



SUN TIMES

NEWS FROM SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL
WEST DES MOINES, IOWA
VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2

PRINCIPAL, ROBERTA HARVEY

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, MISTY HADE

Dear Saint Francis Families,

What an amazing time of year this is! Often during this time I need to pause and remember my journey through this past year. I am still amazed at how fast time goes by and am constantly reminded to stop and take time to enjoy the little things that may go unnoticed. As December comes to a close, I hope that you do the same.



This Advent season was filled with many wonderful memories. Our second graders received their first reconciliation, third through eighth graders participated in reconciliation, the staff and students attended four prayer services for our continued journey to the birth of our Lord, and sixth graders planned a wonderful liturgy for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Along with these faith filled experiences, we had our third through fifth grade choir perform at "No Room at the Inn", a second and third grade Music concert, a Winter band concert, and our Middle School band and choir performed at Merle Hay Mall. Lastly, we were able to collect mittens, hats, and socks for St. Joseph's Emergency Shelter, St. Mary's Family Shelter and others. We also collected money for Heifer International. Looking ahead, January seems just as busy.



One of our goals this year was to begin the process of developing our Positive Behavior Support system. We have a team of teachers that have been receiving training on this system and how it fits in with our behavior plan currently in place. During the

remainder of this year, the team will be developing lesson plans, reward systems, and common vocabulary for all staff members to use. Here is a look at what PBS is and what it is not:

What PBS is:

A set of strategies and systems to increase the capacity of schools to:

- Reduce school disruption
- Educate all students including those with problem behaviors
- Clearly defined outcomes
- Research-validated practices
- Supportive administrative systems
- Use of information for problem solving.

What PBS is not:

- A specific practice or curriculum...general approach to preventing problem behavior
- Limited to any particular group of students...it's for ALL students
- New...it's based on a long history of behavioral practices and effective instructional design and strategies.

During our work to this point we have developed a Vision statement for PBS which states: Saint Francis of Assisi School will foster the development of a faithful and safe school where learning is the primary focus and all the members of the community are respectful, responsible, and are valued in order to experience success each day. As a community of learners, we felt this statement got to the core of what we value at our school.

Once again, I want to thank you for allowing me to be a part of this wonderful, faith filled community. Please have a safe, relaxing, and merry Christmas with your loved ones. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Peace~

Misty Hade

Assistant Principal



Reading Recovery / Reading Support

By Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Taking Words Apart

Taking words apart while reading involves any word work done from continuous text in reading or writing. Proficient readers are able to take words apart, on the run, while reading. Using what they know about how words work, readers can make analogies, connecting the unknown to what they already know (stop + play = stay). If sounding out is used, it is better to sound out with chunks that work together. It is much more efficient to work with word patterns or rime levels than at the individual letter level.

In a study of proficient second grade readers, Elizabeth L. Kaye learned a great deal about the ways these second graders worked on new or unusual words. The following four key features were revealed:

Variety – Skillful 2nd graders used as many as 63 different ways to take words apart by reading.

Efficient Units – They used large, efficient units (chunks) when taking words apart.

Independence – These readers always attempted the complex words they encountered.

Left-to-Right Analysis – Every time the competent readers broke words apart, they worked left to right.

They always started on the left and worked sequentially across the word.

Kaye discovered the following about proficient readers:

Proficient readers **DO** demonstrate the following actions:

Attempt to read the words

Work through the word from left to right

Use many different kinds of word parts on the run

*Multi-syllable units (inter-ested; interested)

*Syllables (voy-age; voyage)

*Root words (long-; longer)

*Compound word halves (news-paper; newspaper)

*Onset-rime (fl-ip; flip)

Proficient readers **DO NOT** demonstrate the following actions:

Sound out words letter by letter

Appeal for help before trying to make an attempt

Stop at the new word and fail to make an attempt

Skip the difficult word and continue to read on to the end of the sentence



Using what one knows well is an efficient way to problem solve. Questioning and prompting can help readers look for known features. We can ask the following questions to help them use what they know to get to something new:

What do you know about that word?

