

Principal's Message

January 29, 2010

Dear Families:

Why wait until Monday for the good news? Saturday morning Mrs. Strengari, Mrs. Northrop, Garrett Van Horn, Mel Madarang, Analise Kaminski, and Nick Pautler competed against 11 schools in the St. Mark's Spartan Speech Classic. These talented students actually won the First Place Team Trophy. Mel and Nick took first place in their categories while Garrett and Analise added to the points for the trophy. What an exciting event for each of us who heard the speeches today! Special thanks to the students for their extra effort, to Mrs. Strengari and Mrs. Northrop for coaching and to the parents for their support. Congratulations for receiving a second first place trophy this year!!!

Our students are very excited about next week's festivities. Catholic Schools Week will begin at the 10:15 Mass on Sunday. Several young ladies will address the congregation after Father Joe's homily. Another group of 10 students will serve as greeters, giving adult parishioners CSW bookmarks as a memento from ICS. One of our first grade families will bear gifts at the Offertory. Following Mass coffee and donuts will be served in the cafeteria. All ICS students who attend Mass are encouraged to show off their uniforms so parishioners see who we are. At some point students will be asked to stand and recite the school's mission with the student speakers.

Please feel free to drop into school to see the CSW decorated doors. We will keep them up well past this week as they personify our sentiments about ICS and Catholic education.

Tuesday morning is our Registration and Open House from 8:30-11:00. Eighth graders will serve as tour guides as they know the school better than anyone! Survey respondents suggested an open house for current families, perhaps in the form of a summer social before the year begins. Parents who may be interested in pursuing this idea or another open house may submit a plan to Mrs. Harjung. With the anonymity of the survey, we cannot correspond with those who made the suggestion.

On the same morning, seventh graders will visit Saint Elizabeth High School to attend a CSW production. Mrs. Keen and the students will be transported by St. E's. Hope you enjoy the show!

At noon on Tuesday, Bishop Malooly will visit each classroom. He certainly exhibits support for Catholic education as he endeavors to meet and greet all school children in the diocese.

Wednesday is the feast of Saint Blaise so we will attend Mass at 8:30 where throats will be blessed.

Because Thursday is Student Appreciation Day, there will be no homework and no backpacks. It is also a jeans pass day for the Haiti contributions. As of today we have about \$400 and we are

still counting. You have all been sooooo generous and I know that the Xaverian Brothers will use the money wisely. Mrs. Northrop shared that the Brothers were all spared in the earthquake since no one was in the building at the time. They have moved with their people to another mission on higher ground. Your donations will help them help others and I know that the Lord will bless your sacrifices.

At 10:00 a.m. grades 3-8 will participate in the National Geography Bee. After school a team of eighth grade girls will compete in a diocesan program called "It's Academic". We are very proud of the very first ICS team ever that will compete with 11 other diocesan schools at Christ the Teacher.

The H S A will provide a Teacher Appreciation Luncheon on Thursday as well and the students will enjoy a sweet treat at lunch that day.

The Blue/White Rally on Friday brings out the finest physical/academic activity of the year. Each class has been divided into a blue and white team. Students should wear a blue or white t-shirt but you should not buy one because they may also wear their gym t-shirt. All students must wear gym sweatpants. Cheerleaders perform to add to the excitement, if that is even possible.

Next Saturday students from grades 4, 5, and 6 will attend the Science Olympiad at St. Mark's. Welcome to the week of contests!

News and Views

- This past Tuesday each level attended a STAMP Out Bullying program. Sister Dorita's committee had prepared a most informative power point presentation to define bullying and the consequences for bullies. Students had the opportunity to clarify what they had seen and heard. So that parents may fully understand the implications of this program, a shortened version of the power point will be reviewed at the H S A General Meeting on Thursday, February 18 at 7:00 p.m. Note that the date has been changed. The overall goal is to empower students to report bullying behaviors and give school staff the tools necessary to recognize, intervene and issue consequences for bullying behaviors that will help students realize that such behavior is inappropriate and will not be tolerated. For the Middle School meeting I shared the ramifications of bullying behaviors on Facebook, MySpace, etc. Aside from the fact that 95% of my students have not reached the mandatory age 14 to sign on to Face Book, I explained that the inappropriate conversations and/ or pictures as well as references to ICS may implicate students in unpleasant situations. The children are not mature enough to realize that they may jeopardize future academic opportunities because they definitely cannot deny the written word. Children's activities should be monitored until they comprehend where their actions may lead. Let me clearly state (which I did at the presentation) that neither Mrs. Gill nor I monitor social networks. I for one have no desire to see first hand how easily the values that we teach day in and day out are ignored. Similar to incidents that spilled over into school last year, concerned parents brought a situation to my attention in hopes that we can protect our students from poor decision making. Only through an honest

partnership of shared values can parents and teachers nurture conscientious young people who exude confidence and sound judgment.

