

Parent NEWS Letter

F A L L 2 0 1 1



100 Years of Catholic Education!

The Lord has certainly blessed the St Ursula community abundantly in the past 100 years. From the early days of our small school room with blackboards and writing tablets to our newly renovated building complete with computer and science labs, television studio, portable laptop and iPad stations and so much more, St. Ursula School has certainly changed with the times.

But a school building is nothing without the exemplary faculty and staff within. Do you think the three Sisters of Notre Dame who originally started our school would have ever imagined the number of fine students and teachers who would grace these halls over the next 100 years? Since 1952, the Vincentian Sisters of Charity, now the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, have sustained the original mission of providing an exemplary faith based education. No longer fully staffed by the religious, our school is now blessed to have a highly qualified faculty primarily comprised of laypersons who give of their time and talents daily, creating a stimulating and loving environment for our children to grow.

And now we regularly see the fruition of the labors of all those who have supported St. Ursula School. We have enrolled second and third generation St. Ursula students and welcomed our past students as active adult parishioners. There is truly no greater reward than knowing that the efforts of all have guided our students in their education and in their faith formation.

We are grateful for the continuing grace God bestows on the St. Ursula community. May God bless you and your family for your kindness and commitment to St. Ursula School.

Sr. M. Joanita Fedor, S.C.N., Principal
Fr. Garnett Dorsey, Pastor

St. Ursula School cultivates the growth and development of the whole student. In addition to a challenging academic and catechetical curriculum, students have opportunities at St. Ursula unlike those at any other school. It is the goal of this newsletter to capture the spirit of the school by compiling information from the various groups. The School Advisory Council was created in August 2008 following Diocesan Guidelines and is comprised of Student Life, Budget and Finance, Enrollment Management, Vision and Planning, Athletics Association and Fund Raising.

Together and with the assistance of many parent volunteers, the goal is to have a viable and growing school fostering quality education and firm Catholic faith since 1911. Happy 100th Birthday!

St. Ursula School is a special place because of the special people who teach, attend, nurture and support the school.

This newsletter will be a source of information and reference about the SAC, school fund raising, parent-powered volunteer groups and the St. Ursula Athletic Association. It will be published in October, February and May.

St. Ursula School Parent NEWSletter
Established 2001
Dana Eckel and Stephanie Lamperski,
Editors

Our thanks this month to Sister Joanita, the teachers, coaches, and parent contributors.



Classroom News

BULLETIN BOARD

Cute!

The Simmons family welcomed a new bundle of joy, Riley Margaret, to their family on July 11, 2011. James (Kindergarten) is a very proud big brother who takes excellent care of his little sister. Thank you to the St. Ursula families who kept us in prayer!

Summer Fun

During the month of July, Matty H. played on the 10 yr. old Hampton tournament baseball team. Tournaments were held at Ingomar, Cranberry, and Penn Hills. Although no championships were won at Ingomar or Cranberry, their lucked changed at Penn Hills. They played Plum for the championship and walked away with the win of 17 – 3! Congratulations to Matty and his teammates on a great season and bringing home the trophy!

Middle and High School Youth Groups

St. Ursula FIRE and ICE Youth Groups have many activities planned for the year. Contact Mrs. Lale Virostek or Mrs. Gretchen Homer in the Faith Formation office for more information, 412-486-3374. Their calendar is on the school website under the St. Ursula Parish link.

Light Bulb Moment

St. Ursula School has partnered with Duquesne Light's School Energy Pledge Program and will receive \$25 for every pledge card returned. Our goal is 100% participation which makes us glow with pride and support to save energy!

Too Late, But Still Great

Last year's 8th grade students sent some thoughts about their fond St. Ursula memories to the newsletter after it had gone to print. Here are some quotes, "What I got out of Saint Ursula School was great friends and more confidence in myself. I learned to be more like myself and not to be someone else to fit in. I learned to appreciate the gifts God gave me and to use them." -Kayla M.

"By going to St. Ursula School for the past nine years, I got amazing friends and so many laughs and memories. There are a lot of unforgettable things that happened at this school, and I will be really sad to leave. I am going to miss the great people, awesome teachers, and good times and laughs that got me through my years at St. Ursula!" – Catherine C.

"One thing I got from St. Ursula is to keep working even though something may be hard. The friendships I have made at St. Ursula are something I will never forget. The nine years I have spent here have been good memorable ones that I will never forget." - Dan Z.

