



Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School
Annual Report
2008/2009

Dynamic education centered in Christ

DAILY PRAYER

David Faber, Principal

Each day after announcing birthdays, Games of the Week, and other important information for teachers and students, we take a moment for school-wide prayer. If you have ever been in the building at this time, you realize how special this moment has become as silence falls throughout our hallways and classrooms. Each student, beginning with our eighth

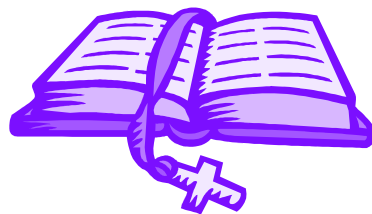
graders and ending the year with third graders, has an opportunity to write their own prayer and then share it with the whole school. Prior to the student led prayer, we share school-wide intentions submitted by students, parents, and staff. During daily prayer we have shared sad times, celebrated happy moments, and witnessed God's goodness and love.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING IN CLASSROOM

David Faber, Principal

Each day, our students have an opportunity to spend time reading the scriptures from their own personal Bibles. Students in grades three through eight are required to have their own copy of the Bible for use in the classroom. Each day after students read a passage related to a theme or element of our faith, they take a short time to apply it to their lives through

discussion and/or journaling. Through this activity we hope not only to help the students become more knowledgeable about the Bible, but also to help them understand the scriptures as the living word of God. This practice has become an integral part of the unique culture at Saint Thomas School.



Curriculum – Faith Formation and Religious Education

WEEKLY SCHOOL MASS

David Faber, Principal

Once a week, usually on Fridays, we gather as a school community for the celebration of Mass. Teachers and their classes take turns preparing the Mass theme, the introduction, readings, prayers of the faithful, songs, and special meditations. Students participate as lectors, servers, gift bearers, instrumentalists and choir

members. After being confirmed, some of our eighth graders even participate as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Mass is regularly attended by our second-eighth graders. On special occasions and Holy Days our preschoolers, kindergartners, and first graders join us for the celebration.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PRAYER SERVICES

David Faber, Principal

The students in our early childhood program (PK-1) gather together for prayer. Teachers and classes take turns planning the theme, readings, prayers, and special activities. This has become a unique tradition here at Saint Thomas. These prayer services

are specifically designed in an age appropriate manner to encourage students' participation. This opportunity allows our younger students to take a more active role in communal prayer.

VISITS TO THE EUCHARISTIC CHAPEL

David Faber, Principal

Experiencing the rich elements of our Catholic faith is an integral part of the Saint Thomas School experience. Teachers are encouraged to bring their students for brief visits to the Eucharistic Chapel throughout the school year in order to reinforce the

value and use of this haven of quiet, peace, and presence before God. Fr. Jim has created a teacher resource and a student prayer card to assist students and teachers during their visits.

Curriculum – Faith Formation and Religious Education

FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HOUR

David Faber, Principal

Each first Friday, we give students in grades 1-8 a choice between going out for recess or going to the church to participate in Eucharistic Adoration from 12:00-12:15 PM during the normal parish Holy Hour. Student response has been unbelievable, with

average attendance between 12 and 20. Fr. Jim has created a special prayer card that many of the students choose to use during this time. Others pray the rosary, read from the Bible, or just sit/pray quietly in the presence of the Lord.

RECONCILIATION SERVICES

Father James Chelich, Pastor

The students in each of our classrooms gathered to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance), both during the season of Advent, and then again during the season of Lent. Examining their hearts, looking at their attitudes, words and actions, and coming before God to take responsibility for them, are among the most important “Arts of Free Women and Men.” The celebration of the Sacrament not only exercises these arts of spiritual maturity, but also seeks God’s ready

desire to give us the supernatural power to change our lives and form ourselves in the image of Jesus. As a result, each year we have reason to marvel and rejoice in the growing sensitivity of heart and personal responsibility of our children. It is wonderful to see the power of God work in each one of them moving them to become “great of soul.” All this is a part of the mystery and power of this amazing sacrament of God’s real presence and power at work in us and among us as Christians.

RELIGION CURRICULUM

David Faber, Principal

In 2007 teachers participated in a diocesan religion curriculum institute to update our diocesan religion curriculum. The newly updated curriculum focuses on systematic instruction of the four main parts of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Beliefs, Worship, Actions, and

Prayer. The new text we will begin using for instruction during the 08/09 school year is RCL/Benziger’s 2007 Faith First Series. All religion texts associated with our program are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

CATHOLIC MORALITY AND CHASTITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Margaret Murphy, Chairperson

In January of 1997, Fr. Jim Chelich led a discussion on the Pontifical Council's document, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. Our faculty, along with interested parents and parishioners attended this discussion. Following that meeting a committee was formed to study model curriculums and to compile an appropriate curriculum for grades K-8. Teachers were consulted and drafts completed for an in-school, daytime program. This committee, led by parents with the input of the principal and teachers, created a

comprehensive Catholic Morality and Chastity Education Curriculum which has been approved by the Education Commission and fully integrated into the total religious education program of the school by the faculty and other guest speakers. There is an evening program designed as an adult education session, and grade appropriate in-school presentations for fifth through eighth grade students (and their same-sex parent). This program gives parents the support they need in their critical role as the primary educators of their children.

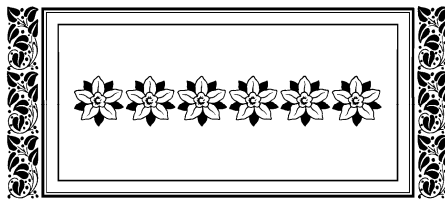
SERVICE LEARNING CURRICULUM

Suzanne VanderZee, Enrichment Program Coordinator

Working through the school improvement process, the faculty has created our Service Learning Curriculum. Emphasizing the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in an age-appropriate manner, each grade level has developed the integration of service within an existing portion of the classroom curriculum. Examples include collecting used toys to share

with others, contributing personal needs items for distribution by the Red Cross Disaster Relief Teams, collecting and donating gently used books for students in need.

Tri-fold reports, which detail the curriculum for each grade level, are available in the school office.



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Ann Geer, Director of Education and Formation

Preparation for the sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Eucharist is a shared responsibility of our parents, sponsors, St. Thomas the Apostle School staff, catechists of the Monday Night Religious Education program, Father Jim, and our Youth Minister, Patti Reynolds. Instruction and formation is a two-year process.

The students receive suitable instruction and formation in the classroom, as well as combined gatherings of parents, candidates for the sacraments, and sponsors. In addition, the candidates spend a full day on retreat in immediate preparation for each of the sacraments.

RECONCILIATION

All students in grades K-8 celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice per year, generally once in Advent and once in Lent. Reconciliation is celebrated with the children in two separate forms (“Form A” and “Form B”) as allowable in the Roman Ritual of Penance.

Students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time in kindergarten and in subsequent years until the fourth grade in Form B. Form B simply means that Fr. Jim guides the children through an examination of

conscience, and then individual confession of sin and absolution, which is age appropriate. Catechesis of the sacrament continues each year for a deepened understanding of the sacrament.

In the fourth grade our students gather for a Reconciliation Celebration under Form A. The girls and boys exercise what Father Jim commonly refers to as, “The art of examining oneself”. Form A simply means that the students complete the process of individual preparation, examination of conscience, confession of sin, absolution and penance entirely on their own, in the manner of adults.

CONFIRMATION

This year 50 young men and women of St. Thomas the Apostle School and Religious Education Program celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, with Bishop Walter Hurley at the Cathedral of St. Andrew.

