

## NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 18, 2012

## Dear Parents, Students and Friends of St. Augustine School:

On this cold, white wintery night it's time to put fingers to the keyboard for a NEWSLETTER before this month slips away.

First, it is always wonderful to return to school following our Christmas holiday – to see everyone safely home, to welcome a returning family back into our school and to begin to both move more deeply into the second term and begin to plan for next year!

I will do my best to divide this message into three parts: review of a couple of the things that we've done since returning, looking forward into the coming month at school and things to look forward to, and looking forward into the 2012-2013 school year.

*Grab a cup of tea or coffee and let's "talk".*

### SINCE RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Our first 2 weeks back to school proved challenging inside our classroom in many cases because such a large number of students did not return due to extended holidays. Again, we strongly encourage everyone to consider the educational impact on programming, skill development and scheduling when this occurs. For those who returned in a timely manner, thank you.

We hosted a Saturday morning Retreat for parents of Grade 2 students who will be receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. With over 50 children being presented for the reception of these sacraments, the gathering proved to be very well-attended, purposeful and well-received by those present. Our thanks to Mrs. Chau, Miss O'Hara, and Miss Kimberly Baker for their participation in the



retreat and to all the parents who attended. Reconciliation will take place on Tuesday, February 7 at 6:00 PM for our Grade 2 students and their families at the Church. Please keep them in your prayers.

Preparing for our *Intermediate Camp* program is a big task for our staff, and on Thursday, January 12 we hosted a parent meeting for all the students who are new to camp, including Grade 4's. Again, we had a very good attendance, and thanks to Miss O'Hara and Mrs. Vales for their leadership in this all-important meeting. (A reminder to all intermediate parents: your child has been given the Camp package that requires your attention as it has lots of paperwork, and many details requiring your time and deadlines that need to be met. Thank you – any questions, please call me at the office.)

We have also had visits from the Principals of Little Flower Academy and Vancouver College, and look forward to St. Patrick's presentation on January 25. All of these visits are to help our Grade 7 students make the best choices for themselves as they begin to plan for their High School experiences. We congratulate the

seven young women who were accepted into Little Flower and look forward to hearing of everyone's plans in the coming months.

January always rings in the basketball season, and this year, with *Mrs. Kozak's* leadership, we launched into the season with our annual *Knights of Columbus 'Free Throw Contest'* for intermediate students. It was so much fun, a great number of parents came and cheered on our students, and we could see some rising stars on the free-throw line! Congratulations to all who participated! (Outside the gym on the bulletin board is a posting of CISVA scheduled games for Grades 5, 6 and 7 boys and girls and everyone is invited to come and cheer on our players. Again, our thanks to the coaches: *Miss Kinsella, Miss O'Hara and Mrs. Kozak* for their commitment of time to support this sport which so many love!

Yesterday, we launched into the Canucks CAN program (Canucks Autism Network). As adults, many of us have some awareness of autism and it has been our goal for a long time to develop a program that will help the entire school community be more aware, more sensitive and more positive about how we engage with all peoples. At a planned assembly yesterday, our Grade 7 presented a short series of skits and witness statements that helped us all grow in our understanding of them, their gifts and talents, their "differences" and struggles and what a difference it makes when we support one another. We named that over the coming four months, each class will learn about autism, so that in April, along with the rest of the Province, we can celebrate **AUTISM AWARENESS** month. Watch for more updates in our newsletter, and you might ask your child what he/she thought about the assembly. (As one grade 5 student said today when asked what he thought about the assembly, "It was touching what the Grade 7's had to say about what they found difficult.")

Today, we host our annual "**Interested New Parents**" Meeting", mainly for those families hoping to join us as their little ones enter Kindergarten. With ten siblings on our initial list, we have only 16 spaces to offer to new families - with so many asking, it is an evident reminder of how needed is our new school with its planned-for expanded space. Over the coming weeks, I'll have the privilege to interview many families, and, just like my initial meetings with all of you, it is a wonderful time to

get to know of the families that will become part of our community. Keep us all in your prayers during this time of discernment.

