



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 Families-

Ah, beautiful, beautiful, fall... football, volleyball, and family week-ends with sunshine- filled days! They have also been filled with learning for all at St. Francis of Assisi school

We had a large gathering of educators at St. Francis in September for the Diocesan Professional Development Day. Small group presentations and activities were planned for teachers in grades 9-12 while the K-8 teachers worked hard to write descriptors for our proficiency rubrics. TAG (talented and gifted), technology, and guidance teachers met within their groups to discuss their curriculum and to share ideas for program enrichment. The sixth through eighth grade teachers of religion continued their work on standards and benchmarks. The last part of the day found K-8 teachers gathered in the parish hall for training on our new web-based progress report that will make its debut this fall. It was a busy, productive day and we were grateful to have this full day for educational focus.

Our faculty members are not the only ones who participated in ongoing professional development during this month. Diocesan administrators from Des Moines gathered in Omaha from September 24 through September 26 for an administrative retreat where we continued training on leadership and teacher support for differentiation in our schools, as well as Spiritual Leadership. Thanks to the following presenters: Jane Kinney, Sacred Heart Assistant Principal; Stephanie Wilson, Director of Student Services for the Diocese of Des Moines, and Fr. Tom Merkel, Superintendent of Omaha Prep. The hours spent learning and sharing this information is



valuable for us all.

Last January we began the student service club, *Serviam*, for our middle school students, including a kick-off service fair featuring over twenty non-profit organizations that rely heavily on volunteer support for the success of their worthy programs. We will again host a service fair for our students on Oct. 2, 2008 in our parish. We have extended an invitation to other area Catholic schools and look forward to seeing students from Assumption Granger, St. Theresa School, St. Joseph School, and Christ the King School in attendance. Our hats go off to Mary Bernabe for organizing this wonderful, educational component for our students. Her service to us is unwavering and steadfast!

I cannot close this segment without a quick glimpse into our Tuesday and Thursday nights when St. Francis of Assisi School hosts Special Olympics Volleyball sponsored by Link Associates. Middle school student volunteers help us set up and put away equipment, work one-on-one with the athletes, and serve as support players in practice games. Actually it's hard to know who is having more fun, the volleyball athletes or our students because the smiles are broad and long throughout the entire night. It has been most gratifying for adults to observe the interaction of all gathered on these nights. Truly we are all being Christ to one another.

May your fall be filled with more beautiful weather, faith, family, and friends.

Peace always-

Roberta Harvey



Musical Notes by Mrs. Lee Randall

Mrs. Randall needs an adult volunteer to accompany the K-5 concerts and "informances". If you are a pianist who has some time for rehearsals during the day and are willing to play for any or all of the grades, please let her know.

First graders are working on skills and songs that we can share for our "informances" coming up in November. Please refer to the website or last month's newsletter for dates and times.

Third graders will begin playing their recorders soon! I am excited for them to practice the recorder and become better musicians at the year progresses. We will use the recorders for at least one music class each week. The instruments will be stored in the music room. If your child brings their recorder home to practice, please be certain that it is returned for our classes on Monday and Wednesday.

Two sections of fifth grade will be preparing for their Masses on October 3rd and 10th. We are integrating our Liturgy music with our regular classroom materials and look forward to seeing you at Mass. Please join us if you can!



Middle School Music by Sr. Vikki Slickers

September has literally flown by. Fall is settling us down and we're becoming more focused and concentrated on each new endeavor.

Our MS students have done a wonderful job this past month leading us in the various Eucharistic ministries. They have been responsible for many of the school Masses and have done it with style and grace. I'm especially grateful to the Sixth Grade and MS Chorus for their prayerful singing when Bishop Pates was here to share liturgy with us. Sometimes I sit back in awe at what our students do. They are truly "spirit - led."

In the classroom: Sixth grade has been learning the "in's and outs" of rhythm, beat and meter. Next we'll combine it with different pitches and we'll be composing some melodies!

Seventh grade students are learning the role of music in Native American culture. This group of people share music in every aspect of their life and have a spirituality very similar to St. Francis when it comes to appreciating everything as "gift" from our loving Creator. Students will be writing a chant, making an appropriate instrument and performing their chants in class. You'll find copies of their chants in our hallway soon.

Eighth grade students have chosen pop songs and we have been discussing the many messages within each song. Now we are going below the surface and examining how the different musical elements enhance or distract from the message. Once we have looked at music in our own time we will look back through other time periods to uncover the "music of the time, place and people."

Last, but certainly not least, our MS Chorus will begin this month. I'm looking forward to getting started and hopefully adding some new voices to our group!



ENRICHMENT

by Mrs. Chris Joslin

St. Francis School will be sending five teams to the Junior High Mock Trial competition. These teams represent the hard work of Middle School students who have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to learn about a specific case and the equally hard work and dedication of parent volunteers. Without such volunteers this program would not be available to our students.

Sixth Grade whole class enrichment: We have just finished a three-week look at India and are now traveling to China.

First grade whole enrichment: We are learning about Korea, specifically information dealing with their Columban Father's Mission unit.

