

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School

The Mustang Connection

Alumni and Friends Newsletter

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
2270 East Stadium Boulevard
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 821-2200
<http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school>

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Middle School Choir Plans Trip To Rome

The St. Francis of Assisi Middle School Choir has been invited to perform in Rome at the 36th International Congress of Pueri Cantores. The trip is scheduled from December 27, 2010 – January 2, 2011. The St. Francis of Assisi Middle School choir will join Catholic youth choirs from all over the world for this exciting event, and will rehearse in the Sala Nervi in the Vatican. The visit will culminate in a New Year's Day Mass in St. Peter's Basilica with Pope Benedict XVI on January 1, 2011.

In addition to performing in St. Peter's Basilica, the choir will have opportunities to perform at local parishes and at the Papal Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore. The students will also tour sites in Rome including the Vatican, St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel.

Other tours will enable the students to see the Coliseum, the Roman Forum, the Pantheon, the Baths of Caracalla and Palatine Hill. Following the Mass with Pope Benedict XVI, the students will also tour the St. John Lateran Basilica and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside The Walls before returning to the US.

This is the first time our choir has been invited to perform in Rome. The students who are eligible to go will spend the 2009-10 and the first part of the 2010-11 school years preparing for the trip. Fundraising will help the families of participating students offset the estimated \$2,500 per-student cost.

In upcoming issues of the Mustang Connection, please look for more information about this exceptional opportunity for our students to connect with their Catholic faith in the heart of our Church and how you can help!

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 Rectory

Christ Shelters Us From The Storm

The Gospel for Sunday Mass as I write this note is the story of Jesus in the Storm Tossed Boat with His Disciples.



Christ is awakened and tells the storm: "Be Still!" How much we would all like to have a still point for the storms we are experiencing in our lives.

Of course God is our still point and Christ, in his teachings and his presence, is our guide. These teachings and presence are the core of our Catholic school and parish. Your donations and investment in our school help us to share this important way of life with our young people. Thanks for your generosity. I ask for your continued support and investment in this important ministry.

Despite the turmoil and decline in population in Michigan, St. Francis Catholic School enrollment remains stable at over 400 students. Great things are happening at St. Francis. Thanks for investing in the future of our church and world!

Fr. Jim McDougall
Pastor

Dreaming...

Our Dream List

- Improved HVAC & Lighting in Gym
- Interwrite Boards in Each Classroom
- New Windows
 - ◆ Music Room North Wall
 - ◆ South Wall including Art Room
- Spanish Curriculum Updates
 - ◆ Textbooks
 - ◆ Materials

Home of Hope Service Project

The students at St. Francis achieved their 2008-09 school year goal of raising \$7,500 to build a playground for nearly 80 orphan girls who reside at Prathyasha Bhavan – the Home of Hope orphanage in Kochi, India. The students raised money by buying "\$1 Dress Down Days" each month, and by holding a children's book sale.

The Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco, who run the orphanage, recently completed construction of a permanent dormitory and school building for the girls who range in age from 5-23. The funds for construction were raised largely through the efforts of Paul and Tracy Wilkes, of Wilmington, NC. Thanks to the generosity of so many contributors, many of the orphans will sleep in real beds for the first time in their lives. In the original facility, the residents slept on straw mats on a cement floor.

Mr. Wilkes brought the Home of Hope to the attention of our St. Francis community on a missionary visit to the parish in 2007. So touched by Wilkes' story of the orphanage was the community that they donated \$25,000 to support construction of the new compound.

Ms. Sara Collins, principal at St. Francis School, heard that the orphanage girls used a trash-filled lot adjacent to the orphanage as a playground, and suggested that our students work to raise funds to build a proper place for them to play.



Home of Hope Residents

The students' fundraising efforts were rewarded in April by a visit from Sr. Sophy Joseph, the principal at the Home of Hope School, and Paul Wilkes, who inspired the service project. Sr. Sophy visited all of the classrooms and thanked the St. Francis students for all their hard work on behalf of the residents of the Home of Hope.

