



Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School

“School of Distinction”

*Dynamic Education
Centered in Christ*

THE PEACEMAKER... **PIECES**

Vol. 15 Issue 1

August 12, 2009

Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents,

True to our school's mission, “Dynamic education centered in Christ”, the summer of 2009 brought with it many changes. As always, God has been generous to Saint Thomas in all of these changes, and I am looking forward to my 17th year here at Saint Thomas with renewed enthusiasm and a sense of great anticipation!

The first and most obvious change of the summer was the promotion of Mrs. Suzi Furtwangler from fifth grade teacher to assistant principal. I know this came as a shock to many, especially the fifth graders who were anticipating having her as their teacher, but Mrs. Furtwangler has been sensing a call to a position of greater leadership for at least two years. On many occasions she communicated to me that she was feeling a call to something more - perhaps a way to reach out to more kids and to have an impact on more classrooms. She wasn't sure what that meant so she faithfully continued to pursue the completion of her master's degree in the Art of Teaching with a Learning Disabilities Endorsement through Aquinas College, which she completed this summer. When the assistant principal position became available, she saw this as an opportunity to answer that call right here in her favorite school, and she pursued it with her whole heart!

We conducted a full search to find the very best candidate for this position, and when Mrs. Furtwangler was one of our final two candidates our interview committee agreed unanimously that Mrs. Furtwangler had done everything in her power over the last seven years here at Saint Thomas to earn this position. She has demonstrated over and over again her commitment and dedication to the entire school community by the way she has touched kids' hearts at all grade levels, supported the entire faculty, and reached out in multiple ways to the broader school community. While we will miss her daily presence in her fifth grade classroom, now her classroom will extend well beyond those four walls to encompass the entire campus, and I am confident she is ready to open her heart and her arms to embrace us all.

With the promotion of Mrs. Furtwangler came the opportunity to hire Mrs. Sally Fochtman, whom we have been pursuing to teach here at Saint Thomas since last summer. We interviewed Sally following the long-term substitute position she completed here at Saint Thomas. It became clear that Mrs. Fochtman would be a wonderful addition to our distinguished faculty, and we waited for the day when we could offer her a position.

“Principal's Welcome” continued on Page 2

www.stthomasgr.org

We would like to encourage all school families to make our Saint Thomas School Website the homepage on your home computer. We update our homepage and entire site often to keep you abreast of the latest news and happenings at Saint Thomas School. In addition, you will find the latest issue of the Pieces, hot lunch menu, updated Sports Schedules and more...all directly available with a single click from our homepage. Many teachers post their newsletters and pictures on the grade level pages and we always add photo collages of special events. The more parents and students who use the website, the more feedback we receive so that we can truly make it YOUR website and a tool that benefits all of our students and families! For directions on how to make www.stthomasgr.org your homepage, see the instructions listed on page 8 of this newsletter as well as information on our new Website Contest which will be featured in each issue of the Pieces!



Attachments

- 2009/2010 School Calendar (*All*)
- Educational Outfitters Catalog (*Gr. 1-8*)
- Uniform Item Description (*Gr. 1-8*)
- Hornet Wear Order Form (*All*)
- September Hot Lunch Menu (*Gr. 1-8*)
- Bible Order Form (*Gr. 3-8*)
- Planner Order Form (*Gr. 3-8*)
- Preschool and Kindergarten Milk Order Form
- Preschool and School Age Immunization Requirements (*All*)

“Principal’s Welcome *Continued from Page 1*

Sally has been connected to the Saint Thomas community for 10 years, initially as the spouse of former teacher, Pete Fochtman and more recently as a long and short-term substitute teacher. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and a recent Elementary Endorsement from GVSU. Previously, Sally taught 7th grade in Florida for one year, she taught one year of high school as a volunteer for the Christian Appalachian Project, and served as the Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at St. John Vianney Parish for 5 years. In recent years she felt drawn back to the classroom where she has done short and long-term subbing. One of the many things that impressed us about Mrs. Fochtman, both during her interview and during her long-term subbing experience, was her sense of “Peace and Purpose”. I look forward to unpacking these gifts and many others with our students, faculty, and parents here at Saint Thomas!

With the move of Brenda Tietema to half-time second grade teacher, we warmly welcome Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge to expand her teaching responsibilities here at Saint Thomas as our new Three-Year-Old Preschool Teacher in addition to her present preschool and kindergarten Spanish teaching role. Mary Ann graduated from Aquinas College with an Elementary Teaching Certificate and a triple major in French, Spanish, and International Relations. She has 15 years experience teaching preschool and kindergarten Spanish at Immaculate Heart of Mary, East Grand Rapids, Mayflower Preschool, and Saint Thomas. We are excited about Mrs. Bridge’s ability to introduce our three-year-olds to Spanish as well as to a special Montessori approach to religious education called, “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd”.

