



THE GOOD NEWS

May/June 2008
Issue 6

FROM ST. MATTHEW

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

St. Matt's Grads Excel in High School

Spring means graduation time. A time to reflect, look back and charge forward. We thought it would be a good time to check in with a few St. Matthew's alumni as they prepare to graduate from high school. We spoke to Amber Johnson, Rachel Goldenstein, Ashton Miller, and Michaela Bird. They are all members of St. Matthew's class of '04 and are all graduating from Cretin-Derham Hall High School (CDH) this year.

These four young women used the fundamentals they learned at St. Matthew's to excel in high school. All four will be graduating with honors and have distinguished themselves in many ways:

- They've all been on the President's Honors List since sophomore year, which recognizes the school's highest academic performers;
- They've all been on the Dean's List all four years of high school;
- Two are National Honors Society members;
- One received All State Academic, an award recognizing the accomplishments of Scholar-Athletes;
- They've all taken four years of Honors and Advanced classes in math, science, and foreign language;
- All have participated in community service and extracurricular activities;
- Three have part-time jobs, working 10-20 hrs/week

Amber Johnson

Amber lives with her parents and younger sister on the West Side just a couple of blocks from St. Matthew's. Her family is not Catholic but chose St. Matthew's School because they saw the school as part of their community and



Amber Johnson

thought their daughter would get a better education there.

When Amber was in the 3rd grade, she decided to convert to Catholicism, and while she continues to explore her faith, she says she always felt good going to mass at St. Matthew's. "I would go to church and always left feeling like I wanted to change the world."

Her community service is to deliver meals to people who have AIDS or are HIV positive. She didn't want to do it at first. "I thought it would be depressing. All doom

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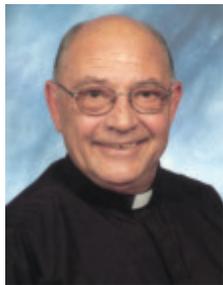
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St. Matthew's Child Care Center expands. See pages 8-9

MESSAGE FROM **father steve**



Fr. Steve's homilies are available on-line at www.st-matts.org

The education and formation of children and youth is a center piece of the mission of Saint Matthew's Parish Community. This ministry takes many forms. In this issue you will read about the successes of recent graduates of Saint Matthew's School. Yet the ministry of our day school is but one way in which we serve children and families.

For almost twenty years Saint Matthew's Child Care Center has been a community focal point for early childhood education. Following a community wide strategic planning process, initiated by WSCO — our local district council — and facilitated by the Amherst Wilder Foundation, a number of specific community needs were identified and local community resources were organized to meet those needs. One goal identified was the creation of a local community development corporation which would advance the residential and commercial renaissance on the West Side. NeDA — the Neighborhood Development Alliance — was created and has worked to carry out this mandate.

The planning process identified the need for a Child Care Center — a community resource which would provide high quality, safe, affordable child care. Because Saint Matthew's parish had a 100 year history of offering quality education to parish and community families, we were asked to undertake the establishment of what has become the Saint Matthew Child Care Center.

State and Federal dollars became available which allowed the building of the Child Care Center, Wabasha Center and the Wabasha Terrace Homes. The funding also initiated a broad variety of family services to assist struggling child care families to achieve a measure of self-sufficiency.

Today we embark on a further development with the addition of Saint Matthew's pre-school — an opportunity to provide high quality school readiness opportunities for pre-kindergarten children.

Another program sponsored by St. Matthew's is KLT — Kids Learning Together. This before school and after school education and recreation program serves not only Saint Matthew School students but also students from our local public elementary schools. KLT also provides full day programming for students on non-school days and during vacation times.

If children and youth are to learn and develop they must be well fed. Saint Matthew's Food Service provides home made, nutritious lunches daily to child care and school students. For almost forty years Saint Matthew's has provided on-site-prepared, home cooked meals for students. This year we also began a breakfast program for all students.

A 75 year old strong scouting program and strong local and community athletic programs also focus on the personal and physical development of our children and youth.

