



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.

Vol. 9, Issue 9

Roberta Harvey, Principal

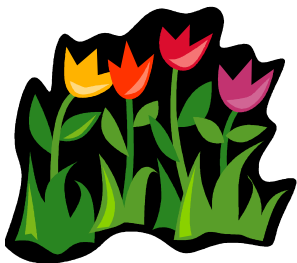
Misty Hade, Assistant Principal

April 2008

Dear SFA Families,

What an amazing winter we have been having! The Groundhog's prediction of five more weeks of winter was right on track. Fortunately, spring is right around the corner and with the early start of daylight savings time it is getting closer than ever. It has been wonderful to have the students outside for recess. All of us need the sunshine and fresh air!

We concluded the month of March with our final Lenten prayer service. Because of Holy Week being during Spring Break, it was important to us to make sure we were able to share the five weeks of Lent with the staff and students. During the Lenten season our staff and students were able to have many faith filled experiences including, reconciliation, sixth grade vocations day, Stations of the Cross performed by sixth graders, and our faith formation day for staff. On our faith formation day, the staff focused on the theme, "Seeing God in all things." This was a wonderful day spent together to renew ourselves for the end of the school year and the start of Holy Week.



March was definitely Music Month! Our band students did an amazing job at the SCIBA contest in Norwalk, our sixth grade students put on a fabulous concert, and the Middle School Choir participated in the DCHS Show Choir Workshop. All of our students are so talented and it is nice to share the gift of music with our families and friends. Along with the talented musicians in our school, the eighth graders had an amazing science fair! It was great to see all of the different ideas and hypothesis the students came up with to test.



A big THANK YOU goes out to all of our families for helping us in our mission for the month. We were able to help St. Joseph's Emergency Shelter by providing several items they needed to have for the many families they help. Without the generous donations St. Joseph's would not be able to help so many families in need.

The end of third quarter was on March 28th. This means that progress reports will be sent home with students on April 4th. Since we do not have conferences, please contact teachers with any questions or concerns you may have. In saying that, please also stress to your child (ren) the importance of keeping up on their assignments and study habits during the fourth quarter. This time of year is always difficult for students with the warm weather and extra curricular activities.

The week after Spring Break, Mrs. Harvey, Ms. Farner, Ms. Nennig, and I will be attending the National Catholic Education Association conference in Indianapolis. The conference will provide many learning opportunities for all of us, as well as giving us the chance to network with other educators of Catholic Education from across the country. We look forward to the week and are excited to share our experiences with all of you.

Once again thank you for your continued support of your child's education.

Peace to all of you,

Misty L. Hade
Assistant Principal

Middle School Music by Sr. Vikki



BRAVO! BRAVO! Congratulations 6th grade students for your wonderful performance of "MUSIC AND ME". It's no secret, St. Francis is loaded with talent and you did a great job using your individual and combined talents to teach us all about the elements of music. Thank you for all your hard work and enthusiasm.

March 26th members of the MS Chorus shared their talents beyond our walls as they traveled to DCHS for a Show Choir Workshop. Students from the Catholic Schools in Des Moines participated in a workshop led by students in the Dowling Dimensions Show Choir. It was a great afternoon of singing and dancing, rehearsals, sharing dinner, and performing together in the evening. Individual performances were also done by each school and the Dimensions Show Choir. What a great experience to look forward to again next year.

Our next performance will be on May 13th with the seventh and eighth grade students performing "BITS OF BROADWAY". We've chosen some of our favorite songs from Broadway musicals to perform for you. We hope you will mark your calendars now and plan to join in the fun, May 13th at 7:00 P.M.

In the meantime, our seventh grade students are tracing the roots of rock and roll and tracing it's evolution through the decades. Students have been assigned a decade of rock to present to their class. You may be hearing some of your old favorites in your homes as they prepare this project.

Eighth grade students are designing a Broadway Musical Theme Park based on what we are learning in class about the various components of a musical. Their parks must reflect the storyline, characterization, setting, and music of the musicals they choose as their inspiration. We have traced the development of this genre from its early beginnings to today. They have a lot of wonderful shows to choose from for their project.

