

December 8, 2009

Dear STM Families,

As a child I always thought the preparation for Christmas was the most exciting time of the year. At school we would learn the Christmas songs, hear the Christmas stories, and the choir would practice extra hours in anticipation of leading the singing at the Christmas morning Children's Mass. The stores did not decorate for the season quite as early as they do these days, but the anticipation of shopping was a part of the season. I can remember the fun of going to the five-and-dime store (Target and Wal-Mart didn't exist yet) and buying a gift - a manger figure - for my grandparents. Several years in a row I purchased the statue of Mary. My sister would remind me that I had bought Grandma that item the year before, but I would purchase it anyway. My grandparents probably had several Mary statues in the manger scene but grandma was always excited to receive *my* gift. Each year she would gently share how honored she was to have been named after the Blessed Mother and how she hoped that she could be as faithful to God's wishes as Mary had been.

On this Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the reading of Mary's song seems fitting so I have included it below. I pray that the song's message will guide your Advent preparations.

"And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

Have a great week and God bless,

Eleanor McCormack

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

In the event of inclement weather, St. Thomas More School abides by the School Closing/Late Opening announcements for the Arlington County Public Schools. If there is a weather event, watch or listen to the morning news to see if Arlington County is listed. If Arlington calls for the closure of schools, we will be closed. If Arlington calls for a 2-hour delay, we will begin school at 10:00 am. Extended Day will open at 9:00 am. If a weather event happens after the school day has started, we will also abide by Arlington County Schools. Generally, Arlington makes its closure decisions by 11:30 am if they are going to close the schools midday. We will also use the Schoolmessenger notification system (telephone and email) to alert you to an early dismissal.

The telephone number for the Arlington County Schools Snow hotline is 1-866-322-4277.

STUDENT COUNCIL GIVING TREE NEWS – Please see the attached flyer

Dear Parents,

This Advent season Student Council chose to help our community by supporting children served by the Catholic Refugee and Relocation Center. Our students created gift request tags which are hanging on the Giving Tree in our front hallway. These were all requests given to us by the Center and are the very basic of needs for children who have recently arrived to the US and have need of the school supplies or warm clothes.

We have asked the students to go home and discuss this commitment with their parents before taking a tag from the tree. If you feel you would like to participate, please do so. *We are asking that you return the unwrapped gift and the attached gift tag to school as soon as possible before December 16th.* This will allow our Student Council members to get them to the center in plenty of time for Christmas.

Thank you for your generosity and May God bless you during this holiday season.

Sincerely,
STM Student Council

St. Thomas More Instrumental Band Program

Beginner and Advanced Band Students and Parents

Barry Ward, conductor

Subject: 1st Parents' Concert: Thursday, January 28th, 7:30 P.M.

On Thursday, January 28th at 7:30 P.M. we will be performing our **1st Parents' Concert** at school. Both groups, beginners and advanced, will be performing on the same concert. All beginner /advanced students please be at school by 7:00 P.M. and report to the assigned classrooms. Please remember there will be no extra playing of instruments in the gym until called for by the director. Both bands will be performing for the school on **Thursday, December 10th** (time: t.b.a)

In order to make our performances look as well as I believe we will sound, uniformity of dress is important. We would ask that the following dress code be followed:

boys: dark pants (black or navy)
white dress shirt - no tennis shoes, please

girls: dark dress or pants (black or navy)
white dress shirt or blouse

*School concerts call for school uniforms.

Please be informed that Mr. Ward has a rule that if a student is not properly dressed for a concert, they are not allowed to perform. Although I would rather not make this strong a statement, I feel that proper dress does have an affect on attitude. This dress code will remain the same for all concerts and particularly the Arlington Diocese Band Festival in March and the Busch Gardens Competition in May.

I believe both bands should play a fine concert and we encourage you to help fill up the audience. I am proud of the band program at our school and want to share their hard work and dedication with you. Looking forward to seeing you on Thursday evening, January 28th, I remain...

Very truly yours,
Barry Ward

A NOTE FROM OUR NURSE

H1N1 news

Arlington County Public health completed immunizing our students and high risk staff on Friday, December 4th. There has been no further information on if or when they may return for a second dose for those under 9. The nurses stated that they were running short on vaccine so I recommend you obtain your second dose from your child's doctor. Thank you to Mrs. Mayes and Mrs. Couto for helping last Friday during the vaccination. Across the state, the cases of H1N1 have declined for the fifth consecutive week.

Hearing and Vision screen

Yesterday we screened 79 children in the 1-8 grades for vision and hearing. If a child does not pass either test, I need to screen them a second time (using the borrowed equipment) to see if a problem exists and then will notify you by a letter. If you would like the results sooner, please contact me. We did not have enough volunteers to complete the Kindergarten screenings off the van like we had hoped. We will screen the Kindergarten during the second week of January. When I receive the date that the equipment is available, I will notify the Kindergarten parents. Thanks to the four parents that helped me with

Lunch and Snack Storage

Recently I have noticed lunchables and yogurt coming in unrefrigerated brown bags for the children's lunches. Please make sure that you are using lunchboxes and ice packs for dairy and meat items that need it. Perishables that are left out more than 45 minutes can begin to grow bacteria that will make the children sick. Thank you.

Wellness Corner

As I spoke of last week, kids spend an average of 6 hours per day in front of TV or computer screens. Setting the example by being active ourselves is the best way to teach them to be active. If you are active and are able to take them to the gym with you, it will help them, too. Many gyms now offer kid's programs or open court time. Or, take them mall walking with you if the weather is bad. Play eye spy in the store windows as you take laps around the mall! Kids need about 60 minutes of exercise per day in order to improve their health, improve their behavior and relieve their stress.

Sincerely,
Donna Lorge, RN, BSN

STMC school nurse
(703)528-6781 ext. 28
nurse@stmschool.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

- Dec. 9 – Interim Reports home
- Dec. 9 – Middle School Service Day
- Dec. 16 – 11:30 Dismissal
- Dec. 18 – 11:30 Dismissal – Extended Day Open
- Dec. 21 – Jan. 1 – School closed for Christmas holiday
- Jan. 4 – Classes resume

ATTACHMENTS

- Pizza Lunch this Friday - Flyer
- Giving Tree Flyer
- Cub Scout Pack 194 White House Ornament Flyer 2009