

“I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.” Abraham Lincoln

Many thanks to all who made our Catholic Schools week special! We had a great celebration! On Monday, our special mass as a school family was planned by our 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Our choir made the mass even more special by debuting one of our new favorite songs called “Digo si, Señor!” It was a stellar performance and reminded all of us to say “Yes, My Lord!” On Monday, we also experienced another great Science Fair this year. Our Science Fair participants which included all of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and the four of the most dedicated 8<sup>th</sup> graders vying for another chance at Regional and State Science Fair this year was simply amazing! We certainly thank Mrs. Pragovich for all of her time and dedication to assisting our students along the way and providing such an amazing event. We also thank our judges. We had many wonderful volunteers who gave up their day to spend time preparing our students for the next level of Science Fair participation and help many of our students enjoy their first Science Fair experience. Many of these same judges will be judging at the regional Science Fair at the University of St. Francis. Thank you all for your dedication to our students.

Our traditional Catholic Schools Week Open House was a wonderful morning! We were thrilled to have so many of our current families come to join our classes for the morning. It was definitely a record set for the most parents in attendance! Thank you for joining us at our Open House.....it made such a difference to your children. They were so proud to have you attend. We also thank the families who took the time to visit our Open House on Sunday. Our entire school works so hard on our Academic Fair Projects, and our students take such pride in their work. It was wonderful to have our families receive a personal tour of projects from the children. We set a record number of parents here for our Open House on Sunday. In fact, we have never had so many families tour our building and see our Academic Fair. It was fabulous to see so many of our children beaming with pride as they showed parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and Godparents their school.

If you haven't heard about the Teacher Appreciation Day competition, you are really missing out on some great material! The teachers took on those students from everything to musical chairs, relay races, obstacle courses, free throw contests, and my personal favorite to watch....scooter races!!! We won a few.....very few.....and lost very gracefully! The races became fairly competitive throughout the afternoon. We had some very excited students and very tired teachers! We proved that we are not as coordinated as we thought but we can win free throw competitions with our PK-4<sup>th</sup> grade students (Teachers 2- Students 1). Of course, the competition with the 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade on Free throws was a little humbling! (I can't even type the scores!) At the end of the day, it was an afternoon filled with laughter and serious competition! The day was complete with the wonderful teacher appreciation notes and letters. Thank you to all of you who took the time to write the kindest words to our staff and myself. You remind all of our teachers and staff that we are so appreciated and loved by our families and children. The letters and kind words are true treasures for all of us! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thursday and Friday, we greatly enjoyed our parent and alumni speakers. We thank both Steve Cardamone and Andy Weis for sharing how their faith and God play such important roles in their lives and careers. They reminded all of us how important it is to keep your faith as a priority all day, every day! We also learned a great deal about the necessary skills to succeed in the future. Thank you for sharing your expertise and most importantly, the story of your faith with our children. We are so grateful to have such wonderful role models amongst us! We were blessed to have several alumni students speak to our students. On Thursday, Miss Illinois~ Ashley Bradarich, SJS Class of 2000~ and Kurt Gonska, SJS Class of 2001 presented to our students and on Friday, our alumni presentations included Elizabeth Lomasney McDermott, SJS Class of 1994 and Katy O'Sullivan, SJS Class of 1993 and proud aunt of Abby and Hailey O'Sullivan came to share how important SJS was to their success in high school, college, and beyond. They also shared the value of their faith in their lives. The students enjoyed all presentations and learned a great deal. The presentations were equally impressive to our staff. We are so proud of our alumni! By all accounts, SJS made a profound difference in the life of our alumni. They are living examples of the priceless dividend from the St. Joseph School experience. And, we are so impressed with the “family” that they remember and still have in their lives from their days at SJS! We will share their stories and advice in future newsletters.....stay tuned!

By Friday, we were really ready to celebrate our students! Our SJS Parents Club Board and members at large served up some special root beer floats for our K-8 students. It was a regular ice cream factory at SJS! Preparing over 260 root beer floats was quite a feat that the SJS Parent Club team handled with ease! Thank you to Cindy Verhoek, State Farm Insurance for her sponsorship of the fest cups. We were able to enjoy the cups as a take home treat as well! We also thank our Parents Club for the special treats for our PS3, PK4, and PK Academy student, too! The morning donuts were a great treat and the ice cream cups hits the spot in the afternoon! Thank you for treating our students to a special treat. We loved it!

