

St. Francis School Monthly News



December 2006

St. Francis is a member of the Independent School Association of the Central States, or "ISACS," which accredits the school as well as all other mainstream independent schools in the Midwest.

ISACS is known as the most professional and influential of the regional members of NAIS (our national organization), and its comprehensive accrediting process sets the standard for the rest of the country. Pat Bassett, who has served as the President of NAIS for the last five years, came to this prominent position after serving first as the director of ISACS.

Given the national prominence of ISACS, it's no surprise that our Annual Conference is a yearly highpoint for schools in our association, and last month's two day gathering in St. Louis was no exception. Several thousand administrators and faculty representatives convened to attend workshops by some of the most credible and best known commentators on American education today. For me, the highlight of this occasion is always the summary of national trends and recent research that these speakers bring to the various sessions. Particularly interesting, and in some cases quite sobering, were this year's revelations that follow in bullet form:

- Research has established that there is no longer any financial benefit attached to an Ivy League education. (What great affirmation for the other scores of truly excellent schools around the country.)
- In one of the plenary sessions before all fifteen hundred conferees, psychologist Michael Thompson (of *Raising Cain* fame), spoke of the outrage he has encountered nationally over excessive homework. He gave the latest statistics on the American teenager's average night's sleep: 7 hours, 12 minutes for middle schoolers; 6 hours, 30 minutes for high schoolers; and **4 hours, 30 minutes** for the average "senior leader."
- Rob Evans, a prominent psychologist and author who consults with scores of schools every year, had this to say: *It is time that we take account of the fact that the popular culture is widely, and rather effectively, undermining the values that our schools and families hold most dear. Schools must therefore find ways to be counter-cultural. Parents, for their part, must come to grips with the reality that school is a minority influence in their child's life.*

REALITY CHECK continued on Page 3 →

Reality Check

FROM THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION: "HOLIDAY WISH FUND" DEADLINE IS NEAR

December 8 is the deadline to contribute to the Parent Association's Holiday Wish Fund — the PA's popular alternative to individual gift-giving to SFS teachers and staff members. Collections are handled on a confidential basis by parent Kim Mackin, the project's co-chair. Make all checks payable to St. Francis Parents' Association.

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR '07-08 SFS PRESCHOOL APPLICATION?

Preschool contracts for 2007-08 will be mailed Jan. 8, and openings are limited -- so don't delay registering your littlest ones for next fall at our wonderful preschool. Questions? Please call our Admissions Office at 228-1197, or the preschool at 228-0165.

TONIGHT: WINE & CHEESE RECEPTION FOR SFS ART TEACHERS SHOW DOWNTOWN AT BITTNETS

A reception is set for 5-9 PM tonight at Bittnets, 731 E. Main St., for the opening of a show called "Connections II; Artists from the St. Francis School in Goshen." Featured artwork will be landscape pastels by Ms. Duechle, oil paintings of nests by Ms. Britt, and graphite angels by Ms. Yenawine. Tonight also is a First Friday Trolley Hop in downtown's art district.



NEXT FRIDAY AT SFS: FLU SHOTS FOR ADULTS AND TEENS

The Oldham County Health Dept. will visit our Goshen campus from 10:30 AM to 3 PM next Friday, December 8, to give flu shots to anyone interested -- teen-age and older. That of course includes interested parents, faculty and staff. The cost will be \$22 per shot.



STOP & SHOP NEXT WEEK AT OUR SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

8 AM-3 PM Monday-Friday in our library

Find great holiday gifts at the fair. We've also set aside two special opportunities:

- * Parents' Private Shopping & Coffee, 8-10 AM Tuesday
- * Kids' Secret Santa Shopping, 2:15-3:30 PM Friday

For more information, or to volunteer to help, call parent Amy Hanekamp, at 228-6860, or Laura Johnson, at 292-0644.

ALSO: Next Friday, our Lower School students will join classrooms around the world in reading for 2007 seconds (about 33½ minutes) to celebrate "Read for 2007: Read for Life."

