



THE GOOD NEWS

FROM ST. MATTHEW

The community of St. Matthew exists in the world as a visible expression of God's love

JOIN US FOR MASS WITH FR. STEVE

Alums & Friends are invited to a school Mass at Community of Saints, located at 335 East Hurley Avenue, West St. Paul.

Thursday, December 13
9:30 a.m.

After Mass you will have a chance to see the school and meet the 7th and 8th grade students at a reception immediately following the service.

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A&F Donor Report for 2011-12: \$143K Raised

From the Editor

Students Say the Spirit of St. Matt's is Alive at Community of Saints

For the past five years, we've asked you to support Alums & Friends Tuition Assistance Fund, and you've responded generously. Your contributions made it possible for St. Matthew's School to back up its commitment to provide a Catholic education to all children, regardless of their families' ability to pay tuition. At St. Matthew's, everybody paid something and nobody was turned away. Not many Catholic schools make that offer.

That commitment continues at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School (COS) and we still need your financial support to make it happen.

While working on this issue, I spent some time at COS and had the opportunity to meet the 8th grade class. I found them to be an impressive group of students. While having to deal with an enormous amount of change during their final year of grade school, they were upbeat and more than ready to accept their role as student leaders. I was struck by their enthusiasm for the school, the respect they showed each other and the high praise they expressed for their teachers.

As a class, they wholeheartedly agreed that this school deserves your support. We hope you'll agree too.

8th Grade Class Clicked From the Start

Nearly all of the 8th graders at COS come from either St. Matt's or St. Mike's. Of the two who didn't, one student is from Heritage but had a connection to St. Matt's, and another student registered at COS this summer after her family moved here from Northern California. With just 15 students, it's the smallest middle school class, which isn't too surprising given that St. John Vianney didn't have a 7th grade feeder class and those classes at St. Matt's and St. Mikes were small to begin with.

While the 8th graders describe themselves as a diverse group, they felt like they clicked from the start. Gaby said, "Beginning with the first day of school, everybody got along really well. We all mixed together."

Sarah nodded, "I thought St. Matt's and St. Mike's kids would stay in their own groups but nobody did that."

Alex agreed, "We're a small class but there's a culture of respect here. We respect each other's differences."

Rosario's family moved from California, where she attended a charter school. "My old school was crazy-big," she said. "This school feels so nice, so mellow and normal by comparison."



A first grader holds up her artwork that celebrates the Mexican holiday, Day of the Dead. For a snapshot of what's happening at Community of Saints, see page 3.

Continued on page 6

MESSAGE FROM **father steve**



Dear Saint Matt's Alums and Friends,

New beginnings can be refreshing, exhilarating, daunting, confusing, hopeful, promising and exciting. All of this and so much more can be said of the beginning months of the reincarnation of Saint Matthew's School as Community of Saints Regional Catholic School.

Two months into this new school year students are active and learning; awesome teachers and administration are engaged and firing on all cylinders; creativity and enthusiasm fills the building.

I encourage each and every one of you to visit Community of Saints and see first hand the way the Saint Matthew tradition of excellence permeates school life.

In this issue we present a collage of snap shots of Saint Matthew students and others (St. John Vianney, St. Michael, Our Lady of Guadalupe) engaged in living and learning.

Fr. Steve visits one of the two first grade class rooms.



This issue also contains acknowledgement of gifts received during the past fiscal year (October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012). Your very generous gifts continue to make it possible for West Side families and students to benefit from the high quality Saint Matthew tradition at Community of Saints Regional Catholic School.

Saint Matthew School students make up the largest part of student population at Community of Saints. The tradition goes on and grows. Families find a welcoming and caring educational setting for their children. Parents and school staff partner to see that each student has the opportunity to develop his/her God given gifts. Students succeed and thrive.

You make all of that possible and I invite and encourage your continued generous support of the Saint Matthew education mission.

Come, visit us. See the 125 year old Saint Matthew School and SSND tradition alive and growing in a new setting, Community of Saints Regional Catholic School.

Please be generous. With your help we change and save lives.

Yours truly,
Fr. Stephen Adrian
Retired Pastor of the Church of Saint Matthew

I encourage each and every one of you to visit Community of Saints and see first hand the way the Saint Matthew tradition of excellence permeates school life.

FR. STEPHEN ADRIAN

A Look Inside Community of Saints



Just like at St. Matt's, every school day starts with breakfast, which reduces tardiness and ensures all students are ready to learn.



After breakfast, all students stand for the morning prayer and pledge of allegiance, led by middle school students over the loudspeaker.



There are two preschool rooms for 34 students. Families can register their child for full or half days, 3-5 days per week.

The 4th grade class has gym outside in the big fields next to the school. There are two baseball diamonds, a basketball hoop and playground equipment.



Kindergarten teacher, Ms. Smith, helps a student practice his writing skills.