While we enjoy each and every event during Catholic Schools Week, we know it wouldn't be so much fun and so special without the support of our families, School Board, Parents Club, and staff. We are so grateful for all the special touches and true gift of the time and attention to our students and staff. As a staff, we are proud to demonstrate the dividends for life at SJS. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to do so at St. Joseph!

# Information

## Upcoming Events

2/12

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tournament all weekend long! 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls play 6:20 pm

2/13

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tournament-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys play at 1:30pm

2/14

- Rite of Covenant f/Confirmation Candidates/Parents in AC – 10 AM Liturgy. Attendance REQUIRED. For Candidates whose last names begin with M thru Z, Confirmation Session from 8:00 to 9:55 am

2/15

- President's Day-No School
- Auction Committee and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Family Meeting at 7pm in the School Hall

2/19

- Last 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Home Conference Games 6, 7, and 8pm

*"When he had finished speaking he knelt down and prayed with them all."*

Acts 20:36

Please take a moment to reflect on the prayer requests of our school families, and say a prayer. Have a prayer request to share? If you have a prayer request that you would like added, the forms are stocked in the school office (although we are not picky, if you just want to jot something down on paper, your prayers are perfect in any format). Just write down your request and send it to school with your child. You can also email requests anytime directly to [singingsportfan@yahoo.com](mailto:singingsportfan@yahoo.com). **If you have shared a request that has been answered and should no longer be included, please notify the office so we can update our prayer sheet.** All prayer requests will be printed at the earliest possible date. **Have you submitted a prayer that has not been printed yet?** Please resend it, just in case we missed it. We welcome your partnership in prayer!

### Diocesan Tuition Grants

Did you know that the Diocese of Joliet offers grants to fund the education at St. Joseph? Last year, several of our families qualified and received awards totaling over \$4000!!! We have applications available in the school office. The due date is early March 1st!!! The process is available in application format and on-line application opportunities are available. Please contact the school office for more information or to have an application sent home. Don't miss this opportunity to receive grants to help finance your children's education at SJS!

### Parish Contributions

Please do keep your tuition and parish contributions up to date! If you are having financial difficulties, please contact the school office or Fr. Tom. If we do not hear from you, we will send out formal notices of arrears. Your parish contributions are necessary to maintain our budget at SJS. We appreciate your assistance.

## SJS Athletic Board Updates

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tournament

Come join us for our 5<sup>th</sup> Grade tournament this weekend! Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys played won last night and advance to play on Saturday at 1:30 pm Our 5<sup>th</sup> Grade girls will be playing this evening at 6:20 pm Please come cheer the 5<sup>th</sup> graders on! It is their first tournament at SJS and they are excited to have the support of our SJS family! It is great basketball.....a whole lot of fun.....and concession stand filled with treats!

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Last Home Conference Game

If you have not seen the 8<sup>th</sup> graders play.....you have been missing out on some amazing basketball! The 8<sup>th</sup> graders and parents will be celebrated as they compete in their last home conference game on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls play at 7pm and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys play at 8pm. (Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys are amazing, too! Come see the 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys at 6pm.) It has been an honor to have these athletes represent SJS. They are amazing both on and off the court in my eyes. Come see for yourself.....we would be honored to have you there! In fact, we are offering free student admission for any students wearing SJS spirit wear that evening! So....come on over and support our 8<sup>th</sup> graders!

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents

We would like all 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents available for a special presentation to our parents before game time. Parents of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls need to arrive at 6:45pm and parents of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys need to arrive at 7:45pm for our presentation. Thank you in advance for your help!

### Co-Ed Volleyball 2010

We have a new opportunity for all those potential volleyball athletes! If you missed the Co-ed Volleyball sign-up, we have extended the deadline to 2/19/10! We are looking for some 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders to play Co-Ed Volleyball. Please see the enclosed flyer in your family envelope for more details.

### Athletic Board Positions for 2010-2011 Season

It is that time of the year....again! We are looking for a few good men and women to replace our retiring Athletic Board members. The Athletic Board would like to begin the training and transition for new board members as soon as possible. If you would like to join the board, work with some of the best athletes that I know.....please contact Dave Brightmore at [dkbrightmore@comcast.net](mailto:dkbrightmore@comcast.net) for more information!

