



THE GOOD NEWS

September/October 2008
Issue 8

FROM ST. MATTHEW

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



School is Hi-Tech Thanks to Volunteers

St. Matthew's has been very fortunate to have a dedicated team of volunteers who have led the way in developing the school's technology. The core of that team includes Rich Schletty ('66), Johnny Edwards, and Chris Stevens ('67). Over the years, many have helped but these three have been involved in everything, from planning and grant writing to wiring and installing and the never-ending maintenance.

Our technical needs have now evolved to a point where it's no longer practical to have volunteers manage all of it. This summer, the school hired a business to provide general tech support. So it seemed like a good time to recap the evolution of technology at the school, look at where we are now and where we go from here.

Not all that long ago, a classroom didn't need anything more high tech than a blackboard to provide a good learning environment for students. But those days are gone. The technology revolution has swept over schools and now fully networked computers and wireless access to high speed internet are considered standard tools in a 21st century classroom.

While that change brings many benefits to students, it presents some real challenges to schools. One of the biggest is that even though computers are expensive, they need to be replaced fairly often. The shelf-life of a computer is about 4-5 years.

In addition to the computers, there's all the stuff you don't see, the infrastructure

needed to make the computers work. At St. Matthew's, that infrastructure includes miles of cables and wires connecting all the classrooms as well as the school, parish center and social hall. And there's the costly server, tucked in a small office on the second floor.

Many people have had a hand in bringing technology to St. Matthew's, but the three who assumed the greatest responsibility are Rich Schletty, Johnny Edwards and Chris Stevens.

Chris Stevens is a network engineer for Qwest and has been involved, he says "from the sidelines" from day one. While Chris describes himself as more of a pinch hitter, he

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HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

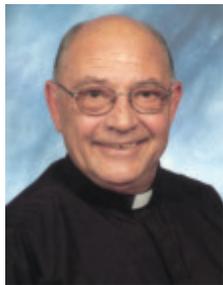
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Fr. Steve's homilies are available on-line at www.st-matts.org

Dear Alums and Friends of Saint Matthew's School,

Partnerships are what it is all about!

The success of a Catholic School is in proportion to the strength and resilience of the partnerships which have a stake in its success.

St. Matthew's School is blessed with a growing number of strong, resilient partnerships; partnerships which bring enthusiasm, commitment and financial resource.

I have long believed that there are many families who would want to choose Saint Matthew's for their child's education, but because of a belief that they "could never afford" Catholic education they do not approach us or consider visiting the school.

St. Francis of Assisi Partners in Education, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, the Catholic Community Foundation, Saint Matthew Alums and Friends, FOCUS (Friends of Catholic Urban Schools) and the Church of the Assumption have come together to provide funds to attract new families and significantly underwrite tuition costs for low and moderate income families.

St. Matthew's Alumni and Friends are critical to this effort. Over the past year alumni have raised more than \$112,000 to spearhead this recruitment effort.

As a result, and as of this writing, St. Matthew's School has a 20% increase in enrollment for the school year 2008-2009. We ended last school year with 139 students and presently have 175 students registered for this year. Kindergarten enrollment this year is at 27 students.

Such increases are remarkable in urban schools – public and private. Urban schools have seen a steady decline in enrollment over the years. What this remarkable increase at St. Matthew's reveals is that many families would seek Catholic Education for their children if that opportunity were financially within their reach.

Our educational partnerships make this possible.

A special thank you to you, the alumni of St. Matthew's for your generosity and your willingness to create the opportunity so many families seek for their child. You make the opportunity REAL.

Yours truly,
Stephen Adrian, Pastor

Mass in the Park

Fr. Steve shared a message of maintaining hope in tough times with over 100 people at the Feast of the Assumption held at Cherokee Park on the evening of August 14. After the service, everyone shared a meal where the Men's Club cooked burgers and brats and parishioners brought dishes to pass. It was a beautiful summer night in the park.



Don't miss St. Matthew's Fall Festival

SEPTEMBER 20 & 21

After 5:00 p.m.
mass on Saturday

6:00 Taco Feed &
Live Music by the Youth
Mariachi Band from
Our Lady of Guadalupe

Bingo, Cribbage Tournament
& Texas Hold 'em

Sunday 11:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Chicken dinner
with all the fixin's

Children's games in the gym

Bingo

Vikings Game @ 12:00 p.m.
at Beer Tent
and more!



Young volunteers from St. Francis help clean up St. Matt's school grounds.