What other words do you know that could help you?

Did you look all the way through the word?

Do you know another word that starts like that one?

Do you know a word that looks like that?

What chunks do you see in that word?

What can you see that might help?

Do you know a word that has that word pattern and might rhyme with this one?

Do you know a word that sounds like that? (*Adapted from the article, Taking Words "A-part, Ap-art,*

Apar-t" While Reading by Elizabeth L. Kaye which appeared in The Journal of Reading Recovery, Fall 2008 pages 5-15)

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the cash gift for teachers this past Christmas. Your generosity is appreciated! I will use my gift to purchase additional Reading Recovery resources.

Happy Reading, Happy Writing & Happy New Year



Musical Notes by Mrs. Lee Randall

Congratulations to the second and third grade classes who did a great job at their concert on December 9. The third, fourth, and fifth grade choir also had a wonderful performance at the *No Room at the Inn* Catholic Charities event on December 7.

Any third, fourth, or fifth grade students who still wish to join the choir are welcome! Rehearsals will resume on January 7th at 7:45 am, and continue to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:45 am. If your student would like to participate but cannot get here by 7:45 am, please let me know. We can try to work around it.

Mrs. Gaul's and Mrs. Pamperin's classes led Mass in December. The students helped us all prepare our hearts for Jesus during this Advent season. Upcoming masses in January will be led by Mrs. Thornton's and Mrs. Doyle's classes.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season!

The St. Francis Yearbook Committee is seeking people to help with this year's Yearbook. The committee is looking for anyone who can contribute in the following areas:

**Sales
Data Entry & Proofing
Photography**



**For more information, please contact
Lori Grote: 225-2257 ltgart@mchsi.com
Linda Laughrun: 222-6950
laughrun@mchsi.com**

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
WEEK
JANUARY 25
THROUGH 30**

SFA OPEN HOUSE
JANUARY 25
12:30—2:30 PM



EARLY DISMISSAL
JANUARY 28
11:30—NO LUNCH

ALL-SCHOOL
LITURGY
JANUARY 30
8:45 AM





ENRICHMENT

by Mrs. Chris Joslin

Kindergarten and Second Grade: These groups have begun their unit on winter holiday customs. We will explore Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and European Christmas customs. I will be working within the Kindergarten classes during centers, and rotate through all the students in small groups. I will continue to work with second graders in their curriculum area.

First Grade: I had the opportunity to show first graders the world from space. This was a wonderful tie-in with their unit on land forms. "Google Earth" was a great program to help students visualize our world.

Fourth Grade: We are continuing our unit on Japan in fourth grade. On Monday, December 15 we have the privilege of listening to guest speaker, Mr. Steve McLuen, as he shares his experiences from Japan, especially climbing Mt. Fuji. Additionally, the students have been making cranes in response to learning about the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima.

Seventh Grade: *Ohaiyo gozaimasu!* This is the proper student greeting for when a teacher enters the room—the seventh graders have been learning about this and should be able to tell you about it! We started with a quick look at Uganda by comparing SFA with a Catholic boys' school there. We decided to make recycled Christmas cards to share with the Ugandan school that were sent right after Thanksgiving. We then compared Uganda to Japan and will continue with an in-depth look at Japan, including its literature.

8th Grade: A small group of students were invited to "Tea with Agatha". This is a group of dedicated readers of Agatha Christie mysteries. This reading group may continue in the future.



Geography Bee: The final bee to determine the SFA representative was held on Monday, December 15. The winning participant will now take a written test. If they score in the top 100 test scores in Iowa, he will be invited to the state bee in April.

The ten finalists that competed on December 15th were: Keaton B. (8), Lincoln B. (8), Jacob B. (4), Paul G. (8), Zach G. (6), Thomas K. (6), Parker M. (6), Alex P. (4) and Lucas R. (5). It is a joy to see so many young people who know their way around the world!