GRANDPARENTS OPEN HOUSE — A RECAP

by Reed Gabhart, head of Middle School

THANKSGIVING IS A HOLIDAY RICH WITH TRADITION, and one of St. Francis School's time-honored traditions is welcoming our students' grandparents to visit on the Wednesday before the holiday. This year's activities were a departure from our previous schoolwide musical spectaculars, but the celebration was no less successful!

After a reception and some words from Head of School John Delautre, our grandparents "returned to school" and visited classrooms with their grandchildren. Many suddenly found themselves reciting French poems, doing math puzzles or jotting down and discussing favorite holiday memories. In many classes, students asked their grandparents about school in their "day," and were surprised at some of the answers! Recollections were shared about rationing food and supplies during World War II, the fear felt during the Cold War, doing math problems without calculators (the horror!), and worst of all – no spell-check! It was a wonderful generational exchange where everyone shared – and learned.

Afterwards, more than 120 of our grandparents, parents and other guests of our student body packed our intimate Garvin Brown Amphitheatre for delightful performances by some of our students. Recent enhancements to our theatre -- including new microphones, audio equipment and improved lighting -- were shown off as our Jr. Kindergarteners recited poetry and our 8th graders demonstrated their percussion skills. Also entertaining our full house were our 3rd graders, with song and instruments, and our 5th grade French students acting out "The Pickled Herring" in French and English. The performances wrapped up with the entire school and audience singing together "The Prayer of St. Francis" in canon, led by Lower School music specialist Kathy Collier. Special thanks to Kathy, Angela Clark and Ed Gupton for preparing their students for our performances, and to all of our teachers who demonstrated their usual creativity in planning for classroom visitations.

Several of our students also came onstage and read aloud about what in their lives made them thankful. Whether simple or cerebral, the treasured moments were genuine and moving. We'd now like to share excerpts from a few essays -- these are from our 6th graders -- and we already are looking forward to next year's Grandparents Day tradition.

What are our Sixth Graders thankful for?

I am thankful for my family because they are there for me. I am happy they are a part of me. They are sometimes embarrassing, but I still love them. Some family members are still in birth. One is going to be my brother or sister. I am so excited!

-- Ashley H

When was the last time you saw a yellow car or truck? Can you remember how many yellow cars or trucks you saw yesterday? When you think about it, you probably can't remember that many, but on your way home today, try to count them and you will realize that they are everywhere. Then when you are done counting yellow cars, count how many things you are grateful for. After this, for every yellow car you see, think of something you are grateful for. My mom made up this game, and I think we need to play it more often. When I turn 16, I will drive a yellow sports car. I am thankful for yellow cars.

-- Adam L

Rahool B is thankful for ...

My Mother

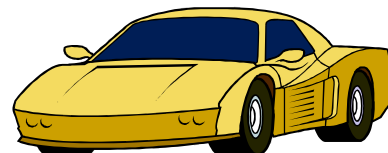
I am dreaming about something peaceful when... RING!! RING!! I whack the "off" button on the alarm clock, brush my teeth and dash out of the bedroom door. I am ready for those warm biscuits with that golden honey that my mom said she would prepare for me today.

I hurry downstairs and grab the glass of cold water that my mom has set on the granite counter. "Just five more minutes," I hear my mom say. "I'm so excited!" I say to my loving mother who cares for me. I am very thankful for my mother.

My Father

"I'm gonna make this three-pointer," I say to my father with full confidence. I swish a three and scream, "I just burnt your eyes!" I run around the driveway and spread my wings and fly. I run like I've just won the championship game. Until... I trip on my shoelace and fall. I've scraped my knee. It's bleeding. What do I do?

"Get the First-Aid kit out of the car. There's one in there," I hear my father say. We get the car keys and unlock the trunk. My father finds the kit and grabs a lot of things from it, like an alcohol pad and a bandage. He fixes my knee. I feel much better because of my father.



REALITY CHECK *continued from Page One ...*

- Across the nation schools are coping with two, conflicting educational trends: 1) a rise in expectations in *how much and how fast* students are being asked to learn and 2) a significant decline among young people in their readiness to be students *behaviorally*.
- According to NAIS President Pat Bassett, schools that teach and practice environmental sustainability are receiving increasing recognition for the value they add to the educational process (How nice to find St. Francis in a position of leadership in this area.)
- The latest studies also affirm that there is no evidence that computers, or technology in general, actually enhance learning! Though computers are obviously here to stay and have become indispensable in many areas of life and work, *other* non-technological factors (such as teacher preparation) continue to determine the quality of a child's educational experience.
- Last, a small but striking tidbit: 80% of American college students now receive discounted tuition.