Mrs. Furtwangler and I are looking forward to continuing to expand our opportunities for students with special needs and those who are academically talented through the continued improvement of our Discover program! St. Thomas is a member of the Christian Learning Center Network of schools; and together with Christen Pierce, our resource teacher, and Amy Zakrajzek, our enrichment teacher, we are prepared to offer the best consultation and services to our teachers, students, and parents. We believe that all students have special needs and all students are gifted and talented! As a result, we must have programs designed to meet their needs. We are very excited about this growing part of our school’s ministry!

Mr. Ted and his crew have been hard at work this summer to continue to present the best kept school in town. After years of wax build up on our beautiful terrazzo floors, he and his crew have painstakingly stripped them down to their bright original surface and have discovered a new technique to polish them to a shine that we hope will be more consistent throughout the year. Just ask—he’ll be happy to tell you all about it!

Mrs. Skallos has been busy incorporating 18 new laptops purchased for one-fifth their retail price through the generosity of the Aschwege family and IBM corporation. She has been busy upgrading all our systems to Microsoft Office 2007 from the 2003 version. We also anticipate the addition of an ENO Interactive White Board by PolyVision, through the generosity of Sue Haas-Williams, parishioner, and Steelcase, the parent company of PolyVision and two interactive student response systems to be shared by our middle school classrooms through a federal grant made possible by stimulus dollars. These exciting projects along with maintaining the most technologically advanced Catholic school around have kept Mrs. Skallos hopping nearly the entire summer.

Mrs. Jeanne Walch, our new Library Coordinator, together with her crew of Maureen Jones and Marnie White have been busily working to inventory, organize, and update the entire library collection. Together with their families they have contributed hundreds of hours over the summer to prepare the library for the fall. They are also looking forward to the addition of several laptop computers in the library for search and research opportunities.

We have been notified by the Shared-Time office of GRPS that our request for a second Spanish class each week for our elementary students (1-5) has been granted. We look forward to the advantage our students will have in continuing to learn the language with the addition of this class.

You will notice that we have updated our framed mission statements throughout the school to reflect our updated mission and new vision statements following the completion of our Long Range Strategic Planning Process. “Dynamic education centered in Christ” is our mission and our vision is to be “A leading innovative Catholic school that invites students to love and serve Christ and engage culture with a saintly passion”. We look forward to delivering our mission and vision this year in the context of our parish and school annual theme, “**We are One Body in Christ**”.

For those who are new to Saint Thomas School – WELCOME, and to everyone else – Welcome back!!!



A Warm St. Thomas Welcome

There are many new families who are currently inquiring about St. Thomas. The new families and students who are **registered as of today's date are:**

Peter & Lilah Ambrosi	Mia P3
Stephen & Amy Bossenberry	Laurel P3 Nikolaus K-AM
David & Michelle Brady	Anna 6
Tadd Kimble & Elma DeLaCruz Kimble	Hayden K-AM
Brian & Cheryl Doyle	Liam K-PM
Thomas & Anne Marie Ferratt	Brendan K-PM
Nick & Jennifer Ford	Cole P3
Brian & Marcie Hillary	Jeb P3
Jeff & Amanda Kwiatkowski	Noah P4-AM
Howard & Lisa Mullen	Aidan P4-AM Caitlin 1
Michael & Michelle Murphy	Erin K-PM
Lisa Nolen	Abby 1
Robert & Tara Reinink	Vincent K-PM Vivian P4-PM
Greg & Carolyn Reese	Katherine Reese P4-PM
John & Leanne Rumery	Nora P4-PM
Stephen & Theresa Steffes	Joshua 5/P
Steven & Mary Sumners	Anna P4-AM
Mark & Michele Thomson	Kenzie K-PM Osta 7
Bradley & Meghan Vedders	Hayley K-AM
Mr. Kim Wood & Mrs. Kimberly Angelwood	Enzo K-PM



WELCOME

We also welcome back to our school:

Duane & Molly Salinas Claire Salinas 7

Carnival Chair Needed

We are looking for a Chairperson for our school carnival. This person would coordinate the activities with the volunteers (who have already signed up). Last year's chairperson will guide you! Plans for the school Carnival will move forward, once the chairperson position has been filled. If you are interested, please contact Angela Yondo at 452-0044.

Summer Office Hours:

August 11-14	8:30-12:30 p.m.
August 17-21	8:30-12:30 p.m. 1:30- 3:30 p.m.
August 24	Office closed
August 25-27	8:30-12:30 p.m. 1:30-3:30 p.m.
August 28	Office Closed

About 'The Pieces'

The Peacemaker Pieces is designed to be a home-school communication tool intended to carry home many informative "pieces" of information. *The Pieces* will be identifiable by two attributes - its name and color. You can receive the bimonthly Pieces along with the other important communications or "attachments" in one of two formats, either electronically or via your oldest or only child in paper form. If you wish to receive this important information automatically online, please fill out the short form below so that we have your current email address. If you wish to receive a paper copy, please encourage your child in this important responsibility. Each issue of the Pieces and the attachments are also available on our website at:

www.stthomasgr.org

on both the homepage and under the news tab where current and past newsletters are archived as well as in paper form in the Welcome & Information Center in the School entrance.

