

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School

# The Mustang Connection

*Alumni and Friends Newsletter*

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School  
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## 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."*

## Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day

Once again, St. Francis students celebrated Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day on Friday, October 23. This year's theme was: "*Rooted in Faith ~ Honoring our Grandparents and Special Friends.*" The day allowed our students to invite their grandparents and special family friends to the school to share a memorable morning filled with fun. It also provided our visitors with the opportunity to see what makes St. Francis School such a wonderful place!

The morning began with an inviting reception in the Parish Activities Center and student entertainment featuring songs and performances. Guests also experienced time in the classrooms, and concluded their day by participating in a heart-warming, all-school Mass. Many visitors supported the school with a donation; one wrote, "*In thanks for the great education the children receive.*"

## St. Francis Heartbeats Celebrate 30 Years!

The St. Francis Heartbeats are excited to celebrate their 30th anniversary! Over the many years of service for the American Heart Association, the team has performed at more than 700 school assemblies, community events, professional conventions, parades, and half-time shows. The Heartbeats were the first JUMP demonstration team in the State of Michigan, and their longevity puts them in the top 5 nationally as well. With assistance from other teams they have helped mentor, the team has raised millions of dollars in the fight against heart disease by encouraging participation in the JUMP and Hoops for Heart program in hundreds of state-wide schools.

Mrs. Green recalls many exciting trips and JUMP opportunities throughout the years including traveling to Colorado, Indiana, and Canada for JUMP camps; participating in numerous JUMP competitions in the Mid-West, and qualifying for competition at the Nationals 9 different years at Disney World.



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## The Rectory



### Looking to the Future



It is often said "To not plan is to let others control your future." Although many unexpected things happen as we journey through life — and God's hand can lead us in new directions — I have found this to be true. Thus, planning and looking to the future is an important part of the St. Francis parish community and St. Francis School.

Each year we come to you in our Annual Appeal and ask you to help us "to plan for the future" by investing in our students. Our students are the future of our faith, our church, our country and our world.

In a world that can be self-centered and destructive, I ask your help in forming our young people to be models of Christ — building the world and God's kingdom.

There are many places where you can invest your limited finances and get a return on the investment, but what greater return can you get than investing in our young people? Please be generous in responding to the St. Francis School Annual Appeal.

Fr. Jim McDougall

### During this Thanksgiving season, "P.A.T." ...

**P**raise God  
**A**sk God  
**T**hank God



## The Principal's Office



### Our New School Year



As you read this issue of our Mustang newsletter, we have already settled into a nice routine here at St. Francis School. Our school day is now 25 minutes longer, which provides extra instructional time for all grade levels.

We discontinued the use of Ann Arbor school buses in the afternoon since demand for that service had decreased to only 12 students. With many carpooling opportunities provided by our wonderful families, we were able to gain something very important - TIME for teaching. Many school districts, as well as the State of Michigan, are recognizing the need to extend the school day to help our students stay competitive.

We are blessed to have a strong enrollment this year, despite the economic struggles in Michigan. We are at 419 students plus 29 preschoolers for a grand total of 448. We budgeted at 395 students so we are pleased with this. Overall, enrollment has decreased about 3 students from last year.

The availability of need-based tuition scholarships has made a positive impact on our enrollment. We have many families who would not be able to afford a Catholic education for their children without these much needed funds. Sincere gratitude goes out to those who participated in last school year's development activities, which contributed greatly to fulfilling this increasing financial need.

St. Francis enters the 21st Century with a new Math program in 4th through 8th grade called Accelerated Math. It offers a way to individualize assignments based on assigned learning objectives. As the practice sheets are completed, the student simply feeds his/her sheet through a scanner, which automatically scores and records the results.

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## Our Faithful Journey The 2009-2010 School Appeal

Since our school first opened in 1952, the St. Francis community has faithfully journeyed together to respond to the needs of families. We can reflect on our past with gratitude and build our future with an unwavering commitment to our children through our sustained generosity and prayer.

Here at St. Francis, we are blessed with dedicated teachers; they are our most valuable resource. This year, our Annual School Appeal will help fund their salaries. Half of the proceeds have been earmarked for that need. The Appeal will also support tuition scholarships and the Booster Club, as well as provide resources to purchase Spanish textbooks for every grade.

Please consider a contribution to the Annual School Appeal. Journey with us by making an investment in our faith ... in Catholic education ... and affirm the beliefs we stand for. Our community stood together years ago when St. Francis School first opened its doors; let's stand together confidently again today.