We are a community committed to the whole person and his/her growth and development — physical, intellectual, spiritual. I am so proud of the many staff and community volunteers who make these ministries work.

*Yours truly,
Stephen Adrian, Pastor*

St. Matthew's parish has many ministries that serve children.



First graders enjoy a healthy breakfast before school.



“Still Received First Communion in Grand Style”

Submitted by John Maloney '74

As a result of the St. Matthew’s fire my second grade class had to reroute our First Communion ceremony to the old St. Michael’s church. Under Sister Beatrice’s tutelage we had been practicing in St. Matthew’s Church and she had us performing with precision, the entire ceremony. This disruption and new location was sure to

cause mayhem in the ranks. Undaunted, Sister Beatrice announced the first day of class after Easter vacation that every afternoon the entire second grade class would proceed the few blocks down to Old St. Michael’s and rehearse the ceremony at this new venue.

I thought, “This is going to be great. We get to be out of school every afternoon the rest of the week!” Better yet.

John Maloney (circled) and his second grade First Communion class.

I thought, not having to sit at my desk I was beyond the reach of Sister Beatrice’s ruler. I had never seen Sister Beatrice’s ruler, but had heard plenty about it from the older students, and lived in fear that if need be she could procure it for the least little disturbance. It was rumored that she carried it in her robe and could produce it lightning quick.



The relief I felt knowing that I would be beyond the reach of her ruler the next few afternoons was quickly squelched that very first day as she marched us along in single file wielding a yard stick. She pointed with it, she directed traffic with it, and she orchestrated the entire second grade procession to and from Old St. Michael’s with it. With her petite frame she used it as a walking stick, and I shuddered to think that if need be she could use it for disciplining as well. She never needed to and, in short order, she had us performing flawlessly once again. Our church could burn down, but the second grade still received their First Communion in grand style.

What Happened to the Stained Glass? This is It!

We all saw the pictures in the last newsletter — stained glass windows, still intact, that appeared to have survived the fire. So what happened to them?

It turns out they didn’t really survive. Those windows that weren’t broken during the fire were so heat stressed that they couldn’t be saved. They came out in pieces. The fragment Fr. Steve is holding is the only one the parish still has.

Fr. Steve holds a piece of the original stained glass windows that survived the church fire.



ALUMNI GIVING UPDATE (AS OF 4/3/08)

YEAR/OTHER	TOTAL GIFTS	TOTAL GIVERS	TOTAL AMOUNT
1936	4	3	\$265
1938	2	2	\$3,040
1939	4	3	\$2,140
1940	1	1	\$25
1941	1	1	\$25
1944	5	4	\$10,200
1946	2	2	\$600
1947	1	1	\$20
1948	2	1	\$20
1949	3	3	\$55
1950	5	4	\$385
1951	5	4	\$140
1952	6	4	\$425
1953	3	3	\$175
1954	5	4	\$1,120
1955	9	5	\$2,000
1956	1	1	\$50
1957	6	4	\$2,770
1958	1	1	\$30
1959	3	3	\$16,050

YEAR/OTHER	TOTAL GIFTS	TOTAL GIVERS	TOTAL AMOUNT
1960	2	2	\$135
1961	2	2	\$1,250
1962	1	1	\$50
1963	1	1	\$25
1964	3	3	\$350
1968	1	1	\$100
1969	1	1	\$25
1972	1	1	\$40
1974	1	1	\$500
1975	3	3	\$545
1976	1	1	\$50
1978	1	1	\$3,000
1981	1	1	\$50
1986	1	1	\$25
Alumni Giving Total			\$45,680
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES			\$33,404
TOTAL (to date)			\$79,084

Alumni & Friends’ Goal is \$150,000 tuition aid by Sept 1st.

Successful Graduates, *continued from page 1*

and gloom, working with sick people.” But she found she really likes it. She enjoys working with the people who run the program and now has a very different perspective about people with the disease.

