



# SUN TIMES

NEWS FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL  
WEST DES MOINES, IOWA

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

Volume 9, Issue 1

Roberta Harvey, Principal

Misty Hade, Assistant Principal

Sep, 2007



Dear Parents,

We're off to great beginnings for the 2007-2008 school year.

Students and teachers are slipping into new routines gracefully and we are pleased to announce that the tardies are at a minimal. Drop-off and pick-up lines are moving smoothly for the most part. Congratulations, parents, your preparations and support for our requests have made the new academic year's start-up less stressful and most enjoyable. And truly, one of my favorite tasks as a principal is morning drop-off. It is wonderful seeing you all and observing our students' bright smiles as cars pass and kids hop out of their cars. It is obvious St. Francis students are eager for new learning each and every day.

Please don't forget our first Home & School meeting on Mon., Sept. 10 in the Large Mtg. Room at 7:00 P.M. It is a great way to connect with other parents and learn about events and activities within the school. The administrative team will be explaining the new Progress Reporting System that will be piloted throughout the diocesan schools this year, grades K-5.

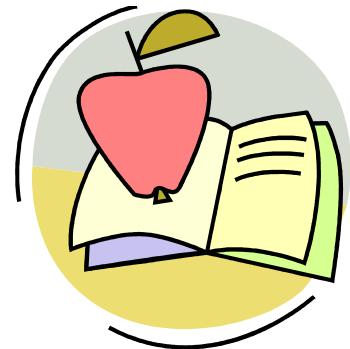
So what's the "big deal" about this new reporting system anyway? We are very pleased that our new reporting system aligns the state and federal mandates for standards, as well as

our own diocesan standards that many educators within the diocese have worked so hard to develop. In turn, assessing our students with these standards helps us better support what our children are learning. We are confident this reporting system will also improve and facilitate communication about learning throughout the school, and will promote consistency and fairness in assessment across and within the grades. Research is revealing that systems that use curriculum-aligned teaching and assessment have a greater chance of student success. This is what makes it a "big deal" for us. We want to increase chances for student success in the most meaningful way possible. We are excited about the opportunities this process will bring to the students at St. Francis of Assisi and other diocesan schools. We'll see you soon!

Kindest regards and peace—

*Roberta Harvey*

Roberta Harvey,  
Principal



## Welcome Newcomers!!

We welcome the following new students and their families to the St. Francis School community!  
We're glad you're here!

Gabriel B., Grade 1	Jarret B., Grade 4
Cade G., Grade 1	Rayann S., Grade 4
Eva S., Grade 1	Jack B., Grade 6
Ethan S., Grade 1	Gianna D., Grade 6
Zack C., Grade 2	Alyssa N., Grade 6
Kelly Mc C., Grade 2	Brianna B., Grade 7
	Louis D., Grade 8

# We Welcome You!



### EMAIL MESSAGES?

Are you receiving SFA Friday News & Notes via email? If you are not, then we may not have your correct email address. If you think that we have an incorrect email address or you have had a recent change, please contact the school office: 457-7167 or drop an email to [stfrancis@dowling.pvt.k12.ia.us](mailto:stfrancis@dowling.pvt.k12.ia.us).

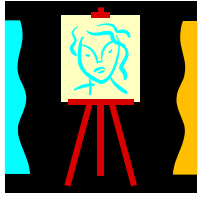
Remember to add the St. Francis School email address to your personal email address book to be sure you receive our communications.



## Valley West Mall Class Cash

Class Cash competition continues through September 2.  
Double points will be awarded on September 1 and 2!

Be sure to stop in to VWM and turn in your receipts to the Information Desk! Let's make SFA #1 in the Class Cash Competition this year!!



## ON OUR PALETTES by Mr. Jason Southward

I would like to send out a loud and joyous “Welcome Back” to the students and their families as we begin a new year. The art room will be full of excitement this year with changes in staff, curriculum, and extra activities.

First and foremost, I would like to welcome **Ms. Sara Anderson** to the Visual Art Department here at Saint Francis. If the name sounds familiar, Ms. Anderson was here last spring as our student teacher. Ms. Anderson will be teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She brings many new ideas and a fresh outlook to the art program.