EUCCHARIST

This year 41 girls and boys were welcomed to the table of the Lord for the first time as they received their First Eucharist on Sunday, April 26 and on Sunday, May 3, 2009.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (PRESCHOOL – GRADE 2)

Holly Lake, Teacher

The preschool through second grade teachers have been working on implementation and collaboration of the ZooPhonics program.

With our Service Learning Curriculum, each grade level participated in a variety of activities. The four-year-old preschoolers have been involved all year with Holland Home; the highlight of which was an Easter celebration with the residents involving punch and cookies. This spring, the preschoolers and kindergartners collected gently used toys and clothes. First graders and their emerging reading is the focus of their service learning, collecting gently used books from home and donating them to ICCF Family Haven. They also sponsored two families at Christmas from Family Haven and provided them with wonderful much needed Christmas gifts. The weather is a big part of the second grade curriculum, so they studied weather disasters and collected small-sized toiletries for Comfort Bags that the organization passes out.

Once again the Kindergartners performed “The Piggy Opera” in April. The first and second graders planted flowers with residents of Holland Home in the fall and the

spring. We also hatched eggs in the first/second grade hallway this spring and watched the chickens grow! All classes were involved in many exciting field trips and activities based on themes from the classroom curriculum.

The 3-year-old preschoolers have learned to treat others with love and respect, have enjoyed several Bible story activities and participated in Advent box activities to help focus on Jesus’ birth. Lent has focused on learning to show love for Jesus by helping others. Their focus through the year is on “What Would Jesus Do?”

The four-year-olds participated in their annual Easter Egg Hunt, and also hosted their 9th annual Mother’s Day Tea on Friday, May 8. The preschoolers serve their moms and grandmothers lemonade, tea, and cookies as well as entertaining them with songs and a show.

The preschoolers, kindergartners, and first graders enjoy prayer services once a week in the Ministry Center chapel. In preparation for First Eucharist, the second graders attend Mass weekly throughout the year. The second graders joyously celebrated the sacrament of First Eucharist on April 26 and May 3.

UPPER ELEMENTARY (GRADES 3 – 5)

Bethann Petkus, Teacher

The upper elementary team focuses on coordinating and integrating curricula. We enhance our curricula with field trips to the Grand Rapids Art Museum, VanAndel Museum, Frederick Meijer Botanical Gardens, Aquinas College Science Center, and the Grand Rapids Symphony. Science is also augmented through outdoor science activities at Aquinas College field sites and hands-on learning experiences.

We place great emphasis on community, spiritual development and growth. This includes basic elements of our faith: praying the rosary, Reconciliation during Advent and Lent, studying the Saints, Stations of the Cross, and daily prayer. The students are involved in planning the liturgy and the highlight of the school week is our celebrating Mass on Friday. The fourth grade prepares for the sacrament of Reconciliation. We plan our religious instruction to mirror the church year and seasonal celebration. The fifth grade prepares to be altar servers.

We believe strongly in a multicultural approach to education, which is visible in our classroom environments. The Language Arts program has a strong multicultural

flavor. We use trade books and literature-based texts to explore different peoples and perspectives. In addition to reading, we emphasize writing skills. Students are encouraged to create and publish their own stories and poems using the school's Publishing Center.

The science curriculum covers lessons on life science, physical science, and earth science. Varied lessons and materials keep the science program interesting and effective. We like to utilize hands-on activities and incorporate writing, art and literature.

Our math program emphasizes fact-learning strategies, connecting the concrete and abstract, linking math vocabulary to symbols, strategies for problem-solving and everyday practices.

A new spelling program has been implemented. This program, *A Reason for Spelling*, focuses on pattern words and a Bible verse. We offer challenge words to differentiate and enhance the program. Words from the trade books being read are selected throughout the year as well.

We offer a safe and supportive atmosphere in which our students can grow spiritually and academically.

Curriculum – Teacher Team Reports Grades 6-8

MIDDLE SCHOOL – SCIENCE

Compiled By David Faber, Principal

The Junior High Science program introduced a new textbook series (Science Explorer 2007, published by Prentice Hall) that maintains the development of critical thinking skills, and excellent labs. One of the great new features of this series is the

availability of the textbook online. Students proceed through a series of unit books each year throughout the course of the three years of junior high. A series of DVDs that relate to each book supplements the core material.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – PROGRAM AND ENRICHMENTS

Middle School Teachers

The students in grades 6-8 participate in the following core subjects all year: Religion, Math, Science, English, Reading, Social Studies, and Vocabulary. St. Thomas also provides the following enrichments: Spanish (3x/week), Art (2x/week), Physical Education (1x/week), Computer (2x/week), and Music (1x/week).

We offer a departmentalized middle school, with choices in our math program, based upon performance and ability.

The 6-8 Language Arts classroom is enhanced by the availability of 30 laptop computers. The computers are used throughout the middle school in different subject areas as needed.

Our class sizes range between 17 and 31 students. The day consists of seven 48 minute periods, a homeroom time at the beginning and end of the day, a 20 minute lunch, and a 25-minute mid-day recess break.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – MATH PROGRAM

Ed Carr, Teacher

We are currently using the Glencoe Series of textbooks. It is a rigorous program which has a number of improvements over the previously used Chicago Series. The program begins with Pre-Algebra.

Once again, we have reason to be proud of our students! Averages, through the third quarter, were:

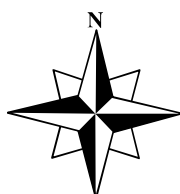
Pre-Algebra (Grade 6) 89.0

Pre-Algebra (Grade 7) 85.7

Algebra I (Grade 7) 92.3

Algebra I (Grade 8) 85.0

Geometry (Grade 8) 90.4



Curriculum – Teacher Team Reports Grades 6-8

MIDDLE SCHOOL DRAMA EXPERIENCES

Adam Baxter, Teacher

Technology was a big part of the Junior High this year. The eighth graders spent Lent learning about the Passion of Christ. They filmed “Walking With Jesus” -- a look at the Passion of Christ through the eyes of eighth graders and their vision of how we are never alone in the journey of faith. The scripts were taken right from the Bible, which helped them to understand the message of Jesus. The project started as an idea to use technology and blossomed into a huge success. The students learned about Jesus from another perspective, and had fun in the process. The film was shown to

the entire school right before Spring Break and was a big hit. The effort that the students, Mrs. Skallos, the technology coordinator, and I put into the film really stood out.

The seventh graders have been making documentaries at the end of their chapters in history. They are using the documentaries to summarize the chapters and show what they have learned. They have also done a video scavenger trip through downtown Grand Rapids. They are continually incorporating learning with technology.



Curriculum – “Specials” K-8

ART PROGRAM

Jessica Seitz, GRPS Art Teacher

St. Thomas students’ artwork has been fun and exciting for everyone to see! I have been quite impressed with the ideas that students have come up with during art class. I have also been pleased to see how students encourage and complement each other. Grades 1-5 have been working with a variety of media including: paints, oil pastels, pencil, chalk, paper and clay. Students have been working on techniques within each media such as: blending, painting smooth lines, using value and folding etc. Projects are often inspired

by stories, famous artworks, or grade level curriculum.

Grades 6-8 are working on more intricate assignments. Assignments synthesize prior knowledge of compositional skills, art elements and art principals. New techniques and concepts are introduced. Students continue to work toward mastering their technical skills. Students have worked with tessellations, painting forms, using a grid, weaving, two point perspective, batik and clay to name a few assignments.



SPANISH PROGRAM

Sue VanZee, Spanish Teacher

In an attempt to build bridges between English and Spanish-speaking peoples, the Spanish program at St. Thomas strives to:

- Assist students' development of Spanish language skills.
- Introduce them to the history, culture, and daily life of Hispanic peoples.
- Help all students to better understand Hispanic culture, language, customs, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Make Spanish learning an enjoyable experience through music, drama, and art.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education, Ashley Grothe

Physical fitness is the main component of Physical Education for students in grades K-8. To develop total physical fitness our students strive to demonstrate an increase in strength, speed, flexibility, agility and cardiovascular endurance.

