



St. Michael Elementary School

December 8, 2009

Dear Families:

How quickly this Advent season—a time of being watchful for the ways in which Jesus comes to our hearts as well as how our hearts are open—is drawing closer to Christmas. Unlike the past number of years, we will not be receiving the wonderful gifts that our previous sister school always provided. They have chosen to move on and help other schools even more impoverished than ours.

For the last number of years, a donor made money available so that we could choose 35 students needing a warm jacket and new boots to be taken to Burlington Coat Factor and then to Payless shoes for boots. Unfortunately, that donor is no longer able to afford that project. In the meanwhile, the South Chicago Chamber of Commerce gave us the opportunity to get some jackets for children we felt mind benefit from them. We sent them the name of the child and the size (our guess). In turn, we have received tickets for parents to take to Immaculate Conception church hall on Saturday, December 12th, to receive the jacket that has put aside for you. Mrs. Sandoval will let you know if we asked for a jacket for your child(ren).

Thanks to all of you who sent your tuition in—we are very close to making payroll. Then we need to worry about payroll over the holidays when you are not here to make payments. We ask you to send in your December payment on December 15th so that we can meet payroll on the 1st of the year. December tuition must be paid in full in order for students to return on January 4th—the first day of school after our vacation ends. Vacation ends at the end of the day on December 18th.

With the coming of **winter storm weather**, we would like you to recall the policy. If the Chicago Public Schools call school off, we are closed. However, if we were to get a severe storm, I can make the decision to call school off. Hopefully, we will be getting a code from the group that handles the code I would need to get that information on television and radio. I have applied for it. In the event something happens before that code is given to me, our teachers would call the family with the oldest child in school and pass that information on. That would be labor intensive and we hope not to have to use that communication strategy. Please see to it that your child has warm jackets, hats, gloves, and boots. They cannot go out to recess without them when the weather is snowy and very cold.

Security additions have been or are in the process of being installed. We discovered that there were five cameras that run footage for about a week on the pastoral care center next door to us; however, they are not activated. A company will be coming to reactivate them and to move a few so that they cover the “gangway” between the school and the pastoral center, the alley (north and south), and the small playground. In addition, our **defibrillator** has been installed and tested. Mrs. Sandoval, Mrs. Botello, Mr. Ortiz, and I are trained to use it. **A very important security policy is that no person—parent or otherwise—may go to their child’s classroom during the school day to pick them up or bring them in. If you wish to see your child’s teacher, please call and make an appointment so we can be sure they are available.** We have been practicing **lockdowns** in the event that someone invades our secure setting who we might believe could be a danger to us. Until the police would arrive to secure the

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setting, we would remain in that position. Eventually, the police will be called to oversee the lockdown and give us suggestions.

You are all invited to our Christmas Program on Wednesday, December 16th at 1:30. It will be our intent to start on time. Today at Mass, our 7th graders who have been learning the hand bells made their debut. They played a most beautiful hymn. Ms. Agnew decided to introduce them to the opportunity since we had the bells.

RAFFLE TICKETS: Each family received ten (10) raffle tickets for \$5.00 to sell to benefit both the school and the parish. They are due before we leave for vacation on the 18th since the raffle is on Sunday, the 20th. If you are not buying the, they must be sent back or you will be charged for them. Please return them in an envelope and return them to Mrs. Sandoval with your money and perhaps a ticket or two that you did not sell.

Father Bob, our Pastor, has been granted a sabbatical beginning January 1 and lasting until June 30th. In his absence, Bishop Perry will make any decisions of importance. He will serve as the administrator of the parish during that time.

We understand that Big Shoulders grants will be received prior to Christmas. You will be notified if you have received one. Half of the grant will be paid in December while the other half will be paid in early April. Unfortunately, Big Shoulders does not have the same kind of money that had last year. We were told that we would be restricted to \$50,000 and that includes grants that have been given to students on a yearly basis like the Reynolds Scholars, the Gallagher Scholars, and the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin grants. We will see what that leaves us.

Blessings on these days...I know how difficult they are for so many of you search for jobs in a jobless economy...who wonder how you will make keep your family fed...and so much more.

Peace...
Ms. Lee

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