



Principally Speaking

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St. Mary Prep

March 5, 2010

Sincere Gratitude

Thank you for your prayers, cards, flowers, thoughtfulness, and true care and concern for me during my surgery and recuperation. It is good to be back in the 'swing of thing' with the faculty, staff, students, and parents. God bless you all for everything that you do for me and for St. Mary Prep.

New Faces

Our After Care program has a new care giver in Mrs. Mary Furlong. Mrs. Furlong is a parish member with a great background in child-care. With the large number of students participating we have added an additional aid for Mrs. Furlong on the days of larger attendance. We have designed a new program which will strengthen the organization of our After Care and provide a more productive outcome for our students. We will send you a copy of the program so that you can familiarize yourself with this new approach.

On another note, may I ask that those of you who are taking advantage of this program, please be prompt with your monthly payments. We still have 56% January accounts from our Pre K-Child Care and 25% from our TransK - Gr. 8 that are outstanding. Since we have already sent home the February Invoices; this now makes 2 payments that need to be paid by March 10. If you have already made payments for the overdue amounts, please send me a copy of your cancelled checks so that I can correct our records.

PLEASE, PLEASE, HELP

In 2008 St. Mary Prep established a Peanut Free School Policy. We have many children with various allergies and some with severe peanut and tree nut allergies. This does not mean just peanuts, but rather any snacks made with peanut or tree nut derivatives. Lately, we have had children coming to school with snacks, lunches, or birthday treats that contain these derivatives in the form of peanut or tree nut oil, proteins, etc. This is against our School Policy and more so it is seriously harmful to a number of our students. If you are not sure of what derivatives may be used in snacks and food, we ask that you refer to the following website www.farusa.org/?page=treenuts or www.farusa.org/?page=peanuts to find out more information. I know that you are always willing to cooperate and to follow through with all the procedures of St. Mary Prep. I am counting on you to help us be **Peanut Free**.

It's Terra Nova Time

You may recall from the March calendar that our students from Kindergarten through Grade 8 will be taking the Terra Nova Standardized Test beginning Monday, March 8th. Mrs. Tatum will not be here on Monday due to a death in her family; therefore, Grade 4 will begin their testing on Tuesday. This will be more comfortable for the children to be tested by their home room teacher rather than by a substitute.

The Terra Nova is a diagnostic tool for the teachers to ascertain what skills the students have mastered and what skills still need mastery. There is no grade mark connected with the test. The information gleaned helps us adjust our curriculum to be sure that the students have mastered all of the skills required for their grade level.

When we receive the reports, you will receive a copy and I encourage you to meet with the teacher or teachers for a further explanation of the results.

The children have taken practice tests so that they would be familiar with the Terra Nova format. Also, the teachers have used a variety of question forms in their subject presentation concepts and skills so that the students would be familiar with different formats. For example: If the students have been accustomed to $7 + 4 = 11$ format and meet something like this on the Terra Nova: If I increase 7 by 4 what would the answer be; they certainly would be confused or not sure of what to do. And so teachers have used various approaches to familiarize the students with a variety of ways that the concept may be presented. We have found great success in using this method. I sincerely ask you to remember that this is not an assessment test to determine how much the students know but rather what skills and concepts have they mastered. We will be testing only during the morning hours. All electives will be moved to the afternoon. This will give the students the advantage of using the early part of the day when they are most alert.

Just A Reminder

Things move very quickly as we come into March. Please remember that March 13th is the St. Patrick's Day Dinner. This is a great time for the adults to get together for good food, good company, and good fun. We will also have our first off-site Tricky Tray at the Villa on April 22nd. It is after the tax season deadline so that we can enjoy a great night out with friends, family, neighbors, and Tricky Tray enthusiasts. Come out and join us for a gala evening. Tickets for both events can be had through school. They are moving at a quick pace, so don't delay - - get your tickets soon.