Please note:

The next 'Pieces' will be sent home on the second day of school, Wednesday, September 2nd. If you have an article or any information you wish to have included in this Pieces please send it to the school office **NO LATER THAN Wednesday, August 26th**. Thank you! ~ Kathy Barth

We wish to receive the Pieces electronically. Please send our copy and the attachments to:

Email address _____

Student/Family Name: _____

Signature: _____

Hot Lunch

Hot lunch will begin on Tuesday, September 1. A September Menu is attached. If you are not receiving Free or Reduced meals, please send lunch money with your student to the office by Thursday, Sept. 3 to begin your account for the school year. Meals will cost \$2.05 and Milk only will cost \$.35 cents. An adult lunch costs \$2.55. Students with outstanding balances from the 2008/2009 school year will not be able to receive hot lunch until the balance is paid in full. Hot lunch payments can be sent to the school office prior to

school starting. If you have questions regarding your balance, please contact Shannon Rodgers at 874-5680.



Immunization Requirements

State Law requires that each student entering Preschool, Kindergarten or a new school have a certificate of immunization on file at the time of registration or no later than the first day of school. In addition, Preschool students are required to have a physical dated within the past two years.



Preschool Students Requirements:

Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file
Signed Physical dated with the past two years

Kindergarten Student Requirements:

Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file
Vision Screening Record on file

New Students entering St. Thomas:

Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file

All Sixth Grade Students:

Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file

Make the Saint Thomas Website Your Homepage!

Instructions:

- Go to your internet browser
- Open your Help page
- Follow instructions for changing your homepage
- Set homepage address or URL to: www.stthomasgr.org



Website Contest!

Each issue of the Pieces will feature a new search and find contest involving information located on our website. Students will need to fill out the form with the pertinent information and return the form to the school office by the next Friday. A winner will be drawn from all correct entries received. Winners will receive a candy prize from our Webmaster and be listed in the next issue of the Pieces! This issue we will draw a winner from all those who make www.stthomasgr.org their homepage. Just fill out the tear off below or drop off a note with your name, grade and the words "WE DID IT—We Switched our Homepage!" Each student from your family may enter.

WE DID IT—We Switched Our Homepage to www.stthomasgr.org!

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ Teacher: _____

Faculty and Staff for the 2009-2010 School Year

Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	3-yr-Preschool	Mrs. Kathy Proulx	Music
Mrs. Betsy Edgerton	4-yr-Preschool	Mrs. Maryly Skallos	Technology Coordinator
Mrs. Mary Lou Gedra	Preschool Aide	Miss Christen Pierce	Resource Program Teacher
Mrs. Amy Peters	Kindergarten	Mrs. Amy Zakrajsek	Enrichment Teacher
Mrs. Joni Poggi	Kindergarten Aide	Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	P-4 & Kindergarten Spanish
Mrs. Kelly Donohue	Grade 1	Mrs. Jamie LaFleur	School Counselor
Mrs. Holly Lake	Grade 1	Ms. Jessica Seitz/GRPS	Art
Mrs. Mary Baxter/Mrs. Brenda Tietema	Grade 2	Mrs. Sue Jazwiec/GRPS	Computer
Mrs. Amy Polega	Grade 2 Classroom Aide	Mrs. Sue VanZee/GRPS	Spanish
Mrs. Sue Michels	Grade 3	Ms. Ashley Grothe/GRPS	Physical Education
Mrs. Bonnie Burke	Grade 3 Classroom Aide	Mr. Ted Coon	Maintenance
Mrs. Abby VanDyke	Grade 4	Mrs. Suzanne VanderZee	Administrative Aide
Mrs. Beth Ann Petkus	Grade 4	Mrs. Sue Ysasi	Secretary
Mrs. Deb Pieri	Grade 5	Mrs. Suzi Furtwangler	Assistant Principal
Mrs. Sally Fochtman	Grade 5	Mr. David Faber	Principal
Mr. Adam Baxter	Grade 6 (History&Religion)		
Mr. Ed Carr	Grade 6 (Math)		
Mrs. Debra Zoppa	Grade 7 (Language Arts)		
Mrs. Mary Sue Stegehuis	Grade 8 (Science)		

Back to School Popsicle Party

The St. Thomas Home and School invites all families to join us at Wilcox Park for a popsicle party.

When: Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Time: 10:00-12:00 Noon

Where: Wilcox Park

Why: This is a great opportunity to get the kids together to visit with old friends, meet new classmates and their new teacher and have FUN! It's also a great chance for parents to meet each other, too!



Rain date: If it is **pouring rain** on Thursday, we will have a rain date on Thursday, August 27th, same time. We hope to see you there!

Attention: Junior High Parents

Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, August 26, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Ministry Center Community Room for our Junior High Parent Orientation.

