

# The Principal's Corner

Notes and Updates from Principal Maureen Trenary



## A Year of Magnanimity!



At the opening school Mass and often since then, Father Kevin has challenged us to focus on a year of **Magnanimity** where **Great souls Explore, Noble souls Serve and Expansive souls Love!**

This is not only a big word for our students to learn, but more importantly a way of living out our faith!

In the opening month of school, I have seen our community responding to Father Kevin's call to Magnanimity. I see it in the ways our students and teachers engage with each other on a daily basis and grow together. I see it in the way so many join in to support our major school events and outreach like Orientation, Marathon and our VEAP drive last week. I saw it during our recent Grandparents Days when our students ran to greet their beloved guests as they arrived. I see it in these examples and so many more!

I hope that you all will join us as we strive to continue expanding our souls through exploration, service and love.

## Grandparents Days

We had our largest crowds of grandparents ever and hosted over 400 grandparents during the two special days! Our grandparents enjoyed the Masses and the homilies by Fr. Kevin and Fr. Neil. After Mass the grandparents were invited to our students' classrooms for presentations and treats. We are grateful to our homeroom parents who organized special treats for each classroom and our teacher and student hosts. This is a heartwarming event for both our students and our grandparents.



OLG 8th graders after the Marathon Pepfest!

## Top Chef Marathon Success!

Our Top Chef Marathon far surpassed our fundraising goal with a total of **\$104,810 - not including Pancake Breakfast Proceeds!** We truly are grateful for the leadership of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents: Sara Schliesman, Tiffany Hanson, Sean Murnan and many helpers. We are also grateful for the participation of our school families! 98% of families participated in this important school fundraiser!



As a part of our Marathon celebration, we had our annual Pancake Breakfast. Close to 700 tickets were sold! Elizabeth Jensen, Carrie Lang, and Amy Weber, second grade parents, were instrumental in hosting a very enjoyable breakfast. Although the breakfast does bring in funds for Marathon, it is mainly intended to be a community event hosted and supported by our second grade parents.

Father Kevin, teachers and students were a big hit as they promoted our Marathon and explained Design for Learning to our parishioners. We received overwhelmingly positive comments from our parishioners of all ages who checked out the furniture and visited the classrooms.

## Staff Reading Workshop

At a recent workshop, John Alexander, the Executive Director of Groves Academy, spoke about dyslexia and reading to our entire school faculty. Dyslexia is neurological condition that affects how language is processed. Dyslexia is not due to a lack of intelligence or a desire to learn. As John stated, "Dyslexia is an unexpected weakness in a sea of strengths."

The second half of the presentation focused on good reading instruction. John discussed the five strands of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. He talked about the characteristics of good reading instruction and the literacy framework used by Groves. It was an outstanding presentation and well received by the staff. This was also a good prelude as we review our current language arts program and select resources for the 2018-2019 school year.

## Design for Learning

We have been receiving rave reviews about our classroom transformations from teachers, parents, parishioners, faith formation families and especially our students! Students truly feel that these classrooms accommodate several learning styles. We are scheduled to receive our final delivery of furniture during MEA break. We will have several new desks available. In particular, the temporary stools in the third grade classrooms will be replaced with chairs. We are in the process of working with Jill Johnson, our Design for Learning designer, to begin consulting with staff regarding our remaining auxiliary spaces. These would include the library, art room, music and after care space as well as some nooks and common areas. We are referring to this as Phase II of the project. We plan to have more details about this phase of the project to include for promoting Give to the Max for this year.

### Additional School Improvements!

As a part of the transformation in our classrooms, Ms. Johnson and Mr. Benson have painted white board walls that can be written on by their math students. Students are excited to be able to write on walls without getting in trouble!

Teacher and parent comments were also very positive about the portable SMART boards in the Middle School. We have also added a portable SMART board in the school library to support both school and general parish programming needs.

## Standards-Based Grading

All grade levels and middle school teachers are working on creating "scope and sequence" sheets and supplement sheets for parents. The hope is that the scope and sequence will give parents an indication as to whether the material their child has been assessed on will be reassessed at a later time, or if there should be reteaching and reassessing. The supplement sheet will accompany the report card and will provide more meaning to the concepts their child has mastered, or are still developing in all subject areas. Teachers will be spending the upcoming early release working in teams on these documents, clarity and uniformity.

## Largest Middle School In History!

Overall enrollment in our parish school is currently 653 students. **Our Middle School is the largest it has ever been!**

K-2 - 212 students

3-5 - 225 students

6-8 - 216 students

## Kindergarten Open House!

**Tuesday, November 14th** we will have our two Kindergarten Open House visits for prospective families! In order to maintain our

strong enrollment at OLG, it is important to continue to have 3 full Kindergarten classes. **Word of mouth has always been our strongest marketing tool. Please spread the word to friends and families looking for a school to call home!**

## Looking Ahead

- **Fall MAP Results** should be arriving in the mail this week. Teachers use these to begin differentiating classroom instruction and monitor progress throughout the year.
- **Fall Conferences** are coming soon! This is a great opportunity to continue your partnership with your child's teacher and monitor your child's progress. Revisit a recent Weekender to register if you have not yet.
- **MNSAA Conference** - On Friday, November 3rd, OLG will again host the annual MN Nonpublic School Accreditation Association Conference for statewide non-public schools. Our teachers will participate as presenters, attendees and help run the event.
- **Give to the Max** is coming on Thursday, November 16th! Please spread the word and consider supporting this important day of giving to help us prepare for Phase II of Design for Learning!