Amber will be attending the Carlson School at the University of Minnesota next year and plans to study Business Marketing. She’s received the President’s Scholarship and a scholarship from 3M.

Rachel Goldenstein

Since sophomore year, Rachel has served as a leader for the annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser at CDH. Students serve lunch and dinner to other students and community members with donated soup and bread from local restaurants in exchange for a contribution. As a freshman, she didn’t know anything about the program when her cousin, who started it, took her aside and said she’d be running it next year. She’s never regretted it, “Working on this has been at the center of my high school experience.”

The \$5,000 they’ve raised each year goes to Heifer International, a nonprofit that helps people around the world obtain a sustainable source of food and income. Rachel likes the fact that the program helps families become self-sufficient and in turn, help others. “The families usually get a pair of animals — goats and sheep are common,” she says, “and when the animals produce a baby, they pass the first one on to another family in need. I like that.”



Rachel Goldenstein holding Heifer International's "Ark" Award for fundraising.

Rachel plans to study biomedical engineering at either The University of St. Thomas or The College of St. Benedicts and pursue a graduate degree at the University of Minnesota.



Ashton Miller

Ashton Miller

Ashton’s service project has been to tutor 2nd grade students at Dayton’s Bluff Elementary School, where about 40% of the children attending are homeless. She works with the kids on their reading and writing skills which can be a challenge because many of them don’t read at all. “There are a lot of kids there who’ve been lost in the system. They’ve changed schools so often, there’s no continuity.” But she clearly loves her work and describes how rewarding it is when she’s able to help them. “Some of the kids have made a lot of progress.”

Ashton has a strong interest in government and public policy issues. In the past year, she’s traveled to New York where she’s learned about the United Nations through a program sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. More recently she visited Washington D.C. through Close-Up, a program where students learn first-hand how government works. She was particularly interested in the Supreme Court and thinks she’d like to study law. She has been accepted at both the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Marquette University.



Michaela Bird (at top) in El Salvador.

Michaela Bird

In addition to her academic success, Michaela has played varsity volleyball and softball for CDH. Playing high school sports meant a seven day commitment during the season. "On volleyball game nights, you don't get home until 11 p.m. because the games start so late. I still had to get in my homework."

Last summer, Michaela went on a school trip to El Salvador, and spent 10 days learning about the country's history, politics and culture. She describes it as a transformative experience. What struck her most was the extreme poverty. "The families we stayed with, they'd eat meat maybe once a month. But we (students on the trip) ate it at every meal. It really opened my eyes." The realization led to action, "When I got back, I took all the clothes I had that I didn't need and donated them. I took food to food shelves. It changed my outlook."

Michaela is going to Creighton University where she plans to study pharmacology. She's interested in issues around healthcare and wants to work in rural communities that don't have the services they need.

EDITOR'S NOTE: St. Matthew's class of '04 was an academically competitive group. The four alumni featured here weren't the only good students in their class and no doubt some of their classmates went on to receive similar academic honors. So congratulations to all the members of the class of '04 as you graduate from high school. We wish you all the best.



What makes St. Matthew's great From the student's perspective

When asked if they would send their children to St. Matthew's, all four young women answered "YES!" Here's a few of the things Amber, Rachel, Ashton and Michaela had to say about what made St. Matthew's a good choice.

"The greatest thing was the small class sizes. You really got one on one attention."

"You couldn't burn bridges. You had to find a way to get along with other kids. Work out problems, accept differences, not make a big deal out of stuff. It's good preparation for life."

"The diversity of the school is a plus. You just take for granted being with all kinds of different kids from different backgrounds."

"I think that helped us feel more prepared for life. Other kids in high school seem more sheltered in comparison."

"Money...having money...at St. Matt's was NEVER an issue. It just didn't come up. It's not part of the culture. At other schools, it's a big deal."

"I think we're more open to do whatever we want to do with our lives. We feel better prepared to take charge."

"Fr. Steve, he doesn't read the gospel, he tells a story...."

