



The St. Augustine Monthly

St. Augustine School † Founded in 1857 † www.staug-md.org

A School You Can Have Faith In † September 2008

From the Principal's Desk...

This Labor Day holiday reminds us of the dignity of human labor and the importance of our contribution to the common good regardless of how small that contribution might seem. Some of our greatest saints performed very menial tasks. One of the most important saints of modern times is St. Therese Lisieux who achieved sainthood and fame doing little things with great love. I know the teachers and I feel very blest to be entrusted with such important and rewarding work as teaching and forming young minds and hearts. It is a work that we humbly share with you. It is also work that involves countless small tasks that if done with love and care reap great rewards. Our theme for this school year is "Shaped to Serve." The faculty, staff and I are committed to serving your family, trusting the Master Teacher to mold and guide us.

The school year is off to a great start. This week (grades 6-8) and next week (grades PK-5) will be gathering for Back to School Night. This is an important opportunity to get to know your child's teacher. The relationship between home and school is very important. The teacher needs to know your child and no one knows him or her better than you. I truly believe that the children will be happier and most successful when a partnership is forged between home and school. This partnership is based on mutual trust. We trust that both parent and teacher want what is best for the child. We trust that the parents are parenting and teachers are teaching to the best of their abilities. St. Augustine teachers are extremely dedicated and hard working. We are committed to meeting the needs of all of the students, to sharing our faith and love of Christ with them and to modeling for them the six pillars of good character.

Communication between home and school is essential in order to maintain a strong partnership. Reading all information sent to you carefully and promptly is very helpful. Checking your child's progress on Parent Access and e-mailing your questions and concerns to the teacher ensures that you know what and how your child is progressing. I urge you to consult with the teacher immediately if you have a concern. Clear communication regarding discipline issues is also critical to promoting respectful and responsible behaviors. Please read the school handbook to ensure that you know what is expected of your child. Some examples include the following: Make sure your child is always in uniform, expect him or her to speak to you and siblings in a respectful manner, and to not tolerate name-calling, negative humor or bad language. It is beneficial to speak positively of school and the teacher in front of your child. Please monitor what you say to other adults in front of your child and be sensitive to the modeling that all of your actions convey. Finally, I urge you to feel free to see me about any concerns that you have that are not addressed or resolved between you and your child's teacher. Although I may have many tasks calling for my attention, none is more important than addressing your child's needs. Every child's success is our goal and the entire faculty and staff look forward to working with you again this year to accomplish this.

Finally, it is important to note that such a lofty goal can only be met with a commitment on everyone's part to be as diligent as possible in acting with trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring and good citizenship, especially in front of the children. At the same time we must also keep in mind that we are all imperfect. In addition to our own sinfulness, many teachers and parents alike are carrying the burdens of sick or aging family members, problems with children, marital concerns, financial worries, and personal health issues. Our faith teaches us not to expect to be spared suffering, but to embrace the cross. Doing so is redemptive, binding us together and enabling us to be compassionate and more caring. I implore each of you to remember the needs of our community in your prayers and to know that others are lifting you up in prayer. I would like to begin the school year with these words of St. Paul,

"Because you are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you." Col 3:12-14

~Patricia Schratz, Principal

Join Us for an Evening of Food & Fun!

Don't miss St. Augustine School's "Back to School Dinner & Family Fun Night" on Friday, September 19 from 5-9 PM in the hall. This very special event will



feature a delicious homemade buffet dinner prepared by Miss Ruth, fun games for kids, a silent auction, moonbounce, DJ, face painting, baked good/snack wheels and fun for the entire family! Please see the attached flyer for details. **Donations of homemade baked goods are needed. Please return the attached form if you**

are able to donate homemade brownies, cupcakes, cookies, cake, fudge, etc. Thank you! We look forward to seeing everyone on the 19th!

Earn Your Volunteer Hours Now!

Volunteers are needed to assist with the "Back to School Dinner & Family Fun Night" on Friday, September 19. Parents are needed to help prepare food, set up the hall, serve food, sell tickets at the door, and assist with the silent auction, games, moonbounce and wheels. **Please contact Mrs. Mobley at smobley@staug-md.org or 410-796-3040 if you are interested.** This is a great, fun way to get a jumpstart on your volunteer hours! Thanks!

The Book Fair is Right Around the Corner...