On a recent visit, Fr. Steve asked 1st grade students about what they're learning.



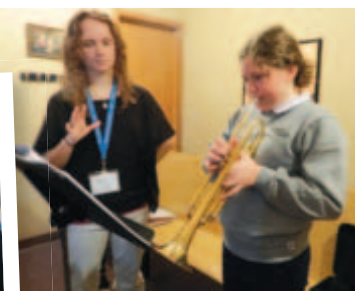
5th grade students work in the computer lab which includes 24 large screen iMacs.



6th graders work on landscapes in art class, taught by St. Matt's alum, Corrine Gangl Schuster ('73).



7th grade students study social studies and religion with Mr. Schild, one of three middle school teachers.



In addition to music class, students can sign up for band. Donated instruments are welcome!

Community of Saints – By the Numbers

K-8 enrollment: **237**

Preschool enrollment: **34**

Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch: **52%**

Students who receive tuition assistance: **72%**

Ethnicity

Latino: **46%**

Caucasian: **44%**

African American: **6%**

Other: **4%**

Tuition Assistance

Thank you all! Because of your generous support, this year Alums & Friends (A&F) raised \$143,000, putting the total amount raised since 2007-08 at over \$700,000. Your generosity has ensured that a high quality Catholic education continues to be available to all families on the West Side.



PILLAR \$15,000+

Roy and Joann Ferber 1959 +
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Martha Riehle 1964
Mary Ann Stadt Roscoe 1961
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Joe and Linda Haas Schaefer
1964 and 1965
Joe Schletty 1962
Chris Schletty 1960
George Schmid 1955
Richard Schmidt 1936
Mike Schnieder 1955
Tony Sitzmann 1957
Robert Smith 1959
John Snyder 1953 +
Georgene Schaps Sorenson 1960 +
Steven and Sheila Sexton Stai, *Friend*
John and Marian Theis, *Friend*
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Julie Karels Treinen 1978
Michael Vasterling 1968 +



Charlene Stefaniak Vitelli 1956
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 Jean Werden 1950
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 Kathleen and Laurence Bidwell 1952
 Mary Lou Allie Bova 1944 +
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 Muriel Budziszewski, *Friend*
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 Richard Clemens, *Friend*
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 Lorraine Cook 1951
 Craig David 1966
 John Donlan, *Friend*
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 Sandra McHugh Egginger 1954
 Emilio Fedeli 1956
 Rosemary Giefer Fischer 1950
 Francis Fried, *Friend*
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 Don and Esther Giesel, *Friend*
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 Judy Helsper, *Friend*
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Peter Nasseff 1962
 Barbara Neff 1954
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 Barbara Olson 1968
 Nancy Buron Ottmann 1951
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Lynn Oxenford, memorial
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 Mary Mohr Perren 1957
Robert Plantenberg 1961
Tom and Leona Quinlan, *Friend*
 Carol Nafus Redding 1962
 Nick Reding 2010
 Tony Roszak, *Friend*
 Marion Schaps 1940
Kathy Schwalter, *Friend*
 Michael Seubert 1955
 Helen Ketchmark Sigmeth 1960
 Tomas Smith 1972
 Patricia Plante Smith 1941
Emma Stadtfeld, memorial
Sharon Solheid Stoll 1961
Sheila Thompson, *Friend*
 Dorothy Turcotte-Tait 1953
Judith Valerius, *Friend*
 Lynn Volkenant, *Friend*
 Sisters Donna and Thomasin
 Valerius/Sergot, *Friend*
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 Diane K Volkenant
 Amanda Weyer
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 Deceased class of 1950

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Fr. Steve Adrian
 Virgil Bloechl
 George Gangl
 Mary and Tom McKeown
 Peg Wolters
 St. Matt's School
 All School Sisters of Notre Dame



bold: first time donor +: 5 year donor

Spirit of St. Matt's is Alive, *continued from page 1*

"My expectations were really, really low," Amanda said. "They had less than a year to plan. But it turned out fine. It's a good mix of students and I've made a bunch of new friends."

Students Agree They Have Better Facilities

One of the benefits of combining schools for St. Matt's students was access to a newer facility with outdoor green space. The students agree those benefits are real and have been a big plus.

"I'm really excited about the hot water!" Amanda enthused. "At St. Matt's in the winter, that water was so cold when you washed your hands, it hurt."

All the students appreciate the other upgrades that came with combining, such as the computer lab, the mobile lab, the smart board and interactive white boards.

New Student Leaders

These students take their responsibility as leaders seriously, as Sarah explained, "We're role models for the younger students so we need to set a good example. That means letting kids know when they do something right, not just when they do it wrong."

With K-8 enrollment at 237, COS has nearly 70 more students than St. Matthew's had, and more than twice as many as St. Mike's. As a result, nearly all the 8th

graders commented that it feels strange to see so many students at school that they don't know. "At St. Matt's, I could name every student in the school," Amanda explained. "It's different here because I know some of the names but not all of them. When you see a little kid and they say 'hi' you want to be able to say their name and I can't always do that yet, but I'm working on it."

