



CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

School Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3
December '07-January '08

From the Principal's Desk:

Dear Parents,

I hope you enjoyed the Thanksgiving weekend with family and friends and are looking forward to the celebration of Christ's birth this month. For me these holidays are times to give thanks to God, to be with family, and to share the gifts that we have been given with those around us who are less fortunate. The gift of Catholic education that we share together gives our staff and your children an opportunity to do all of these things.

We celebrated Thanksgiving Mass together as a Catholic Central family on November 20th. In this celebration of the Eucharist we were able to thank God for what He has given to us and through the Thanksgiving Food and Clothing drives we were able to give warmth, comfort and nourishment to many people who live in our immediate neighborhood. As we enter into the season of Advent and our preparation for Christmas begins, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation together on December 5th and 6th and throughout the month of December will be working together on our traditional Christmas Families Project. These events that help us all grow in our faith are detailed in Kathie Walsh's Campus Ministry article in this newsletter.

Through the Education Committee of our Catholic Secondary School Board and the administrations of both high schools we are studying some important school policies and procedures to determine if changes need to be made to better fit in with the mission and values of our schools.

The first is to develop an admissions policy that sets a minimum standard for acceptance into our high schools. This policy would balance the goal of giving opportunity to anyone who desires a Catholic Secondary School education in Grand Rapids with the resources and ability of current personnel to remediate students and at the same time to truly prepare all students for college.

The second area of study of this committee deals with the dilemma that high schools in Michigan are facing today of finding the optimal way for students to meet all of the state's graduation requirements and to also find room in their schedules for the elective class opportunities they desire. Some high schools in Michigan have changed to a trimester schedule to give more flexibility in scheduling. We are exploring the pros and cons of this as well as other scheduling options that will best meet the educational needs of our students.

Finally, we are developing a policy that will set academic and behavioral standards for students to continue to receive tuition assistance. These standards will be put in place to help us be good stewards of the money that is raised and distributed to students in need of financial help. It will also hold students more accountable for their work-ethic and expected behavior at a Catholic school. We currently distribute over 1 million dollars per year in tuition assistance to families in need from Catholic Central and West Catholic.

In closing, I would ask for your continued support and prayers as we strive to successfully educate all of our students in spirit, mind and body.

May God bless you and your family,
Steve Passinault

Important Phone Numbers

Main Office: 233-5899
Attendance: 233-5812
Guidance Office: 233-5810
Athletic Office: 233-5898
Business Office: 233-5976



Steve Passinault, **Principal**
Tom Maj, **Assistant Principal**
Heidi Clark-Smitley, **Director of Guidance**
Mike Neuman, **Athletic Director**
Kathryn Walsh, **Campus Minister**
David Sankovich, **Technology Director**

From the Assistant Principal

Construction update:

LaGrave and Goodrich construction is to be completed by the time you receive this.

Construction on Wealthy will continue throughout the next several months.

The parking ramp is scheduled for completion in February. Until then, students will continue to park in the Fish Lot and Junior Lot. No new parking decals will be given Sophomores until the ramp is open for use.

Winter weather is arriving, students should allow for extra travel time in order to arrive to school on time and safely. Please review the Policy on "Delay of school/weather related" (p. 16 Student Handbook). If school is to be delayed or cancelled, notification will be given through the local media. If there is to be a two hour delay, school will begin at 10:00 a.m. with first hour. Zero hour classes would be cancelled.

Cell phones continue to be a nuisance at school and during class time. We ask that all messages be sent through the Main Office.

Exams are the week of January 14th. All obligations are to be discharged by that date: library fines, uniforms, detentions, tuition balances, text book, etc. Students may be held out of exams if they have any debts.

Reminders:

- In the event that your son/daughter will be absent, we ask that you call by 10:00 a.m. to the Attendance Office (233-5812).
- Money can be deposited into lunch accounts at any time. We ask that it be done before 8:00 a.m. to avoid delays during lunch.

Catholic Central High School And West Catholic High School

In collaboration with the
NATIONAL RELIEF NETWORK
are teaming up to go on
a mission trip
to the great State of Texas
and help with flood relief

Winter Break 2008
Tuesday, February 19th
Thru
Sunday, February 24th

We'll be leaving C.C. after school on Tuesday the 19th, and returning by early evening on Sunday the 24th. The fee is \$474.00. The registration, waiver, medical & sponsorship forms, as well as the packing list, are in Mrs. Kathie Walsh's office.

Adult men and women are needed for this relief trip as well!! For every ten people signed up, one adult can go free.

Come On! Join Hands!

Catholic Secondary Schools and Catholic Central and
West Catholic Drama Present

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

By

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



JANUARY 24-26, 2008 7:00 P.M.
JANUARY 26, 2008 2:30 P.M.