We will highlight common procedures and expectations, and each teacher will share information about their classes. Please plan on attending this informative session.

FAMILY OPEN HOUSE

On Wednesday, September 16th, at 7:00 p.m., all parents and students are invited to join us for our family open house beginning in the Church.

7:00-7:10 ~ OPENING PRAYER

Fr. Jim will lead all our families in prayer and reflection.

7:10-7:50 ~ PARENT MEETING

Parents will remain in church while teachers and staff will lead students to their classrooms (Preschool-grade 8) and the parish nursery will be open for younger children during the parent meeting **only**.

7:50-8:30 ~ OPEN HOUSE IN SCHOOL Parents rejoin young children in nursery and proceed to school to join your child/ren (youngest-oldest) in their classroom(s). Please keep your child/ren in your care as soon as you rejoin them in their classroom(s).

Morning Arrival

Students should not arrive at school before 7:45 a.m.. All children will line up in the parking lot behind school. **If you drive your children to school, please use the church parking lot for drop off or pick up.** Please drive in on the gym side and drive out on the rectory side. Parking/stopping on Wilcox Park Drive is reserved for busses only.

Attention Grace Street Users:

Preschool Drop-Off/Pick-Up and PM Kindergarten Drop-Off Only! Grace Street is a shared space. Please use spaces and areas designated for St. Thomas. Parents, please **DO NOT park in spots marked for Care Resources, and please DO NOT use the Van Andel parking lot as a pass through** to drop off or pick up students. This will maintain a safe environment for the elderly residents of Holland Home.

Student Pick-Up/ Drop-Off

Students must NEVER be allowed to cross Wilcox Park Drive to enter or exit a car. **DO NOT** drop off or pick up students at the curb in front of school or church. For the safety of all our children, please pick up and drop off students in the designated areas of the parking lot only.

To aid in speeding up the drop off/pick up procedure, please treat Wilcox Park Drive as a one way street (westbound only). Use Hope Street to travel eastbound. When exiting the parking lot, turn right onto Wilcox Park Drive. By creating this ONE WAY environment, we can make the beginning and end of our school days more relaxing for St. Thomas and our neighbors.

The Fulton Street driveway to the Church lot gate and back out around the Mercy Respite Center can also be used to drop off and pick up students.

Please make sure your children know which of the two locations you will be using.

~ Mr. Faber

After-School Care

The St. Thomas After-School Program officially begins on the first day of school, Tuesday, September 1. We are currently enrolling full- and part-time students, grades PM P-4 & PM Kdg through sixth. Please contact me at 458-4228 Ext. 337 for further information.

~ Suzi Furtwangler

BUSSING INFORMATION

Grand Rapids Area Catholic Schools Transportation Consortium will be providing bussing for our students again for the 2009-2010 school year. Families must register each year for the bus by signing a new contract. If you have not registered and would like bussing for your students, registration forms are available in the school office. New stops may be created after October 1st, if not sooner. A mailing with route information and a 09/10 Transportation Contract has been mailed to those families who have used bussing in the past or who have expressed interest in bussing.



Absenteeism

Parents are requested to call the school office at 458-4228, between 7:30-8:30 a.m. *each day that a child will be absent.* Please state the child's name, grade and reason for absence.

Student Planner Organization

We require all students in grades 4-8 to have a trapper keeper (1-1/2" or 2" zipper binder recommended). Inside they will need to have:

1. The blue Catholic School Student Assignment Planner (purchased through the office **ONLY**) **Note: 3rd Graders are required to have this item only.**
2. A pencil pouch (available for purchase through the school office if your trapper doesn't have one)
3. **Six plastic three-hole punched subject area folders for inside the trapper.**
4. For training and consistency sake, instruction sheets will be provided by the school office for each 4th through 8th grade student.

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Look Carefully

Attached to this issue of *The Pieces*, you will find several forms that may be returned during the first days of this school year:



Bible Order Form

One of our spiritual goals is to open the Word of God with our children and invite them to establish a good relationship with it. We are asking that students in third grade and above have their own Bible which they will keep at school to use. It is important that they have a Bible that is their own as they will be encouraged to mark passages in it and make personal notes. If you are in a situation of having to obtain a new Bible for your child, we recommend the following version: The Good News Bible (Today's English Version). We are offering two hardcover editions of this Bible that can be ordered by filling out the attached order form. The first edition is the one we have always offered, a simple black and white copy. The second is a newly printed edition designed just for young Catholics, complete with color inserts, 616 *Pray It! Study It! Live It!* Articles, 99 "Catholic Connections" Articles, a timeline, a complete list of Sunday readings, and much more. Consult the attached flyer for additional information and prices. All order forms must be turned in to the school office by: Thursday, September 3rd.

~ Mr. Faber

Student Planner Organization *Continued from page 6*

Please fill out the attached order form accordingly, enclose a check made out to St. Thomas School for the corresponding amount and return it to school no later than Thursday, September 3. The trapper and folders will also be needed by this time. Thank you for your cooperation as we help teach our students the importance of good organization!

