

Maria Donaldson <schoolmail@gradelink.com>

May 15, 2015 3:27 PM

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Weekly Message from the Principal

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Mary Ann McQueen

May 15, 2015

DID YOU KNOW?

1. ***Did you know*** on the evening of **May 20**, coinciding with the Spring Sing, the third graders will be holding a **Lemonade Stand to support Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF)**.

The class has done months of research and writing about what cancer – they have addressed questions such as:

What is cancer? How do people with cancer seek treatment? Does everyone with cancer receive the same treatment? Is cancer curable? What types of cancer can be prevented? How do we prevent cancer?

As part of their overall learning project they also explored service that they could do as a class to support people who get cancer and that is why they are partnering with Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation – to raise awareness and money for cancer research.

You can support the third grade in the following ways:

1. Send money with your child on Wednesday so that they can purchase a beverage and a food item at the bake sale.
2. Plan to stay for awhile after the first concert or arrive early for the second concert to enjoy

the lemonade stand.

3. **All proceeds from the Spring Sing refreshment table will go to ALSF to fund cancer research and support families dealing with childhood cancer.**
4. We know that cancer affects many lives, and therefore want to know whether you know someone who has been touched by cancer (either to acknowledge a survivor or in memory).

Please send any names to Ms. Clark (3rd grader teacher) at dclark@stmarkschool.com no later than **Tuesday, May 19.**

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, May 20 as we work together to make a difference... One cup at a time!

The fundraising for Nepal was very successful! SMS raised over \$2,000 for the people of Nepal!

Thanks to all who participated!

UPCOMING CALENDAR DATES

May 18 PAC Meeting @ 7:30 AM

May 20 Spring Performance 3:30-4:45 and 5:15-6:45 RSVP Required

May 21 No Homework Club -

May 22 No School Teacher In-Service

May 25 No School Memorial Day

May 27 Spring Sports Award 6:00-7:00 PM in the parish hall

May 28 Jean's Day

May 29 StuCo Voting

June 5 TK Snack Sale

June 10 Parent Appreciation Dinner @6:30 PM for 8th grade students, parents and faculty/staff

June 11 Candlelighting Mass/Full Dress Uniform

June 12 5PM 8th Grade Graduation @ Church

June 15 Last PAC Meeting of the school year @ 7:30 AM

June 17 Last Day of School – Recognition Assembly will take place shortly after morning announcements in the Parish Hall. 10:30 AM dismissal on this day!

SPRING PERFORMANCE:

We will be sending out a detailed set of directions regarding all facets of this evening on Monday, May 17, 2015. It will include specific information about parking, arrival, refreshments, dress, departure and tickets. Please read it carefully so that you have all of the information needed to plan for and enjoy the afternoon/evening!

PAC NOMINATIONS:

Nominations have been received and the officers have been affirmed by the Nominating Committee. The new officers are:

President: Veronica Ruvalcaba

Vice-President: Trina Wilson

CONGRATULATIONS!

Special thanks to Jennifer Agens, Veronica Ruvalcaba, Liz Wright, Tammy Zucker, Elizabeth Chartier and Tara Walden for their service on the Nominating Committee.

GRADELINK:

The office has sent out emails requesting that returning families log onto Gradelink to re-enroll and update your student and family information. Once you log onto Gradelink review all the profile data and click on continue to complete the process by pushing the submit button. It's that simple! If you do not know your Gradelink information please email Mrs. Donaldson at mdonaldson@stmarkschool.com and she will be happy to send it to you.

IMPORTANT FUTURE DATES FOR PLANNING SCHOOL YEAR 2015-2016:

Parent Orientation: August 24, 2015 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM

First Day of School: August 26, 2015 (three half days that week)

Thanksgiving Break: November 25-29

Christmas Break: December 19-January 3

Attached is the DRAFT Calendar. Once it is finalized it will be posted on our school website at www.stmarkschool.com

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

I am so proud of the faculty and staff of St. Mark School. They are an amazing team of dedicated professionals who have worked tirelessly to provide an exciting learning environment for students this year! Careful attention to the needs of students and a commitment to the St. Mark Catholic School mission are all hallmarks of this great team. Their eagerness to model life long learning can be seen in their commitment to ongoing professional growth as well as the continuous focus on school improvement. They collaborate with each other continuously and gracefully. They have served beyond the classroom on committees, as tech mentors, coaches and school leaders. They have implemented a new testing system, an instructional model that is very challenging and demanding and have applied academic interventions to students for whom this is needed.