One more month....it's hard to believe! There's never a dull moment and for all of the fun filled moments with your children, I'm grateful.

Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head

Students from Kindergarten through Second grade have been working to distinguish fiction from nonfiction and define which areas of the media center house them. Learning that fiction books are shelved by the first letter of the author's last name has helped students become more independent in locating fiction books.



Third grade students have started practicing looking up titles, authors and subjects in the card catalog, writing down call numbers and locating the book on the shelf.

Fourth grade students visited the media center to research reports about U.S. Presidents. They practiced taking notes in their own words, gathering information from books and encyclopedias, as well as accurately referencing the sources of information used.

Fifth grade students also reviewed how to reference sources, how to find specific items in a general information book, taking notes in their own words and selecting information that is appropriate to a topic as they prepared a PowerPoint presentation on the American Revolution.

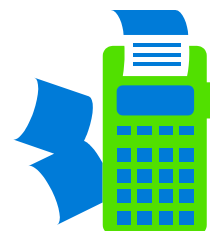
Sixth grade completed their fable, legend and myth unit and are moving on to reading and writing poetry.

Finally, I'd like to extend a quick reminder that there are no fees for overdue books, but if a student has three or more books that are past the due date they will not be allowed to check out until books are returned. Thank you for cooperation and understanding!

Could YOU be the new SCRIP Coordinator?

We are looking for a new volunteer to manage the SCRIP program for the 2008-2009 school year.

If you are interested in learning more about the position, contact Jane Willey at 223-0309.



The Lunch Line

by Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin and Mrs. Barb Wisnieski



By the time you read this, we are praying it is safe to say “spring has arrived!” We really deserve it this year!

Our milk recycling program is working out well. The children have really risen to the occasion and gotten the new recycling routine down. Occasionally, we have one or two children who are not able to finish all their milk, which is just fine.

Here are a few interesting facts we ran across recently. In an article titled, “Wake Up Call” from Women’s Health magazine, it was discovered that about 50% of us are trying to eat more healthily but most of us still don’t know how many calories we should be eating every day. Do you realize “calories in general are what cause weight gain?” We get so caught up in the amount of carbs we are eating, or the amount of fat in foods (which is still important to watch) that we have forgotten the basics; too many calories causes weight gain.

Fifty percent of us are trying to consume fewer saturated and animal fats but 40% of us think monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are unhealthy. The reality is that mono- and poly- unsaturated fats are both good for your heart!

Over 50% of us are trying to consume more whole grains and fiber which is a great goal. But remember, refined carbs need to be cut, too. They are essentially empty calories which offer no nutritional value and don’t fill you up so you feel satisfied. Refined carbs are foods like cookies, cakes, and candy, which have high amounts of sugar (and fats, too).

So, keep in mind as you are improving your diets, that as you add healthy foods, you should be cutting the unhealthy. And keep moving! Even a thirty minute walk a day can do wonders for your overall health.

Some upcoming dates:

Thursday, May 8th: Kindergarten go to lunch day (more details to come)

Friday, May 23rd: 8th grade picnic

We hope you all had a Blessed Easter and Rejoice! He is Risen!



Reading Recovery / Reading Support

By Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Conversations in Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery lessons are designed around opportunities for the teachers and students to talk together while the child is involved in reading and writing. The conversations are valuable for language development and reading comprehension.

Conversations play a role in reading and writing. Listening and speaking both develop by cooperation, conversation and collaboration. Through conversation the student's vocabulary increases when they hear the language, see it and use it.

While conversational exchanges take place during the entire Reading Recovery lesson, except during the running record, there are two places where the conversation is crucial: during the writing component when the child composes and constructs his/her own story and when the new book is being introduced for the next day's lesson.

As the children prepare to write their stories for the day, the teacher and children talk through ideas. The teacher can help them discover what they want to say. The talking might be about something that happened that day or something special the child prefers to talk about. One of the best conversational sources of all is the variety of books in the child's book box; these are familiar books that he/she has already read. Usually the student has so much to say. After more conversation, the student then needs to decide which part he wants to write about. In conversation, the child orally communicates his/her understanding before having to read or write it. Students are encouraged to generate their own story from the conversation they just had with the teacher.

