

September 11, 2007

Dear Families,

Back To School Night for Parents—September 18th. What a busy week this has been! We are now entering our third week of school and are looking forward to meeting you next week at the “Back to School Night for Parents” on Tuesday, September 18th from 6:30-7:45. The evening will be divided into three (3) twenty-five minute sessions in classrooms that you wish to visit. The first session will start at 6:30 in each classroom. The second session will begin at 6:55, and the third session will begin at 7:20. Teachers will talk about the focus of their curriculum in the various content areas, ways that you can support your child’s teacher as well as your learner and the work that comes home each evening. We will ring the bell after each session and invite you to move on to see another teacher or remain in the classroom you are in to spend additional time with your child’s teacher. If you have a middle school student, you will have the chance to visit most of your child’s teachers. If you have more than one child in school, you will have a chance to visit both of your children’s teachers. Please realize that this is not a time to conference with the teacher. If you need to do that, you can e-mail or call your child’s teacher for some time together. There will not be a gathering in the cafeteria on that evening.

Order blank for gym uniforms attached. We finally were able to hire a gym teacher for two days each week. Those days will be Tuesdays and Fridays. It is a challenge to fit all classrooms into a day’s schedule. At this time, the schedule won’t include our PreK children since there is a great deal of movement incorporated in their day. Our Kindergarten class will only have gym once a week. As you know, our students in grades 1-8 will go to Russell Square Park most days for classes. **If you did not fill out a Park District form that went home for you to complete last week, your child will be unable to go to the park until you send that form back to us. If you need another one, ask the classroom teacher for another one. Your child’s teacher is keeping track of the forms as they come in.** If your child needs uniforms, please complete the order form and include check/cash to cover what you have ordered. Orders will be filled and sent home with your child.

On September 14th of this week, we will be kicking off the first MAJOR school fundraiser for the year—the Kathryn Beich candy sale. Packets will come home with your child on Friday. Once again, when you return the order form, you must include the money for the candy ordered. We can certainly use some **parent volunteers to assist with this sale. If you are willing, kindly call Mrs. Sandoval and let her know of your intent to help.**

If you have a child in PreK, Ms. Ryan spent time with me this week talking about the **portfolios** you will see at conference time that document the learning of your little ones—pictures and a description of what your child is saying or doing in that picture. You would probably love to be invisible in the writing center as children choose just the

right paper or writing tool for the task. When asked what they wrote, it is the child's "story" that the teachers write down below their writing. You will be able to see how your child is growing developmentally. Such a joy! Ask about that when you visit PreK at our "Back to School Night" next week.

Congratulations to Mrs. Callahan, one of our Kindergarten teachers who was chosen by the Archdiocese of Chicago's Early Childhood Director to participate in training that will lead to certification as an Early Childhood Specialist. As you might expect, this is a great honor because it is based on a great deal of work that Mrs. Callahan did to get our Kindergarten certified by **the major Early Childhood Association** in the country (NAYCE).

Middle School Teacher commitment to homework help occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays this year. It was actually 5:00PM one day last week when I wandered up to the third floor and found Mrs. Andres tutoring a student in math who was struggling so. I was touched by her patience and by the student's sense that Mrs. Andres cared about her success. Ms. Andres and Ms. Agnew are the homework help team while Ms. Padilla has taken on the role of advisor to our Student Council on Wednesdays.

With an investment of \$700 in sets of novels to be used by **Ms. Agnew for book clubs in her 7th and 8th grade literature classes**, she has launched several groups already. Teaching students how to have deep conversation with one another about authors and that which makes their work so meaningful is an art. It is far richer than simply asking obvious questions and getting simple responses. If you have been in Borders or Barnes and Noble lately, you may have noticed a new genre of writing called the "graphic" novel. Ms. Agnew will be introducing this form of novel to a group most ready for the challenge. Ask her about it when you visit her on "Back to School Night for Parents" because she is excited about it as well as the research on the level of vocabulary the graphic novel supports.

Thanks to our "Sister Parish" in Inverness—Holy Family. This summer one of our volunteers—Joan—spent every Monday and Tuesday in the library from early morning til late in the evening on the hottest of days to assist in the work of automating our library. Carol and Dennis have joined her these past weeks. All the books now have bar codes and can be scanned as the students borrow books from the library. There are many new and used books that grace our shelves thanks to their commitment. We are truly blessed by their presence! We will be having some conversation this week about how Holy Family and St. Michael can work together this year.

Ms. Dora Rodriguez who is responsible for school tuition will now be available in school during the morning if you have any questions about your account. Her job is a challenging one because your commitment to paying tuition is what allows us to meet payroll and our monthly bills. Please don't hesitate to call her at 773-734-4921.

May God bless each of your families!

Ms. Lee