



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 10

Roberta Harvey, Principal

Misty Hade, Assistant Principal

May 2008

Dear Parents—

It was with great joy and happiness that I attended the Confirmation masses for our eighth graders last weekend. I was so very proud of them as they completed this stretch of their spiritual journey and welcome them with open arms as full members of the Catholic Church. I am grateful for the dedication of Mary Green, Religious Education Director; Deb Ryan, Confirmation Coordinator; and their teacher, Ms. Nennig, who worked hard to make this year's preparation full...full of promise, full of the love of Christ, and full of desire to serve Him well. I truly believe that these students will fulfill their promises to God and to their church just as their parents did long ago when they were first baptized as infants. These students provide a sense of hope for the Catholic Church of tomorrow.



Please keep our second grade students in your prayers as they celebrate the sacrament of First Eucharist on May 3 and May 4. How excited these children are! After months of work and preparation, they are eager to receive Christ in this very special way. To Mrs. Berrie, Mrs. Waters, and Ms. Neugent: we thank you for sharing your faith, guiding our children through the sacrament of Reconciliation, and preparing them for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist.

We are busy preparing for the many activities scheduled in May including additional track meets, a band concert, a 7th and 8th grade vocal music concert, field day, and kindergarten visitation day. Our current kindergartners will enjoy a "practice lunch" in preparation for next year, our eighth grade students will devote an entire day to service in our community, and last but not least...Eighth Grade Graduation!

Our staff also has many things to complete before the school year ends. They will be finishing progress re-



ports, updating our technology plan, and updating student files. They will be diligently renovating the standards and benchmarks used to guide their teaching, as well as review the expectations for each grade level. Every school year ends with a goal analysis to review the progress made by the students and staff at SFA, followed by the preparation of new goals for the next school year. Our staff regularly enrolls in classes to continue their education, and many teachers participate in professional development over the summer months.

With so much going on, our staff remains determined to finish the year with a focus on learning. There is still a great deal of teaching and learning to be completed this month!

Thanks to our wonderful parents for their continued support of the academic and extra-curricular endeavors of our students. Many of you find time to volunteer in classrooms, serve lunch, coach athletic teams, work at the greeter's table, and anything else we ask for. Please know that we appreciate your time and talents. Each and every one of you make this school the Christ-centered community that this is. Bless you, bless you.

Please keep Ms. Katie Schiltz and Mrs. Angie Dante in your prayers as they leave our school to go down new paths in their lives and educational careers. We have all been blessed by their presence in our school. Well done, thank you, and may your lives continue to be filled with peace and happiness!

Finally, please pray for our interview team as we will be selecting new teachers for the available third and fourth grade positions on May 1st. May the Holy Spirit guide us with wisdom and understanding as the new selections are made.

Peace and best wishes for a happy Spring!

Roberta Harvey

Roberta Harvey

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**DUE TO A SNOWY WINTER,
WE ARE REQUIRED TO HOLD
ONE MAKE-UP DAY OF
SCHOOL.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE
WILL BE CLASS ON**

FRIDAY, MAY 16TH

**FROM THE POLK COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT:**

Every Wednesday starting in May, Polk County Health will be offering Back to School Physicals for \$20. This includes immunizations review and administration for those that qualify for the VFC program (that is...no insurance, underinsured, Medicaid enrolled, Native American/Native Alaskan), dental screening, dental varnish application and lead screening.



Don't miss our amazing students in action!

**Tuesday, May 6
Jazz Band Concert, 7:00 pm, gym**

**Tuesday, May 13
7th and 8th grade Musical, 7:00 pm, gym**

**Tuesday, May 20
5th through 8th grade Spring Band Concert,
7:00 pm, gym**

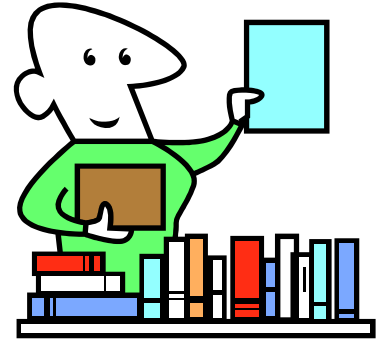
**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EIGHTH GRADERS ON THEIR
GRADUATION FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL!**

*The future lies before you like a field of driven snow,
Be careful how you tread it, for every step will show.*

—Author Unknown

**THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR SFA GRADUATES WILL BE
HELD THURSDAY, MAY 29 AT 7:00 PM**

Book Nook by Mrs. Mary Head



It doesn't seem possible that the end of the 2007 – 2008 is nearing. As the school year draws to a close, the media center prepares for the yearly inventory. It is a major undertaking and would not be possible without the help of numerous dedicated volunteers.

