



## St. Michael Catholic School



### LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Greetings from St. Michael Catholic School.

The new school year is off to a great start. Thank you for taking a minute to read this edition of our Alumni Newsletter. Our goal is to reduce expenses associated with producing and mailing this publication. We will begin an electronic version of this newsletter as soon as possible. To that end, we NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES. It's easy, just visit <http://www.saintmpl.org/>, go to the "Alumni" tab. Click on 'Stay Connected' to complete the online form.

Everyone has been impacted by our economy, including our school families. In just three years, demand for tuition assistance has tripled. We need your support.

Tuition Assistance donation idea: Donate the year you graduated! If you graduated from St. Mike's in 1976, write a check for \$19.76. Of course, moving the decimal either way is just fine! We'll track donations from classes and keep you posted to have a little fun while helping your extended St. Mike's Family members continue the same great education you received 'back in the day'. Send your donations to school and indicate "Tuition Assistance" in the memo!

I hope you had wonderful summer. Please remember your St. Michael School family in your prayers as we begin our 51st school year.

Yours in Christ,

Patrick Fox, Ed.S.  
Principal



### HISTORY OF THE MEDIA CENTER

by Peg Hofer and Bonnie Lurquin, Teachers

We would be remiss if we didn't give thought to the history of our Media Center, once known as the School Library before we draw the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of St. Michael School to an end. When the school opened 50 years ago, the library, a very small one, was located where the present day front office is located.

In the late 70's an addition was added to the school and the library was moved to the present day art room. Irene Mangan was the school librarian. Luanne Kuboushek was also a librarian during this time and remembers something that hasn't changed – ordering books from Mackin. Students checked out books by signing their names on a card located inside the cover of the book and the book was stamped with a due date. The librarian kept the card. To add a little fun, students could crawl into a bathtub with claw feet to do their reading.

As with many libraries, the library became no longer a collection of books but a place for many types of text. When computers were introduced to St. Michael School (the old Apple 2E), the library became a media center and was moved to the room above the gym that presently functions as the band room. Needing more room in the years that followed, the books were moved to what is now Mr. Lenz's music room and the computers were moved to their present spot, the computer resource room on the top floor of Building A.

A growing enrollment necessitated an addition to the school. The library was moved to the new building on the lower level with Terri Pelkey as librarian. Teachers continued to use the computer room in Building A, and lap tops were rolled from room to room on a cart. New technology allowed for Terri to use computer software to check out books. Teachers, parents and students were delighted with the larger space, and the shelves,



chairs and tables that could accommodate our growing number of books and students. In addition to being used by students, the library was a gathering space for luncheons and meetings.

Attractive bulletin boards, student work and at times, enticing graphics line the walls and even the floor to the entrance of the present day Media Center which is now located in Building B on top of the multi-purpose room. Large windows that overlook Duluth Street make for a very inviting, sunny room. An additional computer resource room is located in Building B. Debra Meidl, our present librarian, provides many activities that encourage reading. Some of the activities are Kids Are Authors, The Maud Hart Lovelace Reading Program, the AR Reading Program, and book talks. She hosts three Scholastic Book Fairs and one Barnes and Noble Book Fair. Our Media Center now houses over 15,000 books, 5 computers and is fully automated. We can be assured that it will continue to be a place that encourages students to nurture their love of reading.

# 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

by Peg Sibbet, Technology Committee Member and parent of St. Michael student

Improving technology is a high priority at St. Michael Catholic School. Results from a 2008 school survey revealed “technology” as the #1 area to enhance and improve.

A Technology Committee formed immediately. We started on a small scale by converting *NewsNotes* to an online format, saving time and money! We then researched computer labs, mobile labs, and the Apple 1:1 Program. After a site visit to Our Lady of Grace Catholic School in Edina, we determined that the Apple 1:1 Program would be a great fit for our middle school students. The 1:1 Program provides a laptop for each student, 24/7. Based on feedback from teachers, we decided to create a two-phase technology implementation plan.

Phase I equipped all SMCS staff with new Apple MacBooks to prepare for Phase II when 6th, 7th, & 8th grade students would receive laptops. Equipping middle school students with laptops creates additional time for K-5 students to access the computer lab. Students in all grades will have a technology curriculum (TechSteps) to learn keyboarding skills and how to use applications such as; Excel, Word, PowerPoint – skills used in school and beyond graduation.

SMARTBoards are another important form of technology we have recently installed in every 2nd through 8th grade classroom as well as in the Art and Music rooms. Kindergarten and 1st graders certainly have access to SMARTBoards, as well. These SMARTBoards will greatly enhance the middle school 1:1 Laptop Program. It should be noted that a small number of very generous donations have allowed us to install SMARTBoards at a much quicker pace.