Ready-K Fun

The children in the Ready-K classes are off to a wonderful start this year! They have been so busy making new friends and learning new things! The children are learning how to share, use kind words, how to be kind to others, and follow

rules. The interaction between the children in the class is helping to develop a strong foundation of social skills. The children are also developing a strong spiritual foundation. We have been learning about Jesus, about friendships God gives us, how God wants us to treat others. The children are also learning their prayers and about how much Jesus loves us. We have also been introducing the children to so many fun and exciting areas of learning! The children are learning their letters (upper and lower case), their sounds, and the formation of letters. The children are also enjoying writing their names! In Math, the children are measuring, counting, sorting, grouping, recognizing numbers, and reciting the number poem. The children also love to go to Computer and Music classes! We are really excited about this year and the opportunity to teach your children. Ready-K's first field trip of the year is to Reilly's Farm on Friday, October 21st for a day of fall fun and games!



Kindergarten Loves Water...

Kindergarten's RiverQuest trip on Thursday, September 22 was delightful. We joined grades one through three. The weather was perfect for our adventure. The children talked about mammals, discovered macro invertebrates that inhabit the Ohio River, and with binoculars, searched the shore and skies for birds. They also learned about the water cycle with the Water Cycle Boogie. When we returned to school, we drew pictures of our favorite part of the field trip, and wrote about our pictures. Our religion lesson for the week, "God Gave Us the Gift of Water," was the perfect accompaniment for our river adventure. We all echoed the sentiment, "Praise, God, for the gift of water!"

...And animals!

For many years St. Ursula kindergarten has submitted entries to the Pet Poster contest sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association and the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. The children listen to and discuss the story *Vicky the Vet*. The children take special notice of all the animals that the veterinarian treats. Books about helper dogs also provide points for discussion. The children then focus on the particular topic presented by the zoo. Finally, they compose their picture and add a caption if they choose. In the past it has been exciting to hear that our children have placed in the local contest. This year was no different. First grader, Kevin S. took first place! For his efforts Kevin received a medal and \$25.00 cash. His poster was then sent to the state completion. Congratulations, Kevin! We are proud of you!



First Grade Adventures

Using games and song, the first graders learn skills in reading and math. Special projects include Johnny Appleseed and since October is the month of the Rosary, each student brought to class a rosary and is learning the prayers and reciting the rosary together.

Second Grade Speaks

"Second Grade is really for BIG kids, Mom" –Morgan T.

Well, it turns out that second grade is much different from first grade! Not only do the kids get more homework, they do more things in class, too! In just under two months, the second grade has been mastering consonant digraphs and consonant blends in English, learning the values for two digit numerals through 99 in Math, and they even act out plays and viewed a performance of Tom Sawyer! (Yes, in Second Grade—who knew!?) As they grow in their faith, the second graders are on their way to giving their First Holy Communion. In order to earn such an honor in the Church, our students must learn about the Sacraments. Ms. McKaveny's class is currently discussing Baptism. They have been assigned a Baptism Project that each child will complete, and will be proudly displayed outside of their classroom.

Continued on next page

The second exciting part of second grade is their inclusion in an awesome Online Program: First In Math. This outstanding program helps children master fundamental and advanced mathematical skills, and is presented in a “game” format. The children access the First In Math website, at home, and do their best to complete the “game”. The child that achieves the highest score is recognized as the “First In Math” student, gets to wear the “First In Math” necklace at school the following day, and their name is announced as the “First In Math” Winner, by Sister Joanita, during the morning announcements. This prestigious honor has the children working hard to win that necklace each day! In addition, they have also had visits from the Hampton Fire and Police Departments, to discuss Fire Safety and Bus Safety. The children loved the visits and were very enthusiastic about being safe, at home, and safe at school. Second grade seems to be off to a great start—we are excited to see what’s ahead!!!

Third Grade World

The third grade is pleased to introduce the newest members to their class - George Stripington III and Spotty McSpottypants. They are two leopard geckos that are roommates with Chip the Turtle. Aside from being extremely cute the animals they play very important roles in some aspects of learning. The students are in charge of feeding the animals and watching them at recess. If students in other classes want to hold them, third graders step up and help them out, so they help the students learn responsibility.



