

## NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 16, 2012

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

We are completing our 12th week of this school year, and are so aware of the pace of our lives! There is so much going on that we are all involved in, and much to share in this NEWSLETTER.

We always begin with expressions of thanks:

- To every parent who so faithfully supports their child and the programmes and expectations of the teachers, thank you.
- To all the members of the staff for their contribution to our children's success and happiness, thank you.
- To the members of our Parish and School continue raising the money to pay for the building of our new school, thank you.
- To our Oblate community, for your vision to make a school such a vital part of our Parish right from the very beginning, thank you.
- To our fabulous students, without whom we would not have our School, thank you for being the strong, passionate and good young people that you are!

During the Fall, the students are involved in many activities that they love: **Running Club, Volleyball, basketball, primary Bowling, Crochet Club, Choir and Chess Club.** We enjoy seeing students both show interest in various activities as well as improve in their individual skills. You can see on the front page of today's website one of our teams' and read the story of their success.

I always enjoy sharing some story that highlights the effect of the work that is done by students and staff. One example is Crochet Club... last year, a senior volunteer in our library told us of the City of Vancouver's goal to build a new high rise residence for homeless and displaced persons on 7th Avenue and Fir Street. A number of Churches were involved in helping to create a home-like atmosphere for the new residents, and our community (both parish and school) began crocheting squares to create afghans for each resident's room. Last Spring, a small group of our students, accompanied by our teacher, Colleen Beggs, presented the afghans and homemade cards to the new residents.

This is an excerpt from a thank you letter received from one of the residents:

*I really like (and will certainly be keeping) your card... mine had a greeting "Welcome Home" on it. You are obviously kind and caring young people whom your parents should be proud of. God bless you as you start another year...*

In addition, from the Ryerson United Church community, coordinators of the above project, this message came to us:

*We hear from the staff at the supportive housing facility that the home-made gifts of blankets and cards were by far the most meaningful to the new residents... thank you for instilling such caring and compassion in your students...*

Yes, the students have become very good at crocheting, but more importantly, their efforts have embodied "faith in action"!

Some information for everyone:

Student safety and security is very important. Just in case you are not aware, the school provides the following supervision of students during the school day:

8:10 – 8:40	One Teacher and One Parent
10:15 – 10:30	Recess: 2 Staff members, and 2 grade 7 peer mediators
12:00 – 12:35	Lunch Recess: 2 Staff members, one parent and 2 grade 7 peer mediators
3:00 – 3:20	One staff member and one parent

We do expect that parents will supervise their own children after school if you choose to let them play. We teachers are outside during the above times to ensure security at the gate, and I wanted to make sure that you were aware of your own “after school” responsibilities:

- **be one time to pick up your child**
- **know that you are responsible after 3:00 if you choose to be here and let them play**
- **if you witness a child acting in an unsafe manner, please either speak to him/her or direct the concern to the supervising staff member.**

I usually repeat this message each Fall for all members of the community as a general reminder. Thank you for your support.

### About Sunday Mass

As we come close to the end of the fiscal year, please note that the Parish will be preparing new Sunday envelopes for all the registered members of the community. One of the criteria for PARISH STATUS at the school involves using the Sunday envelopes consistently. Be sure to pick yours up when they are made available in the hallway outside of the Parish Centre, usually distributed in mid-December.

All of our children at the School either know how or are practicing their involvement in Masses. Some things that might help you as a family include:

- considering sitting closer to the front of the church so that your child can be more fully engaged, and visually see more of what is taking place.
- knowing that the Parish Centre as a place of hospitality is to be used following the completion of the final song - children should not be going there prior to this time in the Liturgy.
- considering helping your child/children get in the habit of using one of the Mass Books for children that are in the basket at the main entrance to the Church. Also, the older children can use the Sunday Missal and song books. When the children see you singing and praying in Mass, they will usually follow your good example.
- Volunteering to take up the Offertory gifts as a family as a way of being involved in the Liturgy – Your child would be very proud to do this!
- never letting your child be unaccompanied in the vestibule, foyer or parish centre.



### PASS THE TORCH

It may sound early, but I know that the PTT leadership team is gearing up for another amazing event on April 27, 2013. Consider buying tickets as “table groups”! Everyone should have received via email the “sign up form” for PTT 2013! This process is both electronic, and jobs are available “first come, first served”. This is an exciting change initiated by the PTT team, and we are grateful for their leadership and openness to new ideas.

**Some thoughts on the Internet and how to establish family values/expectations:** (excerpted from a BC Catholic article written by Julie O'Shea VanSpall, November 5, 2012 a former teacher at St. Augustine's School)

In her article, Parents owe children discussion on Internet morals, Mrs VanSpall explores both some of the ways in which the internet can be a useful tool, and some of the ways in which it can be permanently destructive. Some thoughts from the article that might serve as conversation-starters at home follow.

*A wise friend appealed to his teenage daughter's conscience, reminder her that if she wouldn't want something taped to their front door for everyone to see (grandparents, young cousins, friends, solicitors[or future employers or University admissions officers] she should never post it on Facebook. Adults, as role models for our youth, need consistently to adopt similar filters.*

*... We owe it to our children to demonstrate and discuss conscientiousness and morality in social net-working. The World Wide Web is here to say, and we want youth to know how to access information and to have fun connecting with friends, near and far. Because of the power of the Internet, we likewise need to discuss privacy and appropriate behaviours.*

The article also makes many powerful connections between the draw to social media and the connection that children need to seek in their lives to faith, family and loving people.

We hear from many parents the tremendous pull that social media and electronic games are having on children. While almost every child in the school is currently "underage" for FACEBOOK, remember, as parents, you still can influence their choices by what you purchase for them, allow for gifts from others, and determine how much access your child has to the web and games each day. Please, continue to do all that you can to teach your children how to use these tools constructively.

A big package of information went home with the oldest child in each family today. There are a number of time-sensitive items for your consideration.

Please note the inclusion of the DECEMBER Calendar which details a number of events for both individual classes as well as the whole school. With our **Advent Convert** being held on **December 13** in the evening, to which all the students are expected to attend, along with their families at the Church at 7:00... (We will have rehearsal for the concert on Tuesday, the 11th throughout the day, and we would appreciate all children being in school on that day so that they can be fully prepared for our evening of Song and Praise.)

**About our Fall Faith and Foundation Campaign** - thank you to everyone for the work that you are doing as class champions, as new donors or as repeat donors.

We all know that we've gotten this far because of the collective prayers, intentions, generosity and hard work on the behalf of over 800 people. When we work together, generously, everything is possible!

Have a great week -



Principal