

SCHOOL NEWS

"Grow flowers of gratitude
in the soil of prayer."
~Verbena Woods

Upcoming Events

September 29

Feast of St. Michael
(7 pm Mass)

October 2

"Burrito Night" Fundraiser
Featuring delicious Mexican dishes
from Ye Olde Alpha
(5-8 pm School Hall)

October 5-9

SMPS Spirit Week

October 7

First Communion
Parent Meeting
(6 pm Church)

October 13-16

REAP for 6th graders
Camp Russell, Oglebay Park

October 29

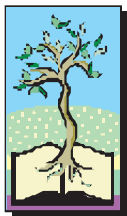
School Rosary
with 7th grade Leaders
(2:15 pm Church)

November 7

Ladies' Wine & Cheese Social
and Shopper's Delight Auction
(6-9 pm, Location: Angelus Center)

November 15

SMPS Pasta Dinner
(noon-6 pm, Location: TBD)



2009-2010 School Year Theme:

**"Build it
and they will come."**

SMPS Junior High offers new classes

With the start of the 2009-2010 school year came many enhancements to St. Michael's Junior High program.

First was the expansion of the overall junior high program to include our sixth graders. Now 6th grade students change classes frequently throughout the day and have the same teachers as the 7th and 8th graders.

A new addition to this year's junior high curriculum is the 16-week "Specials" classes that include *Introduction to Theater*, *Classical Movies*, *Public Speaking*, and *Coping with Teen Issues*.

The Introduction to Theater class, taught by Mr. Sean Decker, explores theatrical improvisation and nonverbal communication skills, both of which are useful for students interested in community theater. Piggybacked with the Stifel Fine Arts Center's "Instant Theater" program, students will learn the art of improvisation and how to develop a scene or monologue on the spot.

In Classical Movies, Mrs. Kim Burge chooses one film to study with her class, analyzing the key character education concepts present in that film (responsibility, respect, citizenship, caring, trustworthiness, and fairness). Eighth graders are currently studying *West Side Story*.

This semester, 6th graders are enjoying Public Speaking class with Miss Sarah Felton, learning how to develop a speech topic and deliver it effectively before a large group. The students also practice delivering impromptu speeches. Finally, *Coping with Teens Issues*, taught by Mrs. Ann Railing, addresses such topics as bullying, cyber-bullying, body image and exercise/nutrition, and smoking/chewing tobacco. Her goal is to start a dialogue with students about these important issues and dispel cultural myths.

Other new classes for junior high include French class once per week for 7th and 8th grade (while sixth graders continue to take Spanish twice per week) and the Stifel Fine Arts Center's *Art Explorers* program, which will teach all 6-8 graders about art in four different time periods: Prehistoric Art, Greek and Roman Art, Middle Ages Art and the Renaissance.

SERVICEspotlight

Fifth graders kick-off 'Adopt-A-Grandparent Program'



This year's fifth graders will be meeting, on a monthly basis, with the residents of Elmhurst as part of their *Adopt-a-Grandparent Program*. On Sept. 16, a "Meet and Greet" was held where students and residents introduced themselves while enjoying an ice cream treat. SMPS students also presented each resident with a Worry Stone that was made as an art project. A positive word was painted on one side of the stone and a symbol on the other side. The following poem was written to explain the stone's

purpose: *A worry stone to ease your heart. Rub it and your worries will depart.*

Students loved visiting with their new special friends and are anxious to visit them again soon.

Science Classroom Highlights...

Eighth graders explore their DNA

The 8th grade class has been studying genetics and heredity in Mrs. Burge's science class. The students have been checking out their parents' earlobes and toes to identify their inherited traits.

For fun, the students used their names to code a DNA alias using the four bases of DNA. They then used colored beads to make a zipper pull of their coded name. They also used the four bases to make a 3-D origami helix.

Who knew DNA could be so much fun??



Eighth grader Ashton Cross displays her name coded in DNA

Fourth graders encouraged to find the joy of science through interesting experiments

This year, our fourth graders will learn all about the science lab during the first few weeks of school, according to Science Teacher Corinne Cecil. Students will learn the basic process of the scientific method as part of their science studies. Before starting any lab work, students first learned to appreciate the importance of safety in the lab and following directions -- both written and oral. The first week of school, fourth graders conducted a small lab on chemical change in matter.

Depending on the project, labs are usually a two- to three-day process. Mrs. Cecil says the first day is a pre-lab session where students prepare their lab sheet with the question, the supply list, and their hypothesis. The following day, students will do the actual experiment. Depending on the time available, conclusions are written either the same day or the following day. Because the entire lab process is an in-class activity, there's no homework assigned. "No matter how simple or complex the experiment," Cecil says, "students always enjoy participating in the labs. My goal is to have our students find joy in the study of science."

To complement the curriculum, fourth grade teachers often utilize guest speakers from the parish and school alumni group to share information about their jobs and careers. In the past, students have heard presentations by a coal miner, a General Electric water treatment specialist, and a local weatherman, to name a few.



**Mustang
MEDIA**

Student news broadcast off to great start

Congratulations to the Mustang Media student news team for a great job in broadcasting their first three newscasts this month. Every Friday afternoon at 2:30 pm, the 12-minute broadcast is seen in all classrooms via their SMART Board. From classroom and student news to sports and weather, Mustang Media has it all!



Advisor Jaime Pettit tapes News Anchors Cathleen Banks and Nick Lasure for the first broadcast.

NEW STAFF

Miss Danielle Payne Music Instructor

We welcome Miss Danielle Payne to St. Michael Parish School this year as our new music instructor.

A 2000 SMPS alumna as well as a graduate of Wheeling Park High School, Miss Payne earned her bachelor's degree in K-6 elementary education from West Liberty University in May 2009. With an extensive background in musical theater, she is anxious to share her love of music with her students. "I hope by the end of the school year, my students will have developed an appreciation for music and shared their gifts and talents with others, as well as with God."

Currently, she and seventh grade teacher Sean Decker are working on the school's Christmas production involving junior high students.

Miss Payne, her parents Rick (a '76 SMPS alumnus) and Lori Payne, and her sister Gabby, a freshman at Wheeling Park and 2009 graduate of SMPS, reside in Wheeling.

Welcome to the SMPS faculty team!

2009-10

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For registration or
class shadowing information,
please contact
Mrs. Marilyn Richardson,
school principal.

Welcoming children of all faiths.