### IN THE COMING MONTH AT SCHOOL...

The coming events our on our calendar... please put onto computers/calendars/blackberries!

- Kindy interviews
- January 26: Student-Led and 3 Way Conferences: (see my notes about this day): NO CLASSES
- January 27: Staff Winter Retreat: NO CLASSES
- February 2: Monthly Mass at 9:30 Grade 6 hosts
- February 7: Reconciliation, Gr. 2, 6:00 PM with their families at the Church
- February 14: Valentine's Day Thank You Tea – see Mrs. Luttrell's last email with the attached invitation TO ALL FAMILIES and the schedule
- February 16 & 17: Catholic Educators' Conference – NO CLASSES
- February 22: Ash Wednesday – distribution of ashes at 9:30 at the Church
- February 22: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR ALL PARENTS 7 PM – (see my notes about this event)
- February 25: Adult only Lenten Retreat "Living Lent" – notice went home yesterday

**Student-Led/3 Way Conference Day:** As a reminder:

- As this is a formal interview day, students are required to wear their uniforms or "Sunday best" clothing – ALL CHILDREN attend their interview on that day.
- The time periods are very tight to include all the children throughout the 10:00 – 7:00 day – we cannot make adjustments should you be late. You would then only have what time is left in your child's interview slot – and teachers are in a full PRO-D Day on Friday and will not be working past their scheduled times.

- There are no classes on this day: you come only for your child's(ren) prescribed time.
- It is recommended that younger children do not come, and if they do, they must remain in the library in a supervised play during your child's interview time.

### LOOKING FORWARD TO 2012-2013

Just as I keyed this in, I realized that for our Grade 7 parents this news won't be part of your story!

\*\*\***Everyone else**, please read carefully because much of this information has to do with committing again to return to our school and how some things will be changing. (Some of this information will be repeated in other communications, but we wanted to be sure that you have some pre-information – we hope that you find it both helpful and informative.)

**Close to the end of January, every family will receive an envelope that contains:**

1. Your 2011 Income Tax Receipt
2. A formal letter from the PEC about what it means to request "Parish Status" for tuition
3. A St. Augustine's Parish Status Request Form which must be completed, signed and returned to the school by February 6th if you wish to be considered for Parish Status for the upcoming school year.

**NOTE: This is a change in procedure for us, as registration packages will be prepared for your child(ren) based on the information you provide and we confirm with the Parish Office.**

If you choose to not return the form, we will assume that you have chosen to pay in the "Other families" category.

### AGM (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)

**With the many changes to this year's registration/ admissions policy changes/fees, etc. we are requiring that AT LEAST ONE PARENT attend this AGM to be fully informed and to pick up their registration packages.**

The Annual General Meeting is set for **February 22, in the School gym**. It is very important that **ALL families are represented at the meeting.**

**The list of things that will be included will at least include:**

1. **Reviewing our Vision and Purpose as a Catholic School**
2. **Updates on CISVA policies on Admissions to our Catholic Schools**
3. **Details on Registration changes**
4. **Detailed information on changing fees, EDU-PAC supplies**
5. **Information on Parent Participation**
6. **An update on our Faith and Foundation Campaign**

This is an **adult-only** event, will begin at 7:00 and conclude by at least 8:15.

#### *Other items:*

You may purchase tickets to the Parish's closing CENTENNIAL DINNER, January 28 by going onto the Parish website: [www.staugustineschurch.ca](http://www.staugustineschurch.ca)

Thank you for your great support of the coat project back in December. Seven bags of good winter coats were donated and forwarded to the needy.

*One last thought:* Please keep one another in your active, daily prayers. By making an intentional effort to do this, it can actually transform how we think of others, speak of others, and include them in our lives. In our all-too-fast moving culture, by slowing down, taking a few minutes each day to bring to mind the needs of others, their intentions and their sorrows, we connect ourselves to the universal Church and become every-so-slowly more a reflection of the goodness that God's asks us to be.

Thanks for the chat – blessings to all!



Principal