Striving for Excellence

St. Matthew's is always seeking to build on the high quality education it provides. One example — since these four graduated, all of the school's curriculums have been updated. St. Matt's students now begin to learn algebra in 4th grade instead of middle school. That academic foundation will allow our students to succeed at whatever high school they choose.



First Row Sitting: **Rita Vogel**, Mary Ann Savard, Anna Marie Morgan†, Janet Thurn, Andrea Morgan, Patricia Corrigan, Patricia Smith, **Josephine Roeller**, Theresa Thurn, Judith Blaeser, Michelle Beauvais, Grace Valen, **Elizabeth Ring**, **Sandra Fortier**

2nd Row: Tom Stehr, Michael Votel, Steve Furlong, Roger Emerson†, **James Adams**, Gregory Whebbe, **James LaValle**, James Kzaley†, Roy Bitterman, **William Berger**, John Hinding, Jeffrey Lasch, Tom O'Neill, Eugene Bloechl, **Robert Miller**

3rd Row: Patricia Rosenberger, **Sharon Wirth**, Barbara Kohrer†, **Teresa Justice**, Sandra Cooper, **Juanita Mamer**, Jeanette Neff, Barbara Delmont, **Kathleen Waldoch**, Barbara Blaeser, **Katherine McEachran**, Jeanne Blissenbach, **June Marthaler**, Patricia O'Day, Suzanne Furlong†, **Nancy Angelo**

† deceased

Class of '58



4th Row: Tom House, **Michael Pate**, Gerald Schadegg, Glen Andersen, Robert Murray, Raymond St. Martin, John White, Robert Lackore, Dennis Einberger, James Cruz†, Philip Stefaniak, Joseph Ernst, Elmer Delougherty, Patrick Gallagher

5th Row: **Kathleen Hutz**, Kathleen Horst, Carol Rutherford, **Julie Ann Cartier**, **Ruth Sullivan**, **Barbara Moszer**, Roberta Mathis, **Margaret Korman**, **Carol Stokke**, Judith Einberger, **Jo Ann Ringold**, Cheryl Markus†, **Anne Blenk**, **Caroline Finch**, Maureen Connaker†, Marilyn Buckrey, Carol Riehm, Dorothy "Jane" Chaput

6th Row: James Kuhns, William Schmidt, Jr.†, Gregory Karlen, Nicholas Winkel, Willard Peterson, David Rosga, John Bessel, Peter Yanish, John Bellows, Michael Gross, Thomas Ginther, Geoffrey Edwards, **Roger Jordan**, **David Ring**, **Ronald Miller**, **Michael Schoenecker**

HELP US FIND OUR MISSING GRADUATES!

If you have information on any of the classmates in red, please email Pat (O'Day) Clemen at beagletoo@juno.com. Or send to the parish office in the enclosed reply envelope.
Thank you!

† deceased

Nearly Half of American Children Start Life at a Disadvantage

“One in three American children are unprepared for kindergarten and nearly one half of infants and toddlers start life at a disadvantage....the risk factors include substandard childcare, poverty and insufficient stimulation.”

Excerpt from report issued by *Catch 'em in the Cradle*, a community-based literacy project.

Twenty years ago St. Matthew's Child Care Center opened its doors. The Center grew out of a series of community meetings that identified a new and growing need. More and more women were going to work and they needed a safe place for their children to go. It was a new ministry for St. Matthew's.

While the Center received some start-up grants, a steady but gradual reduction in state child care subsidies through the '90's made reliable funding a challenge. But the real pain came with the massive state budget cuts enacted in 2001. Childcare subsidies were cut sharply. Families who had been paying \$100 per month for childcare now had to pay close to \$500. Most families couldn't afford it and they pulled their children from the program, not only at St. Matthew's but all over the state. Many centers closed.

Today, St. Matthew's is the only Child Care Center left on the West Side. Most of the families with kids in the program live below the poverty line, which for a family of four means an income of \$20,650 or less. Even these families may have to wait a year or more to become eligible. Families who earn any more than that can't qualify for assistance. And good child care costs money — \$210 per week for a toddler and \$1,000 a month for an infant.

