



Saint Mary School News

March 2009

248.545.2140

628 S. Lafayette Ave.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

E-mail: st.maryro@comcast.net

Web-site: www.st-mary.org

Fax Machine: 248.545.2303

Principally Speaking...by Greg Carnacchi

As the Lenten season continues may God draw us closer to Him and deepen our spiritual walk as we prepare for the celebration of Holy Week and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. May the love of our Savior be evident in us all. Throughout Lent our students have focused on prayer, fasting and almsgiving and how that might apply to each of them. Almsgiving activities included: "Pennies for Peace", the Math-a-thon for St. Jude's Hospital and helping one of our families to get special medical assistance. A very special devotion has been the weekly Stations of the Cross on Fridays, led by the eighth graders. May God bless all our St. Mary families as we experience the joy and wonder of Easter.

Our March 1st "Open House" was a special time for new families, staff, students and parishioners. The tour guides did a wonderful job helping the new families learn more about

St. Mary Catholic School as well as the Ambassador Parents and Students for each room. The food, flowers, and decorations spearheaded by our PTG and School Committee parents made the day very enjoyable for all.

Congratulations to our Destination Imagination teams for their efforts in their competition on March 7th. All of the teams did extremely well and one team took second place and earned the honor of qualifying to compete on the state level. For more information please read Mrs. Schulz's column on page 5 of this newsletter.

St. Mary Catholic School's annual Auction "A Night at the Races" is quickly approaching on May 2nd. Sign up for volunteer service hours is available at the school entrance. At this point, it is important that our parents purchase their tickets and invite friends, family members, or co-workers to our Auction. This event truly helps our school meet its budget.

Our annual Learning Fair set up will take place on March 24th and the Fair viewing will take place on March 25th from 5:30-7:30 PM in the Fellowship Center. For more details, see the 6th grade news section of this newsletter.

Reminder that the Sacrament of Confirmation for our students is April 18th at St. James at 6:00 PM. The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist for our students is Saturday, May 30th at 10:00 AM at St. Mary.

One final note....in order to plan for next year it is critical that each family make sure they are registered. With the economy being so difficult we are working to find additional scholarship money for those families in need. Please turn in your paperwork or contact the Office as soon as possible at (248) 545-9722, especially if you have any questions or special needs. Thank you for your support.

Celebration Corner

This month we want to celebrate the hard work of Jackie Berry, Tonya White, and their helpers in organizing the Open House. Their attention to detail with the flowers, decorations, and food was most evident. Thank you also to all the families that donated food to the Open House. We also thank School Committee members who helped to greet and facilitated the moonwalk and cleanup. The student tour guides were a great assistance to new families in their desire to learn more about our school as well as our Student and Parent Ambassadors for each classroom. It was a group effort and a prime example as

to why St. Mary is a special place to learn and grow. May God continue to bless the work we do at St. Mary Catholic School!

A second celebration goes to Marcella Puchalski who headed up the "Fighting Irish" float effort this year for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Thank you to all who helped with the float and those who marched in the parade. It was also very gratifying to win second place with the float entry. Congratulations for a job well done! Also thank you to Gabriela Bala for the St. Mary Catholic School marketing flyers that she made to pass out at the parade.

Archdiocese Tuition Assistance

Applications for the Archdiocese of Detroit Tuition Assistance Program (PSAS) are available in the school office. The application deadline is April 10, 2009.

These grants are available for 1st through 12th grades and are based on economic need.

If you have any questions, please contact the school office at 248.545.2140.

Preschool—Mrs. Hancasky, Mrs. Dylenski, Mrs. Bala

March is rolling right along in the preschool as we have spent the month learning about transportation and all of the different ways that people get from one place to another. We have read many books about transportation and designed our own vehicles. This theme has also allowed us to explore many science topics such as wheels, rolling and friction with ground transportation, sink and float and properties of water with water transportation and “air power” with air transportation. We will end the month by learning about patterns and Easter fun. Our Senior preschoolers have also spent the month focusing on the letters “H” and “D”.

We hope that you all enjoy the warmer weather as much as we do in the Preschool! Have a great month!

Kindergarten—Mrs. Withee

March came in as gentle as a little lamb and we are excited about this new month. During the first week of March we explored the animals of the pond and river in which we concentrated on the life cycle of the frog. Ask any kindergartner about this interesting transformation. The second week of March found us learning about St. Patrick and all the fun things that are associated with this day. We even/possibly(?) had teeny tiny leprechauns that like the color green come and visit our room! Next comes the study of spring and wild weather. To finish off the month of March: Easter and Eggs and Ocean Life. See you at conferences.