St. Francis of Assisi Sister Parish Providing Scholarships

By Maureen Gitlin, School Administration

In October of 2003, we embarked on a sister parish relationship with St. Francis of Assisi, located in Lake St. Croix Beach. St. Francis is a parish that is about the same size as St. Matthew's and like St. Matthew's, it has a very strong belief in social justice, especially helping those who are in need.

We have found many interesting ways to work together: our pastors have traded pulpits to preach the Gospel; we have attended major events at each other's parish; students from St. Francis have come to St. Matthew's to do service learning and learn about the West Side community; and I have made monthly trips to St. Francis of Assisi to sell SCRIP to help support our school.

In the past three years we have taken our relationship one step farther. In 2006, we introduced the Partners in Education program. This program provides \$1,500 scholarships to students at St. Matthew's School who are in financial need. The parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi donate all of the funds for this program. Some of the donors have ties to St. Matthew's, but most give because they understand that our students deserve the best education possible, regardless of their financial status. In the first year, enough money was raised to give 10 scholarships and last year 12 scholarships were given. We hope to raise enough funds each year to renew a student's scholarship for all of the years that they attend St. Matthew's School.

I visit St. Francis of Assisi about one Sunday per month and have truly enjoyed my time there! I know



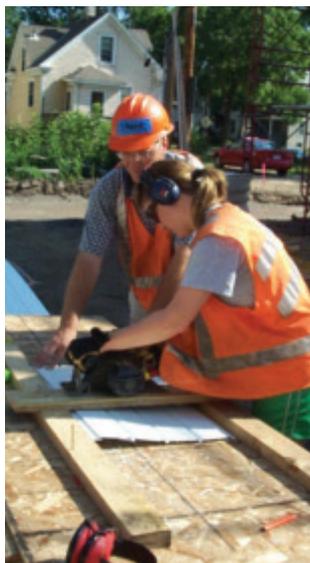
St. Francis parishioners meet with St. Matthew's School officials, Doug Lieser and Maureen Gitlin (seated.)

each time I make the drive down to Lake St. Croix Beach, I will be welcomed by the staff and the parishioners. Over the years I have had the opportunity to meet many wonderful people and hear their stories.

I have been to Wednesday Coffee, where a group of seniors (including some founding members of the Parish) gather after morning Mass for rolls and coffee, the Fall Festival (there was a picture of me in the bulletin popping popcorn), the annual Mardi Gras party, and numerous bake sales and parish socials. Each time I am down there I feel like I am not only spreading the good news about St. Matthew's, but am making new friends.

Helping to Build "Habitat for Humanity"

During the week of July 14, volunteers from St. Matthews helped construct a house for Habitat for Humanity. St. Matthew's Parish has participated in this program for 11 years. This year's home site is in Minneapolis by the University. St. Matthew's partnered with St. Thomas Beckett Catholic Community and Mount Calvary Lutheran to provide enough volunteers for a construction crew for the week.



Photos show volunteers from all three churches as well as future residents who worked on the homes that week. The kids wearing yellow shirts helped serve food to the construction crew.

School is Hi-Tech, *continued from page 1*

believes Rich Schletty is the guy who's done the most to make it happen. Chris says, "He's gone above and beyond the call of duty. I can't say enough about Rich's contributions." Rich, who has his own computer graphics business, has helped plan for, purchase and install nearly all the school's technology. He designed and maintains the parish's website and he's been the first call for help whenever there's a problem with the school's computers. Johnny Edwards, owner of LP Gas-Equipment, is the only one of the three who doesn't work in the computer industry. But Chris says that doesn't matter with Johnny, "He's a 'Can Do' guy. If he doesn't know how to do something, he just figures it out."

Starting From Scratch

While the school had some computers in the '80s and '90s, things really got started in 1996 with Network Day, a government sponsored effort to get volunteers to help wire schools. Tom Maloney, Joe Wenker ('70) and Scott Goldenstein ('80) helped lead a group of volunteers to wire the school. Chris Stevens says wiring all the classrooms was a lot of work but it was important, "It allowed us to have all the computers in the school connected. Teachers could share files or send documents to the printer in the office." In 1997, Sr. Leonius Skarr secured grants and donations to purchase PowerMacs for each classroom.

Another leap forward came when Johnny Edwards secured a grant to install fiber optic cable connecting the school, the parish center and social hall. "Before that," Chris says, "the Parish Center and School computers couldn't talk to each other. And the Parish Center had to use a modem to go online. This was a major upgrade."

