

Elizabeth Ann Seton Award Presented to Mrs. Skallos

Five years ago the Student Council introduced a special award to be given to the teacher or staff member who they felt was a role model, full of both love for God and promoted a Catholic education centered in Christ. The award is named after St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who after her husband's death became Catholic and founded the first Catholic school in the United States.

The Student Council voted to present this year's award to our computer and network savvy Technology Coordinator, Mrs. Maryly Skallos. Mrs. Skallos works diligently behind the scenes to keep our network and computer systems functioning for teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents. She is always on the lookout for new technology that would benefit St. Thomas and is always willing to be the first to "try things out". She notifies teachers of online trainings or websites for their classes. She teaches the kindergartners each week, handles administrative duties and goes above and beyond to make our school distinct. Her devotion to our school, her love of Christ and her listening ear make us proud to say, "Congratulations, Mrs. Skallos and a heartfelt *Thank You* to you from the entire St. Thomas Community." ~ Octavia Houtekier

Preschool & Kindergarten Round-Up and Information Session



St. Thomas the Apostle School will hold a Preschool and Kindergarten Round-Up and Information Session on Tuesday, March 6 from 6:30– 8:00 p.m. and Wednesday, March 7 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. in the Ministry Center. This is an opportunity for parents and prospective students to meet other interested parents and our faculty and to investigate our program. Children will visit the classrooms and share a story and discovery time. Parents will learn how to help prepare their child for school. To register for either session please call Sue or Suzanne in the school office at 458-4228.

Registration 2007/2008

Registration packets for the upcoming school year were sent home with students on February 14. **Registration deadline is Monday, March 12.** Please return your registration materials to reserve a spot for your child. The deadline for applying for financial aid using the Facts Financial Aid Forms is **Friday, March 30, 2007.** If you have any questions, please call Sue or Suzanne in the school office.

Money for St. Thomas

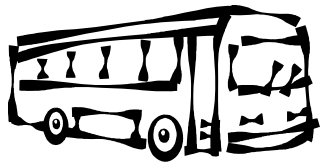
Thank you to all parents and friends of Saint Thomas who shopped at Lands' End. We received a check for \$40.38 which amounts to 3% of the net sales of your purchases from July 1 – December 31, 2006. ~ Sue Ysasi



ATTACHMENTS



- Hot Lunch Order Form
- March Calendar/March Hot Lunch Menu
- Hot Lunch change ½ sheet
- KCHD January Information Sheet
- Abrakadoodle Flyer
- Immunization Notice



Peacemaker of the Month

Rosa Parks
(1913-2005)

Most historians date the beginning of the modern civil rights movement in the United States to December 1, 1955. That was the day when an unknown seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. "All I was doing was trying to get home from work". This brave woman, Rosa Parks, was arrested and fined for violating a city ordinance, but her lonely act of defiance began a movement that ended legal segregation in America, and made her an inspiration to freedom-loving people everywhere.

Rosa Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama, attended Alabama State Teachers College and settled in Montgomery, with her husband, Raymond Parks. The couple joined the local chapter of the NAACP and worked quietly for many years to improve the lot of African-Americans in the segregated south.

"I worked on numerous cases with the NAACP," Mrs. Parks recalled, "but we did not get the publicity. There were horrific cases of abuse but we didn't seem to have too many successes. It was more a matter of trying to challenge the powers that be, and to let it be known that we did not wish to continue being second-class citizens."

The bus incident led to the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association, led by the young pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The association called for a boycott of the city-owned bus company. The boycott lasted 382 days and brought Mrs. Parks, Dr. King, and their cause to the attention of the world. A Supreme Court Decision struck down the Montgomery ordinance under which Mrs. Parks had been fined, and outlawed racial segregation on public transportation.

In 1957, Mrs. Parks and her husband moved to Detroit, Michigan where Mrs. Parks served on the staff of U.S. Representative John Conyers. The Southern Christian Leadership Council established an annual Rosa Parks Freedom Award in her honor.

After the death of her husband in 1977, Mrs. Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development. The Institute sponsors an annual summer program for teenagers called Pathways to Freedom. The young people tour the country in buses, under adult supervision, learning the history of their country and of the civil rights movement. President Clinton presented Rosa Parks with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996. She received a Congressional Gold Medal in 1999.

Mrs. Parks spent her last years living quietly in Detroit, where she died in 2005 at the age of 92. After her death, her casket was placed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol for two days, so the nation could pay its respects to the woman whose courage had changed the lives of so many. She was the first woman and second African-American in American history to lie in state at the Capitol, an honor usually reserved for Presidents of the United States.

In *sitting down* that day in the front of the bus, Rosa Parks *stood up for Freedom*. In her own words, "Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others." May you remember the Rosa Parks of the world as you continue to pray for Peace in our world and may your works and deeds be a reflection to others of Christ's light shining through you for justice and freedom for ALL people.

Portions of this article reprinted with permission from the Academy of Achievement Biography of Rosa Parks.