~ Mr. Faber

UNIFORMS

In order to provide an environment that reflects our Catholic tradition, promotes respect for school and individuals, and enhances self-esteem, first through eighth grade students of St. Thomas the Apostle School are required to wear uniforms beginning the first day of school. The last Monday of each month is designated as a non-uniform day. Our first non-uniform day of the year will be Monday, September 28. The brief descriptions from our handbook are contained below; however, for your convenience, we have enclosed a detailed description of each item. Please refer to the attached **UNIFORM ITEM DESCRIPTIONS** sheet when shopping for uniforms. Items purchased, other than those specifically detailed, must adhere to the "Acceptable" guidelines and match the approved items. Shop at your own risk, and when in doubt, please bring the item (in its original package) to the school office for approval. Thanks for your cooperation.

Sweater/Sweatshirts

Optional Green Booster's sweatshirt (non-hooded type) or dark green * sweater (vest, cardigan or pullover) - must be worn with shirt collar showing and be a reasonable fit. All parts of the uniform must be neat, clean and in good condition.

This sweatshirt can be worn as part of the uniform. Please see the attached Hornet Wear Order Form.



Uniform Code

Girls - Grades 1-8

Skirt or jumper - specific, * pleated, accordion - navy blue or *plaid available at Educational Outfitters only*. White or navy tights or shorts and white or navy socks, must be worn with skirt or jumper.

Boys and Girls - Grades 1-8

All shirts must be plain white or *specific green logoed shirts from Educational Outfitters only* and consist of the following styles:

turtleneck
mock turtleneck
long or short sleeve polo-style with collars
long or short sleeve oxford
specific long or short sleeve blouse*
Navy blue pants, or navy blue shorts (April 1-October 15 shorts optional).
Pants and shorts are to be twill, gabardine or broadcloth with traditional trouser cut. Shorts must be mid-thigh in length. White or navy socks must be worn with pants and shorts.

Students must wear shirts tucked in and buttoned at all times.

Personal Appearance

Grooming for all students should be in keeping with the student's age. Hair-styles should be plain and simple. Boy's hair must be cut above the eyebrows, earlobes and shirt collar. Lipstick and makeup may not be worn in school. If earrings are worn, simple and small will be permitted; girls only. One necklace, one bracelet, one ring per hand. Each teacher will be responsible for seeing that his/her students are wearing proper uniform. Violations will be handled immediately. They will be noted and submitted to the office each morning and afternoon. Parents will be called to bring proper attire.

Non-Uniform Days

Clothing can be casual or dress but must be appropriate for school. Examples of clothing **not** considered appropriate for school include but are not limited to:

1. Clothing with a bare midriff
2. Halter and tube tops
3. Sleeveless tops
4. Clothing with un-Christian or lewd printed material
5. Clothing made of sheer material
6. Shorts or pants that are fringed, cut off or frayed at bottom, made of spandex material or torn or ripped
7. Shorts above mid-thigh length
8. Skirts shorter than knee length
9. Socks must be worn with shoes or sandals

Jean Passes

Jean passes may be used on the second Monday of any month or on other designated days. With the jean pass the uniform top must still be worn.

Special Circumstances

Parents may make written requests to the principal for variance from this Uniform Code because of special circumstances (i.e. injury, child development, etc.).

If you have any questions regarding the uniform, please call the school office at 458-4228.

Gym Shoes

All shoes used in the gym must have light colored soles. No dark soles will be allowed. Check shoe for indication of a "non-marking" sole.

CHALLENGE CLUB

Attention all 5th-8th Grade Girls! Challenge Club is ready to start! Become a part of this year's Challenge Club.... new members are always welcome. Join us and catch the Spirit of Challenge. If you are interested, please call Mrs. Amy Den Braber at 233-0703.

VIP FORMS

You may still turn in your purple Volunteer Forms that were included in your registration packet. Please drop them off at the school office. If you have any questions, please call Angela Yondo (452-0444).

Asbestos Notice from Diocese

In order to comply with the requirements of the E.P.A.'s Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, all of the school buildings in the Diocese of GR have been inspected for asbestos-containing materials. If you would like to review the Management Plan for St. Thomas, it is available in the school office. The Management Plan will state recommended activities which will maintain the asbestos materials in a non-friable condition.

~ Ted Coon

The Boosters Need YOU!

Do you have students in grades 5th-8th grades?

Do you have any budding athletes of any age?

Do you have an interest in supporting St. Thomas Athletics?

Are you new to St. Thomas and looking for a fun way to get involved in and support your school?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please attend our first Boosters meeting of the year which will be held on Tuesday, August 25th at 7 p.m. in the Faculty Conference Room. We have an exciting year ahead of us with improved facilities and awesome kids just waiting to put on those Hornet uniforms!

So come be a part of St. Thomas Athletics. You won't regret it!

GO



HORNETS!

