

THE PEACEMAKER... *PIECES*

St. Thomas School community prepares children for life in a respectful and supportive environment by providing a dynamic education centered in Christ.



ANNUAL PARENT MEETING AND OPEN HOUSE NEXT WEEK Don't Miss It!

On *Wednesday, September 13*, 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.

7:10-7:45 ~ PARENT MEETING

Parents will remain in church while teachers and staff will lead students (Preschool-grade 8) to their classrooms. The parish nursery will be open for younger children during the parent meeting only. Parents pick up young children from nursery, preschool and kindergarten then join your other students (grades 1-8) in school.

7:45-8:30 ~ OPEN HOUSE IN SCHOOL

Please begin with your youngest child's classroom and proceed from youngest to oldest, keeping your children with you as you go to each new classroom. Thank you!

Tonight— 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 6, 2006. Please bring your entire family to the Ministry Center at 7 pm 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 Helen Vrugink at 459-6910. See you there.

First Home and School Meeting

The first Home and School Meeting will be held tonight, September 6, at 8 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 will discuss the financial status of Home and School, committee budgeting, procedures for reimbursement, as well as any new ideas for the coming year. We look forward to everyone getting involved. See you tonight.

Morning Arrival

Students should not arrive at school before 7:45 am. 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. **It is important that the Grace Street entrance is used for dropping off or picking up Preschool students and PM Kindergarteners only.** Parking/stopping on Wilcox Park Drive is reserved for busses only.



ATTACHMENTS



- School Calendar
- Parent Grade Gathering Invitation
- Immunization Information
- Student Insurance Information

Milk Orders/Hot Lunch

A committee is now looking into the feasibility of a hot lunch program for this school year. We are hoping to begin a program sometime this fall, but are unsure of how soon we will be able to start. Until then children will continue to bring lunch from home as usual and we will offer the milk program on a monthly basis. Milk order forms for the month of September were sent home with the oldest child on September 5. We will offer milk beginning tomorrow, Thursday, September 7. If you would like to order milk for your students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade and did not receive an order form, please contact the school office at 458-4228.

Thank you.

~ Sue Ysasi



School Pictures

School pictures will be taken on Monday, September 25 for grades P4-8. Pictures for 3-yr Preschool will be taken on Tuesday, September 26. Please see attached half-sheet for more information. ~Sue Ysasi

Gr. 5-8 Athletic Sports Buttons

Pictures for St. Thomas sports buttons will be held on September 6th & 7th from 6:00-7:30 p.m. at the gym. The cost will be \$3.00 each or 2 buttons for \$5.00. If your younger student is currently on a sports team, you are welcome to purchase a button for him or her as well.

For Your Reference:

St. Thomas participates in the following programs whose numbers we have listed for your reference.

Family Fare: Cash for Class Number is: 11147

Meijer: Rewards Program Number is: 822932



Student PickUp/DropOff

Students must NEVER be allowed to cross Wilcox Park Drive to enter or exit a car. 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 orderly for St. Thomas and our neighbors.

~ Dave Faber

Pieces Schedule

The Peacemaker Pieces is a home-school communication tool intended to carry home many informative "pieces" of information. Please take the time to read it and record important information on your school calendar. All articles should be sent in to the school office by the end of the day on the Friday preceding the publication date (see schedule below). You may send them to the school office or email them to the office at sysasi@stthomasgr.org.

We will be sending issues of *The Pieces* and other important communications with the oldest or the only child in each family. You can also access the most recent issue of the Pieces on our website at www.stthomasgr.org.

Issues of the 2006/2007 *The Pieces* will be sent home on these dates:

September 6, 20

October 4, 18

November 1, 15, 29

December 13

January 10, 24

February 7, 21

March 7, 21

April 18

May 2, 16, 30

A volunteer is still needed to run, collate, and label *The Pieces* on the above dates. Please call Sue in the office if you are interested. Also, if at any time you do not receive your family's copy of the latest *Pieces*, please contact the school office. Thank you. ~ Kathy Barth

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), listed below are dates, times and locations of upcoming Virtus training sessions:

Holy Spirit Parish (Grand Rapids)
Monday, September 11, 2006 @ 6:30 PM

Holy Redeemer Parish (Jenison)
Saturday, September 16, 2006 @ 9:00 AM

Our Lady of Consolation Parish (Rockford)
Sunday, September 17, 2006 @ 6:00 PM

St. Robert of Newminster Parish (Ada)
Wednesday, September 27, 2006 @ 9:30 AM & 6:30 PM

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish (Grand Rapids)
Wednesday, October 18, 2006 @ 8:30 AM & 6:30 PM

Holy Family Parish (Caledonia)
Tuesday, October 24, 2006 @ 6:00 PM
Thursday, November 2, 2006 @ 6:00 PM

