



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

Principal's Letter April 16, 2010

Dear Parents,

I hope your family had a relaxing break last week. As educators, we come back to school renewed and refreshed and excited to "get the job done." We have registered several new families, ordered new water fountains and windows (thank you, families, for your generosity at the auction) and are starting to make plans for the next year. Vacations are energy-producers!

Next week is a busy week for us. On Monday, the staff will have a spiritual retreat led by Father Lagho, a priest from Africa who is in the states to promote support for his parish in Mombasa, Kenya. Monica Stein went on a mission to Kenya last year with several other teachers in the Archdiocese, and Diana Hautala is going to make the same trip this year. We would like to help fund a specific project, whether that be supporting a new well or giving micro-loans for small businesses.

Then on Tuesday through Friday, the students in grades 1-8 will be taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The information provided by this national standardized test will help us to measure progress and focus instruction. Please explain to your children the importance of trying hard on the ITBS so that we can have an accurate picture of what areas we are doing well in and where we need to focus in terms of instruction. Children will do better on the test if they have sufficient sleep and a healthy breakfast each morning.

On Friday night, several of the teachers-Marian Christjaener, Diana Hautala, Chris Harris, Lisa Sorenson, Jill Cann and myself-are taking off to Chicago to attend the International Reading Association Convention. We have spent the entire year focusing on best practices in reading instruction, highlighted by the relationship we have forged with the Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Washington. So we are excited to attend workshops presented by the international gurus of reading instruction. With so many people going to the convention, we can split up and take different workshops in order to maximize our time in Chicago. Money for this trip comes out of Title II funds from the government.

Have a great weekend,

Sheila

Principal's Letter continued

Science Fair Observations: One of our parents, Abraham Araya, was very impressed with the exhibits at the Science Fair, and submitted the following predictions:

“This was my first Science Fair at SFOA and suffice to say I was pleasantly surprised and overwhelmed by the variety of the projects presented and detailed observations and analysis on most of the presentations. I didn't write down specific projects and the student researchers, but some of my observations include:

- Experiment on soils and slope stability (future Engineering geologist)
- Study on the effects of earth quakes on different building materials (future Engineering Geologist/Civil Engineer)
- Experiment studying the gaseous byproducts of decaying food (future Bio Chemist, Agricultural Engineer, Chemist etc)
- Comparison of products including efficiency of different battery brands; chewing gums etc (future FDA Scientists, Electrical Engineers; Consumer Advocates; Lawyers etc)
- A First grader's project showing the “cradle to grave” process of quilting/sewing - from shopping to end product (future Project Manager and Teacher)
- Study on the effects of age and grade level on listening, concentrating, smell etc (future MDs, Nurses, Research Scientists etc)
- Experiment on the effect of oxidation on various metals (future Metallurgical Engineer/Scientist/Chemist)
- Work on impact of pesticides and other chemicals on water, plants, etc (future Environmental Engineers/Scientists/Chemists/Teachers – protectors of mother EARTH!! – you can tell I am passionate about the environment☺)

The scientific methodology of data collection, analysis, and reporting was evident in most if not all of the presentations. This clearly is indicative of the hard work and dedication by the St. Francis family – Teachers, Students, Parents, and Families. You have assembled quite a team and I am glad that we chose St. Francis for our children. Go EAGLES!”

...and thank you, Mr. Araya, for taking the time to give us this feedback. The children, teachers and parents and organizers put a great deal of effort into the Science projects. It's nice to know that those efforts were recognized!