



St. Francis of Assisi

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

MUSTANG CONNECTION

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2011

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New Science Curriculum

Students at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School will start the 2011-12 year with a new science curriculum, purchased with funds raised through the Development Office. *"We are teaching our kids to think like scientists,"* says sixth-grade teacher Wendy Lemke. *"We will address our big questions and challenges through investigation, exploration, designing, building, collaboration, reflection, conferences, showcases and presentations, and lots of reading and research."*

The new middle-school science curriculum is published by It's About Time. The curriculum uses standards-based science content to support inquiry and project-based investigations. *"Sr. Rebecca and I are very excited to bring this state-of-the-art, developmentally appropriate program to St. Francis!"*

The K-5 science curriculum is published by MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, the same publisher that provides the school's mathematics curriculum. *"We felt this was an important consideration for the elementary students,"* says fifth-grade teacher Kim Verhines. *"Familiarity of layout, vocabulary, scaffolding, content assessment, and online resources are the main strong points to this textbook. Each chapter contains several lab activities for students to investigate content with hands-on learning."*

New Web Site Design

If you haven't already seen the new logo for the parish and school, you'll be seeing a lot more of it in the future! In addition to an updated visual identity, the parish and school will be rolling out a new web site. The new site is visually attractive, easy to navigate and designed to improve communication for all parish ministries. The Development Office will have a special section of the web site where visitors can download the latest Development Office communiqués, get information on and register for upcoming Development events, find the school's Wish List, and much more.

Please take a moment to visit the new web site and see what the Development Office is doing to support the ministries of the St. Francis of Assisi parish.

Outdoor Education—7th-Grade Ship Trip

The 7th-grade students will embark on the annual Ship Trip, an outdoor education program aboard The School Ship in Traverse City on September 14-16, 2011. The Ship Trip is partially subsidized with funds raised through the Development Office.

Philosophy and Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is a family-centered 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



In June, on the last day of school, students gathered in church to celebrate their final Mass of the academic year. They expressed an attitude of joy and pride for their many lessons learned.

During my homily, I shared a few important summer-time reminders with the children. I encouraged them to:

Pray
Read
Exercise
and
Have Fun

When practiced daily, these actions help keep life in balance for they nourish the soul, mind, body and spirit. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31*

Now, we welcome students back into our care again with the beginning of a new school year ... one that is full of hope and promise. Please pray that God will continue to bless and guide our faculty and staff as they teach and nurture our children; and, remember to join us at school events and activities throughout the year. You are always welcome at St. Francis of Assisi.

We are thankful you are part of our Catholic school community for you bless us through your generosity and prayers. With your ongoing support, we can whole heartedly continue to serve the Lord and the common good.

Most Sincerely,

Fr. Jim McDougall
Pastor

Loving God,

Our creator, our savior, our companion, bless this journey of a new school year that we undertake today. Refresh our souls and renew our spirits as we embrace the beautiful ministry you have called us to. We welcome those who are new to this community and ask that you strengthen them to share the wonderful gifts you have given them. Lord, make our hearts pure as we prepare for the return of students to this school, and may you guide them to return with open hearts and minds eager to learn.

*We ask this in Your name,
Amen*



From the Principal's Pen



In January 2011, we received our copy of our Validation Visit Report from the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools Re-Accreditation that took place in early October 2010. The report is made up of eleven different areas of study. In the spring, we shared Part 1 of the summary of that report with you; here is Part 2.

STANDARD IV: ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

OVERVIEW: St. Francis of Assisi School appears to be well-organized and managed due to the leadership and hard work of the principal and the dedication of a qualified blended staff of experience and youth.

Comments: The committee noted how St. Francis adheres to Diocesan and MANS policies. They also noted how Ms. Collins is well-qualified, certified, a good faith role model and present at school functions. They also noted the strength of the existence of the School Improvement, Finance and Development committees. So thank you to our wonderful parent volunteers on these necessary committees. Their only recommendation was for the assistant principal to alternate attendance at meetings and events with the principal to alleviate the many time demands on Ms. Collins.

STANDARD V: PROFESSIONAL STAFF

OVERVIEW: The administration is changing the trend of professional development in this school. By incorporating Professional Learning Communities, the staff is beginning to collaborate and form cohesive curriculum with teachers at other levels.