Third Grade whole class enrichment: We are exploring the origins of community through Google Earth and learning why communities begin where they do.

Fourth Grade whole class enrichment: We are working on volcanoes and Winn-Dixie.

In other news: Art Club is beginning soon. National History Day organizational meeting was held and we have many Middle Schoolers who are preparing for the competition.

Scrip Jeans Day

October 20



Purchase Scrip anytime between Sept. 29th and Oct. 13th to receive your Jeans Day Pass!

Middle School Dance

October 10, 2008

7:00-9:30 pm

Christ the King School

\$6 admission



Reading Recovery / Reading Support

By Mrs. Mary Anne Conway

Two unique features included in the Reading Recovery Program are 'Roaming Around the Known' and 'Behind the Glass'.

'Roaming Around the Known' means that the child and the teacher stay within tasks that are familiar for the child during the first few weeks of the child's Reading Recovery intervention. For example, levels of reading texts used would be those levels at which the child is currently successful with their knowledge and strategies.

During Roaming, all activities are to take place in a very positive and supportive environment. During the first weeks, nothing should seem too hard for the child.

While Roaming Around the Known, rapport between the teacher and the child develops, the child's confidence increases, and the learner becomes more fluent and flexible with what is already known.

Goals of Roaming Around the Known include:

- Making the passive child active
- Keeping the reading and writing tasks so within the known that the child's fluency in responding becomes more fluent
- Helping the child learn to use what he/she knows efficiently

Continued on next page

Reading Recovery, continued

During the ten Roaming sessions, records of the activities and behaviors are kept. Reading Recovery teachers keep journals and record evidence for what was not apparent during the assessments. Information in the journaling of activities and behaviors includes:

- Things the child does well
- Specific strategies the child tries
- Any new known items or knowledge that are demonstrated each day
- What the child initiated
- When the child hesitated
- New information that was learned about the child

'Behind the Glass' is another unique and critical part of Reading Recovery. During the school year, I attend Ongoing Professional Development sessions at the Reading Recovery Center in Johnston with other trained Reading Recovery teachers from Central Iowa.

These sessions include two "live" lessons taught by Reading Recovery teachers who teach their own students. The lessons take place behind a one-way glass. The group of Reading Recovery teachers watching the lesson discusses the ongoing decisions made by the teacher and observes the child's behavior. Whether I'm the one teaching "Behind the Glass" or the one observing the lesson being taught, this element of Reading Recovery causes me to reflect on my own teaching more than any other professional experience!

(Roaming Around the Known information adapted from Julie Douetil's presentation at the Reading Recovery Conference in Ohio and Stuart McNaughton's article, Looking at School Improvement Through a Reading Recovery Lens. Behind the Glass information adapted from Heartland's Reading Recovery Program by Thom Davis and Doris Roettger Svoboda)

Happy Reading & Happy Writing

Lunch Bites

By Mrs. Jeannine Laughlin
and Mrs. Linda Larson



This school year is off to an exciting start and we are so happy to see so many students and staff eating lunch with us this year!

Remember, parents, that you are most welcome to join us any day for lunch by calling in your request by 8:45 am. We would love to see you!

We have some new team members we would like to welcome to the kitchen this year. Cheryl Riedl is our Cafeteria Coordinator and is also a parent here at SFA. If you have any questions or changes for the Cafeteria volunteer calendar, please contact Cheryl. Susan Cahill is our new bookkeeper/inventory and cashier and also a mother of SFA students. Welcome Susan. We are also pleased to have Jan Reed here helping us cook, make salads, and serve. Jan's children are grown and she has 3 grandchildren. Jan's husband, Steven, is in the Deaconate Formation Program here at St. Francis. And, Linda Larson, who has been cooking for us for two years has joined the management team and job-shares with Jeannine Laughlin. Linda is responsible for the food planning and has added several new items! She has over 30 years of experience in school food service. Welcome everyone. We thank God we are so fortunate to have great people to work with each day.

National School Lunch Week is Oct. 13-17 this year, and we are planning to follow the menus and theme for the week, which this year is "VOTE for School Lunch", and centers around the idea of an election. There are 5 characters, each promoting a different menu idea, and at the end of the week each student will get to vote for their favorite character! Ballots will be sent to all classrooms for this voting, and the winner will be announced on Monday, Oct.20. Hopefully all students will get to try at least one of the meals so they can cast an informed ballot.

Our new computer program for lunch accounting is coming along, and we certainly appreciate people sending money to cover their child(ren)'s accounts in a timely manner!! Money needs to be deposited at the beginning of each month to cover meals, extra milk, and ala carte for that month. Look for new features like seeing your accounts on line and automatic e-mails to be added to our new system. As soon as this becomes available we will let you know!

We are in the process of initiating a new service for parents. You will be able to pay your lunch accounts through auto-deduct, similar to budget billing. On another note, the school board is in the process of initiating a policy that would require you to use the monthly automatic deduction if you fall behind (have a negative balance) for two months during any school year.

More new items are appearing on the menu this month, and we have tried to let you know what they are by putting an explanation in parenthesis. Hopefully your students will give them a try! We always enjoy hearing what the students and staff think about the new items!!