DIVERSITY WEEK MARCH 5-9



The Multicultural, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is pleased to again have Mr. Zainea teach a variety of international games to supplement student gym time during Multicultural Week (March 5th -9th). These games will be incorporated into P.E. classes for grades 1-5 both Monday and Wednesday. For grades 6-8, Mr. Zainea and Ms. Pierce will lead activities that give students an insight into what it would be like to have a physical disability.

In order for the disability simulation to be a success, we are looking for any wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, etc. to borrow Monday-Wednesday. These items will allow the students to experience what it might be like to have a disability while trying to compete in regular P.E. competitions. The items will be returned on Wednesday, (March 7th). ***Please place your name on the items so they can be properly returned to you*** Thank you!



Parents BE AWARE...

BLOGS: It's still here

It has come to my attention that some of our St. Thomas students are maintaining blogs on the Internet. Everyone needs to be aware of the pros and cons of safe blog usage. Over the course of the next few issues of the Pieces, I will be including some safe tips of online communications. Parents – please talk to your child about their activities on the Internet. Please keep all computers in an open area. Make certain you know everyone your child is communicating with online. Work with your child towards generating a parent and child trust that supports open and honest Internet use. ~ *Maryly Skallos*

Car Family Name Signs

All families received a letter in the mail that explained our new pick up procedure using family name signs in their car window. Thank you to those families who have been using these signs and placing them in a visible spot in your car when picking up students. This will help all staff members get to know families better. We are working to make the pick up line move quickly and smoothly. Thank you very much for your support and cooperation.

"Heely" Shoes

Please note: Heelys (shoes with roller wheels on the bottom) are not allowed in school.

Orderly and Productive Environment

St. Thomas School strives to maintain an orderly and productive environment. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a quiet environment in the hallways and office, and relaying all communications with teachers and students through the office.

To continue to maximize instructional time, the end of the day must remain orderly and productive also. Often teachers must give their students last-minute instructions, homework assignments or notes to be taken home. There is also clean-up, packing of backpacks, putting on coats, and most importantly prayer at the end of each day. As a result, parents waiting in or around the classroom at this time can prevent a systematic and orderly dismissal, especially if the parent raises a question or concern to the teacher at that time.

It would be very helpful if parents would wait outside the school building until after 3:00 p.m. when students are dismissed. At that time, please feel free to meet with your child's teacher or schedule an appointment for a convenient time.

Thank you for your help in creating an orderly and productive environment where we know we are Looking Good and Learning Well.

Reminder: Please do not use the Holland Home Parking Lot on the west side of the Ministry Center. Thank you!

Spiritual Adoption

The next meeting, for the Junior High students who chose to spiritually adopt a baby in danger of abortion, is Wednesday, February 28th at 2:40 p.m. in the Ministry Center. Try to remember your baby bottles. Please come to the meeting, even if you forget your bottles. Remember the prayers are the most important part. Keep up those POWERFUL PRAYERS!

~ *Mrs. Donna Valente*



CC "Blue & White" for Sale

Catholic Central is selling copies of their "Blue & White" newspaper in the Welcome & Information Center by the front entrance. Papers will be delivered each month. Each paper costs \$.25. Please place your quarter in the bucket and take a paper. This is an honor payment system. Thank you for your support.

~ *The CCHS "Blue & White" Staff*

Auction— A Night to Remember!

On February 10th, the Wege Center of Aquinas College was filled with the joy, love and generous spirit of our amazing St. Thomas community. The main ballroom was overflowing with families from our parish family who came together to raise funds for our school, our Tuition Angel Fund and our Parish capital improvements. In addition, we were able to gather together to celebrate Mr. Frank Jakubowski, a man who has worked his entire life to serve the Lord through his service at St. Thomas School and Parish. There was not a dry eye in the room when Mr. J. came to the podium to accept his award. We thank him for allowing us to honor him in this way and especially thank his family who came from across the country to spend this special evening with us.

The auction was not only an emotional success but was a great fundraiser with emphasis on FUN and community building. With over \$50,000 raised, the Home and School Association, The Tuition Angel Fund and the Parish will benefit greatly. We thank each and everyone of you for your prayers, your generous donations of services, items, creativity and hard work. A special thank you to all the families who sold raffle tickets, especially Ryan Pelak who won the I-Pod, and to the Theriault Family who won the Tuition Raffle. Your ongoing support of the auction raffles is much appreciated. We would like to thank all the volunteers who worked behind the scenes before, during and after the auction. We literally could not do it without you! To all the folks who showed up on Friday and Saturday and set up and cleaned up... especially those working out all those final decorating touches. Thank You! To our creative parents who toiled many hours making the classroom contributions that were truly works of art, we were awed by your gifts and appreciate you sharing your time and talent in that way. And to all of you who donated and donated and donated.....you WERE the auction! Thank you!

Lastly, we thank all of you who attended the auction and opened your hearts and wallets with a generous and humble spirit. We know that in moving auction to Aquinas College there would be some bugs to work out! Your patience with our new committee was so appreciated and we promise to have an even more spectacular event next year! May God Bless you all and may you know that each and every contribution you made is deeply appreciated!