Another thing is they animals assist with is hands-on science. The third graders also eagerly measured and weighed the geckos and turtle in September, recorded their data and will do this again in May or June to compare their growth and changes. They will also analyze if the animals have adapted positively to their new environment. Another cool scientific activity that the third graders partake in is becoming zoologist for a day. The kindergarten and preschool classes come to the third grade room for a “field trip” and each of the students does research on so part of the animals habitat or the animal itself and they explain it to the excited little tykes. Chip the Turtle also visits the preschool classrooms. This summer, Chip laid several unfertilized eggs. It was awesome for the students to get

to see and touch a turtle egg. We can compare their size, shape, and texture to chicken eggs later in the year. Chip is a fast turtle and she glides all over the classroom. When you visit our school, please stop in and see her in all her glory. She resides in a 100 gallon tank with fish, rocks, plants, and a snail.

Fourth Grade Power

There are many ways that fourth graders have used technology to help them learn in the classroom. Students wrote in Word on the laptops four sentence pyramids to help with understanding subjects and predicates, and they created letters to a favorite fairy tale character using “Letter Generator” on the Read, Write, and Think website. These were the first projects saved on each student’s personal flash drive. Fourth graders are also interacting with the Smartboard through Smartboard lessons written by Mrs. Cross to review the weekly story in reading or practice skills in English, Social Studies, or Math. There are also many lessons in the Smart Exchange on line that have been used on the Smartboard to assist in learning. Of course fourth graders are also using the new I-Ready Math and Reading computer programs during Math classes. In Religion class students created videos of commercials they wrote about how to follow Jesus.



A web quest on the computer exploring Christopher Columbus’s journey in 1492 was also completed by each fourth grader. There are many links to the learning sites used by Mrs. Cross on Mrs. Cross’s fourth grade web page, and students are encouraged to go on the sites when they wish to explore learning on line at home. Another highlight in the beginning of this fourth grade year was getting ready to go on the RiverQuest field trip. Fourth Graders discovered information about the trip and the life in our rivers using the tools in a treasure chest provided by Riverquest and picked up by Mrs. Cross. Working in cooperative groups, students answered questions and observed posters and samples of macro invertebrates, fish, and birds while understanding the many uses of our water resources. This helped the fourth graders understand the science activities that were coming up on the Riverquest trip. Fourth graders explore learning using the many learning tools available

Fifth Grade



The students lead the Friday morning Mass through service as altar servers, cantering, taking up the Gifts, reading the petitions, and readings. Father Strelinski’s homily message reminds the students, “The reason why we go to St. Ursula School is to learn about God and to help others. Our faith is the foundation for all times in our lives, as kids, middle aged, and in old age. We can accomplish a lot in our lives because God is helping us.”

Classroom News Continued from page 3

Seventh Grade

In conjunction with the 10th anniversary of September 11th and with the request for the addition of more writing activities in the classroom, the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students were each given a writing prompt that dealt with issues that relate to 9/11. Discussions of race, heroes, patriotism, general feelings toward 9/11 came from each of the students' hearts and filled the classroom as well as their papers. The students did an excellent job with such a difficult topic and their writings are on display in the upstairs hallway in the school.

Eighth Grade

The eighth grade has registered to participate in the Science Olympiad, and in preparation for the competition they have been taking advantage of the beautiful weather to launch bottle rockets. Pepsi bottles can be seen flying through the air and bouncing off the trees and the roof! Launching bottle rockets is only one of the many events they will compete in. Students soon will be constructing bridges, mousetrap cars and a Rube Goldberg invention as well. They are really excited about the Olympiad and look forward to competing in March at California State University.

Robotics

FIRST is an organization "devoted to helping young people discover and develop a passion for science, engineering, technology and math". Students in grades 5-8 have the opportunity to participate in one of the FIRST programs-FIRST LEGO League. Our team, the Robovikings, will design, build, program, and test LEGO-based robots and create a research project based on challenges facing today's scientists. The theme for 2011 is "Food Factor". Students will explore the topic of food safety by examining possible points of contamination our food encounters, and find ways to prevent the contaminants from growing. They will research, develop, and share their innovative solutions.

Forensics

The forensic season is about to get started. Our first competition will be in November. Our school will host a regular tournament on January 14 and a novice tournament on March 24. For more information about forensics, please visit the website at SWPFL.org.