More Kids, Expanding Program

But now the number of kids in the Child Care Center is growing again and its programs are expanding under the leadership of its new director, Shar Lavelle. Shar started in September, '07, but her connection to St. Matthew's goes all the way back to her father, Ray Whebbe, son of Lebanese immigrants, who graduated from St. Matthew's around 1931.

Shar has revamped the program so that parents can pay by the hour for child care instead of having to sign up for a full week. She's also launching a preschool program that will be available to children who are not



ABOVE: Preschoolers listen during story time. RIGHT: Shar Lavelle and Denise Chavez.



receiving day care services. And she's making plans for a Family Literacy program she believes will make a big difference in the success of the children in the Center and their parents alike.

She's not doing it alone, of course. Shar, who's worked in the field of child care for over 20 years, works closely with the Center's Assistant Director, Denise Chavez, who has been at St. Matthew's Child Care Center since it started, 20 years ago. Shar says the longevity of the staff is one of the things that attracted her to St. Matthew's. "High turnover is one of the problems in child care, but that doesn't exist at St. Matt's program. I thought, my goodness! They have 20 year veterans there. How did they do that?"

Shar and Denise both acknowledge they make a great team. "We just clicked from the beginning,"



Toddlers and infants enjoy play time at St. Matthew's Child Care Center.



Shar says, "I come in with all my new ideas, and Denise, says, 'Okay, Shar, slow down.' We balance each other."

Denise started as a volunteer in the Center back in '87, "I just love it here. I lived on the West Side and my daughters went to St. Matt's. Now I live in Inver Grove Heights. I thought I'd change jobs but I just couldn't leave."

For all their differences, Shar and Denise are united by a fierce commitment to the children and families they serve. Shar explains, "I believe every child and family deserve to be treated with respect and kindness, regardless of background, history, or how much money you make. That keeps me here every day."

Strong Academic Preschool Program

Shar's plan is to offer a strong academic preschool program that will prepare kids, not just for kindergarten, but for success in school. And she plans to have it up and running by the fall of 2008. The program will provide a literacy rich learning experience and include family involvement. Preschool sessions will last about 2 1/2 hours per day with two and three-day options throughout the week. Preschool age children at the Child Care Center will automatically participate in the program. Other families can choose to send their child just to the preschool.

The preschoolers will meet in a classroom at St. Matthew's School. Shar, along with other staff members, have written grants to raise money for the capital improvements, equipment and furniture needed to outfit the room properly and meet code requirements.



Improve Literacy for Entire Family

Shar is also seeking funding for something called Family Literacy. A recent poll of the preschool children currently enrolled at St. Matthew's Child Care revealed that less than 20% of the preschoolers are read to at home on a daily basis. Of the remaining 80%, more than half reported they are **never** read to or do not have any books in their home. This is a serious impediment to the children's future success in school.

Family literacy helps address the problem. St. Matthew's Child Care will offer a bi-monthly family night centered around reading and literacy in the home. This is one way to introduce early learning to families who may not have the skills or ability to provide their children with necessary learning tools. Inviting parents to an evening meal, providing them with materials to take into their home, and offering a chance to learn together will improve literacy for the entire family and make a stronger learning environment for the child.

Better Future for Their Kids

Shar is convinced the time is right for these programs. She points to a growing body of research about the importance of early childhood education as a key to future academic success. Shar says, "We're trying to help people break the cycle of poverty. We have a lot of single moms. Moms who are in school trying to make a better life. The struggles and burdens they carry, I can't imagine." What she can imagine, and is working to make possible, is a better future for their kids.

St. Matt's Students Win Art Contest Awards

Four St. Matthew's 6th grade students were among the winners of the annual Hope for the City Art Contest. Nicole Brown won 1st Place and received a \$100 gift card. Other winners were Nick Reding, Monique Roquemore and Jack Smith.