This year in middle school, there will be a change in curriculum. The program will be based on the principles and practices of the nationally recognized and research backed “Choice-Based Art Education. Beginning with the idea that the student is the artist, the art room becomes a working studio where students make authentic choices about their art making. This concept supports multiple modes of learning to meet the diverse needs of all students. More information about the choice-based program will come throughout the year.

Lastly, this year will bring forth the birth of the Saint Francis Art Club. The Saint Francis Art Club will be open to any middle school student and will meet after school. The focus of the group will to create art to beautify our school and parish campus. There will be a signup sheet in the art room next week. Details about meeting times and any particulars about projects will come once we have an idea about how many students wish to join.

It’s great to be back and I look forward to working with your children again this year.

*“He who works with his hands is a laborer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist.”*

— St. Francis of Assisi



## Noticias en Espanol! By Mrs. Shelly Power



Welcome to St. Francis Spanish news. This year, first through fourth grade students will have Spanish class once a week. Fifth grade and middle school students have Spanish class twice a week all year. Each year all students will develop increased communicative proficiency by participating in new activities that build upon their knowledge. It is the expectation that by the end of eighth grade, students have developed skills in Spanish that allow them to take higher level courses at the high school level and eventually Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish for college credit.

On the St. Francis School web site, parents and students will find grade level student benchmarks for Spanish class, examples of student progress reports, and middle school daily vocabulary lists.

Also, students new to St. Francis and new to learning Spanish will find a helpful basic vocabulary builder.



## ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin

Hello! I hope that you are all well rested from a delightful summer vacation!

This year will see some changes because of scheduling in the programs that are offered to the Middle School. It will mean that more of the programs that were available during 'SSR/sustained silent reading' and study hall will need to meet after school. Another change is to charge registration fees for some of the Middle School programs. As the school has grown so large, with so many actively involved students, the Special Events program cannot continue to fund all of the registration fees. I will be collecting these fees as the program registration comes due. As always, no child will be prohibited from participating for lack of the fees. Please contact me if there is a need in any way.

I will be sending home information about the programs as they are available. For example, Geography Bee will begin in October, Technology Fair in November and speech contest in April. Programs beginning soon are Mock Trial, Future City, Math Counts and National History Day. If your child should decide that they have the interest and the time in their schedules for some of the later programs which they had not originally checked off on the interest survey, please know that they are welcome to join in to most of them depending on deadlines and time commitments.

Photography, which was an 8th grade program last year, will be open to Middle School students through the art program. I will be working with Mr. Southward in that area. If there is continued interest, we will form a Photography club that will meet after school. Speaking of Mr. Southward, he will be helping me with some programming throughout the year. One program that we are going to pilot with interested 7th graders is mapping with global positioning units.

Grades 4-5: To begin the year, I will be presenting a whole-class program for Mrs. Weisenhorn's social studies class on increasing map, math and logic skills by using a computer program. Small groups in math and/or language arts will begin to meet towards the middle of September.

Fourth grade begins their year with producing the play "Because of Winn-Dixie". I will again be working iwth the speaking parts in preparation for that. Small groups in math and/or language arts will begin to meet towards the middle of September.

Third grade small groups will begin after spring break but during the year, Mr. Southward and I will be preparing whole-class enrichment as needed.

We are looking forward to working with enriching the lives and minds of all our students here this year!



## Food Allergies at SFA

Several students at St. Francis of Assisi School have severe, life threatening food allergies. We are committed to try to provide a safe environment for our students who have severe food allergies. When deciding about birthday treats and other snacks for school, please refer to the Family Handbook and thank you for helping to keep our students safe and healthy!

The following students have severe peanut and other food allergies:

Grade 1: Connor I., Elizabeth M., Matthew M.

Grade 2: Eli A., Nick W.

Grade 3: Ana L., Kate F.

Grade 4: Tyler L.; Grade 5: Michael G.

Grade 6: Connor F.

Grade 8: Johnny J. Isabella V., Cecilia V.

