

Virtue of the Month: GENEROSITY

December 3, 2009

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Upcoming Events

- Dec. 3rd-Dec. 9th,
Book Fair
- Thursday, Dec. 3rd,
Jump Rope Team
Practice, 3:15-
4:15
- Friday, Dec. 4th,
PSO Family Fun
Night, 6:00-8:30
- Tuesday, Dec. 8th,
School Mass,
8:30AM
- Wednesday, Dec.
9th, **No School
Mass**
- Wednesday, Dec.
9th Jump Rope
Team Practice,
3:15-4:15 **NOTE
DATE CHANGE**
- Sunday, Dec. 13th,
Knights of Co-
lumbus Breakfast
- Sunday, Dec. 13th,
Lego Robotics
Competition

Message from the Principal

Dear Families,

The first thing I would like to mention is that next week, I will be sending standardized test reports home to students that took the ITBS test. I will include a detailed explanation with that report. In this Archdiocese, testing is done for all 3rd through 8th Grade students. As you probably know, this is the second year we are using the ITBS standardized test, prior to that test we used the SAT10 standardized test.

Both tests are effective tools in analyzing student content knowledge, however the ITBS test allows us to better analyze the data and the results are returned in weeks rather than months.

Unlike our public schools, the Catholic Schools that I have been associated with have held a contrary point of view regarding publication of test results. This is the case here in Portland. We see that the emphasis should be placed on individual student achievement and progress rather than a published school score. Part of this has to do with respect for the vast variety of school communities in an area and the necessity of taking into account a whole range of socio-economic conditions when judging a school and its effectiveness. Does this mean that the Department and the individual school sites do not take into account the overall test results? Absolutely not, in fact, this sort of analysis is very much a part of our accreditation process. But taken

out of context, test data scores can lead to false conclusions.

So what can I say? Well, I have tracked the data over the past six years pretty carefully. I have discussed and studied it with our faculty and what it shows us is that we currently see our students achieving well above the national norms in all areas of the curriculum. Further, there is a pronounced increase in overall achievement. This takes into account the variance that occurs from class to class. What is the cause of this and why are we achieving at a high level?

Strong parental community, education is a priority, the children come from loving homes in which expectations are high; all basic needs are met

A strong faculty and staff; their professionalism and a commitment to serve; teaching is seen as a vocation not a job; good texts and materials; good use of proven pedagogical techniques; care for each individual child;

An orderly school environment, high expectations of all students;

The school administration's commitment to a vision of growth, excellence and a deep understanding of the Educational mission of the Church;

seeing the necessity of recognizing that God is the first teacher in that He implants in each child the tools for growth; the parents viewed as the primary educators in partnership with the professional educators at school and that prayer and a deep relationship with God optimizing the chances for growth of each individual child as well as the entire school community

These are but a few of the contextual elements that I take into account when analyzing where we have been, where we are and how I set goals and objectives with regard to academic achievement for the future. I hope this furnishes you with some insights and please do call your child's teacher if you have any questions about your child's report.

Sincerely,

Michael Cantu,

Principal



Book Fair



Mark your calendars for this year's Scholastic Book Fair!

We will open on Thursday December 3 and close on Wednesday December 9th. Plan to do some Christmas shopping and help our school get more books for our classrooms and library.

This year we are also participating in an event called One for Books. The children can bring in change to donate. The money we collect will go to buy new books for a school in need. Also, for every dollar donated Scholastic donates one book to others in need.

Many Volunteers are needed to run the fair! If you can help please stop by the office and sign up or call Laura Larsen 503-570-1134. THANKS!!!!

News from the School Office

Jump Rope Camp at the YMCA: Mrs. Hatfield will be offering a jump rope camp at the YMCA on December 21st and 22nd from 9am-11am. Contact the Y for more information.

Jump Rope Team practice will be on December 9th, not on December 10th.

Spanish: Every week 5th-8th graders have a homework sign off form to be filled out, signed by a parent and turned in on Thursdays. In addition, 6th-8th graders have a Spanish homework packet each week.

Do you shop at Office Depot? Earn 5% in their Back to Schools program for our school. Our school ID number is 70205704.

**Christmas Program,
December 17th.**

PSO Movie Night

Didn't return your RSVP for movie night? Come and join us for the movies anyway. There might even be an extra pizza slice or two. Santa Claus is Comin' to Town! starts at 6pm and The Grinch starts at 7pm.

Library Update

This is a busy and exciting year in the St. Francis School library. We have a new computer as well as a library software program. All the current books are being entered into the system. This will greatly enhance our ability to locate what we have and to keep track of what is checked out. The students have been doing a fantastic job returning their books on time. Every once in a while there are some that have been out too long and I have sent home reminders. If you receive one of these and you know the book is lost, you can replace it yourself or send money for the replacement value. Also, please remind your kids that library books need special care so everyone has a chance to enjoy them. There are several volunteer opportunities available including reshelving, repairing and protecting books as well as labeling and shelving new additions to the library. If you have questions about overdue books or are interested in volunteering, please email me at Troychak@verizon.net. Thank you to everyone who has made such wonderful and thoughtful donations.



Lisa Troychak

Librarian

St. Francis Parish News

Knights of Columbus Breakfast, Sunday, December 13th.

Advent Reconciliation Service, Monday, Dec. 21st, 7pm

Out of Parish News

St. Mary's Academy Theatre presents "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever".

Friday, December 11th, 7:00pm

Saturday, December 12th, 2:00pm and 7:00pm

\$7.00 includes ticket and holiday refreshments

\$20.00 also includes special couch seating (limited)

Audience participation: Your own little angel can be a part of the Pageant too!

To reserve your ticket, call 503.721.7712 or email theatre@stmaryspdx.org