St. Augustine's Scholastic Book Fair will be held **September 4-11** in the Burke Wing. The Book Fair will be open from 6:15-7:00 PM prior to both Back-to-School Nights (September 4 & 9). Please take advantage of this great opportunity to purchase books for your children ... the holidays are just around the corner! The book fair offers many titles of quality and award-winning literature for children and adults alike. Teachers will be posting their own "Wish List" of books for their classrooms and



they would greatly appreciate any purchases from their list. Thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity. If you have volunteered to help at the Book Fair, you will receive a reminder slip on **September 3** indicating the shift you will be working.

Hot Lunch Orders



Hot lunch is provided to students who have ordered it in advance. Lunch order forms are sent home the month prior and orders and payment must be turned in by the due date at the bottom of the form. **Payment by check is preferred. If you must pay in cash, please send in the exact amount so no change has to be sent home. In addition, please do not send in more than \$1 in coins.** Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Scrip... On Sale Now

Scrip (gift cards) is on sale every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning from 8:30-9:00 a.m. in the school hall. **Don't miss this great opportunity to support a program that directly benefits your family and our school!** Our scrip inventory includes grocery stores like Giant, Safeway and Super Fresh, gas stations like Hess, restaurants like Red Robin, Red Lobster and Outback, and popular shops like Kohl's, Home Depot and Bed Bath & Beyond. For a complete list of participating retailers, please visit our website at www.staug-md.org. **Please note: Any scrip special orders that were placed the first week of school will be sent home on September 11 or 12.**

Welcome Back!

Please mark your calendar for "Back to School Night" for grades K-5 on **Tuesday, September 9** from 7-9 PM. Topics for discussion will include the student handbook, uniforms, volunteer hours, aftercare, upcoming special events, HSA activities and much more. Most importantly, you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teachers and learn about their plans and expectations for the new school year. We hope to see you there!

"Back to School Night" for all middle school parents will be held on **Thursday, September 4** at 7 p.m. Parents of children in grades 6-8 are encouraged to attend this important meeting where goals and expectations of the middle school team will be discussed.

Uniform Exchange

Please join us in the library at 6:30 p.m. at both Back to School Night's where we will have used uniforms on sale. All pieces are a bargain at only \$5 each! Do you have uniforms that your children no longer wear or have outgrown? Bring them with you and exchange them for something else, or receive a credit for a future exchange. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Uniform Exchange Coordinator, **Mrs. Kirsten Allen**, at kallen246@aol.com. **Volunteers are needed to help at both exchanges. To volunteer, please contact Mrs. Allen as soon as possible.** Thank you!

Cheer on the O's!

The Home & School Association and the Athletic Association have teamed up to schedule "St. Augustine School Night" at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on **Saturday, September 27**. This is the Orioles' last home series of the season. Lower reserve seats are \$15 each.

To order your tickets, please return the order form that was sent home with your child. For questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Dawn Weglein or a member of the HSA Executive Committee. We hope to see many of our school families at the ballpark!



Thank You, Families!

We would like to thank the many school families who so generously donated non-perishable food items and toiletries to the Elkridge Food Pantry. Your contributions are greatly appreciated by the needy in our community. A special thank you to **Mrs. Leah Ricciuti** for picking up and delivering the items to the pantry. This was the first of several outreach projects we will support this school year in order to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Spotlight on Specials...

Each month in the newsletter, we will highlight a different "special" in order to share with you the many exciting things that are happening at our school and in your child's classes. **Our spotlight this month will be on the library.**

Located on the first floor of our school, the library is overseen by **Mrs. Pam Pilecki, Media Specialist**. The library is open Monday through Friday and Mrs. Pilecki is assisted by many wonderful volunteers who help with book circulation, shelving books, cataloging, and many other important duties important in keeping the library up to date. The library provides a wealth of information for both students and teachers. During weekly library classes, students borrow books. In addition, Mrs. Pilecki has structured lessons that help students develop their research skills, as well as their general knowledge of the library. For middle school students, computers are available to assist with research and media literacy is taught in order to increase students' awareness of the impact that print, radio, TV and computer internet media have on their decision-making process. Finally, Mrs. Pilecki often takes time to read to the students, something students of all ages thoroughly enjoy! This provides students the opportunity to experience a diversity of books, while utilizing appropriate listening skills. Teachers often visit the library to check out books to read to their students that enhance their curriculum. They also borrow books to compliment their own classroom library to provide students a wide array of reading and research materials.

According to Scholastic Research, "the school library is critical to every student's learning experience and academic achievement." School libraries inspire literacy and provide an important role in teaching. When learners of all ages have the opportunity to read stories and explore new, exciting information, various forms of literacy can emerge. Research has shown that school libraries inspire literacy in learners of all ages.