Comments: Over the past few years, many of the faculty members have worked to develop common planning time among grade-level teachers. This allows for collaboration time among grade-level teachers. Additionally, the team recognized the strong spiritual life of the staff that is supported by annual retreats and weekly prayer sessions.

STANDARD VI: ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM AND PUPIL EVALUATION

OVERVIEW: St. Francis of Assisi School has a very organized and aligned curriculum that is accessible to all staff and community members. The curriculum is aligned with the Lansing Diocesan Curriculum benchmarks and the MI Grade-Level Expectations.

Comments: Every 7 years, the St. Francis of Assisi School staff re-evaluates a curricular area. During the 2010-2011 school year, the Science teachers are reviewing new curriculum material and plan its adoption for the 2011-2012 school year.

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Meet Our New Teachers and Staff!

Ms. Anne Magyar—Kindergarten



Ms. Magyar is a graduate of MSU and worked for 25 years in the packaging industry before earning her master's degree in education from Roosevelt University in Chicago. She says, *"I am thrilled to bring both my passion for the*

Catholic faith and a desire to create life-long learners to our kindergarten classroom!"

Mrs. Kaylee Dickens—First Grade



Mrs. Dickens is a graduate of Austin Peay State University and comes to us after working for four years as a second-grade teacher in Brownsburg, IN. Mrs. Dickens says, *"I am ecstatic to continue teaching in the primary student grade level!"*

Sr. Rebecca Mierendorf—Science



Sr. Rebecca is a member of the Servants of God's Love Religious Order in Ann Arbor. She has taught upper-elementary and middle-school and recently earned her master's degree in education from U/M. She also has a bachelor's in biology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Sr. Rebecca says, *"I love teaching science*

and sharing my love for the subject with students."

From the Principal's Pen

(Cont. from Page 2)

The Accreditation team also identified that there are many cross-curricular lessons at every grade level. This is especially helpful as we integrate our Catholic faith into our learning at St. Francis. In the years ahead, we will strive to provide substitute teachers to allow teachers time to work on curriculum implementation, consistent evaluation, data dissemination, data-driven instruction, or to peer coach.

We are blessed to have a cohesive family making St. Francis of Assisi School such a remarkable place to grow and learn.

Ms. Sara Collins
Principal

Mrs. Alaina Smith—Heartbeats



Mrs. Alaina Smith, a St. Francis alumna, will serve as the new coach of the St. Francis Heartbeats. Mrs. Smith is a graduate of GVSU and says, *"I feel very blessed for the opportunity to give back to the St. Francis community, which has given so much to me."*

Mr. Michael Smith—Athletic Director



Mr. Michael Smith will join the staff of St. Francis as the athletic director. He will also teach physical education and middle-school electives. Mr. Smith is a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University and a native of Gaylord. He is married to Alaina Smith, who also joins the staff this year.

Mrs. Julie Rick—Media Center Director



Mrs. Julie Rick will join the staff at St. Francis as the new media center director. Mrs. Rick has a master's degree in library science with a specialty in K-12 school library media and library information science. She also has bachelor's and master's

degrees in Art and has taught middle-school English in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Goodbye and Thank You!

We would like to say "Goodbye and Thank You" to two very special staff members:

Gail Drake—Art (32 years)

Nancy Lemmer—2nd Grade (9 years)

Your contributions to the St. Francis community are immeasurable, and we are grateful for the positive impact you've made on so many of our students and families through the years. We will miss you!



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
2150 Frieze Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 821-2200
<http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school>

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St. Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
2ND ANNUAL
TUITION ASSISTANCE
GOLF OUTING
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2011



5200 POLO FIELDS DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48103
734.998.1535

Visit <http://stfrancisa2.com/golf/> to register online,
or call 734.821.2208

Upcoming Events



- September 5: Labor Day
- September 7: First Full Day of School
- September 11: Parish Picnic
(With 12:15 p.m. Outdoor Liturgy)
- September 14-16: Seventh-grade Ship Trip
- September 18: Parish Time & Talent Weekend
(Ministry Fair following the 8:45 & 10:30 a.m. Masses)
- September 23: Tuition Assistance Golf Outing
(Polo Fields Golf & Country Clubs)
- Sept. 29-Oct.1: Diocesan Common Conference
- October 21: Grandparents' Day
- October 31: Halloween Carnival
- November 1: All Saints Day
(All School Mass at 9:15 a.m.)
- November 23-25: Thanksgiving Vacation - No School

Hole In One Contest sponsored by Gene Butman Ford