Important dates to remember are:

May 16 2008 - the last day to check out books from SFA Library

May 19, 2008 - all library books are due back to the media center

In order to prepare the library, inventory the materials, and cover the shelves, it is imperative that all library materials be returned by May 19. Please be aware and plan for this date. **Students who have unfinished genre logs on May 19th will not be able to complete the logs with books from the St. Francis Library.**

With May 19th approaching, it is time to launch an all-out search for library materials. Keep in mind, it is far better for the library when missing books are found and returned rather than paid for. The time and cost spent ordering, shipping, and processing the replacement book along with the unavailability of the book during that time is a hardship on everyone. Please search thoroughly before paying for the item. Replacement costs for the ones that are on the "forever lost" status are \$20 for hardcover books and \$8 for paper.

Thank you to the many library volunteers who have given so generously of their time and talent. Their efforts keep the library operating smoothly and efficiently.

Have a wonderful summer.

Summer Scrip Sales

Stock up for summer! Scrip will not be sold after weekend masses this summer. The last weekend for sales will be May 17/18. The last Monday morning to place orders through school will be May 19th.



The Lunch Line

by Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin and Mrs. Barb Wisnieski



Happy Spring!! It is apparent by the height of the kids in the lunch line that the end of the year is on it's way...it is always fun to see the 1st graders start to look like 2nd graders, 2nd graders like 3rd, etc. at this time of the school year. Like our students, we are looking forward to all of the fun things May brings... celebrating 1st Communion with our 2nd grade friends (Cross Cookie Monday); 8th grade picnic barbeque (May 23rd); Kindergarten Lunch (May 8th); sack lunches (hopefully eaten outside in the warm sunshine!!); and the winding down of yet another school year.

Next year, we will be growing our program once again as we add kindergarteners to our lunch count. We will also be adding an additional lunch period to accommodate more students to feed, which will also hopefully cut down on congestion in the lunch room, and allow students a few more minutes to eat.

Please remember to pay your lunch accounts in full by the end of the school year. Parents of 8th graders: if you have other children at SFA, 8th grade lunch account balances are rolled over to siblings. If your 8th grader has no remaining siblings here at SFA, a refund will be issued for all accounts. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at school.

Thank-you for the continued support of parents, and for all of our wonderful volunteers!! We appreciate all that you do and the time you donate to our program.

Have a safe and wonderful summer!!

The SFA School Lunch Staff





Middle School Music by Sr. Vikki

Wow! I can't believe it's May and this is our final newsletter. This has to have been the fastest year in my history of teaching, and what an enjoyable year it has been!

April had many musical highlights. Our **Middle School Show Choir** attended a workshop at DCHS led by Jody White and the Dimension Show Choir. We participated with students from the other Des Moines Catholic schools. It was a great day of music, fun, and performance. The day ended with an evening performance enjoyed by all in attendance. You will hear good things from this group in the future. In fact, this performing group will be our "warm up" act for the 7th & 8th Grade concert in May.

April 24th found the sixth grade students back to Dowling for a performance of the musical **STATE FAIR**. This fit in well with our unit on American Music since the Musical had its beginnings in America. Students will write a short critique on the performances. The students have been singing and researching music brought to America by the many people who have immigrated here from all parts of the world. With each new arrival came new sounds, rhythms, dance, and melodies. The music of American is infused with so many diverse styles, a true "tapestry of sound." Students have researched particular musical influences and shared them with the class. Our combined efforts can be seen on our AMERICAN TAPESTRY bulletin board!

May 13th brings our 7th and 8th Grade students to the stage! **BITS OF BROADWAY** will be performed on stage May 13th at 7:00 p.m. Come and hear "bits" of songs from some of your favorite musicals. We begin with songs from *Disney on Broadway* followed by a revue which includes songs from *Les Miserable*, *Annie*, *Big River*, *Grease* and many more. We hope you will join us as we bring our year to a "Musical" end!

It has truly been a joy to work with your children. They are so talented and so eager to share their talents in hopes you will enjoy and applaud their efforts. Thank you for your many affirmations of the students and our programs. Have a great summer!



Reading Recovery / Reading Support

By Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Read Together This Summer to Curb Summer Reading Loss

Summer reading loss is a reality, but parents can take many steps to reduce any losses by making sure their children continue to read during the summer. While none of the following ideas are "new", it's good to keep them in mind as summer approaches:

- Look for reading materials that relate to your child's interests such as sports, animals or nature.
- Use your daily routines to provide reading opportunities. Using a phone book, looking for information on the World Wide Web, cooking or reading a brochure or article about a family vacation destination are some of the ways to incorporate reading into your summer days.
- Create a positive climate for reading in your home. Let your children see you use reading to extend your own interests or to help you obtain information. Let them see family members reading and then talking together to discuss what was read. Don't send the message to your child that reading is a chore and something that must be finished before moving on to a more active or fun activity.
- Have books and other reading materials available during transition times. Children can read on the way to a destination, while waiting for an appointment or lesson or even when they've arrived at a destination, such as the park or the beach.
- Make use of the public library and all of its resources. Have your children participate in the public library's summer reading program. Ask the librarian and/or media specialist to offer suggestions that match your child's interests and reading level.
- A reminder about reading level: Books that are slightly below a child's reading level and books that are "favorites" (ones they never tire of) are still considered valuable reading material because they help developing readers to build confidence and fluency.