First Grade—Ms. Farrell

First grade has been working hard! We have been working with tens and ones in Math and with number patterns. We are finishing our work with long vowels and will be learning about blends. We worked very hard to learn the **Our Father** prayer. Now we are writing our own prayers. We completed a unit on presidents in Social Studies and will be learning map

skills next. In Science we completed a unit on dental health and along with the other primary grades, got to hear a guest speaker who presented a fun and informative program.

Enjoy the rest of the Reading Month activities. Good luck with “Turn off the T.V.” week!

Second Grade—Mrs. Stanko

March roared in like a lion like we did when we met Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time! We came away from the experience with peace in our hearts. We will celebrate this sacrament again at the end of March along with the whole school. How blessed are we. We’re also using the brand new Handwriting Without Tears Program that will be school-wide for PK through 3rd grade starting next year. Subtracting with regrouping is also marching forward along with our study of the solar system. We’re also preparing during March for our Blessed First Communion, the Lamb of God.

Third Grade—Mrs. Smith

I want to thank everyone who stopped in to visit the third grade at Open House. It was great to see everyone. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Sawicki and Sophie for being the third grade class ambassadors for Open House. They gave their time, treasures and talents on that day by talking to everyone about third grade.

Our classroom auction basket is amazing. I want to say thank you to all of the parents who generously donated to our classroom basket. We have some really great items.

One last note, in Religion, we are studying and learning the Stations of the Cross. We have been talking about each station and doing a “station page” on each one. When we are done with this project (which will last all of Lent) the third graders will have a folder containing a picture of each station to remind them of Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

Fourth Grade—Mrs. McNish

Fourth grade has Spring Fever! We’re waiting for warmer days to brighten up our weather measuring unit. We are using weather instruments and observations to record the daily weather. The geography of Michigan has been filling our Social Studies time. Our Ten Commandments unit is coming to a close. We have learned a lot! Research, research is all that is on our minds. We are researching severe types of weather for our research papers. Chris Van Allsburg’s books have been our focus in reading. We’re studying his writing style and motivations. A big thanks for all the wonderful auction donations. Our auction bag will be a big hit!

Fifth Grade—Mrs. Sak

The fifth graders did a fantastic job on Constitution Day. Many presidents attended including George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. There were sixteen presidents at St. Mary on February 27, 2009. To prepare for this performance the fifth graders studied the Constitution including the Bill of Rights and its Amendments. On Constitution Day the presidents read the Constitution and the Core Democratic Values. Then, they sang songs that explained the Constitution and performed a skit about how a bill becomes a law. It was a fun and educational day. We sure have a group of talented fifth graders.

In Science the fifth graders are studying the weather. We learned about the equinox and how the earth’s movement affects our seasons. Next, we’ll study weather systems and cloud formations. We’re looking forward to studying earthquakes and volcanoes next quarter.

In Religion we are discussing Lent and how we can become better Christians through sacrifice, prayer and alms giving. Every Friday during Lent we pray the Stations together with the rest of the school. We are looking forward to the joy of Easter.

Sixth Grade—Ms. Kassab

Spring into the fun of this year's St. Mary Learning Fair! There will be so many great things to see from animal adaptations, beautiful artwork, literary works and creative science experiments. What's even more exciting this year is that we have the Bishop Foley robotics team visiting with Iceberg, their fun-loving robot. The Learning Fair will be on March 25, 2009 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Center. Can't wait to see you there!

Note to 6th, 7th and 8th graders: Your Learning Fair projects need to be dropped off at the Fellowship Center on the morning of March 25, 2009.

Seventh Grade—Mrs. Martin

How many parents out there have joined a book club? Many readers enjoy this forum for reading, discussing and analyzing a novel. This month, the seventh grade will have a similar opportunity! They are taking part in **literature circles**, or discussion groups, as part of a novel unit. Along the way, they will produce some written work to show success in comprehension, vocabulary and story structure. Look for them working with their circle in the hall or spread out on the carpet in the classroom!

The eighth grade continues to work on their term paper project. At this point, they are taking notes on their research and developing a solid outline. On a smaller scale, the seventh grade is also researching careers while practicing proper techniques of documentation, note taking and organization. Both groups are experiencing how important it is to pace themselves, to use their time wisely and to stay diligent with the task at hand.

