



## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

**Principal's Letter January 29, 2010**

Dear Family,

As your children have no doubt reminded you, our annual observance of Catholic Schools Week starts on Sunday. Many students look forward to the week each year because it includes enjoyable events and special treats. But it's also a time for us to celebrate the enduring value of Catholic education and focus on the gift that it provides to America's young people. During Catholic Schools Week, we reach out to our community to build awareness of what our school offers, and we thank all those who work hard every day to make our school excellent: students, families, faculty staff, volunteers, community supporters and local and national leaders. One of the most important roles of families is preparing young people for fulfilling lives of love and service to their families, their communities and the Lord. That is why the 2010 Catholic School's Week theme is particularly fitting. "Catholic Schools: Dividends for Life" underscores the long-standing tradition of Catholic education to instill in students the faith, knowledge, morals and discipline that will enable them to fulfill their future roles in life. Now, more than ever, a Catholic education is truly an investment in the future that is worth the consideration of every family.

Check the attached schedule of events to see what we've planned for the week. Please join in the celebration, and encourage your friends and neighbors to participate also, particularly those who may be considering Catholic education for their own children. I think they will be impressed by the attitude, behavior and accomplishments of the students they observe.

Also, please join me in saying thank you to our teachers, staff, administrators, board members, volunteers and everyone else involved in running St. Francis of Assisi School. Through their dedication and commitment, they make our school an excellent example of how Catholic schools provided "dividends for life."

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Reminder notices for our **Annual School Campaign** go out today. The campaign was started sixteen years ago with the goal of providing financial aid for our current families in need so that Catholic education could be more affordable. 50% of the annual campaign funds is invested in our endowment, which is now at \$625,000. Our goal is to have it to \$1,000,000 in five years. We take pride in the fact that, as responsible stewards of Catholic education, we have planned for the future of St. Francis of Assisi School. With the ever-rising cost of education, we need to have a fund to provide for future generations of Catholic school children. Please help us to reach this year's goal of \$75,000. Your gift will provide dividends for the future!

Sincerely,

*Sheila*

## Principal's Letter continued

### **Crisis in Haiti:**

One of the goals in our Five Year Plan states that St Francis of Assisi School will afford the opportunity to actively live Gospel values through faith and service to others. Students are encouraged to recognize their role as members of a global family, and their responsibility towards that family; we continue to develop in our students the understanding of the interconnectedness of all God's creatures and our corresponding responsibility to actively live our faith through good works.

With this in mind, St. Francis teachers have been going through a reflective process with the students before collecting funds and having fundraisers for Haiti.

The students have been learning about the life and economics in Haiti-the mortality rate, the life expectancy, the per-capita income, and the industry. They are beginning to understand that the problems in Haiti did not start with the earthquake; that complex socio-economic factors have played a role in Haiti's struggle, and that the solutions to Haiti's problems involve more than a financial "fix."

What responsibility do we have for the people in Haiti? Teachers have encouraged the students to think about their role as Christians in responding to any crisis. It is being reinforced that as Christians, their role needs to be an active, not a passive, one.

The youth group, led by our sixth grade teacher, Michael Stein-Ross, and supported by Nancy McHenry Dirks, Trish Hanson and Kali Paris, is beginning to research how to help the people of Haiti -where should the money be sent, and on what it should be spent. What organizations are supporting the Haitians? What is their overhead? What organizations will help the Haitians strive for a sustainable democracy and help them strive toward economic justice?

The next step is to develop an action plan that will be in keeping with our findings. We are having a prayer service today, and there will be a collection for the people of Haiti. The students are working on strategies for long-term support that include dances, bake sales, and most importantly, sacrifice. We see this as a call for justice that we need to answer.