

Principal's Corner

Dear St. Patrick School Families,

We celebrate small victories when they occur. As I sit to write, word has just come down from the Diocese that Catholic school enrollment has increased for the first time in ten years. The increase is modest, at 3.34% overall across our Diocese. For the past decade, most schools have experienced shrinking enrollment from year to year. Schools considered themselves lucky merely to retain enrollment numbers from one year to the next without any decrease.

Here at St. Patrick School, we too have stopped our annual slide in student enrollment. For the first time in the past six years, we are experiencing a slight increase. For our K – 8th grades, we stand at 147 students, which is up by one from last year's 146. Additionally, our new preschool has gotten off to a great first year start with 9 students (75% of seating capacity) in the four year old program, and 3 students (30% of seating capacity) in the three year old program. When we include our preschool numbers, we now stand at 159 students, which is a real sign of hope for the future of our school.

Speaking of preschool, our program is off to a terrific start. I normally pop in for a brief visit most mornings. There is so much energy and excitement for learning. Mrs. Paganelli does a wonderful job caring for, guiding, directing, playing, and teaching these little ones. We are also very grateful to all the donations for furnishings and preschool equipment we received from our own parishioners, and from St. Joseph Parish in Belding. (The pastor of St. Joe's Parish, Fr. Brucker, generously offered us low cost, gently used equipment, when their school closed in August.) Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our smooth running preschool start up.

This past Tuesday a letter from the "2006 Gala Committee" went home with students. Please. Please. If you can help out in any way with donations of merchandise or services, please call Kim Herrington at 874-5756, or email her at kherrington@sbcglobal.net. A list of donation suggestions, include: gift certificates to stores, hotels or spas; homemade, hand-crafted items; electronic items; outdoor and sports items; picnic items; holiday items; St. Patrick's church or school items. You can also help make our annual Gala Auction a success by purchasing tickets and attending our silent and live auction dinner. Tickets are still available for \$30.00 each, and the catered food from Honey Creek Inn is always delicious.

The money raised from this event goes right back into revenues for our school budget, through tuition assistance for needy parish families. Each year we budget \$25,000 towards financial assistance for our families who need help in paying tuition. Our Gala Auction makes it possible for students of these families to attend our school. By supporting our Gala Auction, you support our school community and keep our school financially strong and healthy. Please donate or attend, if you can.

Finally, school picture day is coming up on Tuesday, October 3rd. We will have the same standards for dress as we did last year. Student pictures appear in our school yearbook, and they are a public reflection of who we are as a community. Therefore, students may "dress up" (as opposed to "dressing down" like we do on non-uniform days). Students do not need to dress up. They can wear their normal school uniform dress. However, students will not wear t-shirts, athletic shirts, sports sweatshirts, or jeans. Suggestions for dressing up: 1) girls may wear appropriate dresses, skirts, dress slacks and nice blouses; 2) boys may wear dress slacks and dress shirts (and even ties if they desire).

Let us continue to pray for each other, communicate support for one another, and demonstrate our care towards each other as together we "walk the talk."

Christ's Peace and Joy to your hearts always,

Sean P. Donovan
Principal, St. Patrick School