These data may confirm what common sense had already led you to suspect in some cases. Personally, I find it heartening that virtually all educational research of the last 15 years has affirmed the mission of progressive schools like St. Francis. Our attention to the needs of individual students, our emphasis on authentic understanding and hands-on (as opposed to textbook-driven) instruction, our promotion of the fine arts, and our promotion of good citizenship, environmental responsibility and a balanced lifestyle may at times qualify as "counter cultural." And sometimes counter cultural is an excellent thing to be!



NEW DETAILS ABOUT OUR 2007 SFS EAGLE GALA AUCTION

Get in on the action as our Auction Committee cultivates "Our Good Earth," this year's Eagle Gala Auction (to be held Friday, March 9, at The Olmsted).

This year's gala is being chaired by Goshen parent Amanda Matthews Fields and co-chaired by Preschool parent Amy Frederick. For the second consecutive year, our Master of Ceremonies will be Memphis radio personality Tom Prestigiaco.

If you can help with any aspect of the gala, please contact Cindy Wood in the Advancement Office, at 228-1197 x108 or CWood@StFrancisSchool.org. Much planning already has taken place, and the next full Auction Committee meeting will be from 9:30-11 AM Monday, Dec. 11, at our Preschool in Harrods Creek. All helpers are welcome!

And ...

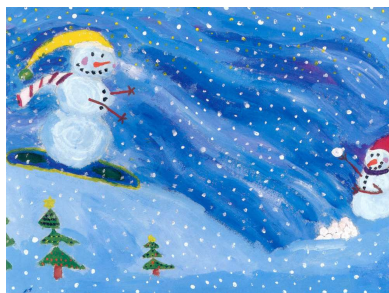
*** We are now accepting auction-item donations** for the Eagle Gala. If you have restaurant certificates, vacation home time-shares, frequent flyer miles, spa treatments, golf outings or other items you think might help raise funds for our school, please contact parents Amanda Fields, Amy Frederick or Risa Koby, a member of the Auction Acquisitions subcommittee.

*** In January we will mail tickets for our "split-the-pot" cash raffle** as well as Tribute forms for our Auction catalog. Stay tuned.

THIS MONDAY: EAT WELL AT ROCKY'S ITALIAN GRILL AND DO GOOD FOR SFS

Rocky's Italian Grill, at 10206 Westport Road, is having a "St. Francis School Night" this Monday.

Bring in the flyer attached to this newsletter, present it to your server, and 10 percent of your check will be donated to our school. It's as easy and tasty as that!



SFS student art again graces holiday cards for CASA, the Court Appointed Special Advocates Project of Jefferson County

Our black-and-white version masks the true color and creativity, but the wonderful "Snowball Fun" holiday card at left was created from artwork by our own Whitney E, now an 8th grader. Whitney's design was one of only six chosen from submissions by students throughout the region.

The cards are sold to benefit CASA, a local advocacy program that provides a powerful voice for abused and neglected children in Louisville.

Cards are for sale by CASA. The cost: \$12 for each 12-card package (\$7 of that may qualify as a tax-deductible contribution). See and order the cards at the CASA Web site: http://www.casajc.org/holiday_card.htm.

For more information, call CASA at (502) 595-4911.

"ANNUAL FUND" UPDATE -- Week Five

As we conclude the 5th week of our Annual Fund effort for 2006-07, we are pleased to report a total \$77,400 in gifts and pledges towards our goal of \$165,000.

For the first time in school history, 100% of your Board of Trustees, faculty and staff are participating in this year's Annual Fund!

Thanks to all of these generous members of our community for stepping up to the Annual Fund challenge.

