



St. Francis of Assisi

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

# MUSTANG CONNECTION

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

**Spring / Summer 2015**

**In This Issue:**

**Page 1:**

Digital Research Solutions

**Page 2:**

The Pastor's Perspective  
From the Principal's Pen

**Page 3:**

New Alumni Association  
Sharing and Spreading our Catholic Faith  
From St. Francis to Times Square

**Page 4**

Our Newest Alumni Families  
Important Dates

## Digital Research Solutions

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is looking forward to providing improved research solutions to its students in the 2015-2016 school year after receiving a \$20,000 grant to support the purchase of Gale Cengage Learning electronic resources. This new digital format, which will include a comprehensive non-fiction database and e-book collection, will foster academic excellence through innovative, scholarly, and curriculum aligned research solutions.

Currently, students access information for research across the curriculum, including religion, science, math, social studies, and extra-curricular activities, via search engines such as Google. Google is a broad and all encompassing search engine which does not always provide reliable resources or age/content appropriate; hence, students can retrieve information that is difficult to understand, inaccurate, or offensive in nature. Our goal is to provide our students with access to database resources that have been vetted for reliability and for learning purposes, thereby providing them appropriate material that is also specific to our school's curriculum.

With the purchase and implementation of Gale Cengage Learning resources, students will have access to preselected age and grade level appropriate resources. Teachers can even build their own textbooks with educational articles and historical resources. The content, which is not freely available on the internet, is the most current available. It includes resources such as articles, journals, studies, books, and events happening around the world.

In the new year, students will be able to access reading level specific material for their research projects at school and from home through a secure log-on twenty-four hours per day. As Katherine Pfeiffer, St. Francis School Media Specialist, said, "The digital resources will give our students greater access to valuable and credible information to support their school work and research projects." With Gale Cengage Learning resources, students learn how to properly credit and cite research sources which prepares them for high school and avoids plagiarism.

Gale Cengage Learning resources are used by the top schools and districts in Michigan. Locally, Ann Arbor, Saline, Dexter, and Washtenaw International High School have all used them or are currently members—much depends on funding for public schools. Catholic Central High School is an active member of Gale Cengage. The company publishes its own content, and is based in Michigan and committed to success. By having innovative research solutions readily available for our community, we can continue to foster our culture of academic excellence at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. +

## End of School Year Prayer



Father,

Thank you for our school.  
Thank you for the fun we had with friends.  
Thank you for the opportunity to learn.  
Thank you for the new experiences we enjoyed.  
Thank you for clubs and sports.  
Thank you for caring teachers.

Amen.

## 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



Another year has come and gone at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, and on May 27th, we bid farewell to 41 students during our graduation Mass. The Gospel that day was about the landowner who gave talents to each of his servants, so in my homily, I called upon our graduates to continue to develop and fulfill their God given talents, whatever they may be.

The purpose of education, and in a very special way a Catholic education, is to honor and strengthen the various talents and spirituality of our students. Praise God, our devoted faculty and staff supported our graduates on their holy journey and prepared them well for their next phase of life.

Now, my prayer is that our graduates (and you too!) will live a life blessed with many joys and dreams fulfilled. May our graduates always remain an ambassador for Christ and stay close to the Lord in prayer. His loving kindness endures forever.

Last month, in a spirit of thanksgiving, many of our Educational Trust Fund (ETF) Leadership Circle 'Class of 2011' donors joined the ETF Trustees and me at the Rectory for a thank you reception. These special friends were instrumental in the success of the Leadership Circle initiative, for they were the first class to make a five-year commitment to the ETF of at least \$1,000 per year. In that inaugural year, 26 families joined the Leadership Circle. Gifts to the Leadership Circle help ensure the strong, consistent growth of the ETF over time, which strengthens the annual award to the school. In the 2015/2016 school year the award will total \$78,000 - the highest ever. We are blessed!

Over the summer months we will prepare for the year ahead. That will include many capital improvements to our parish school such as new windows in the music and art rooms, and the construction of additional kindergarten space to accommodate our growing enrollment. Earlier this year a new HVAC system was installed in the gym, so our building is updated continuously, based on the greatest need. These changes are funded through our parish's capital improvement budget which our generous community makes possible.

Our Pastoral Plan is nearly completed for all of the ministries within our parish, including the school. It will identify our goals, and direct our parish, for the next five years. The school will work to enhance its curriculum, improve its resources for faculty and staff to support their professional development, strengthen its faith identity, invest in capital improvements, and build on its inclusive culture. Our school will continue to offer students a Christ-centered education with an emphasis on academic excellence that includes the formation of strong, committed, and active disciples for the Kingdom of God! +

Father James Conlon

## From the Principal's Pen



By the grace of the Holy Spirit and our Lord, we have been blessed with another fruitful school year. That said, we say goodbye to three beloved and remarkable faculty members: Mrs. Mary (Kentes) Johnson, Mr. John Butsic, and Mrs. Elizabeth Shurmur. We also had to see our beloved first grade teacher in April, Mrs. Kaylee Dickens, leave to Alabama where her husband accepted a position at the University of Alabama.

Mrs. Johnson has served St. Francis for over three decades. Her grace, compassion, and knowledge for education and children has served almost 800 students! Mrs. Johnson ministered lovingly to students in first grade, third grade, and kindergarten respectively. Words do not come close to sharing our appreciation to Mrs. Johnson for her lifetime commitment to Catholic education. Mrs. Johnson is retiring and looking forward to spending more time with her husband and family.

Mr. Butsic was a dedicated teacher, coach, and mentor to many at St. Francis for 13 years. He helped create valuable differentiation practices and has served as a teacher leader for the majority of his time at St. Francis School. Mr. Butsic and his family journey to Madison, Wisconsin, where his wife was accepted into a doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin.