In grades K-3, we work on basic motor skills through such activities as throwing, catching, bowling, kicking a ball, ball handling, etc. We also try to improve the quality of movement within a defined space through various games and activities.

In grades 4 and 5, we refine the basic motor skills and work on lead-up skills for team activities such as

soccer, volleyball, football, basketball, floor hockey, bowling, etc. Physical Education for grades 6-8 serves to refine the skills learned in grades 4 and 5.

In grades 6-8 we work to improve strategic thinking and team skills. Our goal is to give a variety of different sports so students find a sport they will participate in to stay physically active for the rest of their lives.

The students not only develop the physical skills they will use throughout their lives, but also learn to have fun and enjoy a lifetime of physical fitness activities.

SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM

Kathy Proulx, Music Teacher

Music classes at St. Thomas encompass identifying note values, pitch names, instruments of the orchestra, vocal and instrumental techniques, classroom performance time, spring program performances, and involvement in liturgy. The 7th graders study introduction to music history. 8th graders learn about stage production and hand bell ringing.

As a Christ-centered school we use music to enhance the children’s spiritual life. We plan music used for various sacramental preparations,

prayer services and Masses by studying chosen scripture readings and themes. We rehearse songs the entire school is learning, class presentations of music and/or movement.

Our May spring program was entitled “Did You Listen to the Clue?” Students chose to write about a clue (the cross, bible, etc.) as a way to Encounter the Living God.

COMPUTER LAB

Sue Jazwiec, Computer Instructor

Students in grades K-8 all utilize the computer lab. Students are exposed to a variety of applications. Lower elementary students use programs that reinforce their math and language classes, and begin learning basic Office programs. Upper elementary students work on reinforcement applications along with producing an assortment of projects. Junior High students work in Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and a variety of other programs. They have also produced and edited audio segments that have been played on Community radio. Junior High students have also produced short movies. All students work in a keyboarding program. The

skills they learn will assist them throughout their school careers.

We emphasize integrating the curriculum in projects that are done in the lab. The Internet and Web 2.0 applications are used to enhance the grade level curriculum. We strongly promote the integration of curriculum, instruction, and the use of thematic plans to facilitate student learning and achievement.

Students in Kindergarten use the computer lab once per week. Grades one through five receive computer education twice per week. Junior High students have computers three times a week, once for Spanish Lab.



SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Jamie LaFleur, Counselor

As a school counselor for St. Thomas, I provide services in two different ways. I spend time by teacher request in different classrooms facilitating discussions and activities which focus on conflict resolutions, decision-making skills, communication skills

and self-esteem. I also see students on a one-on-one basis. These students are referred by their teacher or their parents. These sessions have been positive in teaching students how to deal with school-related issues.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM/DISCOVER PROGRAM

Octavia Houtekier- Asst. Principal, Christen Pierce- Resource Teacher, Amy Zakrajsek – A.T. Enrichment Teacher

The goal of our special needs process is to provide a positive experience that helps each student to be personally successful. Students are referred to the Student Success Team by teachers and/or parents. The team will usually consist of the relevant DiscoverER teacher, the referring classroom teacher, any other St. Thomas personnel involved with the student, a GRPS teacher consultant, GRPS school psychologist, speech pathologist, and/or Assistant Principal.

By utilizing a variety of resources our Student Success Team works, to develop teacher interventions, parent resources, Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and Section 504 plans. The team meets monthly to review student needs, discuss teacher/parent observations, provide recommendations and complete evaluations based on collected information.

Our Resource Program is in its 3rd year at St.



Thomas. Our resource teacher works in collaboration with parents, classroom teachers, Christian Learning Center (CLC), GRPS special education services, and volunteers to provide educational opportunities to students with special needs within the least restrictive environment.

Through the DiscoverER program we make every attempt to include students in the regular classroom with the support of the Resource and A.T. Enrichment Program. To the extent necessary and possible, resource and enrichment services are made available to individuals and small groups of students within the DiscoverER Program.

Our Academically Talented (A.T.) Enrichment Program was implemented in the fall of this year. More than 30 students (2nd -8th) received services in this area and we hope to expand the program to include all grade levels. Success was found by many in the Spelling Bee and Mathematics League.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Dave Faber, Principal

This year two parent coordinators operate our Library:

Mrs. Aschwege receives a small stipend to organize and coordinate all the resources and parents in our library. Mrs. Jones also receives a small stipend to assist, especially with the purchase of new books. Each classroom teacher takes the lead during library time with the assistance of parent volunteers.

This classroom teacher leadership in the library has created:

- Natural opportunities for curriculum connections and research
- Increased time to read for enjoyment

This year we also added special low-level shelving units for easy access by our younger students to the easy readers.



ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Louis Bandlow, Athletic Director

St. Thomas' Athletic Program is part of the 25 school Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC). Through GRACEAC, St. Thomas offers the current sports opportunities to our 5th-8th grade students:

FALL

Girl's Cross Country Boy's Cross Country (Cross country is available for 7th/8th grade only)

Girl's Volleyball Boy's Football
Girl's Sideline Cheer Boy's Soccer

WINTER

Girl's Basketball Boy's Basketball

Girl's Sideline Cheer

Girl's Competitive Cheer (available for 7th/8th grade only)

SPRING

Girl's Softball Boy's Baseball

Girl's Track Boy's Track

Girl's Soccer

93.70% of St. Thomas 5th-8th grade students participated in at least one of these activities this past year.

The St. Thomas Athletic Program is an important part of our school ministry that helps develop values that are needed to cope with life's competitive circumstances.

Teamwork, honesty, cooperation, self-sacrifice, dedication, obedience, hard work, goal setting, respect, self-

discipline, responsibility, and mutual encouragement are typical outcomes for student athletes.

St. Thomas Hornet teams are intended to be competitive without a must win attitude. They provide an opportunity to promote Christian values through sportsmanship while fully involving the whole person: body, mind, and spirit, in activities that exercise and challenge. Through hard work and the God-given talents of our student/athletes and coaches, our Hornet teams have excelled and enjoyed numerous athletic successes this past year.

Many thanks to the great coaches who have spent many hours helping, teaching, guiding and mentoring our students. It is the coaches that enable the St. Thomas Athletic Program to continue its excellent Catholic tradition in athletics. **Coaching opportunities are always available, so please sign-up through our school V.I.P program or contact the Athletic Director.**

St. Thomas continues to be a leader in the Catholic schools of Grand Rapids. The continuing maintenance and updating of our gym by installing new furnaces and front doors shows our commitment to our student/athletes

and their friends and family who visit our gym. Thank you to the Boosters, the Parish, the Home & School Association, and everyone who continues to help with this and other projects to improve our fine facilities.

Thank you to the parent and student volunteers who help run our gym during games. These volunteers set-up, supervise, and clean the gym on game days. They also staff the St. Thomas Booster's concession stand.

The Booster's gym concession stand is the largest source of revenue for purchasing our athletic equipment. **Please remember that all parents of our student-athletes are expected to volunteer in these game day duties.** Come to a Booster's meeting to find out how your "Time and Talent" is needed.

GO HORNETS!



STUDENT COUNCIL

Lisa Becherer and Octavia Houtekier, Advisors

The 2008-2009 St. Thomas Student Council had a great year with many significant and successful opportunities to serve and help our community.

The Council presented our 7th Annual St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Award during Catholic Schools Week. The students chose Mr. David Faber as the recipient because of his dedication to Catholic education.

