



St. Francis of Assisi

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MUSTANG CONNECTION

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2013

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Science & Technology

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is working with the University of Michigan to integrate technology more fully into its science curriculum. Teacher Sister Rebecca Mierendorf and Professor Elliot Soloway are leading the initiative. Students at the University of Michigan College of Engineering have developed applications which are appropriate for a variety of classroom lessons. Through a grant from the National Science Foundation, the University has donated 30 Google Tablets for use by the 7th and 8th grade students in science class. As the students use the tablets for their lessons, Sister Rebecca gives the University feedback in order to make the applications even better.



One example of how this new approach supports the science curriculum is in the use of a concept map application. Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. With the tablets, students work collaboratively in groups to create a map. They use arrows and different colors to visually describe the interrelatedness of concepts, and they engage more fully in their own learning. In addition, since students naturally gravitate to technology versus paper, they are more likely and willing to complete assignments thoroughly.

As Sister Rebecca said, *"The tablets support what we are doing already in the science curriculum. They fit in really well, they are not distracting, and their use gets us to the same end. I love seeing the students engaged in their work and collaborating with one another, and St. Francis has not incurred any costs for participating in this unique opportunity!"*

As beneficial as this program is, it sadly has some limitations. Only 30 tablets are currently available for student use -- 87 are needed for the 7th and 8th grade alone. (More could be used for the math curriculum, with different applications, for every student in the school.) In addition, tablet usage is restricted to the science lab -- students are not able to use them for school assignments at home. Given the many advantages of the technology and the reasonable cost of each tablet (approximately \$300, including applications and maintenance) St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is actively seeking contributions to fund this dream; twenty thousand dollars is needed in entirety. That said, in the near future the school plans to purchase five tablets for math intervention, for use in all grades for the math curriculum.

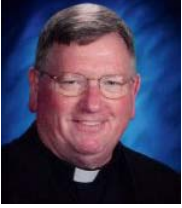
The collaboration and mentorship between St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School and the University of Michigan started in October, 2012. It has been an exciting program for everyone involved and we pray that in the future tablet technology will become fully integrated into the curriculum, through charitable contributions. Please contact the Development Office at cpierce@stfrancisa2.org or at 734.821.2208 to learn how you can facilitate the purchase of these important learning devices.



Philosophy and Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is a family-oriented mission of the St. Francis of Assisi Parish community where each student is valued, respected and nurtured as a unique creation of God. We challenge our students spiritually, academically and physically to learn, care and lead as they work to discover the plan that God intends for them. As followers of Christ, we strive always to instill in our students the words of St. Francis of Assisi... "Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary, use words."

The Pastor's Perspective



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School resumed classes on January 7 after a much needed respite from the end of year hustle and bustle. Now we look forward to a New Year filled with promise and hope.

In 2013, I encourage you to continue your support of our school. We are blessed to have a faith-filled and dynamic learning environment for God's children -- one that has endured for 60 years.

You have many opportunities to contribute to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. Your prayer and volunteer hours are critical to the school's success, as is your financial help.

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find an Annual Appeal remittance envelope. If you have waited until the New Year to make a gift, please contribute what you can to help us meet our operating costs, most importantly, teacher salaries.

Please also consider supporting the Educational Trust Fund (ETF) by attending the February 2 Benefit Event, or by joining the ETF Leadership Circle. The Leadership Circle is comprised of families who have made a commitment of at least \$1,000 per year to the Trust Fund, for five consecutive years. The Trust Fund exists to help preserve the outstanding education provided at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School.

Thank you for the trust you place in our school. May God bless you and your loved ones in 2013.

Fr. Jim McDougall
Pastor

A New Year's Prayer

May God make your year a happy one!
Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;



Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;

Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;

Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;

Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most, and by making you anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

From the Principal's Pen



Dear Friends,

The winter season is always a time when we look back and are grateful for the many blessings God has shared with us throughout the year. Here at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, it is also a time we look forward to a New Year full of hope and joy.

This year we have been celebrating 60 years of Catholic education at St. Francis of Assisi School. For over 60 years we have been blessed with amazing faculty, outstanding faith education, academic excellence and a strong community of families supporting us. We are so proud of how we have grown and we look in anticipation to the future. Catholic Schools' week at the end of January allows us to celebrate the amazing standards we hold true at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School.

We will begin the week with our annual Open House on January 27 from 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. We will continue the celebration throughout the week with events created by our middle school leadership students. It is such a special time for our students, faculty and families to come together and celebrate the excellence St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School has maintained throughout our 60 years.

In light of the Sandy Hook School tragedy, please know that St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School has a very comprehensive Crisis Management Plan. We take all necessary precautions to maintain safety in our school. That said, we will continue to learn and add to our plan to look for ways to better protect our students. You can support our efforts by following our security measures which includes ringing the doorbell at the school's main entrance when you visit or volunteer during the school day. This helps us control admittance to the building. Please also remember to sign-in upon arrival, in the school office. This is extremely important in a time of crisis so we know who is in the building at any given moment. Lastly, please keep those who work to safe guard children in your prayers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank many of our readers for their contributions to our Annual Appeal. The support of alumni faculty, students and families, helps keep St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School the remarkable place that it is for our students. Your gifts help fund teachers' salaries, outdoor education and athletic programs as well as our operating budget. Thank you and God bless you for all you have done to support St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School through the past 60 years.