AT THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
AT AQUINAS COLLEGE

Guidance Office News

Your role as parent is vital for student effort and success. During this semester, please continue to encourage your student to complete all assigned work in a timely manner (see Student Handbook for school policy on late work), to assist your student in seeking help from teachers as needed, and to support a conscientious effort to prepare for final exams in January. Meanwhile, feel free to contact your student's teachers through email. *If you are having difficulty accessing grades from the Portal, please contact the Guidance Office at 233-5810.*

Our top recommendations for academic improvement include:

- Seek extra help from teacher(s) before or after school
- Use planner to track daily homework and differentiate study time
- Create a routine for doing school work at home including location, time frame and accountability from a parent or tutor
- Identify a tutor or study partner for regular contact during the week or on the weekend (see CC website for NHS volunteer tutors)
- Practice different study techniques outside school such as verbal, tactile and visual props (ask teacher or counselor for suggestions)
- Write grade goals for specific courses and track through the Portal weekly
- Meet with school counselor to manage the responsibilities of academics, extracurricular activities and relationships

Seniors & Parents: The Financial Aid Information Night will be held on December 5, at 7:00 p.m., in our cafeteria. Our speaker for the evening will be Mr. David Steffee, who is the Director of Financial Aid at Aquinas College. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – the form required by virtually all colleges and universities for determining eligibility for financial aid – will be explained at this meeting.

Another reminder for seniors and their parents: Students who are applying for college admission should be finishing their application forms. Many schools have deadlines of December 31. Thus, seniors are advised to submit recommendation forms/applications/transcript requests no later than Monday, December 10. When requesting a transcript or letter of recommendation, students need to take into consideration both the volume of applications we receive at this time of year, as well as the Guidance Office being closed during Christmas break.

Parents are encouraged to send a copy of any award letters and scholarship offers your student receives so that we can include this recognition in our graduation program this spring. The total amount of scholarship dollars received by the Class of 2008 is reported in publications about our school, so we appreciate your help in collecting this important information.

Juniors & Parents: The Michigan Merit Exam which includes the ACT will be given during the school days of March 11, 12, 13. There is no charge to take the ACT on this occasion. Further information will be mailed home at the end of January.

Juniors who are involved in a spring sport often find that they have a conflict with a contest that is scheduled for the same day as the ACT such as the June 14, 2008, test date. Other test dates to consider are February 9 (@ CC) and April 12. Information about ACT registration is available from the Guidance Office, or can be found at www.actstudent.org. Information about SAT and SAT II Subject Tests are found at www.collegeboard.com.

Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors & Parents: Results from the fall standardized testing (Explore, PLAN, PSAT with each career inventory) will be mailed home before Christmas break.

Athletic Office News

Fall Sports Champions: The Volleyball team, led by Coach Heather Abram, won the District Championship, defeating Allendale in the Final Match. They won the Regional Semi-Final before a successful season ended in the Regional Championship match. The Girls Swim and Dive team, led by Coach John Hams, won the City League Championship with a 5-0 League record and a 1st place in the City Meet. The team advanced swimmers to the State Finals where a strong effort achieved two new school records.

Team Schedules: Please visit the school website, www.greatholicecentral.com, for up-to-date information for all our teams. Under "Athletics" at the website, the "Schedules" has cancellations, team results, and important announcements (open the "Chalkboard"). The "Schedule" item allows you to select a view showing all athletic events for a week, a month, or a season schedule for any team. These are new features to improve communication with you.

Vacation time: Parents, if you have a family activity that conflicts with practices or games, please discuss directly with the coach as soon as possible. Our policy is covered in the school handbook. Athletic season dates are known well in advance and can be provided by calling the Athletic Office at 233-5898.

TICKETS: City League policy-- *Except Basketball, which is described below, prices for Winter sports are \$4 for Adult, \$3 for students, and \$1 for children 10 or younger*

<u>Basketball</u> JV/Varsity	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Child(<10 yrs)</i>
At Door	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$1.00
Pre-game	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$1.00
Girls Home Season(8 games)	\$24.00	\$16.00	
Boys Home Season(9 games)	\$27.00	\$18.00	
Freshmen game only	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$1.00

Family Pass provides a ticket for two adults and all children under 18 in the home.

Cost: \$80.00

Basketball Season Tickets are available at the Athletic Office after November 30 or at the ticket table in the gym on game night. Season tickets are valid for Freshmen, JV, and Varsity games played at the CC gym only. Ticket prices for the Girls Holiday Tournament at The DeltaPlex and Boys at Aquinas College will be announced. Single game tickets for the next City League game (Home and Away) will available in the school office 7:30am-3:00pm, Monday-Friday, at pre-game prices.

Review the CC Handbook you received last August. The Athletic section provides guidance regarding academic, student conduct, and health requirements to maintain eligibility for school sports.

Catholic Business Directory

The CC/WC Alumni and Friends Association is compiling a Catholic Business Directory, which will offer a free business listing to all who financially support our Catholic Secondary Schools. For information on how you and your business can be included, please visit the Secondary Schools website at www.gress.org (the Alumni and Friends tab) or contact Arnette at 233-5985 or arnettekraus@gress.org.