Once you've made your book selections, here are some activities to try before, during, and after reading together with your child:

Before reading the story....

Have your child show you the front and the back of the book.

Talk about the illustrations. Find out why your child selected the book. Ask what he or she thinks the book is about.

Preview the story. Observe all the pictures and have your child "Tell a Picture" as they describe them and make predictions based on the illustrations.

For nonfiction books, have your child think about the topic, look through the pictures and then brainstorm words that might appear in the book.

Read Together This Summer to Curb Summer Reading Loss, continued

During the story...

Ask your child to point out words he or she knows in the story. "You know the word _____. Find it on this page."

Ask your child if what you have read makes sense. "Does that look like the word I am saying?"

See if your child can show you capital letters.

Ask if your child knows what periods, question marks and exclamation points mean.

Tell your child to predict what will happen next. Ask them what they already know that might help them make their prediction.

After the story...

Find out what your child thought about the story. Which character was his or her favorite? Did he or she like the ending? If your child could talk to the author, what would he or she ask the author about the story?

Did your child's prediction match the actual story?

Go back through the story and see if your child can point to keywords used in the story.

Ask your child if he or she learned any new words.

Have your child point to a certain letter or the sound it makes.

Ask your child to retell the story or just part of the story. Have them find the sentences in the story. Then have them retell the sentences using their own words.

Have your child get a sense of the story setting. Have him or her picture the setting in his or her mind. Picture what the setting would look like, how it would smell, what sounds could be heard and what they might taste and eat if they were really there.

Choose one of the important characters and use words to describe him or her. Return to the book to find examples that explain why those describing words were chosen.

(Before, during and after reading tips were adapted from the Paired-Reading Tip Sheet in the article "Invitations to Families in an Early Literacy Support Program" by Adria Waldbart, Barbara Meyers and Joel Meyers. The article appeared in the May 2006 issue of The Reading Teacher.)

I hope you find many opportunities to share reading with your children this summer. Wishing you an enjoyable, book-filled summer!

Happy Reading & Happy Writing

ENRICHMENT by Mrs. Chris Joslin



We have been blessed at St. Francis with many students participating in exciting programs. The two middle school Odyssey of the Mind teams progressed on to National Competition thanks to their wonderful coordinator, Mrs. Nelson.

Four 8th grade students qualified for State Finals for National History Day. Kasie N will present her documentary on "Maid of Orleans", an analysis of the life of Jehanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc). Monica M, Kristina M, and Megan B will present their dramatization of the *Tinker vs the U.S. Supreme Court*. Other students also competed and did well on their first time out. They are 7th graders Caitlin T and Andrea B; and 6th graders Tom B, Mitch K, Katherine W, Cassidy W, and Kiley W. Some were so encouraged by the experience that they are already brainstorming ideas for next year's competition.

Keaton B represented SFA at the State Geography Bee at Drake University. He finished in second place out of 99 students. Congratulations, Keaton!!

The middle school Future Architect Group went on a field trip to Iowa State University. Thanks to Mr. DeAngelo, who set up the trip, we were able to tour the Jacobson Athletic Center by the architect who designed it! Cal Lewis then took us to the College of Design where he is the Dean. It was very special tour of both places. We also looked at the neoclassical architecture of Beardshear Hall and how old and new are brought together at Parks Library. At the library we were able to see murals by Grant Wood that were part of a WPA project in the 1930's.

Middle school students have begun preparing for the DCHS speech contest. We have about 30 students willing to express themselves in front of a group of judges. They will compete at DCHS on May 10th.

Fifth graders are working on a variety of projects including the annual CANstruction building, a reader's theatre, and book reviews.

Fourth Graders are solving Mystery Sites clues and we have located general regions but are looking forward to more specific clues.

Third Graders finished their rainforest projects with a lovely diorama and a wonderful power point.

All students at SFA were invited to submit poems for the first ever poetry contest that is being held in conjunction with Earth Day and our Artists-In-Residence week.



Eighth Grade Confirmation Dance

Saturday, May 17

7:00—9:30 pm

St. Theresa's School

\$6 Admission

First Eucharist for Second Grade

*Saturday, May 3
2:00 pm for L-Z*

and

*Sunday, May 4
2:00 pm for A-K*

Please pray for our students!



Transportation Reimbursement Reminder!



Deadline for second semester reimbursement forms is May 1, 2008. You will find reimbursement information and forms on the 'Parents' page of our website. You must submit a form to your local school district's transportation office in order to receive your reimbursement. Mileage requirements may apply. As always, call the school office if you have any questions, 457-7167.