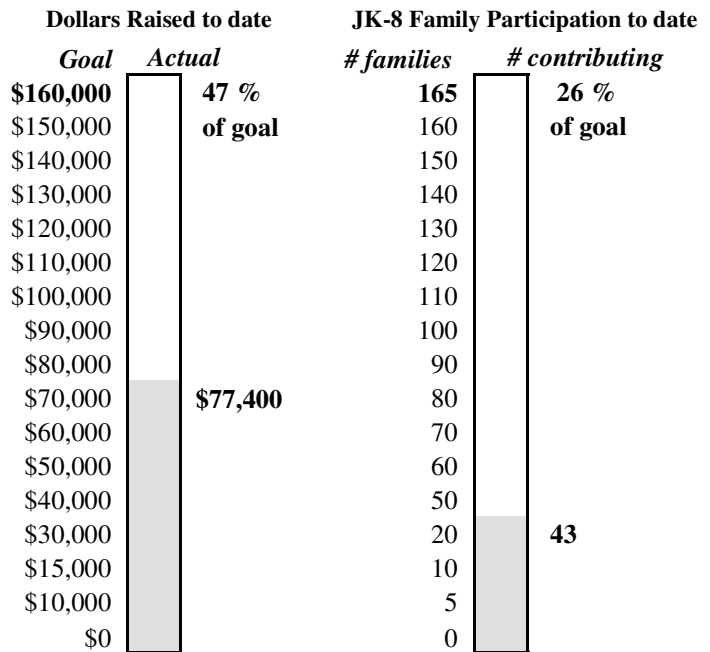
We have similar goals for participation from our Goshen parents. We would love to see all 165 families commit their support towards our program and mission. Your donation, in any amount, truly has meaningful impact. Last year, the Annual Fund donations helped us purchase computer software, classroom materials, storybooks, textbooks, library books, playground equipment and athletic equipment, to name just some of the items.

We have planned our Annual Fund "Phon-A-Thon" for mid-December. Parent volunteers will gather to contact families who can help us in reaching our participation goal. Again, if you have not had the opportunity, please take a moment to fill out and return your pledge envelope, or we will be happy to accept your pledge or gift during our Phon-A-Thon.

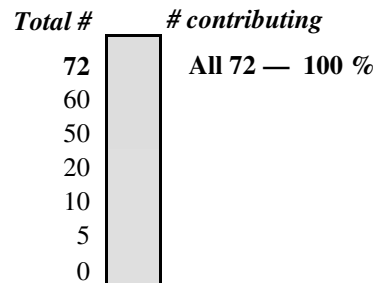
Reminder: Please check with your employer to see if they offer a corporate match. Many corporations offer a 2:1 or better match on your dollar donation. Your Human Resource department will be able to explain their matching plan as well as provide the appropriate paperwork.

All donations received by December 31, 2006, are eligible for current year tax benefits.

2006-07 ANNUAL FUND APPEAL



Board, Faculty & Staff Participation



STATUS REPORT: YOUR OLD BOX TOPS, PRINTER CARTRIDGES AND CELL PHONES YIELD DIVIDENDS FOR SFS

Thanks to all who have been bringing in General Mills Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Labels for Education, and old cell phones and empty printer cartridges for us to recycle.

* The box top and label count is at 3100, which will bring us \$310.

* We recently recycled several big cartons of old printer cartridges and cell phones, all of which will bring us about \$150 -- for a total of about \$250 since summer.

Keep those box tops, labels and recyclables coming. Thank you.



**DO YOU RECEIVE
OUR NEWSLETTERS &
ALERTS VIA E-MAIL?**

We rely on e-news updates and alerts to provide much information to you. If you aren't receiving our e-mailings, contact us at News@StFrancisSchool.org



DECEMBER LUNCHROOM VOLUNTEERS

Please find a substitute if you are unable to work on your scheduled day. If you are unable to find someone to work for you, please call Chef Matt Gasper (228-1197 x112) AND parent Dianne Siciliano (292-3295) before your scheduled date.