Mock Trial: This year we had many honors for outstanding witnesses and attorneys at the Regional, Regional Semi-finals, and State Competitions. Allie S. (7) was honored as Outstanding Witness at State! Congratulations, Allie!



Lunch Bites

By Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin
and Mrs. Linda Larson



We would first like to thank all of you for the wonderful gifts you gave us for Christmas. Thank you for thinking of us!

We are settling into the winter season. It's hard to believe it is January. With the arrival of the New Year, we will be auditing the accounts on auto-debit. If your account has been falling in to the negative we will ask you to increase the amount you are submitting for auto-debit. If you have a substantial positive balance you may decrease the amount you are submitting, if you so choose. We will also be making requests for families who have fallen into the negative twice to submit an auto-debit form for lunch payment.

This month we are going to spotlight whole grains. In recent months we have seen quite a bit of information on whole grains versus refined grains. Some examples of whole grains are whole wheat flour, oatmeal, and brown rice. Examples of refined grains are white flour, white bread, and white rice. Most refined grains are enriched with certain B vitamins and iron after processing; fiber **is not** added back to enriched grains. Among many health benefits, a high-fiber diet tends to make a person feel full, and leaves them feeling full for a greater amount of time. A healthy diet should consist of six to eleven servings from the grain food group. The USDA recommends we consume half our grains as whole grains (3 or more ounce-equivalents per day).

To make sure you are selecting a whole-grain product, make sure the word "whole" is listed on the package and in the ingredient list. Double check labels to guarantee whole grains appear among the first items listed to receive the maximum benefit. Try to choose items with at least 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving.



It is getting much easier to find products that contain whole grains. New "white" whole wheat bread looks and tastes like white bread but has the same nutritional benefits as regular whole wheat bread. Not sure yet if you can sneak whole grains in to your kids' diets? **Try this:** Add some whole grain pancake mix to your regular pancake mix the next time you make homemade pancakes! **Try this:** Purchase a whole grain pizza crust and have homemade pizza one night for dinner! **Try this:** Mix your pasta, half whole grain or "plus" pasta with regular...each time you make pasta, adding more whole grain and less regular! Other great snacks include popcorn, whole wheat crackers with peanut butter, and low-fat cheese quesadillas with whole grain tortillas.

We are making every effort to use more whole grains in the lunch room, too! Our French toast sticks are breaded with whole grain breading. Even our ever-popular corn dogs have whole grain breading! We are fortunate to be able to order chicken nuggets and chicken tenders with whole grain breading too. We also use the ½ and ½ pasta trick when making dishes with noodles!



Middle School Music

by Sr. Vikki Slickers

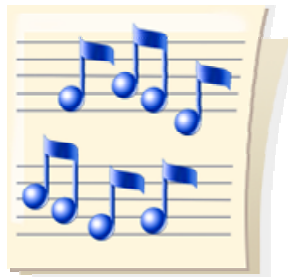
HAPPY NEW YEAR! We're off and running. The next two grading periods will be a lot of fun in Middle School.

February 10th, our sixth grade students will present *WE HAZ JAZZ*. It's a fun mini-musical that introduces us to many of the great musicians of the Jazz Era. You'll love it! Plan on joining us!

Seventh grade students will begin their unit on Pop Music in America. We can trace our whole history as a nation throughout popular music of each time period. It's a fun unit ending with today's pop styles.

Eighth grade students will begin their study of Broadway. There's nothing like a Broadway melody to get you humming and singing along, is there?

Our year culminates with a performance by our seventh and eighth graders. Mark your calendars for May 7th at 7:00 for our Spring Concert. I hope you can attend.