## Book Nook

by Mrs. Mary Head



The Media Center welcomes all students to the Saint Francis of Assisi Library. Saint Francis has a library to be proud of and I am anxious for all students to come in and browse the shelves.

Library books are checked out for a two-week period; however, students are encouraged to return their library books as soon as they have finished reading them. Books may be returned any day of the week. There are no overdue fines, but if a student has a number of overdue books, he/she will be asked to wait until those books are returned before checking out another. Overdue notices are sent to the students on a weekly basis.

Please refer to the Media Center link on the Saint Francis School web site for reading suggestions and to see what day your child has scheduled library visits.

Please continue reading to your children – even when they become independent readers themselves. The benefits of reading aloud are many. It increases vocabulary, widens background experiences, extends listening and comprehending abilities, and expands their capacity to relate to the environment. Reading together can be a very special time for both parents and children.

## SHOW YOUR COLORS DAY!

Wednesday, Sept. 13

Students may wear their favorite team shirts with dress code pants or shorts.

*Go, 'Clones!*

*Go, Hawks!*



## MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCES

for Grades 7 & 8

Friday, Sep 7

St. Augustin's School

\$6.00

7pm-9:30pm

Friday, Sep 21

Assumption School

\$6.00

7pm-9:30 pm

**School ID's  
required**



# News from the Lunch line...

By Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin

Welcome back!

We are very excited to start another school year in the lunch room! It's a packed house this year and it's great to see all the new and familiar faces! We have some great new menu items and hope to encourage each and every child to try something new!

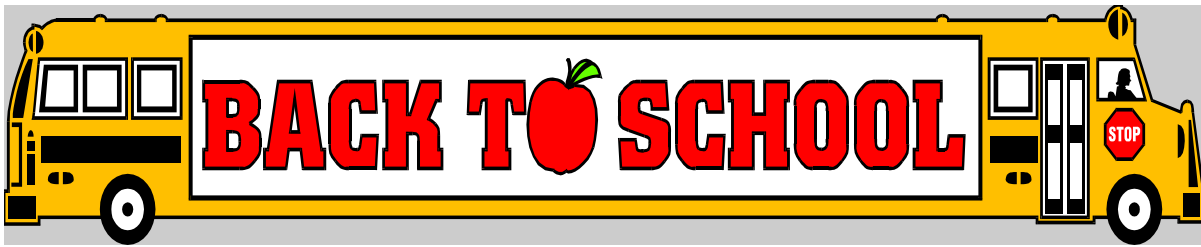
We are very fortunate to have all our staff from last year returning!

- ◎ Mrs. Sue Ritz and Mrs. Linda Larson will be our cooks.
- ◎ Mrs. Larson will also be baking our homemade breads and rolls.
- ◎ Mrs. Tracy Knapp will be baking our sweet treats and managing the cafeteria.
- ◎ Mrs. Debbie Shadle will be our bookkeeper and cashier.
- ◎ Mrs. Kelli Recker has joined our team full time and will be in charge of salads and fruits and vegetables.
- ◎ Mr. Garrett is back to help out with serving, dishwashing and janitorial duties...our jack of all trades.
- ◎ We welcome Mrs. Denise Cacciatore to our team as a cafeteria manager. We are glad to have her!
- ◎ Barb Wisnieski and Jeannine Laughlin are available any time for questions, comments or any menu suggestions you would like to offer!

**LUNCH PAYMENTS:** Please make sure you are **submitting payment for your lunch accounts at the beginning of each month.** School lunch is \$2.20/day, extra entrée is \$1.25 and a la carte (middle school only) is \$.75/day. Milk only is \$.40. Please plan accordingly when calculating your monthly lunch bill.

We have added some new items to our a la carte selection. This week we will be serving sliced apples with caramel as an option. We have also included bottled water, reduced fat popcorn, and Mini Newtons. All the items fulfill the requirements of the mandated Wellness Program.





## Reading Recovery/Reading Support

by Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

The What Works Clearinghouse, a branch of the United States Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, released its independent review of research on Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery showed positive effects in the following four domains:

- alphabets (phonemic awareness, print awareness, letter knowledge, and phonics);
- fluency;
- comprehension; and
- general reading achievement.