We took on several fundraising projects for Teacher Appreciation Week this year. We sponsored a candy sale and "Theme Days". Our Spring fundraiser was an awesome effort by all members of the council. Our 5th annual Cha-Ching Challenge for Charity was both exciting and helpful. The funds (\$1,345) raised were donated to a charity of choice,

St. Jude's Children's Hospital. The Student Council planned several activities for our school. We also coordinated a special guest lunch during Catholic Schools Week. Our officers were very visual as "Welcome Ambassadors" to guests.

The teachers were treated to student made "teacher supply packages" at Christmas time. Faculty & Staff was served a B-I-N-G-O luncheon during Teacher Appreciation Week.

Our proudest moment in history came this May when we completed the first ever Student Council Constitution for St. Thomas the Apostle. It was signed into action by all members of the council and was a year long labor of love.



STUDENT PUBLISHING CENTER

Denise Deveau, Parent Volunteer

The Publishing Center is run by volunteers and funded by the Home & School Association. Students in grades K-8 can write and publish their own stories. They work with teachers and volunteers in the Publishing Center to edit and format their books for publication.

Volunteers type the manuscript in the specified format. The books are

bound before the students return to illustrate them. The students are then the proud authors of their own published book!

Recognition is provided in “The Pieces”, and a certificate is given to each student author.

It is great to see the students developing writing skills at a young age.

CHILDREN’S CHOIR

Kathy Proulx, Director

Several new parish children joined our returning members this year. Rehearsals are Tuesday evenings, with grades K-2 practicing from 6-6:45 p.m. They are joined by grades 3-5 at 6:30 p.m. The older members sing and ring hand bells and tone chimes until 7:25p.m. The choir participates in Sunday and Holy Day liturgies.

Our 3-5th grade choristers rotate their schedule monthly, singing at the 5p.m. Saturday Mass, the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass and the 11a.m. Sunday Mass.

Our program also includes a Youth Choir for students in sixth through

ninth grades. This choir helps lead worship through music every other week at the 9a.m. Mass.

All students sing together five times during the year: once in November, on Christmas Eve, once in February, on Easter weekend, and on Mother’s Day.

The three main goals for the St. Thomas Children’s Choirs are praising God, having fun, and learning a variety of musical styles.

Our children are leaders of prayer, using their voices to lift all our hearts to the Lord.

DISCOVER PROGRAM, ENRICHMENT

Amy Zakrajsek, Enrichment Teacher

Discover Me Program Philosophy:

Here at St. Thomas we believe that all children are gifted. God has blessed every one of us with gifts that we strive to bring forth to enrich and enliven the Kingdom of God here on earth. One of the ways we help the students find and use their gifts is through our Discover Me Program. With this program we are enabled to meet all our students' needs, so that each student is taught through methods that allow him/her to achieve to the best of his/her potential. In so doing the students are grouped in many different ways throughout the course of the academic year, and these groups are continually changing. Teachers are given resources for differentiating lessons when appropriate, and small group programs are created, both within and outside of the classroom, when in the best interest of the group and curriculum. We do not wish to convey an attitude of any one student or student groups as being "better", or at a "higher level" than any one else. We mean to meet each student's need at the most optimal time and with the most appropriate methods for learning without frustration.

DiscovER Program

(Spectrum of: Resource → Remedial → Grade Level → Enrichment → Gifted)

An A.T. (Academically Talented) Enrichment Program was implemented this school year. Currently 28 students in grades 3-6 are participating in the areas of Math, Reading, and Science. This program is designed as a "push-in" program, with the enrichment teacher going into the classroom to work with students, as well as a "pull-out" program, with lessons taking place in the A.T. classroom. There is a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher and the enrichment teacher to ensure that enrichment activities enhance the classroom curriculum.

25 more students have participated in additional enrichment activities such as the Spelling Bee and Michigan Mathematics League. These students signed up to participate in these academic events, coming to the enrichment classroom during their recess once per week to prepare for the competitions.

We have seen positive impact with this new program and look forward to extending it with a more defined identification process and more "in depth" curriculum opportunities.

CELEBRATE LIFE WEEK

Debi Schueler, Parent Coordinator

Every fall, the St. Thomas School Community spends a week celebrating and honoring the precious gift of life that God has given us. The Celebrate Life Committee plans a week of prayer, service and education for the students at St. Thomas. The focus of the week this year was Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The case outside of the office displayed articles relating to her life. Mr. Faber read students information about Mother Theresa, and students led a decade of the rosary each day with intentions for respect for all stages of life. Lower grades had the opportunity to visit with Holland Home residents. Students made cards for the residents, assisted them in a communal service and had an ice

cream social with a special concert. Junior high students were invited to participate in a school year long, Spiritual Adoption project to pray for the protection of the unborn. This project, lead by Donna Valente has been especially moving to many of the students and given them a real sense of their ability to make a difference. The Jr. High students also participated in a prayer vigil at the memorial to the unborn at Aquinas College. The students were also invited to wear t-shirts on Monday that had positive life themes. Many of the students were graced with a surprise appearance of Blessed Mother Teresa, played by a very special St. Thomas mom.

Curriculum – Program Features

MARKETING

Kathy Barth, Marketing Coordinator

This year we have embarked on a new and exciting partnership with our neighbor, Aquinas College, in creating a program called, “College for Kids.” Spread across both campuses and involving various faculty members from both Saint Thomas and Aquinas, this program provides a new forum for exploration of many fields of study and the arts. In addition, this program provides a

new marketing venue as we invite other students from within our parish and neighborhood to be a part of this program. As this program grows, more marketing venues will present themselves allowing us to reach even more families and students.

Our website continues to be an active marketing tool, giving us an excellent “first contact” resource for those new families moving into the Grand

Rapids area. We have had many families first find us via our website presence and then follow up with visits to our campus. The website continues to grow and will soon feature many new photographs of our students courtesy of Bob Line-Neuman. In addition, as personal testimonies and “word of mouth” advertising are often the best forms of marketing, we have now included several personal testimonies on the homepage of the website. We would like to include new ones each year and archive past testimonials so that those visiting our site for the first time can read what actual Saint Thomas parents and students have to say about our school.

This year we again sent out two different postcards for our neighborhood mailing which included a large number of households with children, making our outreach stronger than ever.

We constantly revisit and update the information in Our New Family Folders which includes brochures, the Annual report, grade-appropriate curriculum materials, and informational sheets that give prospective families an initial impression and thorough overview of our school. These folders are sent to all families who request information

about Saint Thomas. In addition, these materials are sent to all those parishioners with preschool aged children approaching school age when we invite them to our Preschool and Kindergarten Round Ups.

We continue our efforts to get these materials, which are also available on our website, into the hands of more people because we know that once people are inside our doors, Saint Thomas virtually markets itself.

We continue to make initial contact with parishioners by sending them a card and gift when they have their babies baptized and then follow through with them when their children reach Preschool and Kindergarten age by inviting them to Open Houses and Round Up. We plan to expand our partnership with these parents in the future.

We have been very successful in our marketing efforts in the past few years and our enrollment continues to rise. We are grateful for our many positive families who have helped to “spread the word” about Saint Thomas so that we can continue to share the many benefits, blessings, and opportunities available here at Saint Thomas School with as many people as possible.

MNSAA ACCREDITATION – 2007 SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION

Dave Faber, Principal

St. Thomas is fully accredited through the Michigan Non-public Schools Accrediting Association (MNSAA). In October 2005, we were invited by our diocese and MNSAA to make application to be considered for a special “Accreditation with Distinction” status. We submitted our goals for this distinction in April 2006 and presented the evaluation of these goals to a state-wide committee in December 2006. St. Thomas the Apostle School received the 2007

“School of Distinction” award in the spring of 2007. We were one of only two schools statewide to receive this first-time ever award from the MNSAA.



