



SUN TIMES

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

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, MISTY HADE

Dear St. Francis Families,

As I sit here writing this letter, I think about where we started many months ago and am amazed that we are already to



the point of ending this school year. Spring has finally sprung, the days are staying lighter longer, and learning is still our main focus.

With the end of the year comes many exciting events for our students including eighth graders being confirmed, second graders celebrating the Sacrament of First Communion, our new kindergarteners coming for a visit, seventh and eighth graders entertaining us with their music concert, band students playing a wonderful spring concert, track and field day, and our eighth graders graduating. All of these events make the end of the year special for our St. Francis community.

This journey together has not come without some challenges. At the end of March, parents of middle school students were given a link to take a survey on the standards-based progress report we have piloted this year. Within the next few weeks I will be sending you a link that will allow you to view the results of the survey. Please know that the progress report committee has gone over the data and will be making recommendations on how to improve the system going forward. Thank you for taking the time to attend the information sessions held in February and for participating in the survey. The data and feedback you have given are very valuable to the process.

I would like to say good-bye and thank you to

the staff that are moving on to new paths in their lives. Mrs. McManus, Ms. Sprung, Mrs. Nelson, and Mrs. Scott have shown a great deal of dedication, hard work, and faith in the teaching of our students. We wish them the best and want them to know they will always be a part of our St. Francis family.

I would like to send a special thanks to Mrs. Roberta Harvey. Roberta has been a mentor, colleague, and friend to me for the past two years. I have learned so much from her by working alongside her, and the experiences have helped me develop my leadership skills. I am so fortunate that she took a chance and gave me the opportunity to come to this amazing place. I truly believe that I was meant to come to St. Francis, to be a learner, and now to be a leader, and this would not have been possible without Mrs. Harvey. Thank you for being an important piece of my puzzle!

Thank you for all the warm wishes of congratulations on becoming Principal of St. Francis. I am looking forward to many wonderful years with all of you.

Please continue to remind your children that even though the weather is getting nicer and spring sports are in full bloom, there is a lot of learning to be completed. May the spirit of the Lord be with you throughout the days ahead.

Peace to you all,

Misty Hade



Reading Recovery / Reading Support

By Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Parents often ask how they can help their child be a successful reader and writer. Many organizations, like these, offer websites with ideas for parents to help their child with reading:

Reading Is Fundamental: The section for parents on this site includes seasonal ideas for summer, a reading calendar with eight weeks of literacy activities, and a "Tips and Tricks" section which includes suggestions parents can use to encourage good reading habits. Also included on this site are monthly activity calendars. <http://www.rif.org>

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL Publications Page): On this site there is a parent guide and article called Put Reading First. The subtitle is Helping Your Child Learn to Read – A Parent Guide – Preschool Through Grade 3. http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first2.html

News For Parents: This organization has a number of helpful articles. If you find the education section and then go to the category "What the Experts Say," you'll find an article by Marilyn Lopes titled "Eight Ways Parents Can Promote Reading at Home." <http://www.newsforparents.org>

Parents' Choice Children's Media & Toy Reviews: Included in this site are many guides for parents. In the section, "Reading, Learning & Play," parents will find ideas for summer fun, seasonal celebrations and holidays, and many more ideas. The "Play" section includes a summer fun guide. In this same section, an article by Peggy Healy Stearns may be of interest to you and your family. It's called "Inspiring Gratitude: Cool Stationery for Thank You Notes." In the "Learning" section is an article called "What's Write for the Family." <http://www.parents-choice.org>

Once you visit these sites, you'll find additional web resources and links for further information. I hope the websites from these organizations provide you with many ideas and lots of useful information to help your children maintain the many reading and writing strategies they have learned and practiced this year!

Have a great summer!

Happy Reading & Happy Writing

Musical Notes by Mrs. Lee Randall



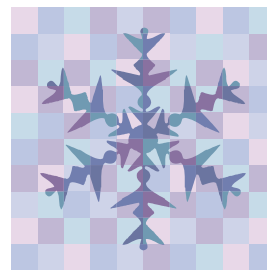
Kindergarten is preparing for informances to be held May 6th in the Parish Hall. The infornance times are as follows:

Crandell's class at 1:45
Townsend's class at 2:15
Howard's class at 2:45

Students will come to school in dress code for that day and perform during their normal class time. We hope to see you there!

**There will be NO
class for
Kindergarten
students ONLY on
Thursday, May 7
due to
Kindergarten Visit
Day
for next year's
group.**

*Classes will be held
Monday, May 11.*



*This is a scheduled
make-up day from a snow
day this winter.*

Mission Jeans Day * Thursday, May 14



Lunch Bites

By Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin
and Mrs. Linda Larson



We are winding down yet another successful year in the Lunch Room! We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who have volunteered this past year, either as a server or a helper, as we cannot have a successful program without our volunteers! So, **THANK YOU.**

If you are currently participating in Auto-Debit, we will be evaluating account balances during the month of May. Any positive balances can be carried over to next year or we can issue a refund check. We will only issue refund checks for balances over **\$20.00.**

Friday, May 22 we will be having an end of the year picnic for the 8th graders. We will be grilling hot dogs and burgers. Please pray for nice weather for our picnic. That same day, we will be having a selection of sandwiches served. Check the menu in the column to the right for options for that day. If you have any questions, feel free to call us or shoot us an e-mail. Thursday, May 28 will be Track and Field Day for the school. As it indicates on the menu, a sack lunch will be provided for each child who takes hot lunch that day. Please pray for a nice day then, too!

