



Weekly Message from the Principal,
Mary Ann McQueen

October 9, 2013

Parents: There will be no parking on the Garfield lot this Thursday, October 10, 2013 due to filming! In addition, there has been a bit of congestion on the Garfield lot after drop-off as parents are leaving at the same time as some are arriving for 8:00 am mass. We are working on a solution and will keep you posted.

Friday, October 11: No school, teacher in-service

This Friday, October 11, 2013 there is no school for students and no Homework Club. Teachers and staff will be involved in an in-service day focused on preparing for accreditation (WASC, WCEA). St. Mark is accredited by both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and by the Western Catholic Education Association. This year the faculty and staff are going through the self-study process, a discernment process that provides us with an opportunity to take a close look at our program and evaluate what works and what needs improvement or attention. Out of this process will come an "Action Plan" designed to provide a roadmap for future strategic planning and program enhancements. A parent survey will be an important part of the self-study process and we will be engaging parents in various ways as we move forward.

Admission Outreach to Prospective Parents:

We had a very successful outreach event yesterday and welcomed many families to our campus for an informational session and classroom tours. More than twice the number of people that we expected attended! Student speakers Maddie and Isabella did a terrific job! Thank you Elizabeth Chartier, Martha Champlin, and Jennifer Agens for leading tours with such finesse! I am so proud of the program, teachers, students and staff of St. Mark School. Our visitors were very impressed with "The Best Kept Secret...!" I'm not so sure it's much of a secret anymore! Thank you to all who helped to get the word out about the event. The next outreach date is November 5th at 8:00 am until 10:00 am.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-Teacher Conferences are coming up. They take place on Thursday, October 17 and Friday, October 18. On both of these days students have a half day of school and are dismissed at 12:30 pm. There is no *Homework Club* on these days as well. Only one or two families per grade have not signed up. Please do this today! Go to the link below to register and sign up for your conference(s). Should you have any questions or need help, contact Mrs. Maria Donaldson who is more than happy to assist you!

Thank you to all parents who have signed up and to Maria Donaldson for making it so easy! We are trying to implement systems that make these types of sign-ups easier and more efficient for parents.

Conferences are fifteen minutes in length and it is important that the schedule be maintained once it is set. Please make every effort to be on time for your conference and to plan for questions, etc. as needed. Should you have questions now, don't hesitate to contact the teacher(s).

Spanish Conversation:

Spanish conversation classes began last week at St. Mark. We have contracted with Language Door to provide this instruction. The teacher from Language Door is Senorita Andrea Marquez and she will be here each week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. She spends about 35-45 minutes with each grade. We will evaluate how this program is working and will decide how to further implement a Spanish language program in the future.

High School Admissions:

Parent Information Night for 8th grade parents is on Wednesday, October 9 at 7:00 pm here at St. Mark in the 8th grade classroom. We will be discussing the entire application process.

Fingerprinting for Volunteers is happening at St. Mark on Saturday, November 9, 2013!:

Fingerprinting will be conducted at St. Mark School on Saturday, November 9, 2013 for all Virtus-trained parent volunteers. The hours are as follows: 10:00 am to 1:40 pm and 3:20 pm to 5:20 pm. Each twenty minute session can accommodate four people but this fingerprinting opportunity is being offered via the Archdiocese webpage so there may be a lot of traffic as a result. So, sign up now! To sign up, please call Maria Donaldson in the school office.

6-8 grade parents:

Please see the attached schedule of all of the high school nights, open houses and other important information that relates to the high school search for your child/children. We encourage you to attend high school evening programs that are being offered at St. Timothy on October 10 or at St. Paul the Apostle on November 19. Check those school's websites for parking and time directions. Please plan to get started with these endeavors in the 6th grade and to continue them into 7th grade. This is very motivating for students to begin picturing themselves in high school and to understand what is expected of them to achieve the admission that they seek. We will discuss this process in an on-going way and I welcome your questions.

RE: high schools visiting St. Mark. In order to be fair to the high schools we are offering them lunch time to provide information sessions to our students here on campus. We will make the information and dates available to you as we set them!

Pictures/Picture Re-takes:

On Friday, October 25, 2013 picture retakes will take place. Pictures are being sent home today, October 9, 2013. If you are not pleased with the photos (within reason) you can send them back and take a make-up picture on Friday, October 25. Dress uniform on this day as well.

Student Council Charity Event/Outreach to the Community:

Student Council members are participating in the "L.A. Caner's Challenge 5K/10K, walk/run. See attached flyer and join the team. The proceeds from this walk/run benefit pancreatic research. Let's give a big "roar" to Student Council and the moderators, Ms. O'Reilly and Ms. Amador!

Halloween is around the corner...

Halloween is a big day at SMS! You may want to begin planning your costume now! Try to be clever and work with items at home that you have vs. buy a costume. Please have fun with the costume planning and remember that SMS is an elementary school with students ages 4-14. Appropriate costumes are required. Should you have any question about that, ask away! Leggings under short costumes are required. Make sure the tops are appropriate and that the abdominal area is covered.

Parents, we will gather on the yard in the morning but students will be dismissed to their classrooms right away. We will have our regular assembly when they come out onto the yard for the Halloween Parade! Between drop-off and the parade we invite parents to gather near the lunch tables for coffee and bagels. Room parents will be decorating tables and may need some assistance. Watch for email communication in this regard.

Dismissal on Halloween will take place at 12:30 pm and there will be no Homework Club on this day.

Friday, November 1, 2013 is All Saints Day!

Dress uniform on this day and a special All Saints Day liturgy will be celebrated.