Coffee with the Principal and Assistant Principal



On Tuesday, September 22, all are invited to participate in "Coffee with the Principal and Assistant Principal.", an informal hour, 10-11:00 a.m., in the faculty/conference room during which parents can ask questions, share ideas, and learn about current programs.

Recess Supervisors

All lunch recess supervisors - Mark your calendars!!!!

On Tuesday, September 1, Supervisors will be meeting from 10:00-11:40 a.m. in the lower level of Church. Our first lunch/recess will follow. Please make every effort to attend the meeting. If you cannot attend, please call Becky Shiel at 456-5412 to make arrangements to go over the rules and theme. Thanks! ~ Becky Shiel



Important Dates

August

- 24 Faculty & Staff Retreat
School Office Closed
- 25 7 pm Sports Booster Meeting
- 26 10-12 noon Popsicles in Park
- 26 6:30 pm After-School Care
Director available
- 26 7 pm Jr. High Parent Mtg.

September

- 1 First Day of School (1-8)
- 1 9-10am 3-yr Preschool
Open House
- 1 9-10 am AM Kdg Open House
- 1 1-2 pm PM Kdg Open House
- 1 10:00-11:00 AM Assembly
10:00-11:40 AM Recess
Supervisor Training
- 2 First Day of Kindergarten
- 2 9-10am 4-yr AM Preschool
Open House
- 2 1-2pm 4-yr PM Preschool
Open House
- 2 7pm New Family Orientation
- 2 8pm Home & School Mtg.
- 3 First Day for 3-yr Preschool
- 3 Student Planner Orders due
- 3 Student Bible Orders due
- 9 First Day for 4-yr Preschool
- 14 Jean Pass Day
- 14-16 Vision & Hearing Screening
- 16 7 pm Family Open House
- 22 10-11am Coffee with
Principal & Asst. Principal
- 28 Picture Day (P4, Gr. 1-8)
- 29 Picture Day (P3)

Pesticide Notification

As a part of our pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied. You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the grounds or buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but notice will be following any such application.

School Pictures

School pictures will be taken on Monday, September 28 for Grades 4-yr Preschool thru 8th grade. Pictures for 3-yr Preschool will be taken on Tuesday, September 29. Picture retake day is scheduled for November 5, 2009.

Reading with the STARS

(St. Thomas The Apostle Reading Students) - Community Partners

This past April, this program was piloted, pairing reading students with an adult listener. Students read for a half hour, one to four times per week. We had parents, grandparents, and others from the community come into the school to listen. Holland Home residents came over on Friday afternoons. On two afternoons, the students walked across the parking lot to Care Resources (an adult day care center) to read to their participants. The program was such a success that we continued it this summer, reading for eight weeks at Care Resources. This year we are also inviting Aquinas College students to volunteer for one half hour. This is a great opportunity for our students to interact on an intergenerational basis and to also be exposed to those with disabilities.

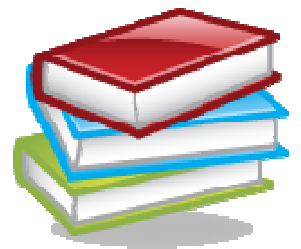
Are you interested in volunteering one half hour a week? Do you know someone who might be interested? The times needed are approximately 8:30-9:00 a.m. and 12:00-1:00 p.m. one day per week.

Please call me if you have questions or if you would like to volunteer. Thank you! ~ Liz Aschwege (365-7689)



Reading With The STARS

Reading with the STARS will be implementing a leveled reading program this year. This incorporates levels A-Z (A-C Kindergarten, C-I 1st grade, J-M 2nd grade, N-P 3rd grade, QRS 4th grade, TUV 5th grade, XYZ 6th grade, Z 7th and 8th grade). Our goal is to show the reading progress of all students. These books will be in their own bins, marked with the



level, and will be located across from the library in the Annex. We are hoping to eventually have this resource available to all students, teachers, and parents. As we are building our collection, we are looking for any books that you no longer use as a donation. There are resources on line to help us with identifying the correct level of the books, and some of course, will need to be more thoroughly evaluated. Maureen Jones will be evaluating these books. As in the past, any books that we don't use, we donate to another program. If you have any books you would like to donate, please call me for pickup at 365-7689 or you may bring them to the school office.

Thank you everyone for supporting this program!

~ Liz Aschwege



Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions

If you are new to our school or an existing volunteer who still needs to attend Virtus training, (required for all school volunteers), please note the upcoming sessions:

St. John Vianney (Wyoming)
Monday, August 17 @ 6:30 PM

Our Lady of Consolation (Rockford)
Sunday, August 23 @ 6:30 PM

Franciscan Life Process Center
(Lowell)
Wednesday, Sept. 2 @ 9:00 AM

St. Pius X Parish (Grandville)
Monday, September 14 @ 6:30 PM

All Saints Academy (Grand Rapids)
Wednesday, Sept. 16 @ 6:30 PM
(FYI: This date is also our Parent Open House.)

