



Principal's News and Notes

December 18, 2009

As we approach the end of the fall 2009 school year, there are several noteworthy accomplishments and information that DeSales is very proud of. As you will read, our teachers have been busy with several exciting and interesting programs and services that make DeSales Catholic School a value added school for all our children and families. The following are some of the highlights:

Sister Mary Asarese, Reading Specialist, is pleased to announce the purchase of Headsprout. Headsprout Early Reading is an award-winning, interactive, on-line reading program that meets the National Reading Panel guidelines for instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. This year we are using the program in Kindergarten and First Grade. Sister Mary is also piloting a new Headsprout Reading Comprehension Program with a limited number of students. We will evaluate that program for future use.

Mrs. Shipley and Mrs. Strobel's Pre-K class are making a soft bed of straw for Baby Jesus by doing acts of kindness and service for their classmates and teachers. The Pre-K after school group has been making candy canes to brighten up the meals for Meals on Wheels.

You can always count on the primary classes to keep the spirit of giving alive throughout the year. Since the beginning of the year, Mrs. Hausrath's "Change" a Life Jar has donated change collected to a different organization each month. With the help of first and second grades, between \$30 and \$50 has been donated to St. John's Outreach Center, Roswell Cancer Institute, Operation Scrooge and a DeSales family in need. The Religious theme of the month is "Following in Christ's Footsteps". The students have all written ways to be more Christ-like on a paper foot and a path of footsteps from each of the rooms lead to the Star of Bethlehem.

Fourth grade students recently spent time with local senior citizens from the Dale Association through our HISTOP program. Senior volunteers from the Association came to DeSales to share stories about their lives when they were young. Our students then went to the Dale Association to share interesting stories about their own lives. This program helps children learn what life was like with no televisions, computers, ipods, or cars, and hear stories from veterans about WWII, the Korean War and Vietnam War. The students get a better understanding of a life that is so totally different than anything they have ever known and the senior citizens enjoy learning about all of the new technology and students' lives today.

Notes from the world of Mrs. Engel's Social Studies classes include checking out the sixth grade students' names written in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics lining the halls in the Middle School wing. Try to figure out who belongs to each drawing. On December 17th, the class will be traveling to the Buffalo Museum of Science to explore their ancient Egyptian exhibit. The seventh graders are making a colonial quilt using the information they have learned about the 13 colonies. The eighth grade is studying the early 1900s including the difficulties Industrialization brought and wonderful inventions of that period. Invention projects are hanging on the wall

outside the office. Middle school is also gearing up for the National Geographic Geography Bee to be held in January.

Mrs. Kruse's artists are busy these days. In the Art hall, you will see diffused watercolor paper leaves created by the 4th grade. There are also pop art whimsical colorful cakes in oil pastels using depth and perspective made by the 3rd grade. The Kindergarteners colored their version of an abstract artist's drawing using geometric forms and bold colors.

About 50 students performed at this year's Winter Recital held December 17th under the direction of Betsy Russell, Instrumental Music Instructor. Congratulations to all of the solo and duet performers playing piano, flute, clarinet, trumpet or percussion. Adding to the Christmas spirit this week, classrooms were entertained by Music Instructor Steven Budnack's wandering Christmas carolers. Great job performers and singers!

The fifth grade students graduated from the DARE Program after completing ten weeks of instruction from Deputy Haseley of the Niagara County Sheriff's Department. For a culminating project of the program, all students wrote an essay on making good choices and how to say "No" to illegal substance use. Congratulations to the graduates and thank you to Deputy Haseley for the great job with our students.

The Christmas chain adorns the Library as Mrs. Deeks has already begun building the red and green paper chain as an incentive for students to read. The children add a link each time they read and bring their book back to the Library on time during the Advent Season. The goal this year is 1,000 links.

DeSales basketball teams are off to a great start this year. More than 70 boys and girls in grades 4-8 are building their skills on the basketball court as they represent DeSales in five Diocesan Interscholastic leagues this winter. Both boys and girls teams have been very successful with recorded wins thus far.

An area currently in use as the cafeteria manager's office will be renovated over the Christmas holiday to provide an expanded and more functional space for improved health services to our children. The renovations include installing a window and opening a large doorway to the area currently used as the copier room/mail slot area. The copier and faculty/staff mail slots will be moved into a section of the current file server room adjacent to the science classroom and lab. The cafeteria manager's office will be moved to the existing health office. The expanded health office will be completed and ready for our return to school on January 4th.

As a reminder, in the event of an absence, 6th, 7th and 8th graders should check their teachers' websites for homework assignments. If the information is not available, the student should contact another student with a similar schedule. If a student is absent more than three days and wishes to acquire homework, they should e-mail the teachers directly. Homework can be picked up in the Main Office between 2:50 and 3:30 pm. Parents who wish to pick up homework for students K-5 who are absent three days or more, should call the school office in the morning and you will be able to leave a message with the child's teacher. Homework may then be picked up between 2:50 and 3:30 pm in the Main Office. It is impossible for teachers to prepare homework assignments before the end of the school day, since they are responsible for supervising their classes throughout the day.

Thank you for your cooperation regarding the H1N1 pandemic. Please continue to monitor your children and keep them home if they have a temperature over 100 degrees and/or if they are not

feeling well. H1N1 updates can be found on the Lockport City School District and DeSales websites.

All employees and volunteers at DeSales must complete VIRTUS training (“Protecting God’s Children”) and keep current with the VIRTUS training bulletins as mandated by the Diocese. To register for training, go to www.virtusonline.org and click on the registration tab.

There will be NO SCHOOL on Thursday, January 28th, 2010 for students due to a Faculty and Staff Retreat.

Christmas recess begins December 22nd. Parents and families are welcome to join us for a special Christmas Mass and sing-a-long at 9:10 am followed by early dismissal at 10:50 for K-8. School resumes on January 4th.

A Wish for the New Year

Health enough to make work a pleasure; wealth enough to support your needs;
Strength enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them;
Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them;
Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished;
Charity enough that shall see some good in your neighbor;
Cheerfulness that shall make others glad;
Love that shall move you to be useful and helpful;
Faith that shall make real the things of God;
And *hope* that shall remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

Phillips Brooks

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

***Best Wishes for a peaceful, joyous and blessed holiday season.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year***