Monday, December 4 - Mary Ann Pollard, Ginger Campbell
Tuesday, December 5 - Lana Tyulmenkova, Suzy Bagga, Michele Monda
Wednesday, December 6 - Carolyn Wetterer, Vlasta Ross, Gretta Manni
Thursday, December 7 - Nancy Scott, Patti Adkins, Ann Hendren
Friday, December 8 - Karen Siladi, Risa Koby, Christine Speck

Monday, December 11 - Lisa Wiley, Christina Ullum, Rene Prys
Tuesday, December 12 - Robin LeMastus, Dianne Siciliano
Wednesday, December 13 - Sherry Stevens, Kim Mackin, Risa Koby
Thursday, December 14 - Michelle Heit, Cynthia McAfee, Ann Hendren
Friday, December 15 - Laurie Kinney, Catherine Chandler, Tracy Lattis

Monday, December 18 - Dace Maki, Mary Ann Pollard, Amanda Fields
Tuesday, December 19 - Kathy Baucom, Steve Paradis
Wednesday, Dec. 20 through Tuesday, Jan. 2 - NO SCHOOL; Holiday Break

SFS COMMUNITY LAUNCHES CLOTHING DRIVE TO HELP BURMESE REFUGEES

Around midnight on Nov. 9, a group of refugees from Burma -- also known as Myanmar -- landed in Louisville. They arrived here by way of a squalid refugee camp in Thailand, to which they had fled almost 10 years earlier to escape government oppression. Living conditions in the camp were unthinkable: 9,000 people confined to 16 acres in sweltering tropics with no electricity or plumbing.

Working through Kentucky Refugee Ministries, two area churches -- Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral and St. Luke's Episcopal Church -- are sponsoring one of the newly arrived families: a 22-year-old man, his 20-year-old wife, their 2-year-old and 8-month-old sons, and the husband's father and 16-year-old brother.

One of our kindergarten teachers, Sarah Dewberry, attends Christ Church Episcopal and told us the family members have two fully furnished apartments and enough to live comfortably -- except warm clothes. They are small people, and clothing donated to them so far has been too large.

We are asking for your help.

Today through December 15, our school will accept donations of new or gently used clothing for the family. The sizes needed:

- * Men's size S or M clothing, to fit a man around 5'5" weighing about 130 pounds.
- * Women's size 0, XS or S clothing, to fit a woman around 5' tall weighing 90-100 pounds
- * Boys' clothing size 9 months, 18-24 months, or 2T.

Deposit the clothes in boxes outside the main office. Any surplus men's clothing will be offered to two other Burmese men who have been in Louisville for about a month, without sponsors. Extra women's or children's clothing will be donated to the Center for Women & Families.

Ms. Dewberry is our contact person for any questions you might have. Thank you!

"INTERNET SAFETY" ASSEMBLIES RESCHEDULED

Our previously postponed Internet Safety assemblies -- age-appropriate presentations for students in grades 3-8 -- have been rescheduled for Thursday, Dec. 7, at these times:

- Grades 3 & 4: 1-1:30 PM
- 5 & 6: 1:30-2:15
- 7 & 8: 2:15-3

THE LOWER SCHOOL MATH LAB IS GRATEFUL TO:

- * parent Kelly Farmer for donating a math game
- * the Lattis, OBrien and Bagga families for donating their outgrown toys and trinkets to the Math Lab "Store"

As you periodically clean out your closets and playrooms, please consider donating used toys, trinkets and other items of interest

INVITATION TO ALL: HOLIDAY CONCERT BY OUR 3/4 CHORUS

Our 3rd and 4th Grade Chorus will present a free, holiday concert at 7 PM Thursday, Dec. 14, at St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church, U.S. 42 at Wolf Pen Branch Road. The chorus -- directed Kathy Collier, our Lower School music teacher -- is one of our Wednesday afternoon Elective Projects. Come and enjoy a musical start to this festive season.

DECEMBER 15: HOLIDAY DANCE FOR GRADES 6-8

Our next dance is set for 7-10 PM Friday, Dec. 15, for SFS students in grades 6-8. Admission is \$5. Our faculty will chaperone, but parents are welcome to help.

HAVE YOU SEEN ...

- * a small, girl's magenta waterproof coat with hood and geometric fleece print on the inside lining?
- * a small, boy's dark blue winter coat with hood?

If you find either of these objects mistakenly hanging in your closet, please return the coat to the school office, and we'll reunite it with its young owner. Thank you!