Holy Family Parish (Caledonia)
Tuesday, October 20 @ 9:30 AM & 6:30 PM

To Register for Virtus Training

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

Operation Christmas Child 2009!

As you are shopping for school supplies, please keep Operation Christmas Child in mind. We will have a bin in the hall downstairs for your convenience to store the items.



The most needed items are: crayons, markers, glue sticks, pencils, small notebooks, general items for older boys. Or if you see a fantastic deal, please free feel to purchase for our all-school project. Remember, everything must fit into a shoe box. Please call Maureen Jones with any questions at 454-2107.

Thank you for your continued support!

2009-2010 HORNET WEAR REMINDER

Once again, The Saint Thomas Boosters are offering HORNET WEAR promotional clothing items for purchase. An order form is attached to this Pieces and is also available on the Saint Thomas School website. Completed order forms and money may be turned in to the school office. Please make checks out to: Saint Thomas the Apostle Boosters. For more information contact Stephanie LaVoie at 954-0969.



NEW ARRIVALS!



Congratulations to:

Mike and Abby VanDyke
on the birth of
Therese (Tessa) Marie VanDyke

She was born on Thursday,
July 30, 2009
and weighed 7 pounds and 11 ounces
and was 20 1/2 inches long.

Proud siblings are:
Ethan VanDyke (4/Petkus) and Cole
VanDyke (1/Donohue)

Congratulations to:

John and Wendy Graveline
on the birth of
Elizabeth Margaret Mae Graveline

She was born on Tuesday,
July 7, 2009
and weighed 8 pounds and 5 ounces
and was 21 inches long.

We love new babies at St. Thomas!

If you have a new family member and would like to share this wonderful news with the school community, please call the school office at 458-4228 or send written details and your information will be placed in the "Pieces". Thank you!

One Body Together in Christ

The CLC Network announces the 4th Annual Inclusive Church Conference – One Body Together In Christ. It will take place on Saturday, September 26 from 8:00 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. at City on a Hill Ministries in Zeeland, Michigan. The conference will include sectionals dealing with Autism, Mental Illness, Friendship Ministries, and G.L.U.E. teams. For more information go to www.clcnetwork.org.



Band News

2009/2010 Daily Band Schedule

Band classes will begin Wednesday, September 2.

5th Grade-Mon/Wed. 8:15-9:00 a.m. at St. Thomas

6th Grade-Mon/Wed. 7:15-8:00 a.m. at St. Thomas

7th/8th Grade-Tues/Thurs. 7:15-8:00 a.m. at St. Thomas

This year there will be a **5th Grade Band Camp held Mon. 8/17-Thurs 8/20** Camp will be at Catholic Central High School according to the following schedule:

Flutes 9:00-9:45 each day; Clarinets 9:45-10:30 each day; Percussion/French Horns 10:30-11:15 each day; Trumpets 12:00-12:45 each day Trombone/Baritone/Tuba 12:45-1:30 each day.



Home & School Officers for 2009-2010

The Home & School Association would like to introduce and welcome its officers for the 2007/2008 school year:

President: Amy Jaracz
 Vice-President: Open
 Secretary: Tracey Jermstad
 Treasurer: Dawn Olney



New Family Reception

Attention all new families and their mentor families! We would like to formally welcome you to St. Thomas with a new family reception on Wednesday, September 2nd at 7:00 pm. Please bring your entire family to the Ministry Center to meet the administration, Home & School officers, committee chairs and other new families. We encourage all new family mentors to attend this event as well! Questions, please contact Nora Lignell at 956-3446. See you there!

Come Join Us for Coffee and Donuts on September 1, 2009

All parents are invited to gather and socialize after you drop your children off on the first day of school. Come grab a cup of coffee and a donut and visit with old and new friends from 8:00-9:00 a.m. in the Ministry Center.

First Home and School Meeting

The first Home and School Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 2nd at 8:00 pm immediately following the New Family Reception in the Ministry Center. ALL parents are welcome and encouraged to attend to find out about Home and School. This meeting will provide an overview of all major committees and we will discuss the financial status of Home and School, as well as any new ideas for the coming year. We look forward to everyone getting involved this year.

FREE MONEY for our school!!

Please save those Box Tops for Education logos found on the top or bottom of General Mills products. Simply tear or cut them from the packaging and send in with your child to school. Each of these logos translates into FREE money for St. Thomas!



SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE:

8:00 am	School begins
11:20 am-12:15 pm	Lunch/Recess ~ Grs.1-5
11:42 am-12:30 pm	Lunch/Recess ~ Jr. High
3:15 pm	School dismissal
8:00- 11:00 am	P3, P4, K (AM)
12:15-3:15 pm	P4, K (PM)
3:15-6:00 pm	After-School Care

Crayon drive!

A large crayon mosaic mural is in the planning stages and we need lots of used or new crayons of all shapes, sizes and colors. Just send them in to school with your child or give to Mrs. Furtwangler. The finished piece will adorn the middle school hallway, and all students will have the opportunity to participate in its creation.