PE with Mrs. C.

In Physical Education we are off to a fast start moving and playing. The primary grades have started out the year working on spatial awareness through numerous games and activities. The middle grades have been working on soccer skill and finishing up the unit with a game of scooter soccer. We were hoping to have been able to head to the field but unfortunately it seems to rain the night before PE!! The older grades have been fine tuning their soccer skills by playing small sided games down at the field, along with a full field game. The next unit will be football for the middle and older grades. The primary grades will continue working on spatial awareness and beginning to master weight transfer when tossing or throwing.

Health

In Health, all classes are working on a plethora of different subjects. Kindergarten is completing Chapter 1: All About Me, covering topics such as feeling, cooperation, and getting along. First grade is discovering things about their bodies and how to properly take care of it. Second grade is also learning about their bodies, specifically about eyes, ears and exercising. Third grade is gaining knowledge from Chapter 3: Keeping My Body Fit. Fourth grade will discover many different body systems this year starting with the skeletal system. Fifth grade is completing chapter 1, learning about setting goals and dealing with feelings. Sixth grade is also working on Chapter 1, setting goals and positive self esteem. Seventh grade is discovering the digestive and excretory system. Eighth grade has been given a 4 week discussion with Officer V. during health time.

Pinwheels for Peace

Along with art teacher, Mrs. Pontoriero, St. Ursula students created Pinwheels for Peace. On September 21 the kids paraded down from the school to the church lawn (pinwheels spinning) to pray and plant pinwheels in front of the parish sign, giving those who drive or walk by the message of peace. At Mass on Sunday, Father Dorsey said that many people inquired about the beautiful colors in front of the church... besides being simple pencils with a bright neon paper decorated by each student and stuck to the eraser with a push pin.





Student Council

New student council officers have been elected and we have already had our first dance, which was a fun time for grades five through eight. Our President this year is Bridget M., Vice President, Riley M., Treasurer, Erica D. and Secretary, Caitlyn M. The Student Council will help with the Monster Ball this month and is planning a full schedule of activities that include many service projects for the year.

Alum Award

In conjunction with the school's 100th anniversary, St. Ursula School Alum Achievement Award was created to recognize former graduates of St. Ursula School. Through their lives and examples they are living the "Enter to Grow, Exit to Serve" motto that is the foundation of all that we do at St. Ursula School. All graduates of St. Ursula School were eligible for consideration. Congratulations to Conrad Carney II, Jean McNally, Elizabeth Regan, and Janet Buettner Rushmore. The awards were presented by Father Garrett Dorsey, and Sister M. Joanita Fedor, Principal, directly after the October 23, 11:00 a.m. with Bishop Zubik at the St. Ursula School 100th Anniversary Celebration Mass.

FUNdraising!

The school fundraising efforts are off to a great start!

Our golf outing kicked off the year raising over \$6000 as well as providing lots of fun for all who attended.

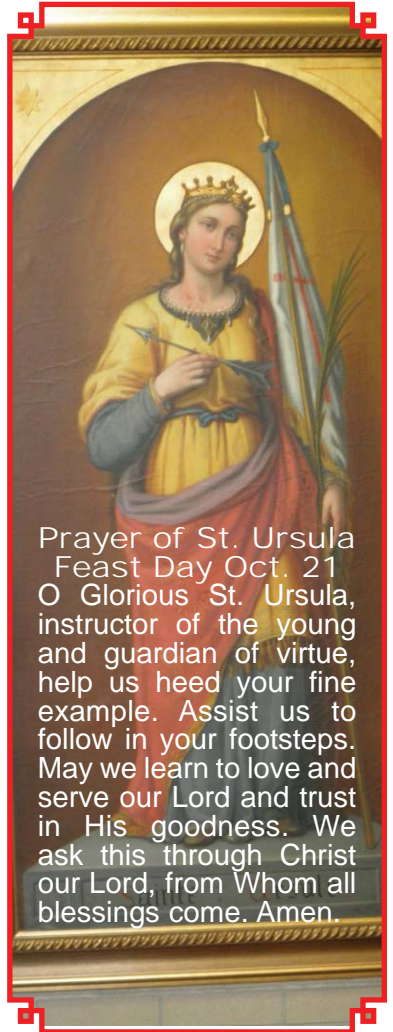
Enjoy and Entertainment Books, Innisbrook wrapping paper, lottery calendars, Mixed Bags and Sarris Candy are all on sale now.