The contest theme was Color My World. Students were asked to submit drawings that showed what the world looked like through their eyes. The contest is open to any organization that is a community partner for Hope for the City.

Hope for the City is a non-profit organization that fights poverty, hunger and disease by collecting and

distributing overstock products from businesses such as retailers, food distributors and medical supply companies. The items go to people in need locally, across the country and around the world. Since started by Dennis and Megan Doyle in 2000, Hope for the City has donated approximately \$230 million in wholesale valued goods.

All four contest winners will have their artwork featured and displayed at Hope for the City's fall gala and it will be part of the evening's silent auction.



Nicole Brown — 1st Prize Winner



Nick Reding — 3th Place



Monique Roquemore — 4th Place



Jack Smith — 5th Place

From the Editor

To Measure a School's Success — Start with its Graduates

In this issue, we feature four St. Matthew's alumni. In 2004, they graduated from St. Matt's as part of a class of 17 students and joined a freshman class of 310 at Cretin Derham Hall. All four of them have received awards for their academic success and will be graduating with honors. St. Matt's provided these students with the basic skills they needed to compete with kids from around the metro area, some from much wealthier schools in the cities and suburbs.

But I was more impressed by something else they got, something that can't be found in a book. The students said some of the most important things they learned at St. Matthew's were values, such as genuine respect and appreciation for diversity; the belief

that money is not everything; a commitment to help improve the lives of others.

These young women demonstrated a confidence in themselves and a commitment to their communities that I expect will lead each of them down a very interesting road.

And that's one of the things that makes St. Matthew's special. Our school doesn't just produce good students. It produces good students with great values.

Congratulations to all the students in St. Matthew's class of '04 as you graduate from high school. We wish you the best in all your endeavors. And let us know how it goes.

Maggie Lee, Editor

Student Service Projects

At St. Matthew's, students not only learn Catholic values, they live them. During the school year, every student in school will take part in a Service Project that will emphasize the importance of acting on Christian values and beliefs.



First Grade

The 1st graders took part in two projects this year. As in previous years, the students collected new socks for Listening House, a St. Paul non-profit which provides support to people who are homeless. A new project this year was to make Easter baskets for kids at Children's Hospital. After making the baskets and filling them with candy, the students delivered them in person to the hospital.



6th Grade

6th grade students ran a school-wide Food Drive throughout Lent. They collected over 267 pounds of food. The 4th grade class won a prize for contributing the most pounds of food. Some of the 6th graders helped deliver the food to Neighborhood House where they learned demand at the food shelves is going up. (Note: Photo was taken on St. Patrick's Day.)



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Weekend Liturgies:

Saturday - 5 p.m.

Sunday - 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

www.st-matts.org

EVENTS calendar

SPRING CONCERT AND SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR — May 8 at 7:00 p.m.

This year students will be singing classic rock and roll hits from the '50's & '60's. The concert will take place in the school gym. Before and after the concert, everyone is welcome to check out the student's science fair projects on exhibit in the school hallways.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL "SELECTION" PROCESS — May 10-11

In the spirit of the New Testament, parish members have been discerning whether they are called to serve as a member of the council. On Pentecost Sunday, new members will be drawn "by lot." This will happen at each of the weekend Masses.

PROJECT RAINBOW MASS AND RECEPTION — May 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Students in 4th - 8th grade will get to visit in person with their Project Rainbow pen pals. After Mass, everyone will meet in the social hall for a reception.

KINDERGARTEN VISIT — May 16 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Children registered for St. Matthew's Kindergarten next year and those who are considering it are welcome to come and find out what kindergarteners actually do. For more information, call the school office at 651-224-6912.

8TH GRADE GRADUATION — June 1 at 10:30 a.m. Mass

St. Matthew's 8th grade class of 2008 will have their graduation ceremony at the 10:30 a.m. mass. Following the mass, there will be a luncheon in the social hall for family and friends of the graduates.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL — June 4