St. Jude Parish (Grand Rapids)
Wednesday, November 8, 2006 @ 6:30 PM
Wednesday, May 2, 2007 @ 6:30 PM

Booster News

Many of you may already know that exciting and much needed renovations took place in the gymnasium this summer. When you come back from summer break you will find updated locker rooms and bathrooms among other things. We're sure everyone will enjoy and be proud of the new look at the St. Thomas gym. The booster committee also decided that this fall would be a great time to update our concession stand staffing policy. Following the policy already in place at many of the other elementary schools in the diocese, the St. Thomas Boosters will now have one concession coordinator, whose job will be to assign volunteers to a specific time to staff the concession stand. You may ask yourselves, how will this be different than the system used in the past? Under the new policy the coordinator will assign parents of St. Thomas athletes to work a specific date and time, as opposed to making phone calls asking if the parents are able to volunteer. The assignment posting will be handed out to all families with children participating in any sport at St. Thomas. The families will then be responsible for staffing the concession stand. If they are unable to make it for their scheduled date they are responsible for finding a substitute to work for them. If no one shows up to staff the concession stand, the family who is scheduled for that time will be charged a \$25.00 no-show fee. The Boosters are hopeful that this new policy will ensure that all families participate to support the Booster's main source of income.

The Boosters believe that St. Thomas has one of the best sports programs, and we all know the student athletes take tremendous pride in being a St. Thomas HORNET! Thanks for your help in making our sports programs successful.

~ Helen Vrugink (Booster Secretary)

Immunizations & Screenings

This is a reminder that all Preschool & Kindergarten students must have an updated immunization record on file in the school office by the first day of school. Preschool students are also required to have a physical dated within the past year. A vision screen is also required for all Kindergarten students. If you have an incoming 6th grade student that has had an immunization after Kindergarten, please contact the school office at 458-4228.

The Kent County Health Department will again be routinely screening children in their schools. Hearing screening is done in Preschool, Kindergarten, 2 & 4th grades. Vision screening is done in Preschool, 1st, 3rd, 5th & 7th grades. Please note that free hearing & vision screening is offered, by appointment, at any Kent County Health Department. Please call 632-7047 for an appointment.

Please see attached flyer for new preschool immunization requirements beginning January 1, 2007. On the back side of the flyer is information regarding Meningococcal disease (meningitis). The Michigan Department of Health requires that this information be given to all families with students in grades 6, 9 & 12. Please contact the Kent County Health Department at 632-7020 if you have any questions regarding these immunizations.

Attention Volunteers

All who volunteer on a regular basis are welcome to have their picture taken on Picture Days, September 25 & 26 (morning). Geskus Photography will use these photos to create volunteer picture ID's. We ask that you wear these whenever volunteering at school. They will be yours to keep. Please call the school office at 458-4228 to let us know which day you will be having your picture taken.

~ Octavia Houtekier

Mark Your Calendars and Plan on Helping with Carnival!

Our Annual St. Thomas Carnival is set for Saturday, October 14, and will be here before we know it! Please mark the date on your calendar and plan on attending. If you are interested in helping, please contact Carnival Chair, Michelle Rohn or VIP Coordinators Angela Yondo or Lisa Wolf.

Parent/Student/Teacher Communciations

To ensure all notes reach their destination, we ask you to deliver to the office all correspondence one day before it needs to go home. All notes placed in teacher mailboxes after 7:30 a.m. will go home in planners the next day. To eliminate multiple notes to the same family, notes will be given to the oldest or only student of the family.

Please notice our new shelves in the school foyer. We have placed important notes, order forms etc. for you to quickly pick up. We hope this will be an added convenience to you. ~ Dave Faber



DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Sound interesting? Destination Imagination is a program based on creative problem solving theory that helps young people build lifelong skills in creative and critical thinking, teamwork, time management and problem solving. The teams of up to seven people work together as a team to create their solution to a Team Challenge, which can have a focus that is theatrical, structural, improvisational, scientific or technical. Want to know more? You may access additional information at www.destinationimagination.org. In addition, Donna Valente and I will be giving a brief overview at the Open House on September 13th, and will be available afterward to answer any questions you may have. Please let us know if you are interested so we can move forward as soon as possible to identify teams, parent volunteers and coaches. Please contact Jennifer Clemens at jnclemens8@comcast.net or 974-0015 with any questions.

Recess Supervisor

Cheryl Lambert is our Recess Supervisor. Her name was accidentally omitted from the Recess Article in the August "Pieces". Please contact her if you have any questions at 458-1608.

Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement volunteers "teach" in the classroom for five visits following a one-time orientation where all materials are provided. JA involves volunteers from corporations, businesses, colleges, parents, grandparents and retirees.

There are classroom openings at **St. Thomas** where your students are waiting for the JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT program to be delivered by YOU – the VOLUNTEER!