We are also looking forward to lots of fun at our annual Dance a Thon on October 28th.

And don't forget our ongoing SCRIP and Market Day programs.

Never a dull moment!

Where would we be without our fundraising chair people and their teams of volunteers who make all this happen for our school, as well as the many friends and families who continually support our programs? A big thank you to all involved. We look forward to another successful year of raising funds to make St Ursula School stronger and better than ever! Check the school website for the complete calendar of fundraisers and for updates throughout the year.



Prayer of St. Ursula
Feast Day Oct. 21
O Glorious St. Ursula,
instructor of the young
and guardian of virtue,
help us heed your fine
example. Assist us to
follow in your footsteps.
May we learn to love and
serve our Lord and trust
in His goodness. We
ask this through Christ
our Lord, from Whom all
blessings come. Amen.



2011-2012 Student Council Officers

Congrats to our 24 Cross Country runners!

We had a fantastic team consisting of runners in grades 4-8. The team practiced and competed from early August through October, with the Catholic Grade School Cross Country Championships at Coopers Lake Campground on October 15 as the last event.

Cross country teaches many life lessons that will help athletes perform better and will make their lives better, long after they have crossed the finish line.

Being the very best that you can be, regardless of where you finish. Getting the most out of their abilities will lead to success in nearly all of their endeavors. We are proud of all of our runners... those that finished first, third, tenth, and thirtieth. Everyone had the courage to start, and did their very best to the finish. Without all of the team working together, the team will not succeed. This is also true of anything else in life. Cross-country is truly a team sport, and our entire team supported each other through the season. Cross country requires a great deal of self-discipline. Unlike many other sports, the coach is not always with each athlete during the run, each runner must draw on his own strength to go the distance. This trait is the key to success in anything.

Some Season Highlights:

- * JV Girls team had a 1st and 2nd place finish
- * JV Boys team had a 2nd place finish
- * Annie S. had three 1st place and one 3rd place finish
- * Peyton W. had two 2nd place and one 3rd place finish
- * Danny S. had one 1st place finish
- * Nicholas M. had one 3rd place finish
- * Amanda K. had one 1st place and one 3rd place finish
- * Melanie R. had one 3rd place finish

The team had FANTASTIC results at the Catholic Grade School Championships.

- * Annie S. medaled, coming in 4th place of 233 JV Girls runners!
- * Amanda K. medaled, coming in 8th place of 155 Varsity Girls runners!
- * JV Girls team came in 17th out of 31 teams
- * JV boys came in 18th of 31 teams
- * Varsity Girls came in 13th of 18 teams

Special thanks and congrats to our 8th graders: Erica D., Matt M. and Caitlyn M. They were great leaders and role models for the younger runners. We will miss them next year.

The coaches and parents were impressed and so proud of how their times, endurance, mental toughness, and health improved in such a short time. Congratulations to all!
--Coaches Curry, Hanlon and White



Thanks to our soccer coaches!

Good luck to teams as basketball season approaches!

GO VIKINGS!



Brownie Troop 50225 Goes on Tour

Spring 2011 proved to be a very busy time for Brownie Troop 50225.

As the girls worked very hard to "Bridge" to Girl Scout Juniors they were also on tour throughout the city of Pittsburgh.....As part of their "Bridging Celebration" the girls toured the Three Rivers and many bridges of Pittsburgh on Ducky Tours. A fun time was had by all! What a great way to honor the girls, their work in completing the requirements for Brownies and graduating to Girl Scout Juniors.

With the start of the new school year, our Junior Troop has many new "journeys" to explore. The girls will be "Amused" as they start their first journey. They will learn how to become leaders, work together as a team and learn by doing.

Look for the girls as they start various service projects, learn of the many roles within the community, earn the Girl Scout Bronze Award, attend Girl Scout Camp and take many outdoor adventures.

Stay tuned for an exciting year ahead!



Thank You, Sponsors!

*Thank you to St. Ursula Parish for the donation that allowed our newsletter to be printed in color!

The Lamperski Family
Has Faith in Education

St. Ursula School Graduates:
Lorelei – 1995 Justin – 1996
Philip – 1998 Carolyn- 2000
Ben – 2003 David – 2008
Joseph – Class of 2015

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