Phase II includes preparing for the arrival of student laptops, upgrading wireless infrastructure to handle 140 laptops, and implementing the *TechSteps* technology curriculum. Elementary teachers have been anxiously awaiting the receipt of their SMARTBoards. Installation is complete as of August 25th. The Tech Committee, staff and students are excited about these new technology initiatives at school. We are truly embarking on a journey toward 21st Century Learning!

Another major technology initiative has been the renovation of our School and Parish websites, which are now fully functional. Check them out! Many of our teachers have been busy creating their own websites!

1:1 Laptop Program orientations are scheduled before school begins. Students will begin to receive laptops on September 9th. The teachers, students, and parents are all anxious to get started on this technology journey!



Sandy Haycraft, Lane Farnquist & Corla Niesen

## STAFF FEATURE CORLA NIESEN

If you call or stop by to visit St. Michael Catholic School, most likely the first person you will encounter is Corla Niesen. Corla has been working at St. Michael's for 16 years. Corla's job duties include receptionist, answering the phones, letting people in the front door, selling Scrip, scheduling the gym and classroom usage, typing the *News Notes*, copying class work for the teachers, and whatever other various jobs that she gets asked to do. Corla really enjoys the variety of work that she does at St. Michael, and likes the friendliness and kindness of everyone she comes across.

Corla's family moved to Prior Lake when she was 6 years old, and she lived on County Road 42, which back then was considered living in the “boonies”. Corla's first impression of St. Michael Catholic School happened when she was in

9th grade and the St. Michael students joined the public school kids. She said the students were smart, motivated, and had lasting friendships with their St. Michael classmates. She knew then that when she had kids of her own, this was the school that she wanted them to attend. She looked forward to volunteering at the school to be an integral part of continuing the quality and values of the school, and was excited when Sr. Irene first gave her the opportunity to work at the school. Corla's most memorable moment since working at school was when Sister Irene rode Ralph Prchal's Harley for Aprilfest.

Corla has been married to her husband Bob for 29 years. They have two grown children, Josh and Katie, who both live and work up north. When Corla is not at work, she enjoys riding her bike with friends, reading, working on their cabin up north and traveling.

## STAFF FEATURE LANE FARNQUIST

If there's something that needs to be set up, cleaned up, fixed up, brought up (or down) somewhere at St. Michael's, the person you'll find doing that is Lane Farnquist. Lane has been taking care of all kinds of maintenance issues at St. Michael's for the past 11 years on a full-time basis, although he started as a part-time employee working on the playground in 1988 when his children were attending school here. Lane said he was offered a full-time position here five times before he decided to accept the job. He said everyone was so nice here that he was just sucked right in. Lane said he really enjoys his job because of the kids at school. He said there have been many memorable moments while working at St. Michael's, so he can't think of any one in particular.

Lane is originally from Savage, and has lived in the general area his entire life. He and his family lived in Prior Lake for 10 years, so all three of his children attended St. Michael's for at least part of their school years. Sadly, Lane's son Mason died of liver cancer a few years ago. When Lane is not at work, he and his wife Bev enjoy spending most of their time with their daughter Jennifer and son Michael, and their two granddaughters, Tiffany (3) and Madison (4 months). Lane also enjoyed playing softball five nights a week until an injury this year put an end to that.

## STAFF FEATURE SANDY HAYCRAFT

A face that many people will probably know around St. Michael Catholic School is Sandy Haycraft. She has been working at St. Michael's for 24 years, ever since Sister Irene came on board and was hiring new office help. Sandy was interested in the job because it was close to home and it was a place that was God-centered, which she said has assisted in improving her faith. Sandy was originally the receptionist, made copies, acted as nurse, as was Sister Irene's secretary. Eventually a nurse came in part time from the public school and Corla was hired to assist in the office, so now Sandy

*Continued on page 3*

*Sandy Haycraft continued from page 2*

works primarily in the middle school office and does more with paperwork such as registrations and tuition payments. Sandy really enjoys the students and the Christian values that are taught. Her most memorable moment while working at St. Michael was when Sister Irene rode a Harley.

Sandy grew up on a farm in Plum City, Wisconsin. She has two sisters and two brothers who all still live in the Plum City area, near her father, who is 93 years old. Sandy met her husband Brad when they were both working in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This October will mark their 39th anniversary – Sandy says it honestly doesn't seem that long and that time flies when you're having fun! All four of Sandy's children attended St. Michael Catholic School. Now they are all married and raising children of their own.

In Sandy's free time, she enjoys camping, walking, cooking, taking care of her nine grandchildren, and just relaxing.