Mrs. Shurmur has dedicated 11 years to St. Francis as a teacher. Now, life is calling her in a different direction - she is reaching out to expand her horizons and challenge herself in new ways. We are sad to say goodbye to a wonderful teacher, colleague, and friend. Yet, Mrs. Shurmur is excited for her new adventures, which makes us all very happy for her. We will miss her dearly, but wish her the best of luck in her journeys ahead.

Even more changes abound as St. Francis School grows in enrollment. Currently, for the 2015-2016 school year, 44 students are enrolled in our kindergarten program - this is the highest enrollment in a decade. We are proud to share our parish school with all families who seek an exceptional faith-based education!

Our math committee has narrowed down 3 teaching resources for the Math Curriculum. While we follow the Diocesan standards as our curriculum, we look to publishers to provide the materials to instruct the students. The math teachers have spent the year reviewing materials, listening to webinars, and analyzing materials in their field. We are very excited to use new materials and teaching approaches come Fall 2015. The generous donations through the Annual Appeal will give us the resources to continue a robust math program at St. Francis - thank you!

Change is in the air, but we are all very excited to follow His example as we walk in His name. We are blessed to have a loving, caring community of parents, teachers, staff, students, and parishioners. I wish you all a safe and peaceful summer! +

Julie Fantone Pritzel, Principal

Page 2

## Attention Alumni - New Alumni Association



Do you remember walking through the halls of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School with your teachers and friends? Maybe many years have passed since you left our school, or possibly just a few. Whichever the case, you likely have some fond memories to share! To that end, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is working to start a new, informal, **Alumni Association**. The group will gather periodically for fun, fellowship, and networking, to name a few.

If you would like to support your alma mater through this initiative by fostering a spirit of loyalty, strengthening ties to our school, and promoting its general welfare, please contact the Development Office at [cpierce@stfrancisa2.org](mailto:cpierce@stfrancisa2.org) or at 734.821.2208. Enthusiasm for your alma mater and a willingness to contribute your time is all that is required. An initial interest group gathering is targeted for the summer of 2015, in Ann Arbor. Go Mustangs! +

## Sharing and Spreading Our Catholic Faith

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School provides a faith-based education which carefully integrates Jesus and his teachings into the students' curriculum and extracurricular activities. Daily prayer, weekly Mass, and weekly Eucharistic Adoration all foster a strong community of student disciples devoted to deepening their personal relationships with Jesus. The rewards of these practices are evidenced in St. Francis School's commitment to cultivating engaged student volunteers who happily share of their time and talents through service projects in the broader community. Our students leave our school with a greater understanding and respect for stewardship and the positive impact they can generate for their neighbors. +

## From St. Francis to Times Square



Stacy Nadeau

In the summer of 2005, six women made national news when they appeared on a Times Square billboard, dressed only in their underwear. While other nearby billboards featured actresses and supermodels, this one, promoting Dove brand products, promoted real women with real curves and the nation went wild. Dove's mission was "to make more women feel beautiful every day by widening the stereotypical theme of beauty and by inspiring women to take great care of themselves."

Since then Stacy has committed her life and career to helping women feel great about themselves. She lives in Chicago, Illinois with her husband, Tim and pup, Dyson. She works full-time as a speaker, consultant, and coach to empower women everywhere.

Regarding her education at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, Stacy said, "My time at St. Francis was a time I will always remember. I made great friends who I still keep in touch with, and I have fond memories of the staff there. My faith, infused in to my education, is something I will always cherish. It helped me become the ethical, strong entrepreneur I am today." +

Congratulations Stacy, for making a positive difference in our world!

*Since love grows within you, so beauty grows.*

*For love is the beauty of the soul.*

~ Saint Augustine ~

Suddenly, Stacy Nadeau, an industrial organizational psychology major at DePaul University and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Alumna, was thrust into the national spotlight. As one of the real women featured in the advertising campaign, Stacy quickly emerged as a spokeswoman for healthy body image. She appeared on the Today Show, CNN, Ellen, Dr. Phil, Tyra, and Oprah (twice).

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

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization  
US POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 723  
Ann Arbor, MI

## Our Newest Alumni Families

Congratulations to our newest alumni families! They graduated their last or only student in the 2014-2015 school year. May the Lord bless and keep these families in the years ahead.

Bruck Family (3 years)  
Cummings Family (4 years)  
Michael DeBacker Family (13 years)  
Stephen DeBacker Family (12 Years)  
Decker Family (16 years)  
Drake Family (6 years)  
Edwards Family (16 years)  
Filipe Family (7 years)  
Fioramonte Family (2 years)  
Galasso Family (2 years)  
Geron Family (4 years)  
Hoffman Family (11 years)  
Kowalski Family (15 years)  
Lignell Family (6 years)  
Murphey Family (10 years)  
O'Leary Family (3 years)  
Purdy Family (11 years)  
Rotche Family (1 year)  
Rust Family (12 years)  
Schwab Family (12 years)  
Wishart Family (11 years)

### Congratulations!



## Important Dates



- June 21:** Father's Day; Summer Begins!
- July 4:** Independence Day  
(School Band in Ann Arbor Parade)
- July 20-24:** Vacation Bible School
- August 11:** Historic Church Tour Bus Trip
- August 15:** Assumption of Mary
- August 31:** School Orientation Day
- September 1:** School Begins
- September 7:** Labor Day
- September 13:** Parish Picnic
- September 17:** School Curriculum Night
- September 21:** Teeing It Up for Tuition Golf Outing  
(The Polo Fields—Washtenaw)  
**Register by 7/31/15 for a chance to win two tickets to the MI vs. OSU football game on 11/28/15 at MI stadium - 4th floor of East structure in premium seats. Visit <http://stfrancisa2.com/golf/> to register online.**