Teachers — "We Have the Best of the Best"

The exceptional teachers are what the students like best. "We miss the old teachers but we've gotten to know these teachers and they're great," Gaby said. "They're serious when they need to be serious and funny when it's appropriate."

One student pointed out that getting a teaching job at COS was very competitive.

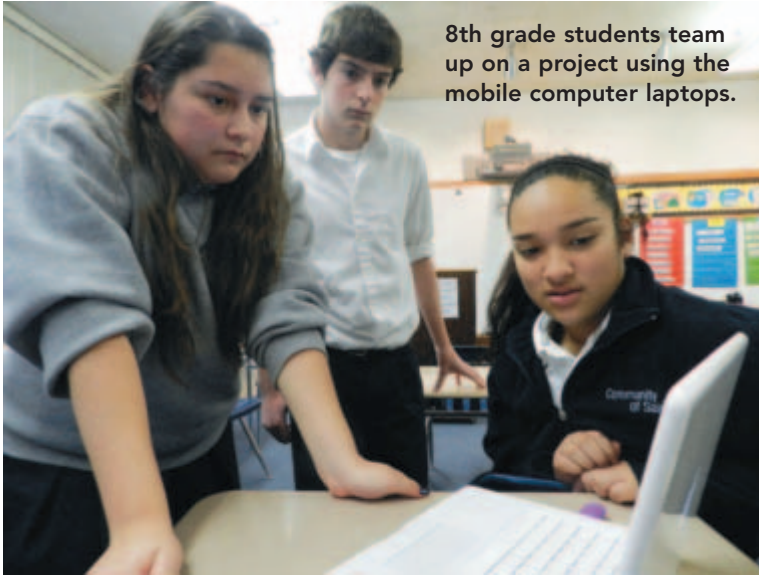
"We have the best of the best teachers here," she said.

"If you have a problem, they want to know what they can do to help."

Everyone is welcome to join Fr. Steve for Mass, see the school and meet COS 8th grade students on Thursday, December 13. The all school Mass is at 9:30 a.m. and will be followed by a reception with 7th & 8th grade students.

For more info call the school at 651-457-2510.





8th grade students team up on a project using the mobile computer laptops.



Fr. Steve talks with 8th grade students about their role as leaders in the school and how important it is for them to encourage younger students.

Rosario was even more enthusiastic, “The teachers here are straight-up awesome. At my old school, my teachers were not supportive and I didn’t do well. These teachers are so supportive — I’m really learning now and it’s made me a different student.”

Several others agreed that as a result of their teachers’ encouragement and support, they are performing much better now and have a different view of their academic capabilities than they used to. For some, that improvement, together with the new mix of students, has led to a more profound change in how they see themselves, and given them each the opportunity for what one student described as ‘a fresh start.’

Ruiz put it this way, “We have a chance to be different here,” he said. “Last year I was the quiet kid and now I’m not. We accept each other for who we are now.”

“The teachers here are straight-up awesome... I’m really learning now and it’s made me a different student.”

8TH GRADE STUDENT

Students Understand Tuition Assistance is Crucial to Families

The students from St. Matt’s were familiar with that school’s commitment to provide tuition assistance to all families seeking a Catholic education for their child. The class took a few minutes to discuss the possibility that some people might not want to continue that support at COS.

Alex said, “I would want them to support it. If you think about it, it’s the same kids going here. They might just have different names.”

“I think it gives the school character,” Sarah added. “Not many schools are willing to make that offer.”

Amanda pointed out the support is still necessary, “We want people to know they don’t have to settle for a public school. The spirit of St. Matt’s is alive here at this school. Half the students wouldn’t be here without tuition assistance.”

“What if they turned away a student who was really awesome?” Nicole asked. “We’d miss out on having them be part of the school.”

“I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for tuition assistance,” Rosario chimed in.

The 8th graders agreed that some of the changes have been difficult — they all miss former classmates and friends who didn’t enroll and teachers who weren’t hired.

They also know the school will continue to evolve as the culture of the three former schools is distilled down to one. But as one student summed it up, they’re off to a good start.

“When you look at all the differences and all the good changes,” the student said, “in some ways, it’s been a breath of fresh air.”



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Businesses and organizations are invited to help sponsor *The Good News* and support St. Matthew's Alums & Friends efforts to raise funds for tuition assistance. Sponsorship helps us achieve our goal of making a high quality Catholic education available to all families in our community regardless of their ability to afford tuition.

If you'd like more information about sponsorship, please contact:
Maggie.lee@comcast.net or call 612-964-1677.

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THE **Good**
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FROM ST. MATTHEW

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Thank you
for your generous support
of Catholic education on the West Side!