

Enlightening Minds, Enriching Lives

# St. Germaine Family Newsletter

Sept. 2, 2008

**Welcome Back**

## **Parent Back-To-School Night Thursday, September 11, 2008**

Our annual "Back-to-School Night" will be held on Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. We will begin with a general information session in the Church at 7:00 p.m. followed by an Open House until 8:00 p.m. to allow parents and teachers to meet briefly. [Please remember that the teachers will need to greet each family that attends, so the Open House will not be a good time for a parent-teacher conference. If you have sensitive information to share with your child's teacher, please feel free to set up an appointment at another time so that the teacher can devote adequate time and attention to your concerns.]

This year, we will have a "Back to School Raffle" that evening. Each teacher will have a set of raffle tickets. For each of your child's teachers that you visit, you may complete one ticket (Play fair—only teachers your child has!!) Four prizes will be awarded in a drawing from all of the tickets on Friday morning:

First prize: \$50 in Jewel or Speedway  
Second prize: \$25 in Jewel or Speedway  
Third prize: \$10 in Starbucks

We're hoping you can join us for this event

## **Extra Calendar Pages Available**

The monthly calendar pages that are usually included in the Family Handbook were distributed at Registration Day (Aug. 19) this year. The pages contain as many of the events and activities for the year as possible. They should come in handy as you plan your schedules. If you did not pick up a copy of the calendar packet, please drop a note to the office and we will send one home.

We're glad to be back and we're looking forward to another exciting year. Each year we start out with fresh hopes and expectations and we ask God to bless us with the energy and grace to live up to these hopes and expectations. We began our Liturgy Update season with an all-school Mass last Friday to set us off on the right foot.

The faculty spent the summer working on materials for our new Social Studies series. These materials will help them continue to differentiate instruction for all students. The goal for classroom instruction is not just for the students to "learn the stuff" but to do it successfully. This requires teachers to be constantly aware of the progress of each student—those who do well and also those who struggle. Toward this end, teachers spent time this summer examining the essential knowledge, understandings and skills that students will be expected to master in Social Studies. In this way, we will be able to expand the strategies we use to assess students' mastery.

This year we want to continue with last year's theme: "Nothing Succeeds Like Success." We want to find ways for all of our students to feel that sense of accomplishment that comes with a job well done. We ask you as parents to join us in helping your student to strive to be the best he or she can possibly be. In this regard, we would especially like to focus on the quality of work students produce both during the school day and on projects or assignments they complete at home. We ask for you to help us in this goal by asking your child, "Are you proud of this work?" or "Did you do your best on this assignment?" Pay special attention to the work teachers send home for you to see. Compliment work that is done with care and insist that work unacceptable to you be improved. We need to share a consistent focus.

Remember, too, that our new reporting system places a great deal of emphasis on the EFFORT grade your student achieves. For many students, doing just enough "to get by" is a well-loved strategy. Help us to extend your child's learning by asking them what they are doing in class to go "above and beyond" to prove their effort to their teachers.

We always are interested in your impressions of how your child is doing—as we know you are interested in ours. Together, we can maximize your child's learning this year—and help them to experience successes that will carry them to new heights.

We pray each day for God's blessing and guidance in the work we do together. Please join us in asking God to bless the work of our new year.

## **Innisbrook Wrapping Paper Sale September 2-17**

Each year the Family School sponsors the Innisbrook Wrapping Paper Sale as one of its primary fund-raisers for the school. Funds from this sale have helped the Family School Association donate \$225 to each teacher for their classroom "wish list"—items they would like to purchase for the students in their rooms. It also helped the FSA raise the funds to replace all of the classroom blinds on the east side of the school. Our goal is to replace the blinds on the west side this summer.

Our sale has always been a big success and we hope that you will be able to participate again this year. In the past some parents have been willing to take the sale brochure to work to offer the items to their co-workers. The paper is of very high quality and people often appreciate the opportunity.

## School Improvement Plan Process

Our school will participate in the Office of Catholic Schools evaluation process during this school year. The faculty will begin compiling the data and work samples to compliment the official report. We will also have a visit from the Illinois State Board of Education. Both visitations are tentatively scheduled for mid-March, 2009.

We know that we have a wonderful and successful school, as the national Blue Ribbon School Award attests. We are looking forward to the process and know that we will be able to WOW our visitors with our accomplishments. The process is a lot of work, however, entailing about 250 pages of questionnaires and self-assessment instruments. Please remember us in your prayers as we undertake this task.