On Our Palettes

by Mr. Jason Southward and Ms. Sara Anderson



Art club will begin meeting in the month of October. Art club is for middle school students who wish to pursue artistic endeavors above and beyond what is taught in the classroom. We plan on meeting twice a month, on the first and third Monday of every month. If there is no school on a day we are to meet, we will meet the following Monday. There will be a theme for art club each trimester, with the first trimester's theme being "Digital Photography" (future themes to be announced). Students may stay all three trimesters, but also have the option to skip a trimester if that trimester's theme does not appeal to them, or other scheduling conflicts interfere with them attending all sessions. Sessions will build upon previous sessions, therefore it is important that students attend all sessions.

For digital photography, we ask that all students interested bring a digital camera. However, there are always some students interested who do not have access to a camera. Therefore, we are asking for digital camera donations for the art club. If you have recently upgraded your digital camera and your old one is collecting dust, please consider donating it to the art club.

"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

Parent-Teacher Conferences



Tuesday, October 21
4:30-7:30 pm

Thursday, October 23
11:00 am-7:00 pm

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



BOOK NOOK

BY MRS. MARY HEAD



Would you encourage your child's love of reading if you could? Of course, what's more — you can!

The Scholastic Book Fair comes to our school from October 20 - 23 to share exciting books and learning products with our young readers. Parents and teachers will find plenty of items to interest them too. We hope to have the fair set up by October 14th so classes can visit during their library time. Parents may shop during the school day but are especially welcome during parent/teacher conference times on Tuesday, October 21 from 4:30 – 7:30 pm and Thursday, October 23 from 11:00 to 7:00 pm.

When you visit the fair, look for the "Classroom Wish List" display to see how you can help build your child's classroom library.

The Book Fair helps us promote learning while raising money to continue to build our library collection. To get a sneak peek at some of the titles that will be at our Book Fair go to www.scholastic.com/bookfairs.

If you would like to help with setup or take down or you would be willing to work at the book fair during conferences please contact Kelly Fini.

Thank you for your help and support!

Gym Shorts

by Mr. Mike Hazel & Mrs. Mary Beth Scott



Happy October! The sports fan's greatest month is upon us, and the recent competition held in PE is coming to a close. Mrs. Scott's Run Across Iowa was held in September, and to date, the 5th grade has finished, with 4th grade closing in. Mrs. Weisenhorn's class took first place with 328 miles, while McManus's class edged out Mrs. King's class by one mile to take second place at 325 miles. As 4th grade continues down the stretch, Mrs. McLuen's class has a commanding lead, but all 3 classes should finish very soon.

In other related news, the annual fall mile run is scheduled for the first week of October, weather permitting. Be sure your kids are eating a healthy breakfast and getting enough sleep before PE days that week (as they should always, of course). Also coming up is Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart event for grades 1,3,5, and 7. We usually coordinate this event with our annual health fair in February, but did not want to burden you with the fundraising portion of the event so close to the Gala. Therefore, we have bumped it to the early fall, hoping this makes more sense.

It is time for great Iowa fall weather! Get out and enjoy it!



Guidance Corner

by Mrs. Julie Heckle

Hope you and your children are off to great to start to the school year. In this newsletter, I would like to share one of our community resources, update you on what your child has been learning in guidance class, and provide you with our plans for Red Ribbon Week.

Student Assistance Program:

- Provides counseling services free of charge to students and their families. All the schools in the Diocese provide this service to their families and employees.
 - In your work place, you may have heard it referred to as EFR, Employee and Family Resources, it is the same program.
 - SAP assistance focuses on problem assessment, short term counseling, and referral to appropriate resources.
- Calls are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (244-6090)

Guidance Class

- **Kindergarten:** Listening skills (Behaviors of a good listener)
- **1st Grade:** Manners (Classroom and lunchroom manners)
- **2nd Grade:** Friendship (Characteristics of a good friend, behaviors that hurt friendships)
- **3rd Grade:** Standardized test preparation (COGAT & ITBS)
- **4th Grade:** Study Skills (Desk organization and homework environment)
- **5th Grade:** Study Skills (Time management, learner responsibilities)
- **7th Grade:** Goal setting, study skills, dealing with pressures

Red Ribbon Week 2008

(Oct. 20-24)

"Our School Rocks to a Drug Free Beat!"

Monday, October 20, 2008 "Give Drugs the Slip"

Students may bring slippers to wear in school today
 Students receive ribbons to wear for the week
 Brief overview of the week will be given at the end of Rosary

Tuesday, October 21, 2008 "Wear Red Day"

DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) presentation
 1:00-2:00 3rd-5th grade
 2:00-3:00 Kdg-2nd grade

Middle School will have a DEA presentation on Friday, October 10 from 8:30-9:30.
 Students may wear a red shirt with uniform bottoms.

Wednesday, October 22, 2008 "Rock Star Hair Day"

Students may wear their hair in fun rock star fashions
 End of the day "Rock Out"

Other Activities

Music: Learn song "Rocking to a Drug Free Beat"

PE: "Dance to the Beat" in class this week

Art: Create drawings of your favorite rock stars