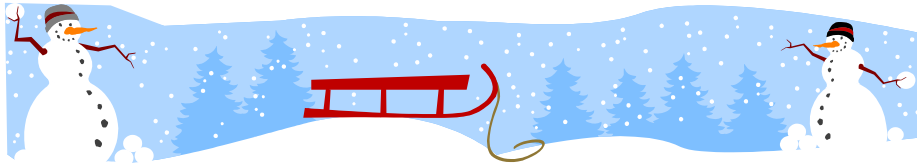


KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION and REGISTRATION

Thursday, January 15
7:00 pm
Parish Hall
Parents only, please



Don't forget:
Wear your
SFA or DCMS
Spiritwear on
Wednesday,
January 14.



BOOK NOOK

BY MRS. MARY HEAD



The windy cold days and the freezing cold nights make it a perfect time to snuggle up with a blanket, your child, and a good book!

Some great winter picture books are:

Ice Palace by Deborah Blumenthal

The Three Snow Bears by Jan Brett

Snow is My Favorite and My Best by Lauren Child

Snowballs by Lois Ehlert

Snowie Rolie by William Joyce

Snowflake Bentley by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

Thomas' Snowsuit by Robert Munsch

Winter Lights: a season in poems & quilts by Anna Grossnickle Hines

Pearl's New Skates by Holly Keller

The Terrible Storm by Carol Otis Hurst

The Schoolchildren's Blizzard by Marty Rhodes Figley



Some winter chapter books for the middle school reader are:

Tracks in the Snow by Lucy Jane Bledsoe

Snow Treasure by Marie McSwigan

Winter Room by Gary Paulsen

The Flying Flea, Callie and Me by Bill Wallace

I wish a sincere thank you to all the families who made contributions to the monetary Christmas gift for teachers and staff in December. Your kindness, generosity and support are treasured.



Guidance Corner

by Mrs. Julie Heckle

During the last couple of months we have had some exciting school-wide activities. On November 21st we joined with school across the world by participating in the second annual "International STAND UP to Bullying Day". Students wore pink shirts to show that they have the courage to stand up for themselves and others who might be dealing with a bullying situation. The students also signed a "STAND UP to Bullying" pledge. On November 25th we participated in the national "Mix It Up at Lunch Day", sponsored by "Teaching Tolerance", a professional teaching publication that promotes the acceptance of differences. We mixed up the students at each grade level to give them a chance to sit with someone different at lunch and expand their friendships. The students had a great time.

Students in eighth grade are participating in an "Adolescent Life Skills" program presented by staff from the Employee and Family Resource Program. Presenters will be coming in weekly during the next eight weeks to present on a variety of topics. The first two sessions focused on communication and decision making. The students have been engaged in the group activities and active participants in the discussions.

Guidance Class

Kindergarten:

- o Identified classroom and lunchroom manners that help make school a respectful place.
- o Learned about teasing and bullying and how to stand up for ourselves and others.
- o Identified qualities of a good friend.

1st-3rd Grade:

- o Identified bullying behaviors and realized that sometimes we are the ones being the bully.
- o Learned the difference between a normal conflict and bullying.
- o Learned and practiced strategies for dealing with teasing and bullying.
- o Identified roles in bullying situations (bully, target, victim).
- o Explained how bystanders can help others who are being bullied.

4th Grade:

- o Began the "Don't Laugh at Me" program.
- o Described the effects "put downs" have on a person's self-esteem.
- o Identified negative and positive behaviors in the classroom
- o Selected three negative behaviors to work on eliminating from the classroom environment.
- o Selected three positive behaviors to keep going and increase in the classroom.
- o Each student selected one behavior he/she wanted to stop doing.

5th Grade:

- o Role played ways to say no to dangerous situations and still keep your friends.
- o Explored types of bullying and reflected on how we sometimes engage in bully behaviors.
- o Explored the affects of acceptance and rejection
- o Described the qualities of a good friend.
- o Distinguished between close friendships and exclusive relationships.

8th Grade:

- o Defined habit and identified habits they would like to change and habits they want to keep.
- o Established personal goals and wrote an action plan to achieve this goal.
- o EFR speaker presented lessons dealing with communication and decision making.