### Christian Leadership Awards

The Southwest Catholic Conference has announced that Adam Gonzalez and Jamie Sweis have been awarded the conference Christian Leadership Award for St. Germaine School. The award is based on an essay that contestants wrote at the close of the last school year. Congratulations, Adam and Jamie!

### Effort Roll

We place a high value on the effort students show in their work. Each trimester students in Grades 5-8 are eligible for the St. Germaine Effort Roll. Encourage your students to begin working now to be included in our first trimester roll. Richie Konopko was inadvertently left off the last trimester Effort Roll. Sorry, Richie!

### Muscular Dystrophy Association "Lock UP"

Mr. Reedy will be "locked up" on October 8<sup>th</sup> at Palermo's Jailhouse! We will be raising funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Help Mr. Reedy raise the bail he needs! (Even though a lot of people would rather see him remain locked up!) Any donation amount will help. A copy of the form is included with the newsletter. All donations should be sent to school in an envelope before October 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Illinois State Board of Education Physicals and St. Germaine Sport Physicals

The ISBE requires that all new students receive a vision exam as they begin school for the first time. Students in Grades K and 6 are required to submit immunization/physical forms. (Sixth grade students this year are exempt because they were required to submit the forms as fifth graders last year). Students in Kindergarten, Grade 2 and Grade 6 must submit a dental exam form. These forms must be submitted before October 1, 2008. Students who are not in compliance must be excluded from school beginning on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Choir Schedule

Ms. Mooney announced the following dates for St. Germaine choirs: Children's Choir (Grades 3 & 4) begins Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>; Youth Choir (Grades 5-8) begins Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>; Cherub Choir (Grade 2) begins Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>. For more information about the choir programs, please call Ms. Mooney or drop her a note.

### stgermaineschool.com

Julie Clarke will again serve as our "webmaster" this year. She is always willing to post notices and photos of our school activities. It is always easiest if the items are sent electronically. You may submit items to stgermaineschool@comcast.net. With your help we can publicize our accomplishments more effectively. Thanks.

## FootballMania

In the July mailing we wrote to ask for your help in making our FootballMania sweepstakes a success.

If you remember the data from the letter, we were able to raise \$30,000 in our first year. That amounted to an \$80 tuition savings for each child enrolled in the school. (Tuition was slated to increase \$130, but because of FootballMania, we were able to keep the increase to \$50 per student.). During 2007-2008 we raised about \$16,000. This certainly helped to keep tuition costs down—but not nearly to the extent that we did in our first year.

We hope that we will be able to improve our performance this year, but time is very short!! We decided to run the ten week version of the game in order to give us more time to sell the tickets. We now have an October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. We have almost 2000 tickets to sell in the next few weeks to realize our goal. We are hoping that you can help by asking several family members or co-workers to join in the FUN. Since the FootballMania season is 10 games, the twenty dollar ticket cost represents about \$2 per week. Your odds of winning one of the nine prizes awarded each week are much greater than the LOTTO odds!

We are including another copy of the FootballMania order form with this newsletter. Complete the form and return it to school with your check. We'll fill out the tickets and return them to you within a day or so. You can also stop by the office to request a block of tickets to take with you to work if that will improve our sales!

As an added incentive, for every twenty tickets you are able to sell, we will provide you with a free ticket. It might be the winning one!! Please help us to reach our goal. We can do this if each family would aim to sell at least three or four tickets. It's "do-able" and will really have an impact on the tuition increase we will need to implement when we plan the school budget for 2009-2010. Don't sit back and rely on someone else to help keep your tuition costs down!

We are also looking for help selling the tickets in Church each weekend. If you can help out at even one of the Masses, please call the office.

### Looking Ahead. . .

- 9/1 LABOR DAY—No student attendance
- 9/2 Parent/Student Confirmation Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Church
- 9/3 LifeTouch Pictures  
School Board, 7:00 p.m. in the Faculty Room
- 9/4 Kindergarten/Pre-School Parent Night, 7:00 p.m. in the Church Hall
- 9/9 Market Day
- 9/11 Parent "Back-to-School Night" 7:00 p.m. in the Church. Open House until 8:00 p.m.
- 9/13 Confirmation Retreat for EIGHTH GRADE students at Brother Rice High School
- 9/17 Athletic Association Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Faculty Room
- 9/18 Family School Association Meeting, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
- 9/19 Half Day Faculty Meeting, 11:30 student dismissal,