Seventh Grade—Mrs. Peterson

We have just finished up our poetry unit. The eighth grade did a wonderful job on their poetry projects! Both sixth and eighth grades have started mythology. The sixth grade will be given an introduction to the gods and

goddesses. Eighth grade will read the first book of the *Iliad*.

The sixth graders have moved on from spelling to vocabulary. Every week they are required to know the spelling, part of speech, synonym and antonym of each word. This is to build their reading and writing skills. We are just finishing working with prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. We will begin writing a research paper after the Easter Holiday.

Eighth Grade—Mrs. Irwin

As the third quarter comes to an end the eighth grade is getting anxious about their trip to Washington D.C. We are studying the Civil War and discussing major battles. One of the stops on our trip will be Gettysburg.

During Lent the eighth graders will be doing a Shadow Drama of the Stations of the Cross. It is a very dramatic way to witness the Stations. They will be performing this on Wednesday, April 8th.

Many eighth graders have heard from high schools and have made their decisions.

Math-A-Thon

Thank you to the students who have decided to participate in this year's Math-A-Thon Fundraiser. Your pledges will help support St. Jude Children's Hospital. All donations are due on April 8, 2009. Have fun!

R2L Fundraiser

The Middle School Right to Life Club (R2L) is trying to help a fellow St. Mary family raise money for their son who is suffering with cerebral palsy. The Khalil family will be traveling to China for a stem cell research procedure, in which stem cells are used from babies who have come to full term. During lunch on the following Wednesday's items will be sold to help raise some funds. Prices range from .25¢ to \$1.00.

- Wednesday, March 18 enjoy something sweet at the bake sale!
- Wednesday, March 25 find a special message in a fortune cookie!
- Wednesday, April 1 cool off (hopefully) with a fresh cup of lemonade!

Please help the Khalil family and support life! God bless!

Shadow Drama

The eighth graders will present the Stations of the Cross as a Shadow Drama on Wednesday, April 8th at 9:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

Please join us.



Library—Mrs. Carnacchi

Classes visiting the Library in the last month have been taking part in discussions about how to go about choosing a book to read. We use the terms “too easy”, “too hard” or “just right” in the younger grades and give examples of books that fall into each of those categories. A book that is “too easy” is one in which the child can easily and quickly read all the words without any faltering. I share with them that this kind of book is a lot like riding a bike down a smooth hill with their feet pedaling fast and easy...no problems, no sweat. On the other hand, a “too hard” book is like riding that same bike UP a bumpy, rock-covered hill on a hot, muggy day. When attempting to read this kind of book, the child has difficulty reading fluently because there are so many words that he/she doesn't know. It's a struggle and leaves the student worn out and often frustrated. Many students STILL want to check out these kinds of books from the library because they have often seen older students reading them (peer pressure is everywhere!) but I explain to them that these books need to stay on the shelf for a while longer. Finally, we have a book that is “just right”. Now, your child is pedaling on a relatively even surface, with an occasional bump (an unknown word), but kids involved in these types of books are engaged in what they are reading and have lots of confidence. We talk about the “5 finger rule” when choosing a book.....open up to the middle of the book and begin to read. Hold up a finger every time you come to a word you don't know and when all 5 fingers have been used, it's probably a good indication that this particular book is “too hard”. I encourage the child to return the book to the shelf and visit it again sometime in the future.

The proper reading level is certainly one factor in choosing a book but so is the appropriateness of the material. Some books at the correct reading level will contain subject matter that the student is not emotionally mature enough to handle. Again, peer pressure often pushes students in the

fourth or fifth grade, for example, to choose books that they see seventh or eighth graders reading. I truly feel that the emotional maturity of a student MUST take precedence over the reading level or length of the book. Students need to have an understanding of the themes, topics and emotions in a novel and be able to relate to the content. As the adults in their lives, we need to guide them in choosing emotionally appropriate titles. How do we help them? Well, certainly pre-reading a book that they are interested in is the best thing to do but often we don't have the time to do this. That's when visiting a website like commonsensemedia.org is beneficial. Or just type the title of the book into a search engine. These sites will let you know the themes found in the book. If we find that the content is somewhat questionable, then the adult must ask themselves if the child NEEDS to be introduced to that life issue at his/her age. Once children's minds are titillated by adult themes, even if they truly do not completely understand what they are reading, it is very difficult to get them back to reading books that are intended for their age and emotional level. Often Book One of a series can start off somewhat “mild” but the mature content accelerates in the titles that follow. By then, the child is “hooked” and insists on finishing the series. As the adults in their lives, it is our challenge to introduce them to a wide variety of quality literature and help them make GOOD choices at the same time. If you have any concerns or questions about what your child is reading, please feel free to call and I'd be glad to discuss titles/issues with you.