Summer is coming. Make sure you eat right and get plenty of exercise. Fruits are at their peak in the summer months. **Try this: Have each person in your family try a new fruit they have never tried before.** To stay active, take some time to go on a family bike ride or family walk after dinner.

Here's a fun idea! Why not plant a "Pizza Garden" this spring. Your garden could include a tomato plant for sauce, green peppers, onions, basil, or many other choices to make a great homemade veggie pizza or the beginnings of your favorite pizza.

Thank you all for your support of the Hot Lunch Program! If you ever have any menu ideas or suggestions, please let us know.

Last but not least, we would like to take a minute to thank our staff who works so hard every day to put out the best lunches for your children. Those people are Sue Ritz, Jan Reed, Kelli Recker, Tracy Knapp, Cheryl Ried, Robert Garrett, and Susan Cahill.

Have a great summer and we will see you in August!



ENRICHMENT

by Mrs. Chris Joslin

It is hard to believe that we are winding down another school year, and graduating another class of incredible students who will be leaving us and making their way to high school! I hope that their SFA years prepared them well for this new experience.

8th grade: We are continuing our look at war through the cinema. We have viewed and discussed *Casablanca* and *Duck Soup*, a classic Marx Brother's movie, and will finish with a selection about the Cold War. We will look at the Peace Park at Hiroshima, Japan in early May. I hope that these students have learned that education is more than reading, remembering, and reporting back information and that analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are better goals for writing and other projects.

5th grade: We are spending the last month of our time together learning about Japan, its sacred spaces, and the Shinto religion. We have also spent some time completing our Construction project and in writing kanji.

Kindergarten: We began with poetry and continue now with work on Google Earth, learning about places around the world that are unique.

First Grade: We ended our unit on poetry by doing some acting with our poems to discover voice.

Third Grade: Our poetry unit culminated with a recording of each class as they read poems in two voices.

Second Grade: Our year will end with a focus on poetry and the world around them.

National History Day: We had eight students preparing projects this year. Andrea B. and Caitlin T. researched Pete Seeger and the Banjo That Changed History and will compete at the state tournament on May 4th.

Dowling Catholic High School speech tournament is now being held at Indianola Middle School during the construction period at DCHS. Seventeen middle school students will compete on May 9th in debate, duo, prose, and poetry & oratory. We wish them all great success!

In personal news: I hope you all have as good a summer as I am hoping to have. I will be traveling to Chile for one month as part of a Fulbright-Hayes project. There we will study the rapid urbanization of the country as well as the depopulation of rural areas. I am honored to have been chosen and even happier to have Ms. Anderson and Ms. Nennig joining me as well! It will be an exciting trip which will be made even better by sharing with these two middle school teachers.

Thank you for a great year at SFA!

Middle School Music

by Sr. Vikki Slickers



Spring has finally bloomed and so have our talents! We've had so many wonderful experiences filled with music from other cultures as well as our own American musical forms.

The last weeks of April brought with it the sound of African rhythms as our students became actively involved in some African drumming. What a fun experience thanks to Stacie Palmer and our Enrichment Committee!

Our sixth grade students added appropriate hymnody for their prayerful reenactment of the Stations of the Cross. Since then they have focused on the American Musical form, specifically THE MUSIC MAN by Meredith Wilson. Our students will go to DCHS for a live performance of the musical. I'll be anxious to read the 'reviews' written by our students when they return!

Seventh and eighth grade students are putting finishing touches on our musical review of the decades of Rock and Roll music. You won't want to miss the fun as tunes from the "oldies" are performed on May 7th at 7:00 P.M. My bet is you won't be able to just sit and listen. I'm sure you'll be singing along with us. Who knows, you may find yourself dancing in the isles! Rumor has it Elvis WILL be in the building as well!

It has been such a great year filled with surprises as new voices continue to take the mic. It's so great to see smiles come to our students faces as they try new things and risked trying out new talents. That's what it's all about!



Thank you all for a wonderful year and for your continued support of our music program. Your children are wonderful and we have so much fun making music!

Have a fantastic summer....and be safe!

BOOK NOOK

BY MRS. MARY HEAD



It doesn't seem possible that the end of the 2008 – 2009 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.

An important date to remember is May 15, 2009.

In order to prepare the library, inventory the materials, and cover the shelves, it is imperative that all library materials be returned by May 15. Please be aware and plan for this date. **Students who have unfinished genre logs on May 15th will not be able to complete the logs with books from the St. Francis Library.**

With May 15th 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.

Have a great summer!



We'll see you in August!



Dress Code Additions 2009-2010 School Year

**Capri Pants– khaki or navy– can be worn in
August, September, and May**

**White long sleeve shirts may be worn under
uniform shirts.**

**Fleece– Middle School students may
purchase a navy or grey fleece with the SFA
logo.**

Pants– students may wear pants with rivets