

by Mrs. Barb Wisnieski

HAPPY 2007!!!! Here's what we've got "cooking" in the School Lunch Program for the New Year....

The new winter menu cycle and winter salad schedule were started in December, and will continue through March. In spring, look for new menu items which include seasonal fruits and vegetables, along with the standard student favorites.

Milk in plastic bottles has been well received by SFA students. This semester, we will use our grant money from the dairy council to promote healthy eating with fun prizes and contests.

Nutrition education will be our focus this semester in the cafeteria. Your student will be learning about the foods we serve, in addition picking up nutrition trivia tidbits in the cafeteria. (There's nothing more fun than a little "lunch and learn", right?!) Don't forget to check out our monthly menu for nutrition and health facts.

Thanks for your continued support of our program, and prompt payment of lunch accounts!!

Happy New Year!
See you in 2007!