

School News

St. Mary's School

March 1, 2009

Early Dismissal

Classes will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, March 6th, for the monthly faculty meeting. Friday will also be a casual dress day for all students.

Spring Break!

Our spring break is scheduled for the week of March 9th through March 13th. Classes will resume on Monday, March 16th.

Great Winter Benefit

The Winter Benefit at the Pioneer Pavilion Saturday, February 21st, was again a great success. Thank you to all of the committee members who worked so hard to give us that great evening! Thanks to our sponsors, parents and parishioners for supporting the event.

Third Nine Weeks

The third nine week grading period will end on Friday, March 6th. Report cards should be available for parent pickup on Wednesday, March 18th. Please make arrangements to meet with your child's teacher to receive the report card that week.

P.T.C. Meeting

A general meeting of the P.T.C. is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th, in the gymnasium. We will have information about end-of-the-year activities and next year's budget and tuition. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m., and we will provide free child care during the meeting time.

Please make plans to join us!

School Registration

We will begin registration for the next school year on March 18th. We will be sending home all the materials needed for registration on that day. We will give our current school families the first opportunity to register.

Tuition Assistance

We will again have tuition assistance available to families for next year. We will have application blanks available in the office during registration – this year we have two applications to complete.

- The application for the Archbishop's Appeal is only for Catholic students from Kindergarten to 8th grade, and only one student's name is included on the application. The deadline to apply for funding from the Archbishop's Annual Appeal is April 1st.
- The application for the local Adopt-a-Student Fund is open to all students in all grade levels. The deadline to apply for the local Adopt-a-Student fund extends into the summer.

Both funds provide assistance based on financial need – please pick up an application to see if you qualify. Each application asks for documentation of income with a federal tax return 1040 or employee W2 form. Parents will only need to provide one copy; our office will copy the return for the other application.

Stanford Achievement Test

Our achievement tests will be given in March this year. Our second and sixth graders will take the Otis-Lennon Ability Test on Thursday, March 19th. All students in grades one to eight will start the Stanford Test Friday, March 20th. Testing days will continue Monday, March 23rd, through Wednesday, March 25th.

We will test each morning starting at 8:15, and the testing will continue to about 10:15 or 10:30 each day. Please make a special effort to have students at school on time for the testing. Once testing has started late students will not be allowed into the classroom.

Also, please try to schedule appointments for students outside of the testing times on these days.

2008.2009 Calendar

Our faculty and school council will soon be developing the school calendar for next year. We expect the first day of school to be during the week of August 17th.

PSIA Contest

We are hosting the PSIA District 7AA Academic Contest on Saturday, March 28th. Participating schools will be: Nazereth Academy (Victoria), Our Lady of Victory School (Victoria), St. Gabriel School (Austin), Holy Family School (Austin), St. Andrew's School (Austin), Ace Academy (Austin), Atonement Academy (San Antonio), and Bell Home School (Fredericksburg).

We thank all of those who are volunteering to coach and who have agreed to help us on the day of the contest.

This is a special day to celebrate academic excellence and achievement.

Cheerleader Tryouts

We have scheduled our Cheerleader Tryouts for Tuesday, March 3rd, at 4:00 p.m.

Reminders

- 1) Remember to call the school office if your child is going to be out of school for the day. Call early if you like and leave a message on the machine.
- 2) Remember the school buildings are locked during the day for the safety of our students. Please come to the office to receive a visitor badge and a key if you plan to visit any part of the campus. Please do not ring the ramp door bell to gain entrance to the high school building.
- 3) Remember that students should be free of symptoms – fever and/or nausea – for 24 hours before returning to school. This year has been especially difficult for students and parents and teachers with the lingering effects of illness.
- 4) Remember the elementary building main entrance is open from 7:45 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Before and after those times parents and students should use the west (gym-side) side entrance.
- 5) Remember that cars dropping off students in the high school parking lot in the morning should pull into a parking spot before unloading children. Cars that stop in the drive create a hazard as cars in the street are unable to pull into the parking lot.

- 6) Remember there is only one adult helping students out of cars at the gym circle drive in the morning. Only the car in the front of the row should allow students to leave the car.

St. Joseph Society Raffle

We have recently sent information and tickets for the St. Joseph Society raffle and dinner. The St. Joseph Society has really helped out our school by making the Halle available for many school functions. This semester we have used the Halle for: the National Geo Bee Final School Competition, and we will use it again for the PSIA Art and Science contests on March 28th.

We hope you are able to support the St. Joseph Society fund raising effort!

Tax Credits

Our school office in San Antonio has asked us to remind parents about the tax savings that might be available to your family. Many families do not take advantage of the tax laws that provide credits for certain levels of income, and credits for child care expenses.

Classroom News

Fifth grade school news: St. Mary's fifth graders joined fellow fifth graders of the San Antonio Archdiocese when they attended a Mass at the historic San Fernando Cathedral. Every year Archbishop Gomez invites the fifth graders to a special Mass, so they can meet him and see the beautiful church. This year they also had the treat of seeing Father Tony, since he is the new pastor of the cathedral. Another honor was having Blake Vick proudly represent our school by altar serving. Father Tony added details as the class toured the church after mass. After a sack lunch, they visited the San Jose Mission. Adults joining the group were Mr. Sanchez, Mrs. Weinheimer, Monica Itz, and Paul and Libby Vick.

The fifth grade visited the SPCA and gave them a donation of \$100 which they contributed themselves on the 100th Day of School.

The class visited the Fredericksburg Landfill, which correlated with its science chapter about conservation and the environment.

Another trip by the class was its monthly visit to the Tristar Nursing Home.

Have you written your Congress Members? The fifth graders wrote many letters to Catholic Congress Members asking them to please vote to protect the dignity of life, especially that of the unborn!

Music News

Through a grant provided by the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance, Mrs. Stehling recently purchased additional barred music instruments for music classes. A contra bass and sub-contra bass xylophone were acquired and have been immediately put into use in grades 1-4. The PCAA also sent the 4th and 5th graders to hear DRUM CAFÉ in which they used their own Djembe drum, learned about drums, musical form and geography.

Scrip Card Sales

Our February Scrip card sales totaled \$29,740.00. Thanks to everyone who supports the Scrip card program. The sales for this month earned approximately \$1,500.00 profit for our school program.

Tips for Choosing Books for Kids

Here are general tips on choosing appropriate reading material that will keep young readers engaged and enthusiastic about reading. Share these ideas with friends and family members who buy books for your child.

- Younger children enjoy books that use word repetition, rhymes, and predictable text. Look for books with colorful pictures and simple words.
- For beginning readers, select books that match their skill level.
- At the library, let your child choose some of the books.
- If your child has a favorite book, he or she may enjoy other books written by the same author.
- Choose stories that provide new experiences, such as folktales or books about different countries and cultures.
- Choose books that match your child's interests, from dinosaurs to dancing. (Most children like books that are funny.)
- For children who are already reading, select a variety of books - books you can read together, books you can read to your child, and books your child can read to you.
- Encourage your child to try different kinds of books, such as mysteries, biographies, and other non-fiction.
- Ask the children's librarian for book suggestions or booklists.
- Books about events in your child's life (new siblings, moving) can help him or her cope with fears and feelings.
- Visit the *Between the Lions* web site (pbskids.org/lions) for more on children and reading.