**Be sure to return your registration forms to hold your spot for “ALMOST BLUE” School!**

As always, we hope to share the St. Joseph tradition of excellence with many new families this year. If you have friends, family, neighbors or co-workers who would like to experience a strong sense of community with religious aspirations and commitment to academic excellence...please send them our way! **On February 16<sup>th</sup>, we will begin the acceptance of new students. If you have not secured your child’s spot with the returned commitment fee and form, please do so by the 16<sup>th</sup>!** Traditionally, the openings in our fill Preschool 3 Year Old, PK4 Academy, and Kindergarten fill quickly. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes will have limited availability. We have openings in most grade levels 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. In your past family envelope, you received the “official” commitment form and information for 2010-11. Please contact our office if you are in need of a new form. The 2010-11 Commitment Form and fee of \$100 will secure your child’s placement at SJS for next year. **As a current family, we will hold your spot if your form is returned on time along with having your tuition and parish contributions up to date.** With the limited availability in so many primary grade levels, it will be crucial for your family to meet the established deadline of 2/16. Please contact our school office if you have any concerns or questions. We are happy to assist you through the enrollment process, and we would love to have all of our students back at SJS for the 2010-11 school year!!! And, really.....how can you pass up the opportunity to be enrolled at SJS- one of the fifty private schools in the nation nominated for the **2010 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL of EXCELLENCE AWARD?**

**SJS Parent Club Happenings:**

A million thanks.....

- To our Honor Society students that helped us during the Hospitality Sunday/Open House, as we “kicked off” Catholic Schools Week.
- To all of our room parents that kept our classrooms in order while our wonderful staff enjoyed a well-deserved luncheon! Also to our moms that stayed and cheered on our children as they beat the teachers in the Teacher Appreciation Day games. (ok, so it was about 50/50)
- To our many parents that worked with our students on Sandwich Day. Demonstrating what it means to work together to help others. We made TONS of sandwiches, and had fun doing it!!

**Valentine’s Day Parties:** Our “sweeties” had a wonderful time at their Valentine’s Day parties! Thank you to all our room moms for putting so much effort into making if a fun-filled day!

**Auction Projects:** N’est-ce pas? Auction time is fast approaching.. Please do not make a faux pas and have your crème de la crème of auction projects en route to the office. They are due on Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, but we will not be in school that day. You can start sending them in on Tuesday. The auction crew is joie de vivre (in high spirits), and looking forward to seeing the amazing creations of our children!!

**Roller Skating Party:** Our annual roller skating party will be on Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at USA Skate Center in Romeoville. There is no school on the 5<sup>th</sup>, so come on out and get your retro groove on!! Check your family envelope for more information!

**Bowling Party:** The date for our annual event will be on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Strike N Spare. Please watch for more information to come.

The next Parents Club meeting is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:45a.m. in the extended room. Please join us and see what we are about, what we are working on, and sometimes, how you can help. We would love to see some new faces! Please call ahead to let us know you will be coming, just in case the meeting is cancelled.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Carrie Ray, SJS Parents Club Secretary

**IMPORTANT UPDATES**

Please see your family envelope for problems at dismissal that must be addressed. We have received multiple complaints from our neighbors on 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and Jefferson Street. We have also received notice that the Lockport Police Department that tickets will be issued for the illegally parking by stop signs, blocking neighbors driveways, and double parking which creates unsafe driving conditions and limits cars abilities to drive on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Your immediate assistance and cooperation is needed. We have changes on the way and need your assistance to be “Good Neighbors” and provide a safe environment for our children.

# SJS Updates

## **Promenade in Paris.....March 20, 2010**

It will be here before you know it! We are pleased to report that we are nearing the \$14,000 mark in donation items! Thank you to all of our families who have donated and continue to seek donations on our school's behalf! We are in the home stretch and looking for some GREAT items! We are especially looking for condo or vacation stays. Just this week, we received a very exciting vacation trip from one of our families. (Stay tuned for more information on that one!) Do you have any connections for a vacation stay? Can you help with a donation of sports memorabilia or electronic goods? While our efforts have brought in some amazing donations, we are looking for more to make our night successful. Please contact Amy Galetti at 815-609-5129 or by e-mail at [agaletti@sbcglobal.net](mailto:agaletti@sbcglobal.net) for more information!