In 2003, the school purchased the Apple X Server. The server, Chris Stevens says, was another major purchase, "It increased processing power, provided greater storage capacity, made it possible to host our own website. It was a big improvement."

When the school established an internet connection, Chris made sure the school got a good deal from Qwest. And parishioner Marty Olson, who works for Border Bound, arranged for his business to provide free email accounts for all the teachers and parish staff.

Ongoing Need to Upgrade

Thanks to the careful planning and hard work of many volunteers, the school and parish have built a solid infrastructure at a minimum cost. But Chris Stevens points out that we need to keep up our technological

Chris Stevens, network engineer for Qwest, helped bring St. Matt's technology up to date.



A mobile computer lab was donated to the school in 2006. The school plans to purchase a second mobile lab this year.



Mrs. Marxer's 3rd grade students still use Apple II computers from 1983 to practice multiplication and division.

investment. "We want to maintain a technical base for students in this increasingly technical world so kids can develop the skills they'll need as they move onto higher education. Their use of technology will only increase."

Looking ahead, the school will need to replace the outdated iMac computers in the Computer Lab as well as the server which is beyond its shelf life and has become unreliable. The school also needs a new internet protection system so kids can safely navigate on-line.

Many people, more than we can name here, have played a part in building the technology infrastructure at St. Matthew's. If you contributed time, money or expertise, we thank you. Your gift has made a very real difference in the lives of many students.

Excited About the Coming School Year

By Doug Lieser, Principal

Greetings Alumni and Friends! It's amazing how quickly a year goes by. As summer passes, energy fills the building. This time of year brings excitement for our students and staff as we anticipate the year to come. We have made great progress over the past year and look forward to building on that during the 2008-2009 school year.

We are always looking for ways to enrich the education of our students. Last year we launched several new programs that we'll be continuing this year including Chess Club for grades K-5 and Band for grades 4-8. We also introduced an after-school Homework Club and Technology Club for our middle school students as part of a West Side 21st Century Learning Community Grant. Students in grade 4-8 will again get to compete to see who will represent the school in the Archdiocesan Spelling Bee. And we'll be expanding our work with STARBASE, a rigorous one-week science, math and technology curriculum. Last year, only 5th grade students took part; this year, it will be offered to 4th and 6th graders.

We also provided students with new opportunities to live out and deepen their faith. St. Matthew's students volunteered at Feed My Starving Children, and took part in the Social Justice Conference; both were big hits with our middle school students. These programs brought important enrichment to classroom learning and we look forward to continuing them this year.

And we'll be continuing the free Breakfast Program

for all our students. There's been a lot of research demonstrating the benefits of a school breakfast program and last year, our teachers and families experienced those benefits first hand.

With the help of Catholic Charities, we've added a 3rd day of counseling support that will be available at our school. Our counselor plays an important role in providing academic, social, and emotional support to our students.

St. Matthew's has an extremely dedicated team of teachers and staff with whom I am thrilled to work. Last year, our teachers' professional development focused on something called Differentiated Instruction. With a wide range of interests and abilities within each classroom, Differentiated Instruction helps our teachers meet our students' individual needs. We will continue the same focus this year and have added a tool which will allow teachers to access on-line support as they implement the techniques they're learning.

Enrollment is up and we are very excited about the direction our school is headed as we continue to grow. At St. Matthew's we are dedicated to our students and strive to enrich the academic lives and spiritual growth of these future leaders.



Third grader, Holly Casillas, shows off a new uniform as students get ready to go back to school.



In the Pursuit of Excellence

Seven teachers and administrators at St. Matt's are pursuing (and one has earned) Masters Degrees through the Murray Institute at the University of St. Thomas. The Murray Institute was established to further the education of Catholic school teachers and provides full scholarships in exchange for a commitment to continue teaching at Catholic schools. St. Matthew's has encouraged all staff to take advantage of this great opportunity. The results are better trained teachers and administrators who provide a high quality educational experience for our students.

School staff currently working on their Masters: Front Row L-R: Amy Brown – 2nd grade; Maureen Gitlin – Administration, Denise Felitto – 4th grade. Back Row: Lynn Volkenant – Assist Principal, Jennifer Slaten – Mid School Math, Theresa Mahowald – Kindergarten, Doug Lieser – Principal. Not pictured, Geri Padelford, who earned her Masters last year.