## In Memoriam: Mary Jo Peters



Mary Jo (Brooks) Peters passed away on Saturday, September 26, 2009. Mrs. Peters was an exceptional guardian of St. Francis of Assisi parish and gave selflessly of her time on behalf of the school. For years, Mary Jo ran the Friday evening Bingo games, which provided support to the school.

Mary Jo was preceded in death by her husband, Wilbur, and is survived by her five children and their families: Jody and Kris Matthew of Ann Arbor; Helen of Ann Arbor; Brooks and Carol, Shawn and Christie, Brian, and Nicholas of Sterling, VA; Vince and Colleen, Jason and Shawnie, Zachary, Keegan, Casey, and Eli of Chelsea; Terry and Alex, Andrew, and Daniel Farkas of San Diego; and her two wonderful great-grand-children Ayden and Leah. Memorial contributions may be made to the Mary Jo Brooks Peters Scholarship Fund at St. Francis School. Mary Jo will be dearly missed by all those who loved and cherished her.

## Scholarship Fund An Investment in Our Students



As friends and alumni of St. Francis, we share a commitment to keeping Catholic education accessible to a wide range of families and recognize the awesome foundation it provides for the children who are able to attend.

In these tough economic times, the enrollment at St. Francis remains strong enabled in part by the lowest tuition among area Catholic schools and our ability to help many families with tuition assistance. The need for tuition assistance has increased significantly in the last year with the job losses in Michigan, and we are re-doubling our efforts to build up the fund.

Families often have a difficult time requesting tuition assistance. When they do, their privacy and confidentiality is honored and respected. To receive assistance, a family completes an application to Private School Aid Service. Then, St. Francis School receives a recommendation regarding the potential amount of tuition assistance. If it is awarded, some tuition is also paid by the family. Due to the limited resources in our Scholarship Fund, we are unable to offer full scholarships. This year, through September 30, nearly \$70,000 has been awarded to families.

As Catholics we are called to look to the larger good. If you are able to support the Scholarship Fund, it may enable one more family to experience the benefits of a Catholic education.

## Educational Trust Fund Benefit *Kentucky Derby - Race for the Future*

Help us fill our treasure chest for the 9th annual Educational Trust Fund Benefit on Saturday, April 24, 2010. "One-of-a-Kind Treasure" donations such as those noted below are needed for the silent and live auctions.

- Art**
- Autographed Memorabilia**
- Destination Packages**
- Dining & Entertainment Packages**
- Jewelry**
- Sporting Event Tickets & Packages**
- Vacation Homes**



Please call Colleen Pierce at 734/821-2208 or email her at [cpierce@stfrancis2.org](mailto:cpierce@stfrancis2.org) if you have a "One-of-a-Kind Treasure" you would like to contribute. Thank you!

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## Heartbeats Celebrate 30 Years!

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The team has presented at Michigan's Physical Education Conventions and 'blitzed' many Up-North schools in the Harbor Springs, Traverse City area. The team also traveled to San Diego for special JUMP events and were invited guests on a Navy Aircraft Carrier.

The team has been featured on TV - as guests on the Morning Show and on the Don Shane Show. Numerous half-time shows have showcased hundreds of talented Heartbeats at Notre Dame, UP of M, EMU, Detroit Pistons, and a special Indiana Colts half-time when St. Francis alumni Jim Harbaugh was the Colts quarterback.

Mrs. Green's favorite memory; however, is not of the many exciting travels, but of the enthusiastic jumpers each year that shared so much talent and spirit with the team. *"It warms my heart when I hear that many Heartbeats are still jumping - sharing their skills with sororities, fraternities, business talent shows, college fitness classes, etc. PLEASE drop me a line and let me know how you are doing at kgreen4@comcast.net."*

## Principal's Office

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When the assigned numbers of objectives are completed, the program generates a test on which the student must attain 85% mastery in order to proceed with practice on the new objectives. Now isn't that amazing? Equally amazing is that this program was purchased with proceeds from our 2008 Summer Appeal.

In closing, please know how much we appreciate you for journeying with us through another academic year. God Bless you for your commitment to Catholic education and to St. Francis School.

## Events on the Way

**Christmas Program** - December 15, 2009

**Open House** - January 24, 2010

**Book Fair** - February 19 - February 26, 2010

**Educational Trust Fund Benefit** - April 24, 2010