In the last family envelope, we sent home information to help our advertisement team. Please return your forms of your favorite businesses and our advertisement team will do all the work to secure the ad and share your positive review in our auction booklet. Please contact Yolanda Jesse at 815-588-1489 or by e-mail at [yolandajesse@yahoo.com](mailto:yolandajesse@yahoo.com) for more information. We have also included a fun way for all parents to support this event with a "HAPPY AD" to recognize their children in a special way. See the flyer included in your family envelope!! Each and every dollar of profit for this event will help our children. Please support our events and return your form next week!

Our sponsorship team is looking for some leads! The sponsorship our event is a wonderful way to showcase your business or the company you work for and help our school at the same time. Check with your human resource department or management.....most companies have funds set aside to help educational efforts. Please contact Julie Dixon at 815-836-2548 or by e-mail at [jdixon16615@comcast.net](mailto:jdixon16615@comcast.net) for more information!

100% of the Auction profits benefit the children of St. Joseph! Please don't miss the chance to be a part of this amazing event and support your child's school. Our 1<sup>st</sup> grade families have been great to work with in securing donations. Please join our efforts to make this night the best one yet!

\*\*\*Look for your auction invitation that will be coming your way soon! Please remember that all families are obligated with the tuition contract to purchase or sell two tickets. We hope you can join us on the 20<sup>th</sup>!\*\*\*

## **SJS Student Success**

### **Spelling Bee 2010**

Last week, we had another GREAT Spelling Bee at SJS! We were proud to see the top three spellers in grade 6, 7, and 8 participate in our local Spelling Bee. Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade was represented by Eric Dubek, Jennifer Lee and Nina Pilon. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade was represented by Jacob Carlsen, Eric Hennenfent, and Courtney Stakenas. Our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade was represented by Philip Jackinoski, Cameron Moore, and Alyssa Murphy.

All of our spelling champs gave it their best. I can't imagine how tough it is to face the bleachers filled with 200 students and spell on the spot words like these students did! We were proud of all their efforts to prepare and give their best effort! With some tough words right from the beginning, the Spelling Bee narrowed down to our top three spellers Eric Dubek (8), Eric Hennenfent (7) and Alyssa Murphy (6). Alyssa kept up with the two "Eric's" for a few rounds and finished as our 2<sup>nd</sup> Alternate. We know that Alyssa will be making repeat performances at our Spelling Bee in the coming years. Congratulations, Alyssa! The Spelling Bee continued with the two "Eric's" and it was something! They went round after round....after round....and we watched amazed by their spelling and by their determination. After many rounds and probably over 50 words between them, Eric Hennenfent was named the Spelling Bee Champ and Eric Dubek was named the 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate. We congratulate Eric Dubek on his stellar spelling through the years. For the past three years, Eric Dubek has been a Spelling Champ. He has always represented us very well. Once again, we were proud of his efforts. Eric Hennenfent will be representing SJS at the Scripps Spelling Bee at Lewis University. At this level, he has the amazing opportunity to be amongst the top spellers from each school in Will County. Last year, Eric represented SJS very well. He is our TOP SPELLER and we hope he makes it all the way to Washington, DC! Please keep Eric in your prayers as he competes for the chance to spell his way to the championship in Will County and land at the National Spelling Bee in Washington, DC! Congratulations and best of luck, Eric!!!

### **Patriot's Pen 2010**

The VFW of Lockport recently sponsored an essay contest that was open to all students in grades 6-8 in the Lockport area. The title of the essay was "When Should We Honor Our Veterans." We are pleased to announce that SJS students were named the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place winners! Brian Rossi took 1<sup>st</sup> Place and received \$75.00 prize. Julie Mrozak's essay received the 2<sup>nd</sup> Place award and received \$50.00 for her prize. Tristan Conrad's essay received 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, and won \$50! In addition to the cash prizes, the students received medals for their achievement. All prize winning essay writers were honored at a dinner with their parents on January 18, 2010 at the VFW in New Lenox. Congratulations to Brian, Julie, and Tristan on a job well done! We are so proud of your writing abilities and passion for such an honorable essay topic. It is always an honor to see our student's achievement and abilities recognized outside of our school. The VFW was impressed with all of our student essays and thrilled to award our students for 3 years in row with these awards!