During the 2008-09 school year we completed the self-study process and will be visited by the MNSAA in October of 2009 for reaccreditation.

NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE (WWW.STTHOMASGR.ORG)

Kathy Barth, Marketing Coordinator

Our updated school website is being used by more families and students as we use it as a major communication tool between home and school.

Announcements, the latest sports schedules, upcoming events, hot lunch menu, calendar, and Pieces, can be found on our website. In addition, you can download the latest professional recording of our students singing our school theme song and reciting this year’s special prayer (as well as those from last year). A new “face lift” for the site is in the works as we add an abundance of new photos to enhance the header of each page.

Our website continues to be a first draw to our school, providing new

and inquiring families with their initial look at our school. The site has helped us to reach an ever expanding market of possible new families. The website gives these families a chance to get a “feel” for St. Thomas before they even walk in the door. This gives us a chance to market to people who haven’t moved into the area yet, as well as to those who like to see what we have to offer before they schedule a visit in person. We’ve added several testimonials from current families, giving those interested in exploring the possibility of Saint Thomas an opportunity to hear first-hand from others all the wonderful qualities and blessings that make Saint Thomas such a special place.

TECHNOLOGY AT ST. THOMAS

Maryly Skallos, Technology Coordinator

We began the school year with a full complement of technological tools that have benefited our entire program. The basic components include:

- Data and voice networks that connect the computer lab, classrooms, school office and rectory.
- Telephones with teacher voicemail in each classroom
- Multi-media computer pods in every classroom.
- An automated library
- Peripheral components including laser printers, color printers, and fax machines
- Digital cameras and digital camcorder
- A web server to handle our website
- Digital cable hookup for instructional use within the school
- Having a full-time technology coordinator on site
- Digital intercom and bell system
- Ceiling projectors and large screens to enhance learning opportunities

During the course of the year, we have increased our basic components by:

- A networked digital copier
- Continuation of a weekly technology club for middle school students
- Upgrading 25% of old computers to newer technology
- Obtaining updated software programs to fit the needs of students and current programs
- Updated student information system program
- Use of student response systems in our upper elementary classrooms
- Contracting a network consulting firm to assist the technology coordinator in network matters
- Maintaining and upgrading the wireless mobile computer system with 20 laptops for students to use in addition to the computer lab
- Maintaining the Freedom to Learn mobile wireless system for use with our Middle School students

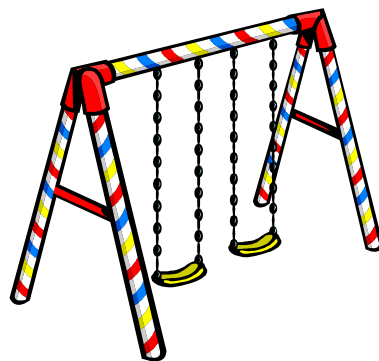
St. Thomas takes pride in our technology-rich learning environment. Thanks to the generosity of the parish, businesses, many individuals, and our Home and School Association, our students are being prepared to excel in the 21st century. Students, teachers, and parents are learning to use the technological tools that are essential in this age of information.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Octavia Houtekier, After-School Program Director

The After-School Program (ASP) continues to be an important ministry for our school community. As the children's needs change we have reassessed the program to provide the best atmosphere possible. The DHS licensed program has been expanded to include students from PM 4 year old preschoolers to students up to 12 years of age. This year there were 4 full-time and 7 part-time students enrolled in the program. The After-School hours changed to 3:15-6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A multiple student discount, early registration discount and a child care bank for teachers was added this year. Students participated in fun, organized activities on various days, including board games, gym time, computer lab, group activities, prayer circle, neighborhood walks, cooking projects, sledding, and arts and crafts.

Each day we plan for homework, student down time, and a delicious snack. The program was also available to participants on scheduled days when school was in session half day. On those particular days, ASP kids have enjoyed field trips to Frederik Meijer Gardens, the YMCA, Children's Museum, Yesterdog, Jersey Junction, and the movies. Community service projects have included delivering food to God's Kitchen, organizing the parish pantry, making cards for Holland Home residents, writing letters to veterans and soldiers in Iraq, picking up trash at the park and the Aquinas campus, caroling for the teachers, and being responsible for Box Tops for Education. We are confident that this program will continue to grow and provide a safe, fun and nurturing environment.



SCHOOLYARD HABITAT

Patti Mirandette, Parent Coordinator

Life in the habitat continues to prosper. Even the weeds are healthy, which serve as perfect targets for 6th-graders wielding weeding tools!

This year our “Weed and Feed” program continued with great success. Student volunteers gave up their lunch recess time to work outdoors. Afterwards, they enjoyed a special ice cream treat for their efforts.

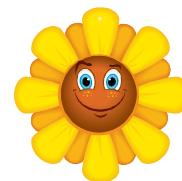
Throughout the fall, the students happily prepared the habitat for winter by cutting back grapevines, raking up leaves, and planting perennials. In the spring, they cut back unruly woody ornamentals, pulled weeds, cleaned up debris, and planted plants. The students really enjoyed this time spent outdoors as their work was rewarded by fresh air, feelings of achievement, and the chance to observe wildlife and insects at every turn.

Some specific activities included our 2nd grade class participating in its annual springtime Planting Day with residents of the Holland Home. The children worked together with our senior neighbors to transplant over 500 seedlings from trays to flats. These young plants will grace the grounds at Holland Home, and some will be planted in our habitat for summer color.

Our 5th-grade class erected an arched arbor over one of the benches in the habitat last spring. As the grapevine runs rampant, the students cut its branches into long lengths and weave them in and around the arbor. Over time, they will create an outdoor sculpture in this way, inspired by the work of artist Patrick Dougherty.

This spring, students will create an herb garden with a small stone retaining wall around its perimeter. They will plant pumpkins in the seasonal bed, and divide and transplant perennial flowers in the butterfly garden. Come autumn, the students will harvest herbs for lessons in cooking, herbal teas, and herbal vinegars. They’ll harvest the pumpkins for pumpkin pies, roasted pumpkin seeds, and decorative uses. And they’ll use flower heads for creating cloth and yarn dyes, just like the Native Americans did years ago.

The habitat continues to grow and change as we make efforts to use the space to enhance our school curriculum. Happily for us, it provides a special area for contemplation and composition, planning and planting, and learning as we go.



Teacher Professional Development

TEACHER RETREATS

Suzanne VanderZee, Administrative Aide

The faculty and staff of St. Thomas gathered for a retreat to begin this school year. In August, they boarded a trolley and headed for a day of reflection led by Fr. Jim Chelich. Their reflection focused on the

school's theme for the year: "Encounter the Living God". The day also included time for quiet prayer, lunch and social time with the staff.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

David Faber, Principal

Each teacher at St. Thomas participates in an annual process called Teacher Performance Assessment. The purpose of the assessment process is to encourage and document the professional growth of the faculty at St. Thomas.

Each teacher participates with me or our assistant principal, Octavia Houtekier, in a process of goal setting at the beginning of the year. Every teacher also participates in a mid-year review, several informal visits, one formal lesson observation, and a year-end assessment.