And so, it is with sadness and pride that I share with you the professional career changes in store for some of our faculty – sadness because I am sorry to see them go but pride because I know how much they have grown as teachers and contributed to St. Mark School:

Miss Lauren Espinoza is relocating to Chicago, Illinois. She is going through a discernment process about possible careers in education. Miss Espinoza's leadership in the TK classroom, as a school leader (she heads up the PeaceBuilder Program, serves as a tech mentor and serves on the WASC accreditation team. Her commitment to excellence and program development have had a tremendous impact on the growth and strength of our emerging learner program at St. Mark.

Miss Kari Farwell has decided to explore career options beyond the classroom. **Miss Farwell is a talented educator and has brought great energy and focus to our first grade**

classroom this year. Miss Liu will be returning to first grade next year as she enters a teacher credential program at LMU and she will be joined by a new lead teacher.

Miss Deanna Clark is pursuing teaching positions overseas. Miss Clark, a native of the Pacific Northwest, has accomplished a great deal in her three years at St. Mark School here in Venice, but teaching in another country is part of her career path at this time. Miss Clark has served on the WASC accreditation team and this year is the teacher leader implementing the comprehensive service-learning program. While at St. Mark she has completed a MA and obtained her California Teaching Credential while serving in the Place Corps Program at LMU.

Elyse Farwell has taken a teaching position in Quito, Ecuador. Her interest in expanding her professional portfolio by taking on the challenge of teaching overseas is testament to her bold and expansive ambitions! Miss Farwell has lead the *Grades of Green Program* and the Yearbook this year. While at St. Mark, Ms. Farwell completed an MA as part of her Place Corps Program commitment.

Mrs. Lebenzon brought great depth of experience and enthusiasm to St. Mark middle school program this year and she implemented a new curriculum – Teacher Curriculum Institute Social Studies for grades 6-8. Mrs. Lebenzon will be joining her husband, Chris, who is currently working on a film in England. She hopes to return to St. Mark in the near future.

Mrs. Hanna Song our Spanish language instructor will be moving on to new challenges supporting her husband's new dental practice in Long Beach where she will be living. We wish her well in her new endeavors!

Ms. Maeve Cummings is retiring from St. Mark School after nearly 25 years of service. Maeve will still be leading the music program at the Church of St. Mark and we will see her regularly. She has recently obtained her real estate license and will be pursuing business opportunities in that area. We are grateful to Ms. Cummings for her years of dedicated service and her commitment to the students and faculty of St. Mark! She has been involved over the years as a teacher and as a parent. She has taught multiple subjects including music, religion and science and has also served on the accreditation committee and as vice-principal.

And so, I am sure you are wondering – who will be replacing these teachers in the coming year. We have a very thorough and comprehensive hiring process and we have been working for months to secure the very best instructors possible for these positions. To date we have hired

four teachers for the upcoming year and we will be sending out information about those professionals in the coming weeks. The process that we use includes obtaining and screening resumes, interviews with multiple people on campus and for those selected from this process a demonstration lesson is conducted. Several members of the hiring committee observe the demonstration lesson and then debrief with the teacher candidate. The committee then discusses the extent to which the candidate meets the criteria set for teachers at St. Mark School – commitment to Catholic education and excellence, experience and background suited to this setting, outstanding recommendations from references, demonstrated excellence as an instructor and a commitment to professional growth and collaboration.

We have received many resumes, interviewed many candidates and conducted several demonstration lessons in the past several months. We will continue to do so until all positions are filled. We are grateful to the entire faculty most of whom have participated in some way during this process. We will keep you posted.

Once again, we are grateful for the collective years of service on the part of those who will be moving on from St. Mark. They have contributed greatly to the school's growth and continued excellence and for this I am very grateful!

Note:

If you reply to this email please confirm that it is directed to Maria Donaldson, mdonaldson@stmarkschool.com. Your reply cannot be delivered if you use our bulk email address (schoolmail@gradelink.com).