## ALUMNI FEATURE JESSICA YOUNG CLASS OF 2007

My name is Jessica Young. I am currently a senior at Prior Lake High School. I graduated from St. Michael Catholic School three years ago and it truly feels like yesterday. I am having a wonderful experience in high school and I think that my time at St. Michael's made all the difference.



*Jessica Young, Class of 2007*

I am involved in several activities at the high school. I have been in speech since freshmen year and I really love it. I think that I developed those particular skills and abilities throughout all of my years at St. Michael's. I am also in a group called SADD, which stands for students against destructive decisions. As well as SADD, I am also in Junior Optimist Club. I know that my background and character was shaped at St. Michael's and though it is challenged, I will never stray from making good decisions. I am also involved in the fall play. Last year I was in the technical crew, but this year I think that I will try out for a part on stage. I played tennis sophomore year as well and I think that I will play again next year; it is a really great sport. Finally, I am in National Honor Society. I think that is the activity that I am most proud of and this year I am going to be the President. I am very excited to have this leadership opportunity and am honored that I was chosen to be President.

St. Michael's made me who I am today. My time at St. Michael's gave me confidence and I think that is part of the reason I am doing well in high school. Not only was I prepared academically, but even more than that I was prepared mentally. I learned how to be myself and how to make good choices regardless of the choices that others around me are making. I know that my time at St. Michael's will continue to benefit me later in life because it certainly has so far.

*“my time at St. Michael's made all the difference”*

## 8TH GRADE GRADUATION ST. MICHAEL'S CLASS OF 2010



Photo by Renee Kaiser-Muelken

Check out the Alumni Outreach link on our website:  
<http://saintmpl.org>

## 2011 GALA DINNER

This year, St. Michael Catholic School will be celebrating The 2011 Gala Dinner on Saturday, January 29, 2011 at Brackett's Crossing Country Club in Lakeville. We would love to have our alumni represented... all are invited! This year, much of the planning and communication will be done online so please make sure and visit the website: [www.saintmpl.org](http://www.saintmpl.org) and look for the Gala tab! Once there you will find all of the information you need to view the invitation, purchase tickets, browse the auction catalog and more! We are also reaching out to alumni who are interested in becoming a personal or business sponsor. There are different levels to choose from and it is a wonderful way to expose your business among the school community while supporting the traditions of St. Michael Catholic School!



*Marathon coordinators  
Katie Vander Weit and Susie Williams get the students  
geared up for this year's marathon.*

## MARATHON A+ FOR SERVICE

The annual marathon at St. Michael Catholic School is one of the two large fundraisers for the school every year. The goal for this year's marathon is to raise \$30,000, and any amount raised above that will be used as tuition assistance for families who need help during these tough economic times. The theme of the marathon is A+ for Service, and each grade level will participate in a different service project. The projects will include:

- Walking downtown and to Lakefront Park
- Packaging supplies for the Humane Society
- Sending supplies to our Sister Parish in Chimbote
- Building birdhouses and cleaning up our Nature Center
- Cleaning the church
- Supporting Operation Military Kids
- Visiting with friends at McKenna Crossing, Keystone and Safe Haven
- Assembling thousands of meals at Feed My Starving Children



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(L to R) Gerald and Ann Shimek and Lee Ann and Steve Shimek



(L to R) Patrick and Norma Klein and Audrey and Clarence Kaiser

## ST. MICHAEL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The St. Michael's Golf Tournament on August 15 was another success for the athletic department. This year 130 golfers on 27 teams participated in the event, and raised \$7450.30 for the athletic department.

With the money raised, the athletic department was able to purchase a new volleyball system, volleyballs and a ref stand. The department also plans to purchase new bats for the baseball and softball programs and other items needed to run the athletic program. In addition, some of the money will be put into a fund for future major purchases such as new side basketball hoops by the bleachers.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the event. Please consider joining in the fun next year.

## Mission:

*Dedicated to spiritual growth, academic excellence, and social development, the mission of St. Michael Catholic School is to prepare our students to live the Gospel message in an ever-changing, diverse world.*

## E-MAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!

We are making a plea for all alumni to submit their e-mail addresses to us! In an effort to move towards our 21st century technology goals (and save a few trees while we are at it!), we plan to phase out paper newsletters and move to an e-newsletter format! We will be able to communicate with you more frequently with the added value of cost savings and a lot of time! We promise to provide you with the same great information on St. Michael Catholic School! Please visit our brand new website: [www.saintmpl.org](http://www.saintmpl.org) and while you are there, click in the 'Alumni' tab and then 'Stay Connected.' You will find a user-friendly form to submit your updated information!