



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL

**Principal's Letter April 23, 2010**

Dear Parents,

Yesterday was Earth Day, and the kindergarteners went around and picked up trash around the school. What a great, concrete way to show students at an early age how to be responsible stewards! It made me reflect on what we are doing at St. Francis to create an environmentally-friendly school that recognizes its role in the global community.

St. Francis of Assisi's Five Year Plan, developed by the School Commission, calls us to embrace globally-sustainable standards, and we are working towards this goal on several levels. Last fall, we installed seven-day programmable thermostats to better control the use of heat in each classroom. We have a plan to replace all the single-paned windows, starting with the north side, within the next five years (thank you, Spirit Auction 2010!). The school has ordered new water fountains so that, with a better water source, we can begin to discourage children from bringing in a new container of bottled water each day.

Tim Newcomb, one of our parents, has helped us to measure the effects of the school's conservation measures on gas consumption. Tim has a Masters in Environmental Management, and he examined the gas bills to measure the change in gas consumption in the last several years. This was not an easy task, as mitigating factors needed to be considered. We added an energy-efficient boiler in 2005 (thank you Spirit Auction 2005 and Puget Sound Energy!), and then turned around and built the Family Center, increasing the square footage of the property and thus the gas consumption. Nevertheless, Tim was able to draw some conclusions from the data that he gathered.

Here are Tim's observations:

"The school has undertaken energy conservation measures in the past five years and will be taking more in the future, in order to make the building more efficient. While natural gas prices have fallen slightly in the recent past, this cannot continue indefinitely. This report will show that the school uses about the same amount of natural gas now as it did just before the construction of the new gym, and the report also suggests that (proposed) further conservation measures will bring gas consumption down to the pre-construction level. In other words, conservation will make it possible to add a significant heating load (the gym) to the school without a net increase."

The support of our parents over the years, partnered with the sense of direction provided by the School Commission, has enabled St. Francis of Assisi School to be a responsible steward of its environment. Thank you!

Have a Great Weekend,

*Sheila*