Junior Achievement's programs are straightforward and easy to deliver. They are perfect for parents who want to get involved in their child's class without a lot of time to spare. If you want to volunteer in your child's class by teaching the students about concepts that will prepare them for life, be a JA VOLUNTEER.

If you're interested in preparing young people for their futures, contact: Junior Achievement: Diane Petrakis 616-575-9080 x26 or dpetrakis@iserv.net or Dave Faber at 458-4228. **Call today for more information!**

ConQuest Club for Boys

You've probably heard of K4J and Challenge Club, but do you know there is also a Catholic faith-based club just for boys aged 5-17? ConQuest helps boys explore and strengthen their Catholic faith, become strong leaders, and make new friends. If you are interested in learning more about the St. Thomas ConQuest Club, you and your parents are invited to an informational and orientation meeting this Sunday, September 10th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Ministry Center. Flyers with more details are available at the Welcome and Information Center located inside the main school doors. If you have questions feel free to call St. Thomas parishioner Steve Strobel at 957-7776.

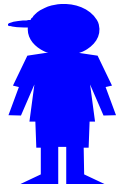
Coffee with the Principal and Assistant Principal

On Tuesday, September 26, 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.

~ Dave Faber



Welcome!



A Warm St. Thomas Welcome

A special St. Thomas welcome to our newest families and students (those enrolled since the August Pieces went home). They are:

Chris and Amy Drees

Benjamin (P4/PM)

Adam (2/H)

Zachary (5/F)

Bobby and Rachel Hazelton

Kathryn (P4/PM)

Ken and Debbie Hurst

Bahen (6/K)

John and Maggie Walsh

Julia (2/H)

We also welcome some familiar families and faces who are returning to our school:

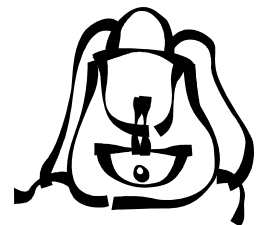
Nicole Klimczak

Chase (P4/PM)

Cade (K/PM)

Backpack Facts

Occupational therapists are raising awareness about backpacks and book bags. Check out these facts, then take a look at their web site if you have more questions: www.aota.org.



- Never let a child carry more than 15 percent of his body weight
- Load the heaviest items closest to the child's back
- Both shoulder straps should always be worn.
- Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps.

The bottom of the pack should never rest more than 4 inches below the waistline



You are Invited to Our Third Annual Parent Grade Gatherings

The following families have graciously offered their home to host our annual parent grade gatherings. This is a great opportunity for parents to connect with other parents from their children's grade and is a great adult night out. More details on location and what to bring will be provided one week prior to each event. So call your sitter and mark the date on your calendar now! If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email Jennifer at 974-0015 or jmcmemens8@comcast.net. Thank you!

All Preschool Host:	Mike & Maureen Muraski	Saturday, September 30	7-9 pm
K AM and PM Host:	Edward & Rachel Purdue	Saturday, November 11	7-9 pm
First Grade Host:	Scott & Emily Brew	Saturday, October 7	7-9 pm
Second Grade Host:	Jim & Debi Schueler	Friday, September 15	7-9 pm
Third Grade Host:	Daniel & Amy Jaracz	Friday, October 13	7-9 pm
Fourth Grade Host:	Greg & Geralynn Stormzand	Saturday, November 11	7-9 pm
Fifth Grade Host:	Jim & Carole Knapp	Friday, September 29	7-9 pm
Sixth Grade Host:	Dave & Joni Poggi	Saturday, November 18	7-9 pm
Seventh Grade Host:	Bob & Amy Callaway	Saturday, November 4	7-9 pm
Eighth Grade Host:	Michael & Jan Sprenger	Friday, October 27	7-9 pm

New Family Reception

Attention all new families! We would like to formally welcome you to St. Thomas with a new family reception on **Wednesday, September 6th**. Please bring your entire family to the Ministry Center at 7 p.m. to meet all the other families.

First Home and School Meeting


Welcome back! The first Home and School meeting of the new school year will be held **Wednesday, September 6th** immediately following the New Family Gathering in the Ministry Center at 8 p.m. It would be wonderful to see you there!

Carpool Connection

Are gas prices getting you down? Are you looking for someone to help share the drive back and forth to St. Thomas but don't know anyone well enough to ask? Please consider posting a notice on the Carpool Connection bulletin board in the front entrance of school.

Question of the Week?

Do you have a burning question for Home and School? Chances are that other parents have the same questions. Jot your questions down and send them to the office via kid mail or email Jennifer at jmcmemens8@comcast.net. (attn: Home and School). Your question will be answered confidentially in our "question of the week" column in the Pieces or personally if you would like a phone call or email back.



ST. THOMAS SCHOOL CARNIVAL COMING SOON!

Saturday, October 14th!

Mark your calendars and watch for details coming soon!