- Kindergarten students are learning about church. Each child made a church scene with an altar and pulpit with stained glass windows (quite different from ICC!). For Catholic schools week, the class wrote a sentence about why they like ICS and then discussed how it is different from other schools. The papers are in the hallway for our Catholic Schools Week (CSW) visitors. On Friday they had their second spelling test...just the beginning of a long career of spelling tests. In science they are learning about how water changes the earth and about rivers, oceans and waterfalls. Mrs. Broomall believes that science is their favorite subject. On Friday they also read to a first grade friend...really incredible progress.
- First graders have finished coloring mittens and hearts to decorate their doors for Catholic Schools Week. How fitting that hearts represent these loving children!
- Second grade once again has beautiful examples of their work in the hallway for prospective families to admire.
- From third grade we have more adventures of Patrick...he changed his shell. Mrs. Kumpel feels that he is disguising himself to make another escape attempt. Students are studying tall tales by reading and acting out Pecos Bill. Also, the meal worms that they feed to the snake are now becoming beetles. There are now 5. So, third grade is losing snakes but gaining insects: 5 beetles, 1 cricket. 1 lazy tadpole, 1 snake and 6 hermit crabs. I need to visit the menagerie this week. Hope our visitors are open-minded critter lovers.
- Fourth grade studied the systems of the body. You should see the life size drawings in the hallway as well as reports. I also had the pleasure of reading the most impressive essays on why their parents chose ICS for their school. As young as they are the students really appreciate parental sacrifices and the wonderful gift of Catholic education. The essays were both heartwarming and beautifully crafted with almost perfect penmanship. Truly works of art! You should be so proud of your children and how seriously they are working. They also decorated sleds and wrote sentences about this year's CSW theme: Catholic Education, Dividends for Life...Faith, Values, Knowledge, Discipline.
- In art, fifth grade explored the artistic technique of pointillism through the works of Georges Seurat. They emulated his style on ceramic tiles that now decorate the main office.
- Seventh grade essays on whom God is calling them to be include a charming picture of the student writer. They took the time to really think about what activities they enjoy and who really matters to them. I do hope the visitors read them to gain insight about our mission to nurture disciples.
- Eighth graders have been learning about topography in science class. They plotted the school topographically and made mountains from clay after plotting them. Future geologists?

From

- Mrs. Van Horn... another reminder to grade 4 to provide an updated physical this year.
- Mrs. Harjung...gratitude to all parents who returned re-registration on time. We now have a solid picture of openings for next year's students. Also, the ICS

Communication Survey that was emailed to all families had 89 respondents, an amazing response. While we will not install an elevator soon, we are reviewing all other suggestions. In the future we will address some of these concerns in the message.

- Marcella Lockwood, H S A president...remember that the meeting has been changed to February 18. Another topic for discussion at the meeting will be a “Race for Education”, a spring fundraiser that will reach out to friends and extended family rather than school parents. There is an amazing potential for enhancing our technology and science programs through this event and we have created a prize program that will reward every student who participates.

I feel that Father Joe’s reference to Catholic Schools Week in the Sunday bulletin warrants repetition:

“We begin today to celebrate Catholic Schools Week. At the 10:15 Mass we will celebrate, as a parish, the impact that Catholic education has upon our community. ICS was opened in 1927. Many still remember the first school next to the original church. There are fond memories of the academics, discipline and strong religious emphasis that were the hallmark of the day. Today, the focus on Gospel values had to be the primary base on which our school children are educated because they are entering a much more secular world. Of course, the three R’s and discipline are also a priority. Something must be right for our school because mostly every student likes being there. So we thank everyone who makes Catholic education a reality for our parish...our principal, priests, teachers, assistants, staff, students and their loving families...and you who contribute in many different ways to keep our parish school deserving an A+. Happy Catholic Schools Week.”

God bless you...

Mrs. Kirkwood