The above findings were taken from the What Works Clearinghouse report dated March 19, 2007. The complete report is available online at [www.whatworks.ed.gov](http://www.whatworks.ed.gov)

### Reading and Writing

Recent research says that the more your child writes, the better he/she will write AND read. Reading and writing strategies are intertwined and growth in one area is always reflected in the other.

In writing, the child is required to give special attention to letter detail, a sequence of sounds, a sequence of letters and the connections between messages in oral language and messages in printed language. Writing requires that the child organize his/her thoughts into understandable communication. This process strengthens the writer's understanding of language usage and also his/her grasp of the chosen topic.

The following simple message reminds us how reading and writing work together:

**READ!**

The more you read  
the better you read.  
The more you write  
the better you write.

The more you read  
the better you write.  
The more you write



# MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

## *K-5 Music News by Mrs. Lee Randall*

Greetings everyone and welcome to our new year! Just a couple of announcements for the upcoming informances. All informances will be held in the Parish Hall.

Kindergarten informances are on October 23 at the following times:

KC/AM - 9:00-9:30

KT/AM - 9:30-10:00

KC/PM - 2:30-3:00

First grade informances are on October 24 at the following times:

1M - 12:30-1:00

1G - 1:00 - 1:30

1C - 1:30-2:00

For those of you new to our school and informance is an “informed performance.” The students get a chance to show you what they have learned in music class in a relaxed concert setting. Please join us for these fun events!



## *Middle School Music by Sr. Vikki*

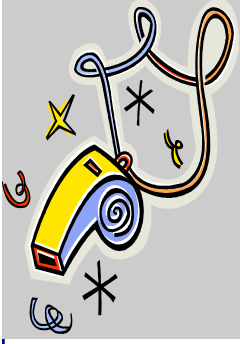
Middle School students are on the move in music. They have been busy introducing me to themselves and to St. Francis through music.

Our eighth grade students have written “Jingles” highlighting what they consider to be the strengths of St. Francis of Assisi school while the seventh grade students have composed musical Raps as a way of introducing themselves to me.

Sixth grade students are inventing new ways of notating music as a way of better understanding the necessary components of written music.

Soon you will be hearing the parts of the Mass sung to a new beat as we begin to learn the Caribbean Mass setting. Our Middle School students are anxious to lead us as music ministers in our school liturgies.

Last, but not least, we have several MS students participating in auditions for the Opus Honor Choir. I'd like to applaud the efforts of these students: Joe B., Andrea B., Megan B., Amanda B., Jonathan B., Mitchell K. Salem W., & Katherine W. We're proud of all of you for challenging yourself in such a positive way.



# GYM SHORTS

by Mr. Mike Hazel and Mrs. Mary Beth Scott

Welcome back students and parents! It is an exciting new year in the PE department as we welcome a new face, Mrs. Mary Beth Scott. Mrs. Scott will be teaching grades 1-3 and the pm Kindergarten class. Mr. Hazel will teach grades 4-8 with the two am Kindergarten classes.

Many of you may know Mrs. Scott from little league baseball circles, and she has been teaching PE in Urbandale, Knoxville and Carlisle for the past 13 years. A wife and mother of three, Mary Beth is also the head volleyball coach at ADM high in Adel. With the addition of the three new related arts staff members, we were able to create a schedule that once again sees grades 1-5 twice/wk for PE (no more confusing letter days!). Mrs. Scott has developed a running and fitness program for the elementary grades that recognizes the efforts of students both inside and outside of school.

For middle school, Mr. Hazel and Mr. Southward have block classes, where they see the kids all year once/wk for 90 minutes. The students seem to be as enthusiastic about this news as we are. We will be able to really emphasize fitness in the curriculum this year and we look forward to some upcoming field trip opportunities for middle schoolers. We also will be introducing the usage of heart rate monitors in middle school. This will really give us an upgrade on PE technology and better yet, it will help the students individualize their efforts in PE, helping them maximize their fitness potential during class.

PE is never enough, of course; much activity should happen daily outside of school, but it will be a much better program this year. Again, welcome back, and get out and play!