St. Matt's Student Wins Red Cross Award for Saving Friends Life

Bree Osborne received the highest award given to an individual by the Red Cross for the actions she took to save her friend and classmate, Anna Erickson. The incident which led to the award took place

last December following St. Matthew's Christmas Concert. The girls, who were in 3rd grade, were with their families at Bakers Square on Robert Street when Anna began to choke on an ice cube.

Anna and Bree are in Girl Scouts together and just two months earlier, both girls had received their badge for First Aid Training.

When Anna realized she couldn't breathe, she knew what to do. She crossed her hands over her throat to indicate she was choking. Then, Bree used what she learned in First

Bree Osborne holds up the medals she received and the certificate signed by President Bush.



Aid to perform the Heimlich maneuver on her

friend. Bree says, "We were taught to put your arms around the person, make a fist, put it on the belly button and pull up."

She immediately dislodged the ice cube and Anna was able to breathe again. The whole thing happened pretty fast but it was frightening just the same. Anna recalls, "I was very scared...I thought I was gonna die." Bree agrees, "Her face was actually purple."

For her actions, Bree received the Red Cross Certificate of Merit, an award only given to individuals who have used their Red Cross training to save a life. Red Cross representative, Courtney Johnson, says that in the two years since they instituted the award, it's the only one that's been awarded in Minnesota. The award includes a medal and a Certificate signed by President Bush.

Bree maintains an even keel about the whole thing, but she admits, "It's cool to know that I did save somebody's life."



Anna Erickson and Bree Osborne are interviewed by a Fox T.V. News reporter about what happened.

From the Editor

Enrollment's Up – A lot!

When Alumni & Friends (A&F) formed over a year ago, the A&F committee set two ambitious goals for itself: to raise \$150,000 by September 1st for St. Matthew's school and to increase enrollment by 50 students. This newsletter will go to print before we reach the final tally but we know already the A&F has raised well over \$100,000 for school scholarships. This is a great accomplishment and we'll be sure to list the final total along with names of contributors in the next issue.

Even more amazing though, has been the progress made towards increasing enrollment. Again, we don't know the final count yet because families can and do register up to the first day of school, but at this point, enrollment is up about 40 students. That deserves a big 'WOW!' Enrollment just isn't going up at most other Catholic schools right now, let alone urban Catholic schools. And it's all the more remarkable because it's happening during an economic downturn.

So 'Congratulations' to everybody that helped make this happen. Whether you put a sign in your yard or encouraged a neighbor to consider St. Matt's for their child, or donated money to help fund scholarships, you are part of this success story.

A&F is just getting started. There'll be new goals for this year and more opportunities to join the effort. So thanks to all of you who are helping to achieve these goals. It's all about making a difference in the lives of children.

— Maggie Lee, Editor



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www.st-matts.org

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Pastor: Fr. Steve Adrian

Parish Office: 651-224-9793

Weekend Liturgies:

Saturday - 5 p.m.

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

www.st-matts.org

EVENTS calendar

VIKINGS VS. PACKERS — September 8, 8 p.m.

The Men's Club host a party in the Social Hall to watch the game on really big screen t.v. Food and refreshments for \$5.00.

FALL FESTIVAL — September 20 & 21

Beginning Saturday, after 5 p.m. mass, they'll be serving up tacos and live Mariachi music in the parking lot. On Sunday: Chicken Dinner with all the Fixin's (11a.m. – 3 p.m.); kids games in the gym beginning at 11:30 a.m.; Vikings Game at noon and a lot more. *See page 2 for more details.*

COFFEE FOR A CAUSE — September 21

Dates are open for any parish organization or person to host the Sunday Coffee Hours, bring food, promote a cause and apply the proceeds accordingly. To find out more: call John Del Vecchio at 651-221-0871.

MARATHON FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS — October 3

Students will collect pledges to raise money for school. Individuals and grades compete to see who will raise the most. For information on how to sponsor a students, call the school office at 651-224-6912.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS — October 4, 6:15 p.m.

In recognition of the Feast of St. Francis, animal lovers are invited to bring their pets to this outdoor service conducted by the Hall Avenue entrance.

NOVEMBER 4TH — REMEMBER TO VOTE!

MEN'S CLUB WINE TASTING — November 14, 7 p.m.

Enjoy an evening of wine, cheese and good company in the Social Hall.

DINNER HONORING FR. STEVE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY — December 7

Save the date – we'll be celebrating Fr. Steve's 40 years in the priesthood. To find out more or help get involved, call the Parish Center at 651-224-9793.