Teacher Professional Development

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Debra Zoppa, School Improvement Team Leader

The School Improvement Team, made up of a teacher representative from each grade level section, as well as Mr. Faber and Mrs. Ysasi, meets monthly throughout the school year to coordinate a monthly school improvement meeting attended by the entire teaching staff. The team serves as a sounding board for staff concerns and brings these concerns and school improvement ideas to the team meeting. Each monthly school improvement meeting includes either a Best Practice presentation by a teacher, staff member, or speaker, or a technology showcase; highlighting

ideas, teaching strategies, or innovative classroom learning opportunities. During the 2008-09 school year several ideas were presented for consideration and discussion to the Team including The Lake Michigan Writing Project, reading strategies, the school accreditation self-study, Professional Learning Communities, enrichment planning for the school year and summer, Information for Growth Survey, student response systems, creative conflict resolution, and a possible upgrade to Office 2007.

TEACHER PLANNING MEETINGS

Suzanne VanderZee, Administrative Aide

On several school days, students were dismissed at 2:15 p.m. and the St. Thomas faculty met together in Professional Learning Communities. Two Professional Learning Community meetings were day-long meetings with teaching staff from other local Catholic schools. Similarly, while parent catechists led classes on the Holy Days, our teachers met together by grade group (Early Childhood, Elementary, and Junior

High). During these times, each group discussed curriculum planning and other issues that uniquely affected them.

Team Planning meetings differed from the monthly Faculty meetings held Monday afternoons at 3:15 p.m. Faculty meetings are designed to discuss procedures and programs that impact the faculty and school as a whole.

Teacher Professional Development

SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, & CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Sue Ysasi, Secretary

Our faculty and staff of St. Thomas recognize the importance of continuous professional education. By participating in numerous development activities each year,

they continue to bring fresh and innovative ideas to the community. Below is a listing of the workshops and conferences attended by members of our faculty and staff during the 2008-2009 school year.

DIBELS
Advanced Moodle Training
Allergy Seminar
Aquinas College
 Reading/Research – grad. Classes
Aquinas College Spanish 201
Brain Gym
Capturing Kids' Hearts
Catechetical Conference
Children's Creative Response
 To Conflict Workshop
Computer Forensics
Curriculum Institute for Math
Curriculum Institute for Social Sciences
Curriculum Mapping Software
Davenport Univ. Computer Fundamentals
Differentiation Workshop
Diocesan Workshop – GRIM
 (General Instruction of the Roman Missal)
Diocesan Curriculum Crafter Training
 For Science
Early Childhood Education – 3-7 yr olds
Educational Research Methodology
Educational Law
Exceptionalities in Education
Exploring Reggio Emilia Approach
Foldables for K-5
Girls on the Run Coaches Training
GRCC Spanish 101 & 102
Handbells
In a Reading State of Mind
Inclusion
Infragard – Who is protecting the data now?
Instruction for Diverse Learners (Differentiation)
Instructional Sessions on Catholic Faith

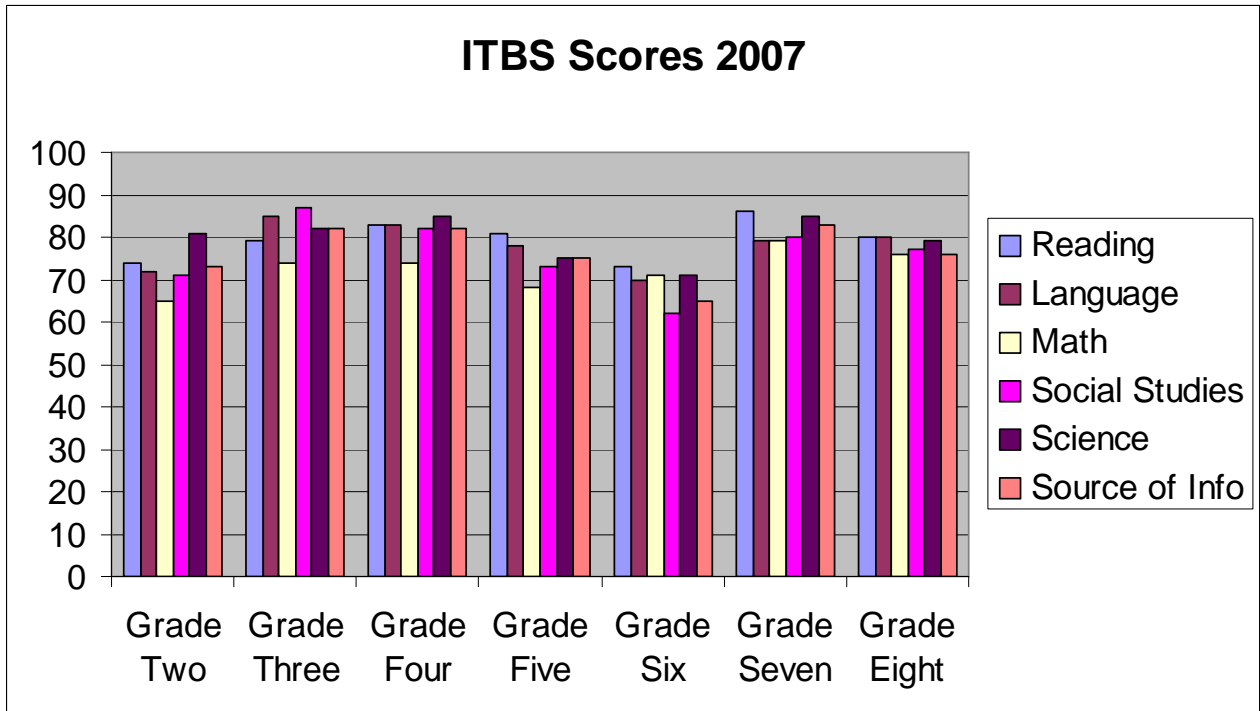
(14 sessions)
ITEC – WM
Lake Michigan Academy – Memory & Learning
Lake Michigan Academy
 - Sensory Presentation/Asst. Technology
Leadership in Schools
Learning Disabilities Assoc. of Michigan
 Conference
Liturgical Latin
Love & Logic – Rockford Public Schools
MACUL – Office 2007: The Old meets the New
MACUL – Second Life
MANS Administrators' Conference
Media Relations for Principals
Michigan Reading Assoc. Annual Conference
NPM Reading Workshop
Prayer w/Father Phil Shangraw
Preserving our Catholicity
Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
Reading and Research
Reciprocal Coaching in Inclusion Program
Response to Intervention (RTI)
Retreat: St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
 Detroit, MI
School Safety Tabletop Discussion
Science Audit – Denver, CO
Secondary Thinking Skills for the 21st Century
Securing Windows Server 2003
The Catholic Faith
Training: Curriculum Mapping Software
Using Wikis in Elementary School – KISD
WMU Teacher Inservice Workshop
Writer's Workshop of Grades 1-2
Zoo Phonics

Student Achievement

TEST SCORE DATA

David Faber, Principal

These scores represent class average national percentile.



Student Enrollment & Class Size Data

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL CLASS SIZE REPORT

Preschool 3	13
Preschool 4 AM	11
Preschool 4 PM	17
Kindergarten-AM	21
Kindergarten-PM	20
Lake - First/Second Grade	17
Donohue - First Grade	18
Baxter - Second Grade	20
Michels - Third Grade	20
VanDyke - Third Grade	23
Petkus - Fourth/Fifth Grade	19
Pieri - Fourth Grade	22
Furtwangler - Fifth Grade	24
Baxter - Sixth Grade	15
Carr - Sixth Grade	16
Zoppa - Seventh Grade	31
Stegehuis - Eighth Grade	31

Total Enrollment – 339
 12% of our students represent minority groups (American Indian, Asian, African American, Hispanic, Multi-racial).

Total Families – 182
 90% of our families are parish families and 10% represent non-parish families.