Scrip News

Thank you to the St. Mary Catholic School families who have tried Scrip this school year. We hope that we can gain many new participants in the final few months of school. In fact, we thank Monica Brady, Michelle Suchyta and Sarah Becker for their help in expanding our Scrip program to the parish. They will be on hand on

weekends to take and distribute orders from interested parish families. We plan to continue the Scrip program throughout the summer months so watch for details. Also, beginning May 1st Kroger will institute a new program called “Kroger Community Rewards”. With this new program there will be no need to purchase and use a Kroger card in order for our school to receive profit from Kroger. All you will need to do is swipe your Kroger Plus Card each time you check out and the school will benefit!! You will need to register your Kroger Plus Card on the Kroger website and we will share how to go about that in the upcoming weeks. We thank all of you who are Kroger shoppers and have faithfully reloaded your Kroger card. If you have any questions concerning the Scrip program, feel free to contact Barb Pietron or Leslie Carnacchi or email us at stmaryroscrip@hotmail.com.

Pennies for Peace

What a wonderful response to our “Pennies for Peace” campaign. Due to everyone's help, from our youngest preschoolers to our eighth graders to our parents, we were able to send a check to “Pennies for Peace” for \$619.55....that's over 60,000 pennies!! This was an excellent way for our students to live out their faith and show our love for Jesus...”**Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.**” (Matthew 25:40) Thank you to everyone and a special thank you to Mrs. Withee for her help in exchanging the pennies at the bank.

Spring Book Fair Coming!

Can you help out at our Spring Book Fair? I will need help to set-up the Fair on Friday, March 27th after school, on Monday, March 30th and Thursday April 2nd from 5:00-8:00 p.m., on Tuesday (3/31), Wednesday (4/1) and Thursday (4/2) during the school day, and on Friday, April 3rd beginning at 8:30 a.m. to pack up the Fair. If you are interested, please call Mrs. Carnacchi at (248)545-2140 ext. 229. Thank you.

March is National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month. The following are some tips from Oakland County Health Division.

Breakfast: Waking Up to a Healthy Start!

Breakfast starts the day right! It gives your child energy, protein, vitamins and minerals, all of which he needs to grow, learn, play and stay healthy. Children who regularly eat breakfast tend to perform better in school due to improved concentration, problem solving skills and attendance. They are also less likely to be overweight. Help your child wake up every day to a healthy start by offering a variety of healthful foods.

- **Ready-to-eat cereals**—They're quick, easy and a low-fat source of vitamins, minerals and fiber. At home, offer 5 or 6 cereal choices. Let kids mix several kinds together.
- **Milk, yogurt or other dairy products**
- **Juice and one fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit**—Whole fruits have extra fiber. Children eat more fruit if it's cut up. Try fruit kabobs. Serve fresh fruit with a yogurt dip.
- **One or more grain products**—Include whole-grain bread, bagels, rice cakes, tortillas, low-fat muffins and breads made with fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Serve with jam, jelly, peanut or apple butter or light cream cheese.
- **"Daily specials"** - If you have extra time, try toaster waffles, pancakes or French toast, hot cereal, a homemade breakfast burrito, or egg dishes.
- **"Unbreakfast" foods**—Rice, tapioca or noodle pudding, peanut butter and jelly on a tortilla, cereal cookies, English muffin pizza, grilled cheese sandwich, baked potato, soup, fruit salad, or left-over chicken. It's not what you eat, but when you eat it that makes it breakfast!

Remember—Breakfast provides another opportunity for you to role model healthy eating habits for your child. So set a good example by eating breakfast yourself!

Ten Tips to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

1. **Start your day with breakfast.** Breakfast fills your "empty tank" to get you going after a long night without food and prepares your for learning.
2. **Get Moving!** Find ways to fit physical activities into your daily routine.
3. **Snack smart.** Snacks are a great way to refuel. Choose snacks from different food groups. Save cookies, chips and candy for occasional snacking.
4. **Work up a sweat.** Participate in activities that get you breathing hard and sweating like running, jogging or dancing. Remember to warm-up and cool-down with stretching.
5. **Balance your food choices so you don't eat too much of any one thing.** Your body needs nutrients like protein, carbohydrates, fat and many different vitamins and minerals such as vitamins C and A, iron and calcium from a variety of foods.
6. **Get fit with friends or family.** Being active is much more fun with friends or family; encourage others to join you.
7. **Eat more grains, fruits and vegetables.** These foods give you carbohydrates for energy, plus vitamins, minerals and fiber. Besides, they taste good!
8. **Join in physical activities at school.** Take a physical education class and/or participate in physical activities like sports, recess and marching band.
9. **Foods aren't good or bad.** All foods can be part of a healthful diet.
10. **Make healthy eating and physical activities fun!** Play games and eat foods you like. Be

adventurous—try new sports, games and other activities as well as new foods. Set realistic goals—begin with small changes.