St. Thomas School Calendar ~ 2009-2010

(Revised 5/27/2009)

First Quarter/First Semester ~ 40 student days/250 hours

August

- 24 Teacher Retreat
- 25-27 Teacher In-service
- 26 Popsicles in the Park
- 26 Junior High Parent Meeting ~ 7pm
- 31 Teacher In-Service

September

- 1 First Full Day (Grs. 1-8)
AM 3-yr-old Open House ~ 9-10 a.m.
AM Kindergarten Open House ~ 9-10 a.m.
PM Kindergarten Open House ~ 1-2 p.m.
- 2 First Day of Kindergarten
AM 4-yr-old Preschool Open House ~ 9-10 a.m.
PM 4-yr-old Preschool Open House ~ 1-2 p.m.
- 3 First Day of 3-yr-old Preschool
- 4 NO SCHOOL—Labor Day Vacation
- 7 NO SCHOOL—Labor Day
- 9 First Day 4-yr-old Preschool
- 16 Parent Meeting/Family Open House ~ 7 p.m.

October

- 2 11 AM dismissal/Teacher In-Service NO BUS at dismissal
- TBD 6 p.m. School Carnival
- TBD Celebrate Life Week begins
- 29 No School/MANS Conference
- 30 No School/MANS Conference
- 30 End of First Quarter

Second Quarter ~ 44 student days/274.5 hours

November

- 2 ITBS Testing begins
- 3 Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 5 11 a.m. Dismissal –Parent/Teacher Conferences (afternoon and evening) Report Cards Home
- 6 11 a.m. Dismissal
- 25-27 Thanksgiving Vacation (No After-school Program)

December

- TBD Christmas Vespers ~ 7 p.m.
- 8 Immaculate Conception (*Celebration thru Worship and Service*)
- 23-31 Christmas Vacation

January

- 1 Christmas Vacation
- 4 School Resumes
- TBD Vocations Week
- End of Second Quarter*
- 18 No School~Teacher In-Service
- TBD 7:00 p.m. Variety Show
- 22 Report Cards Home
- 25 Catholic Schools Week

Third Quarter/Second Semester ~ 42 student days/267 hours

February

- TBD Reconciliation Celebration ~ 7:00 p.m.
- 16 Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 17 Ash Wednesday
- 18 11:00 a.m. Dismissal Parent/Teacher Conferences (afternoon and evening)
- No School – Mid-Winter Break
- 22 No School – Teacher In-Service

March

- TBD Diversity Week begins
- 3 Kindergarten/Preschool Roundup Info Session ~ 9 a.m.
Kindergarten/Preschool Roundup Info Session ~ 6:30 p.m.
No K-AM, or P4 AM
- 19 Third Quarter Ends
- TBD ChaChing Challenge (*Student Council*)
- 26 Report Cards Home NO BUS TODAY

Fourth Quarter ~ 47 student days/296 hours

April

- 1 No School/Holy Thursday
- 2 No School/Good Friday
- 4 Easter
- 5-9 Spring Break
- 12 School Resumes
- TBD First Holy Eucharist (*1st Group*) ~ 3:00 p.m.

May

- TBD First Holy Eucharist (*2nd Group*) ~ 3:00 p.m.
- 3 Teacher Appreciation Week begins
- 5 May Crowning 7:00 p.m.
- 12 Spring Program ~ 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- 20-21 7th Grade Retreat at Camp Blodgett
- TBD Sacrament of Confirmation 8th Grade 7:00 p.m.
- 28 Last Day for 8th Grade
- 31 No School – Memorial Day (No Afterschool Program)

June

- 2 Last Day for 4-yr-old Preschool
8th Grade Graduation ~ 7 p.m.
- 3 Last Day for 3-yr-old Preschool & Kindergarten
- 4 11 a.m. Dismissal ~ Last Day of School (Grs 1-7)

AUGUST

M	T	W	TH	F
I	I	I	I	
I				

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	X*
X*	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

OCTOBER

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	/
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	X*	X*

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
2	C	4	/C	/C
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	X*	X*	X*
30				

DECEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	H	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	X*	X*	X*
X*	X*	X*		

JANUARY

M	T	W	TH	F
				X*
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
I*	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	C	17	/C	X*
I*	23	24	25	26

MARCH

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

APRIL

M	T	W	TH	F
			X*	X*
X*	X*	X*	X*	X*
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

MAY

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
X*				

JUNE

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	/*

I = Teacher In-service / = ½ Day X = NO School C = Conferences H = Holy Day * = No Afterschool Program E=2:15 Early Dismissal

Daily Schedule – Grades 1-8

8:00 a.m. School Begins
 11:20 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Lunch/Recess (Grs. 1-5)
 11:42 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Lunch/Recess (Grs. 6-8)
 3:15 p.m. School Dismissal

Daily Schedule – Preschool/Kindergarten

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Morning Session
 12:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Session