Conversations that take place during the book introduction also offer many opportunities for language learning and reading comprehension. During book introductions, the children get to hear the teacher use some of the language patterns of the story and they are often asked to repeat some of the patterns so they can hear themselves say them. As a result of the conversation during the book introduction, the children are given enough information to help them maintain meaning, yet still be able to problem solve unfamiliar words that they will find during their very first reading of the book.

As casual as these conversations may seem, their benefits should not be underestimated. Conversation topics are different for every child and for every lesson. While the Reading Recovery lesson follows an established routine and familiar structure that supports the child's learning, the content of the lesson varies for each child. Individually selected books for each child, student generated stories and conversations all contribute to the uniqueness of the lesson that is tailored to each individual child.

—adapted from *Running Record*, Spring 1996 "Learning Through Conversation" by Patricia R. Kelly, Adria F. Klein and Gay Su Pinnell and "Working Smarter, Not Harder – Connecting the Reader's and Writer's Workshop" by Michelle Fraley from the National Reading Recovery Conference, February 2008

Happy Reading & Happy Writing

ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin



Future Architect Club has completed their model of the new Olympic training center that is being developed in Altoona, Iowa. They will be presenting their project to interested students and parents in early April. Arrangements are being made for a culminating field trip to Iowa State University's College of Design later in April. Many thanks to Tony DeAngelo for leading this group and to Mr. Southward for letting us use the art room after school. The seventh graders have learned a great deal about the planning and construction of a real building.

National History Day contestants are as follows: eighth grade: Megan B., Kristina M., Monica M., and Kasie N.; seventh grade: Andrea B. and Caitlin T.; sixth grade: Tom B., Mitch K., Cassidy W., Kiley W., and Katherine W. These students will present their projects on April 1st. We wish them all well.

Geography Bee News: Keaton B. has been named an Iowa Geography Bee contestant! He will represent our school on April 4th at the State Geography Bee. We also wish him well. Last year he was in the final top 10.

Technology Fair contestants will be meeting with Mrs. Nitzel after school from 3:30-4:30 in the tech lab. They will take their projects to Nevada, Iowa later in April.

3rd Grade is wrapping up two rain forest projects. One is a diorama of a rainforest which will be on display soon. The other project is a PowerPoint on "The Rain Forest; Nature's Medicine Cabinet".

4th Grade continues to work on their journey north mystery sites and will complete this project in late April.

5th Grade is working on book reviews, children labor issues, and will be coordinating a "Construction" project in early May.

In **6th grade** I have been the guest speaker in Ms. Farner's social studies class. I have provided slide shows and information from my study tours to China, Korea, and India.

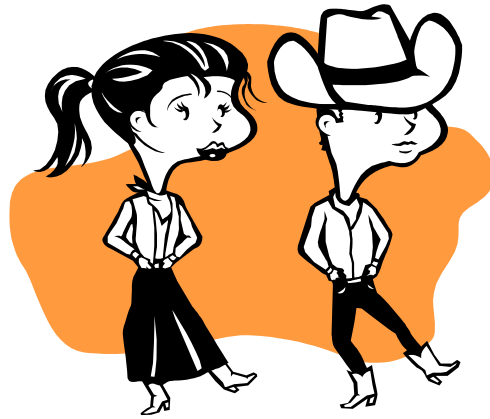
In April, I will be coordinating a poetry contest for grades K-8 in conjunction with the Fine Arts Day focusing on Earth Day. Students will be able to submit a poem following these themes: earth, wind, water, and fire. One student from each class will have their poem selected to be displayed during the Fine Arts week.

I hope you all had a great spring break!



MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 11
7:00—9:30 PM
ST. PIUS SCHOOL
\$6 ADMISSION



*Eighth Grade Confirmation will
be held on*

Saturday, April 26
12:30 pm

and

Sunday, April 27
1:30 pm

Please pray for our students!



April Showers bring May Flowers