~ *The Auction Committee*

Thank you to the many volunteers that helped make the Auction such a huge success! We appreciate all of you who donated your time to help with basket making, booklet and set-up. We would also like to thank the volunteers who generously offered to volunteer the night of the Auction. We couldn't have done it without you! We would like to recognize Mr. Ted and Mrs. Ysasi for always assisting us with a smile with our many needs over the last few months! Thanks to Michelle Rohn and Jennifer Clemens for their vision and leadership. A huge thank you to all of the committee members that worked so hard to make this a great evening for everyone to enjoy, as well as a profitable fundraiser for the school and parish.

~ *Lisa Wolf and Angela Yondo*



If anyone won a basket at the auction and is wondering what to do with the basket now that they have emptied the wonderful contents, we would welcome the donation of the basket back for use at next year's auction.

~ *Claudia Triestram*

Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions

If you are a new parent or are an existing parent and still need to attend Virtus training, (required for all school volunteers), please note the upcoming training sessions:

St. John Vianney Parish (Wyoming)
Monday, February 26, 2007 @ 6:30 PM

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish (Grand Rapids)
Monday, March 5, 2007 @ 6:30 PM

St. Jude Parish (Grand Rapids)
Wednesday, May 2, 2007 @ 6:30 PM

If you plan to attend one of these sessions, and have not already registered, please register online as follows:

- Go to www.virtus.org
- Click "Registration"
- Click "Begin the Registration Process"
- Select Diocese of Grand Rapids as the organization.
- You will be required to enter a UserID and password (of your choice)
- Fill out registration form
- Choose a location

Soup and Stations with the Boys of ConQuest

On Friday March 16th, the St. Thomas ConQuest Club will be hosting a meatless soup supper from 5PM until 7PM and Stations of the Cross which will follow at 7PM in the church. All members of the parish are invited to come eat and pray with us. A free will offering will be taken and all proceeds will support the ConQuest Club.

ConQuest is a National network of leadership programs, clubs, and camps for boys and young men 5 - 16 years of age. ConQuest trains boys to become self-disciplined and confident young men, Catholic leaders who possess moral integrity and are committed to improving the communities in which they live. The St. Thomas ConQuest Club meets on Sunday evenings from 6PM until 8PM in the St. Thomas Gym. Stop in to see what we are all about or call Steve Strobel (957-7776) for more details.

Be Informed

Do you know where your money goes when you see that movie? Or, buy that medicine? Or, eat at that restaurant? Or, support that non-profit organization? Some of it may go to Planned Parenthood – the nation's leading abortion provider and the world's chief abortion advocacy group.

Now there is an organization that tracks corporate donations to Planned Parenthood. It's called "**Life Decisions International**" and for a small fee you can receive a list of all corporations who have contributed money to Planned Parenthood. Check out their website:

www.fightpp.org.

Be informed. Make a difference. If you want more information or have any questions, call Lois Marie Ens 957-9617.

Community Events

Family Road Rally

March 3, 2007, 1:00-4:00

The Business Alliance for Families enthusiastically sponsors a Family Road Rally. Participating families will travel from one fun site to another on a quest for clues, entertaining activities and give-aways. Call Patty Kennedy at 454-9082 for more information about this family friendly fun event.

Abrakadoodle:

Where ART Meets Smart

Check out great art class offerings in the attached flyer. Abrakadoodle has opportunities available for ages 20 months through 12 years old. Want to learn about interesting artists and their techniques? Just waiting to dabble in some paint, pastels or digital photography? Take a look at what we have planned for you. Contact Patty Kennedy 356-2417 with any questions.

School Night at the RAMPAGE

The Grand Rapids Rampage Arena Football is celebrating their 10th season. Come and celebrate with them on **Saturday, April 21st at 7:00 p.m.** when they play against the Chicago rush. The School Night cost will be \$15 and will include....

- Discounted upper bowl ticket
- \$5 food voucher
- Post game meet and greet autograph session
- Group raffle drawing

Flyers are available in the Welcome & Information Center. Remember to save April 21st for a night of football fun. Call Tracy Bandlow at 452-8314 for more info.

We Celebrate Our Newest Authors

The Following Books Were Published During the Weeks of Jan. 29 and Feb. 5, 2007

Francesca Deveau	My Dad, Isabella and Me	Mrs. Baxter-1
Alayna Henry	The Big Snowman	Mrs. Baxter-1
Madelyn Yuncker	The Jesus Book	Mrs. Baxter-1
Jacob Jaracz	The Kangaroo	Mrs. Baxter-1
Rebecca Brew	The Magic Flower	Mrs. Baxter-1
Greta Staggs	Trina Went Ice Skating	Mrs. Baxter-1
Adrien Yondo	Adrien's 1 st Day at School	Mrs. Lake-1
Lizzy Murphy	Michelle	Mrs. Lake-1
Jameson Van Dokkemburg	The Story of the Little Frogs	Mrs. Lake-1
Regina Faber	I Like First Grade	Mrs. Lake-1
Thomas France	Christmas	Mrs. Michels-2
Zack Sanderson	Friday Night	Mrs. Michels-2