Average class size - 21

Parent and Parishioner Involvement

HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Amy Bocian, H&S President

The Home & School Association is an outstanding volunteer parent organization which funds and/or sponsors many services to the children and to the school. It provides extra funds to each teacher yearly for classroom enhancements and supports the following activities and facilities:

- Arts Committee
- Carnival (school/parish social event and fundraiser)
- Eighth Grade trips
- St. Thomas Auction (major school/parish fundraiser)
- Faculty and Staff Appreciation (Christmas cookie trays, Fall and Spring luncheons, and Teacher Appreciation Baskets)
- Field Day (fun day for students in May)
- Playground Equipment
- Roller Skating Parties
- Science/Art Lab and Habitat
- Student Publishing Center (students write/illustrate their own books)
- Junior High School Dance
- Operation Christmas Child
- Classroom Technology
- First Day of School Coffee
- Used Uniform Sale (end of year)
- New Family Reception (new families 'adopted' by veteran school families)
- Multicultural, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Field Trip Transportation
- Morality and Chastity Committee
- Vocations Committee
- Celebrate Life Committee
- Parent Grade Gatherings (parents get to know each other)
- Popsicle Party (students reconnect before school starts)

Home & School Association meetings are held four times annually and are open to all parents and teachers. We look forward to the continued support and involvement of our St. Thomas parents and faculty.

Parent and Parishioner Involvement

VOLUNTEERS IN PARTNERSHIP (VIP) PROGRAM

Angela Yondo, VIP Coordinator

Over 200 individuals and families volunteer to help make St. Thomas such a special place. Our volunteers provide many services for the school. Some of the activities our volunteers participate in include:

- Bulk Mailings
 - Carnival
 - Catholic Morality and Chastity Committee
 - Boosters Committee
 - Education Commission Committees
 - Home & School Association Committees
 - Library/Media Center
 - 4th grade Reconciliation Reception
 - Office Help
 - Parent Catechists on Holy Days
 - Publishing Center
 - classroom help
 - School Directory
 - School Picture Day
 - 8th grade Confirmation Reception
 - St. Thomas Auction
 - Field Day
 - Conference Lunches
-

BOOSTERS ASSOCIATION

Don Serba, Boosters President

The St. Thomas Boosters Association is comprised of parents and students who participate in any athletic program sponsored by the Grand Rapids Area Catholic Elementary Athletic Council (GRACEAC).

The Boosters are responsible for financial support for these programs. They raise money for uniforms and equipment through the operation of

our concession stand, the Mother's Day Flower sale, and the sale of St. Thomas sweatshirts, T-shirts and sport buttons. We also provide gym volunteers to help in the concession stand, clean up after tournament games, and take admission at the door.

Boosters meetings are held three times throughout the year.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTION

Nathaniel R. Wolf, Education Commission President

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as Education Commission President this past year. The nine member volunteer education commission works collaboratively with our Pastor, Principal, Assistant Principal, Finance Council, School Improvement Team, Director of Religious Education, and Home & School President to advance the school's mission.

Presiding over the monthly meetings organized in collaboration with the principal, the president ensures that the commission is focused on working toward the goals set forth in the school's long range plan.

The commission as a whole acts as a policy recommending body to the Pastor and Principal. Working within Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools' guidelines, the commission helps advance educational program development at St. Thomas.

Nine years ago, Principal David Faber encouraged me as a new parishioner and parent to take a leap of faith and consider the Education Commission as a way to become engaged with the school and parish. By the grace of God and the support of the parish, I was elected to serve. New members are

elected by the parish at large for a three-year term or are appointed to a one-year term outlined in the Commission's by-laws. My time spent on the Education Commission has been personally rewarding. Please consider your leap of faith and bring your individual talents to the Education Commission.

Each commission member leads their respective committee in achieving the goals set by the long range plans. All community members are invited to serve on a committee, which is a great way to become more involved with our wonderful school.

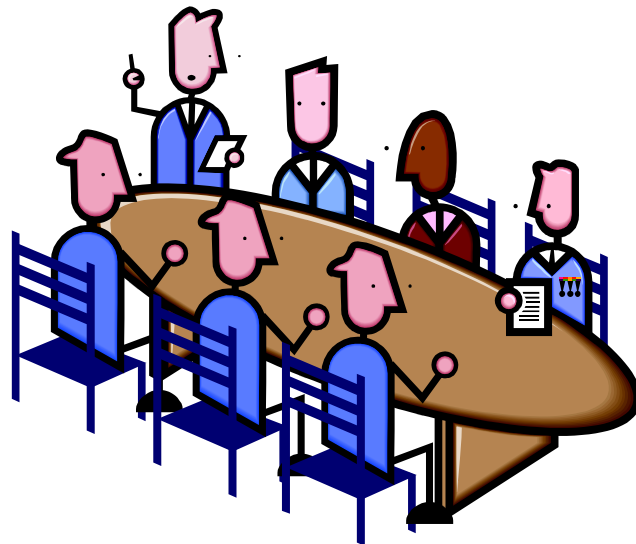
The commission is also responsible for developing and monitoring annual budgets in conjunction with the Finance Council, defining long range goals, and seeking the input and support of our faith community.

This year, I am especially proud of our accomplishments. In addition to offering our students an outstanding curriculum, St. Thomas' faculty and staff have worked hard to initiate a program targeted to provide additional educational opportunities to those students who are accelerated learners and those who have special needs. That our school was able to add vital

and wonderful programs to its already excellent curriculum is truly a remarkable accomplishment in our difficult economic times. Finally, I want to highlight our school's newest offering. This summer St. Thomas the Apostle School will be collaborating with Aquinas College to offer the first annual "College for Kids" summer program. This is an exciting new opportunity for learning and we are

very pleased to work with Aquinas College to offer it to our students.

I want to again thank the parish for supporting St. Thomas the Apostle School. Working collaboratively and guided by God's grace, we will continue to succeed. Thanks to your substantial commitment, St. Thomas the Apostle School is truly a School of Distinction.



FINANCE COMMITTEE

Julieta Tablante-Blanco, Chairperson

As chairperson of the Finance Committee, I played an active role as liaison to the Parish Finance Council. This year, the Committee has set the goals for the Long Range plan which are the following:

1. Clearly define the work of the Education Foundation and Tuition Angel Fund to both parishioners and school families i.e., a) from application process to award, b) define guidelines of how much can be granted from the Educational Foundation and raised through the Angel Fund.
2. Find ways to maximize (increase) the tuition revenue.
3. Find sources of funding to support the addition of part-time aide for our fourth/fifth classes.

The committee, with the help of Dawn Olney, was able to create an informative/educational flyer for the parishioners and school families. This flyer was used during an appeal which helped us achieve goal #1. This also helped us raise an estimated \$30,778.87. This total does include the Angel funds raised at the Auction.

The committee meets to revise the previous school year's budget in October and also prepares the next year's school budget, which is approved by the Education Commission in January or February and brought forth to the Finance council for approval.

The highlights of the budget process for 2008-2009 include:

- An ongoing goal to recognize the dedication and contributions of our teachers. It has long been a goal of the Education Commission to maintain the teacher base salary at a level of 85% of the local public school base salary in order to attract and retain excellent beginning teachers. We will continue to meet this original goal with a .5 increase to our base salary and a 1.67% step increase for the 2009-2010 school year.
- To provide ongoing training to our faculty and staff.
- To maintain the 130 plus computers and laptops located in our classrooms, lab, and on our mobile lab, as well as Internet access, enhanced wireless capabilities, network support and software upgrades.