Past Blessings

A Development Reflection

A new fiscal year is upon us! As we begin to move forward with our fund raising activities for 2009-2010, let's take a moment to reflect on some of the blessings of the past year.

"Carpe Diem – Seize the Day!"

Remember that? Last year, a generous, anonymous friend offered to match every donation, dollar for dollar, to our first-ever Summer Appeal, up to \$250,000. We responded to that challenge mightily, raising \$205,305 in gifts and pledges. At the end of the fiscal year (June 30th) the match was paid in full and other contributions totaled \$200,932. So, all together, the Summer Appeal raised \$406,237 for St. Francis School!



St. Francis School

How are those dollars helping our students and school? Nearly \$260,000 has



been earmarked or used to support teacher salaries, tuition scholarships for families in need, math curriculum updates, a second grade reading assistant, band instruments, teacher professional development and the Booster Club (in lieu of magazine and candy sale fund raising.) The additional proceeds will be used for capital improvements including the complete renovation of four restrooms (K/1 and 2/3 hallways) and the replacement of the technology room doors. They will also be used to purchase classroom enhancements including state-of-the-art projectors, and new student desks and chairs.

Your thoughtful support to this Appeal has helped us keep tuition affordable, with minimal increases, in the midst of a challenging economy. It has also improved the learning environment at St. Francis School.

Past Blessings

A Development Reflection - continued

"Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

That was the theme of the 8th annual Educational Trust Fund Benefit which was held on May 9th at the Four Points Sheraton in Ann Arbor. Focusing on our students, and their hopes and dreams, the event was well supported by over 230 guests and raised more than \$47,000 in net proceeds. This year during the Benefit, many guests contributed an additional \$18,500 to a special appeal for tuition scholarships; those resources will help many school families in the upcoming year.



Principal Sara Collins thanks the DeBackers & Stagers

Since the inception of the Educational Trust Fund, the corpus has been retained in investments to provide for the future. For many years now, to help keep tuition affordable, five percent of the average of the last three years' beginning Trust Fund balance is disbursed to St. Francis School annually. This year, the school will receive an award in the amount of \$53,000.

"Zoom, Zoom!"



Ken Butman & daughter Mary with Grand Prize Winners

On June 9th during the school's Ice Cream Social, the Gene Butman Ford Car Raffle commenced. Since 1997, Ken Butman's valuable donation of a car has allowed our school families to generate

nearly \$940,000 altogether, through the sale of raffle tickets. Most recently, the Car Raffle raised over \$53,000. Those proceeds will be used for tuition scholarships, painting in the K-1 and Middle School hallways and Outdoor Education (Storer Camp and School Ship Trip.) Congratulations to the lucky winners: Rick & Cathy Pense (Ford Flex), Jena & Alex James (\$1,000), Craig Hupy (\$500) and Ilene Fitch (\$250.)

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St. Francis Mustangs Can Do

Once again, St. Francis students displayed their "Can-Do!" attitude by holding a returnable can drive during Spirit Week (May 26-May 29) to raise funds for the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Pediatric Center.

A friendly competition was held among all classrooms to see which class could deliver the largest number of returnables for the drive. Mrs. Drew's 4th grade class won top honors. For their efforts, the class was rewarded with a pizza party.

Representatives from St. Joseph's Pediatric Center were on hand at the school on May 29th to receive the school's donations.



Events On The Way

St. Francis of Assisi School will welcome its students back for the 2009-2010 school year on **Tuesday, September 8, 2009**. One big change the Mustangs will see is an extension of the school day by 25 minutes. The extended school day will enable us to devote more time to teaching and teacher preparation.

On **Friday, October 23, 2009**, our children will welcome their grandparents and special family friends to visit the school during Grandparents and Special Friends Day. If you have a grandchild in St. Francis School, mark your calendar for this heartwarming event!

The annual St. Francis Halloween Carnival will take place on **Friday, October 30, 2009**. The parade begins at 12:00 noon sharp. Everyone's invited!