Peace & Goodwill,

Julie Fantone
Principal

Educational Trust Fund Benefit



A great time with good friends in support of a terrific school! As co-chairs for “*Diamonds & Denim*,” we cordially invite you to join us at the Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel on February 2, 2013 for the 12th annual St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Educational Trust Fund Benefit. “*Diamonds & Denim*” promises to be a celebratory evening catching up with friends (both old and new!), with the excitement of bidding on a wide range of treasures in our live and silent auctions, while providing critical support to outstanding Catholic education in our community. The diamond is the jewel of the 60th anniversary; hence, the event’s theme.

As an occasion to spend time with friends, the chance to bid on one-of-a-kind treasures, and the opportunity to provide critical support to an important mission of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, the Educational Trust Fund Benefit has proven to be a terrific event. Whether a school parent, alumni, parishioner, family member or friend, we look forward to seeing you on February 2.

For more information or to make an online reservation visit www.stfrancisa2.com/etf or call Colleen Pierce, Director of Stewardship and Development at 734.821.2208.

Kind regards,

Stacey & Jeffrey Higgins and LeeAnn & Patrick McKeon
Yours Hosts and 2013 ETF Benefit Co-chairs

Celebrating 60 Years



Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and talent as well as those who generously donated gifts and services to the kick-off of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School’s 60th Anniversary year. October 5, 2012 marked the 60th Anniversary and we celebrated in early October with an All-School Mass, dedication and blessing of a Peace Garden as well as a “Mustang Roundup” party. You can view photographs from the festivities at:

<http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school-community>

To date, the Peace Garden includes a Peace Pole, student art, and many plantings ready for blooming in the spring. When the weather is mild the school plans to install two benches in the garden. Then, visitors will have the opportunity to sit and relax and enjoy the tranquil space in prayerful meditation. On Friday, May 3, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will celebrate May Crowning at which time the students will bury a time capsule in the Peace Garden.

Opportunities to participate in the yearlong celebration include volunteering as a “classroom reader” during March reading month and “speaking” during Career Day. Please contact Principal Julie Fantone at jfantone@stfrancisaa.org or at 734.821.2200 to identify ways in which you can share your time and talent with the students of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School.

“Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary use words.”
~ St. Francis of Assisi ~

Retired Principal Lives Faith through Service to Others



Linda Miller

When retiring in 2006 as principal at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, messages from numerous time, talent and treasure homilies led me to thinking about volunteer activities. These activities would need to use my background skills but would also need to benefit the community with time and treasure.

Teaching and a love for children brought me back as a substitute for the school, and also as a facilitator for the VIRTUS program for the Diocese of Lansing. VIRTUS is a program for anyone volunteering for church programs that particularly deal with children. The program addresses sexual abuse awareness and the classes are filled with great discussion questions regarding this very important topic.

A Catholic Social Services newsletter led me to the CASA volunteer program which deals with children removed from the home due to sexual abuse or neglect. Volunteers work with the Washtenaw Juvenile Court one case at a time until the child or children are reunited with family or are placed in foster care or an adoptive home.

Since my husband was already a volunteer for the local Red Cross chapter, taking classes and becoming a Disaster Relief volunteer was an easy transition. Recently, we spent the first two weeks in November driving Budget and Ryder trucks filled with supplies to the coastal towns in Northern New Jersey from Hackensack to the North and Manasquan and Tom’s River to the South immediately following Super Storm Sandy. We saw and experienced all that you watched on T.V. with long gas lines, electricity out in many areas and downed trees. Many homes and businesses on the coast were completely destroyed by Sandy. Please keep all affected in your prayers.

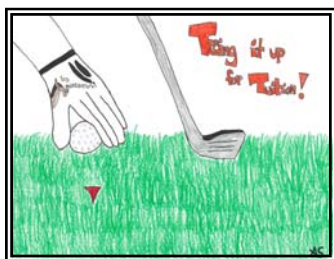
My advice for volunteering is to look at your interests and abilities and when you see something that fits those criteria, say **YES** and try it out. St. Francis of Assisi Church and School, as well as Washtenaw County, are in need of volunteers in many different areas. You will be amazed with the rewards and you will have the opportunity to live your faith through volunteer service to others.

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<http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school>

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Teeing It Up For Tuition



The 3rd annual St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Tuition Assistance Golf Outing, “*Teeing It Up for Tuition*,” will be held on Friday, September 20, 2013 at the Ann Arbor Polo Fields Golf Club. The Co-Chairs for the outing are Cokey Huffman and Trish Edwards.

Preparations are beginning already so everyone can enjoy a fun and successful event on behalf of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School and the Tuition Assistance Fund. Every year many families rely on financial help to enable their continued enrollment in the school.

The “*Teeing It Up for Tuition*” logo was designed by a 6th grade student, Andrea, during a recent school wide contest. It’s playful imagery will guide the event planning.

Plan now to attend this memorable event! Registration will begin at 9:30am with an 11:00am shotgun start. The cost will be \$150 per player. Please **SAVE THE DATE** and join the fun on September 20! Watch for more information soon.

Important Dates



- January 27:** School Open House
Catholic Schools’ Week Begins
- February 2:** Educational Trust Fund Benefit
(*Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel*)
- February 13:** Ash Wednesday
(*Fish Fry in Parish Activity Center*)
- February 15-19:** Winter Break
(*No School*)
- March 28-29:** Holy Thursday & Good Friday
(*No School*)
- March 31:** Easter
(*Easter Egg Hunt in Gym, 8:00am-1:30pm*)
- April 1-5:** Common Calendar Break Week
(*No School*)
- May 27:** Memorial Day
(*No School*)
- May 30:** Eighth Grade Graduation
- May 31:** Ice Cream Social & Car Raffle
- June 7:** Last Day of School