- To promote the growth of our academically talented and high achievers through an addition of a part-time Enrichment teacher.
- To provide an opportunity for our fifth grade students to play a musical instrument and to develop and enhance the band program.
- Because of the growth we are experiencing, it remains a priority to maintain an increased number of teacher's aides in classrooms as necessary.
- The actual cost for each of the projected 339 St. Thomas students is \$4,192 based on the operating budget. Without the parish's commitment to school families, this would be the per child tuition rate. The budgeted parish investment is \$607,656 which is a 0% increase over last year. This is approximately 41.5% of the parish operating budget of \$1,463,904.
- A comprehensive review of other Catholic schools in our market was accomplished. St. Thomas tuition rates reflect the values we provide. It is a priority of the Education Commission to assure that a Catholic education is available for all St. Thomas families. With general increases in tuition of 2.5% to our Preschool, Kindergarten and 1 elementary student rate, we understand that there will be a growing need for financial assistance. The Education Foundation/Cook Scholarships will continue its funding for tuition assistance at an estimated \$50,000, and the Tuition Angel Grants/Kuazi Scholarships will continue to help additional families, as well as those who find themselves with an immediate or unforeseen need.

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Jim Schueler, Chairperson

The Facilities and Technology Committee had one major goal this year—to gain a full understanding of the existing facilities and equipment of the school. The parish conducted a survey of space needs and performed

due diligence of potential space expansion options. The committee is reviewing this information along with enrollment projections for the upcoming years to determine potential needs and solutions.

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Lynette Flynn, Chairperson

Goal # 1: Continue promoting St. Thomas School by utilizing varied marketing tools that communicate our unique Mission and Vision.

Goal # 2: Increase Public Relations Efforts.

Goal # 3: Investigate Enrollment Goals using facilities/space planning capacity issues. Continue to identify the effects schools of choice/specialty schools have on enrollment.

Result:

1. The St. Thomas website continues to be updated making it a state of the art interactive marketing and communication tool. The website communicates the unique mission and vision of Catholic Education within St. Thomas School to parishioners and the wider community.
2. The post card mailings to neighbors with children ages 2 to 10 continue to reach out to a broader community to help develop enrollment goals.

3. A collaborative effort with Aquinas College to reach out to special needs or gifted and talented students is close to

being



finalized.

4. St. Thomas supported and participated in the Diocesan wide market study highlighting the availability of Catholic School Education.

MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Mark Triestram, Chairperson

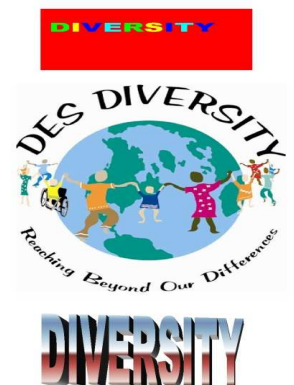
This school year 2008-2009, the Multicultural, Diversity and Inclusion (MDI) Committee continued to accomplish both its long term and short term plans. The underlying goal of each of the committee's plans is to enhance awareness of diversity, cultural competency, proficiency and inclusiveness.

Thanks to numerous volunteers, this year's activities were even more expansive than in the past. In addition to updated monthly bulletin board displays, the committee published newsletters, sponsored the well received Diversity Week, and hosted an interactive ethnic music celebration. The committee was also fortunate enough to arrange a visit from our Asian sister city representatives. An ongoing activity is the development of an expanding collection of resource tubs. The tubs are designed to be a teaching aid used in the discussion of topics ranging from disabilities to religions other than Catholicism. Diversity Week featured activities, music, interactive class discussions and a modified lunch menu which featured a different ethnic food each of the five days.

The committee, in collaboration with the Home and School Association has previously invited guest speakers to speak on Diversity and Tolerance and intends to continue this effort for the 2009-2010 school year.

As stated in the school's Long Range Plan, the MDI committee will continue to promote multiculturalism as an essential element of the Catholic Education through the recognition of the value of Diversity, cultural competence and cultural proficiency among personnel and families as well as utilizing the talents of a diverse student body and staff.

The committee's plans for the 2009-2010 school year include continuing the incorporation of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion throughout every aspect of curriculum, school climate and community. We continue to progress in meeting the committee's goals to support the development of anti-bias/ culturally sensitive curriculum with continued encouragement and ongoing teacher training in these areas.



Budget Information

School Revenues

Net Tuition Revenue	\$639,407
Previous Year's Tuition	4,794
Foundation	65,000
Tuition Angel Grants	37,668
Registration	24,525
Donations	15,250
Bussing Revenue.....	3,520
Rental Income	400
Total School Revenues	793,344
Net Parish Investment	607,656
TOTAL REVENUE.....	<u>1,406,000</u>

Administrative Costs

Public relations.....	\$2,320
Contracted Services (Payroll & Tuition)	5,450
Administrative Fringe Benefits	54,472
Fundraising/Development.....	--0--
Hospitality.....	80
Volunteer/Staff Appreciation.....	900
Postage	2,555
Printing/Copying.....	5,055
Administrative Salaries	170,097
Staff Development	6,551
Bussing Expense	13,530
Allocation to After School Program	17,443

Instructional Costs

Salaries:

Lay Teachers.....	664,896
Substitute Teachers	12,450
Christen Learning Center Network.....	7,867
Furniture and Equipment	150
Playground Expense.....	18,852
Fringe Benefits.....	176,114
Student Gifts	160
Library.....	3,803
Hardware/Software Support.....	14,872
Equipment Maintenance	572
Other Expenses	6,557
Athletic Program.....	8,595
Teaching Supplies	8,998
Band Program	3,840
Computer, Printer, Copier & Duplex Supp.....	2,596
Habitat & Greenhouse Supplies.....	--0--
Testing Materials	3,482

Internet Link (DSL Line Charge)	1,034
Textbooks.....	22,413
Plant Costs Allocated	<u>154,845</u>
TOTAL SCHOOL EXPENSES	<u>\$1,390,548</u>
Net Income.....	<u>--0--</u>
Parish Capital Funds (July 1, 2006– June 30, 2007) \$61,800	
Grants	
Home and School Assoc. Budgeted Requests (2006-2007)	\$32,187
Boosters Organization Expenses (Jan. 1, 2008– Dec. 31, 2008)	\$7668.90
Title II, Part A	\$3,757
Title II, Part D	\$1,187
Title I	\$16,495
Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant – School Counselor	\$2,004
Gifts (July 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007)	
Restricted School Donations.....	\$28,383

ST. THOMAS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

David Faber, Principal

The St. Thomas Educational Foundation supports the Catholic educational programs of the parish. Established in 1983, it was one of the first Educational Foundations of its type within the Grand Rapids Diocese. Its purpose is to support parishioners in accessing Catholic educational programs through the availability of tuition assistance.

It has helped hundreds of families and thousands of children attend St. Thomas School. This year alone, with assets as of December 31, 2008, totaling \$1,134,265 it provided \$65,000 in tuition assistance to 45 families. The Educational Foundation continues to be the primary source for tuition assistance to parishioners desiring a Catholic education for their children.

TUITION ANGEL PROGRAM

David Faber, Principal

The St. Thomas Tuition Angel Program has been established to supplement the funds of the St. Thomas Educational Foundation on an annual basis. This program increases our ability to provide support to families requiring tuition

assistance. This year, many generous tuition angels donated a total of \$54,231 to the Tuition Angel Program. As of April of this year, 49 St. Thomas School families received tuition assistance from the Tuition Angel Program.

TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANTED

Dawn Olney, Coordinator of Finance

St. Thomas Educational Foundation	\$65,000
Tuition Angel Program	\$54,231
Diocesan Tuition Assistance Awards	\$9,375
Education Freedom Fund	\$5,166
TOTAL ASSISTANCE	\$133,772
TOTAL FAMILIES ASSISTED	63



**Saint Thomas the Apostle
School**

Dynamic Education Centered in Christ

2007 "School of Distinction"