Our school library has received rave reviews from "Titlewave" for its wide selection of books available, condition of books and average number of books per student, and age of collection. We are constantly adding new titles to our collection and working hard to ensure that students and teachers alike have the resources they need to succeed.

We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Pilecki and her volunteers for helping all of our students develop a love of reading and literature! The time students spend in the library is dedicated to reading for pleasure, information and exploration – valuable tools for student success. If you have any questions regarding your child's weekly library classes, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Pilecki at ppilecki@staug-md.org or call 410-796-3040.☺

School Masses



The school celebrates mass together the first Friday of each month. All parents are welcome to join us in church for mass. Please note that beginning September, school masses will begin at **8:45 AM**, rather than

9 AM. This will allow for more student learning. We hope you will plan to worship with us.

Keep Saving Those Boxtops!

We're having another "Box Tops for Education" pizza contest this fall! All that you need to do is collect the Box Tops for Education labels from your food packages at home (General Mills, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Ziploc, Kleenex) and send them in to school. Place them in a ziploc/envelope labeled with your child's grade. Ask family, neighbors and friends to help you! If you have any questions regarding the boxtops program, please contact Mrs. Joseline Castanos at 410-582-803 or j_castanos@comcast.net. Thank you for your support!

CHARACTERCOUNTS!

Once again this year, we will be working diligently to promote good character within our school community. Students will be encouraged to demonstrate the 6 pillars of good character (**trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship**) both at school and at home. Teachers and staff will model these pillars and teach students how they can make a positive

difference in the community and the world by exemplifying good character. We encourage all of our parents to take advantage of opportunities at home to stress the importance of the six pillars of good character. Together, we can all make a difference!

Goodsearch.com

Do you search the Internet? If so, please use **goodsearch.com** as your search engine! **Goodsearch.com**, powered by Yahoo!, makes a donation to our school every time you use their search engine. You need only register our school on



your first search, then it will automatically default to St. Augustine School for future searches. Please encourage your family, friends, neighbors to use **goodsearch.com!**

Lunch Volunteer Training

There will be a mandatory training session for all lunch/recess volunteers on **Tuesday, September 9** from 8:45-9:30 a.m. in the hall. At this time, there will be an overview of all procedures and rules for lunch and recess duty presented by Mrs. Schratz and Miss Ruth. We expect students to exhibit good character in structured and unstructured time. Lunch and recess pose the greatest opportunity for discipline issues to surface. We want you and the students to enjoy lunch/recess. If we all work together and enforce the rules, it will be a positive experience for everyone. Lunch/recess duty is an extremely important volunteer role and one that is greatly appreciated by our teachers. **Lunch duty will begin on Wednesday, September 9.** Thank you for your cooperation and for volunteering your valuable time!



Back to School Dinner & Family Fun Night



☆BAKED GOODS DONATION FORM☆

Yes, I will donate homemade baked goods for the dinner on Friday, September 19.

I will provide (please circle): brownies / cookies / cupcakes / cake / pie / bread / fudge / muffins
(Please take homemade goodies to the hall the morning of 9/19 or send to school with your child.)

Family Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Please return this form to school by September 8. Thank you for your donation!

IMPORTANT!

★ Drop Off & Dismissal Procedures ★

Parents of non-bus riders have two options for dropping off their children:

1. Car Line — Please line up in front of pre-k. Students may not be discharged before **8:15 AM**. Cars are **NEVER** to pull out of line, but must wait until the vehicles in front move.
2. Parking Lot — Parents who wish to walk their children may do so but **MUST** park in the back lot, remain in cars until **8:15 AM** and ensure that their children walk on the sidewalk.

Afternoon dismissal:

- All car riders are picked up in the back parking lot. Cars must wait until given the signal to move. Anyone arriving after the bell at 3:25 PM must park in the top lot and **WAIT** to leave until the exiting cars from the back lot are dismissed.
- Cars parking front end out will be dismissed first.
- Parents are not to park in the spots along side the convent nor in handicapped spots.
- Parents of bus riders must be familiar with this procedure for days there is no Howard County bus service.
- Families using the playground must cross **BEFORE** the cars begin to move or wait until the parking lot is clear.

Your complete compliance of these important safety regulations is a sign of your good character and positive modeling for your child. If you have any questions regarding these procedures, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Schratz. Thank you for your cooperation.