Fun Snacks for School

- Make "applewiches" by coring an apple and cutting it into rings. Spread light cream cheese, or peanut butter between two rings. Stand animal crackers in the middle and make a merry-go-round.
- Cut slices of bread into fancy shapes with cookie cutters, cover with favorite meat spread such as tuna salad and serve with carrot sticks.
- Make "ants on a log" by spreading nut butter on celery sticks and top with raisins.
- Make "treasure logs" with slices of lean meat rolled around cubes of reduced fat cheese and secured with toothpicks.
- Offer a fruit-n-cheese kabob by alternating chunks of fresh fruit and cubes of reduced fat cheese on a bamboo skewer, toothpick or pretzel.
- Allow children to make their own sandwiches with small squares of bread, squares of lean meat and triangles of reduced fat cheese.
- Send fresh fruits, such as melon balls, apple slices, banana chunks and blueberries.
- Make a "Peter Rabbit Salad" with a pear half, cherry nose, nut eyes, prune ears and carrot whiskers.
- Try "Peppy Popcorn" by adding Parmesan cheese and garlic butter to popped corn.
- Spread peanut butter or cream cheese between two graham cracker squares.
- "Nuts and Bolts" made with unsugared ready-to-eat cereal, peanuts and pretzel sticks heated together with margarine, Worcestershire sauce and garlic salt.
- Serve applesauce with a sprinkle of cinnamon and nutmeg and two teaspoons of dried fruit or a dried fruit mix.

What's the WORST that could happen?

They could so "No."

If you ask a person or a business to make a donation to the St. Mary School Auction, the worst thing that could happen is that they could say "No." That's all.



We've all heard "no" hundreds of times in our lives – and we're still here to tell about it.

WE NEED 75 MORE DONATIONS!

Forms and donations due NOW!

- ◆ DONATIONS & DONATION FORMS (Triplicate Form)
- ◆ PROGRAM ADVERTISING (Blue Form)
- ◆ SPONSORSHIP (Yellow Form)

Auction Raffles Free Tuition or Technology

This year you will be able to participate in the Auction Raffles even if you can't make it to the celebration on Saturday, May 2. Auction invitations were mailed to homes this week. The RSVP card includes a chance to pre-purchase tickets for the raffles listed below.

TUITION FOR ONE YEAR

Tuition is for one student at the in-parish service rate.

Cost: \$100 per ticket. Only 100 tickets will be sold.

DIGITAL DERBY

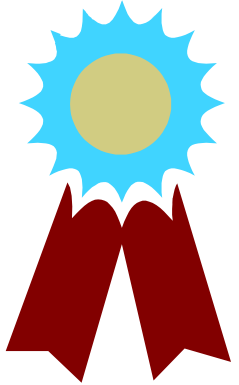
You pick the prize, we'll pick the winner. Place your raffle ticket in the box in front of the prize you want to win!

Cost: \$25 per ticket or 5 for \$100.



St. Mary Creative Club—Mrs. Schulz

On Saturday, March 7th, St. Mary Creative Club sent four teams to the Destination Imagination Regional Tournament. I want to congratulate the four teams for a



job well done. Two of the three competitive teams received the highest score possible, for their instant challenge—way to go! One of our teams received second place in their overall division and is eligible for state level competition. Another team came close for consideration. I want to thank the team members again for their hard work and their parents for their support.

I would also like to thank the coaches; being one of the coaches, I know it involves a lot of hard work and time. So, I would like to thank Mrs. Gina Kendell, Mrs. Sonia Pillar and Ms. Colleen Schulz for their efforts. I would also like to thank our appraisers and volunteers, without whom we couldn't go to competition. Let me thank our appraisers Anne Kopy, George Kopy, John Schulz and Steve Kenny. I also want to thank the following volunteers; Heather Heilman, Ron Pillar, Robert White, Erin Schulz and Ali Thompson.

Destination Imagination members and First Lego League will be receiving information about a joint end of the year pizza party. Also Future City members will be receiving information about their end of the year party.

Again congratulations to all teams.