CSS Special Events Office

SAVE THE DATE for the All New CACHE EVENT

Do you CACHE? Sure you do! And you will want to show how much by attending our new CACHE (Care About Catholic High School Education) Event that will be held on Thursday, May 8, 2008. There will be a delicious dinner, an engaging speaker and other surprises. So, at this time, we would ask you to please fast forward to 2008 and SAVE THE DATE of May 8th for your show of support for our Catholic Secondary Schools.

CC/WC Alumni and Friends Theatre Evening

This event is for everyone who enjoys theatre and a social gathering afterwards. The Alumni and Friends Association has purchased a block of tickets for the Saturday evening, January 26, 2008 presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" to be performed at the Aquinas College Performing Arts Center. The play is a joint production by the Catholic Central and West Catholic Drama departments. We encourage all to come to enjoy the play and to take part in a wine and cheese gathering following. For more details and ticket information, please consult www.grcss.org website and click on the Alumni/Friends tab.

All A's Walk

On October 3, the seventeenth annual All A's Classic Walk took place. Nearly 1,700 students, staff and parents walked or ran from Catholic Central and West Catholic on a route through the city which led them to John Ball Park. This walk was a culmination of student and staff efforts to collect money for the Catholic Secondary Schools' tuition assistance program as well as for the emergency tuition assistance programs that exist on both campuses (the LePres-Gerkey Fund at West Catholic and the Willie Butler Fund at Catholic Central).

As the walkers entered John Ball Park, they were greeted with the sounds of the combined Cougar and Falcon bands playing their school fight songs. Parents, alumni and friends were on hand to offer bottled water and snacks to the walkers. After enjoying the snacks, the music and each others' company, the students were dismissed to enjoy the afternoon off from school.

Once again, the All A's Classic Walk was a grand success, raising over \$115,000. The Grand Rapids Catholic Secondary Schools could not have enjoyed this tremendous success without the efforts of students and staff who worked so hard to raise the money. Parent volunteers also played an integral role by walking with the students, assisting with decorations and serving treats. The Catholic Secondary Schools appreciate the generosity of all of those who made contributions and recognize in a special way those who were able to contribute and support the walk as sponsors.

Gold Level Sponsors (\$2,500)

Davenport University
The DeltaPlex
HS Die and Engineering Inc
Herman Miller Foundation
Michigan Pain Consultants-
Mark Gostine, M.D.

Breton Gardens Family Dentistry
Aspen Surgical Products Inc.
Bush Auto Works, Inc.
Cantina Mexican Grill
Chemical Bank
Donald P. Condit, M.D.
DeltaPlex Arena and Conference Ctr.
Die Tron Incorporated
Discount Tire Co.
The Dog Pit
Drew Cooper & Anding
Ed Elderkin, CC '59
Fisher & Dickinson PC
Grand Rapids Allergy PLC
Grand Ridge Orthodontics-
Dr. John Monticello
HS Technologies Inc.
Hams Automotive
Hub's Inn
Hungerford, Aldrin, Nichols & Carter P.C.
Integrated Systems Group
Kerkstra Portable Restrooms

Knape and Vogt
Bruce and Joanne Langlois
Lydia's Uniforms
Mapes Insurance
Masselink Brothers
Meyers, Bueche and Nies, Inc.
Olive Garden
The O'Neil Family
Philips & Johnston DBA Rock River
Fabrication
Preferred Concrete Construction Inc.
Swift Printing
Theatrics
The Van Portfleet Family
VanHaren Electric Inc.
Viking Products, Inc.
Williams Group

Silver Level Sponsors (\$500)

Beene Garter LLP
BetterLife Unlimited
Flexchecks
Fr. Michael Danner
Kohl's
R2 Technology
Ridgeview Industries
Spectrum Cubic Inc.
Timothy and Cynthia Smith

Bronze Level Sponsors (\$250)

Aquinas College
Apex Spring and Stamping

From the Campus Minister:

Dear Catholic Central Family,

It was wonderful to talk to so many of you during conferences.

We celebrated our Thanksgiving Mass the Tuesday of Conference Week. We collected clothing for the Cathedral Outreach Center and non-perishable food items for the Downtown Churches' Food Pantry. Our celebrant for this Mass was Fr. Steve Cron, the Rector of the Cathedral.

On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving we hosted a Memorial Service for Saron Jenkins of the Class of 2007 who died on October 25. Although many graduates were able to attend the funeral, still others were unable to come home from college. The Service was at the Cathedral at 8 p.m. and was wonderfully well attended. Saron's mother and family were there, and it was a great testament to Saron and the closeness of the Class of 2007.

We will begin Christmas families during the first week of December. Mrs. Mary Hanks, Mrs. Jeanine Gasper and Student Congress are coordinating Christmas Families this year. Every 5th Hour class will receive information about a family that has been screened by the Cathedral of St. Andrew. Most are members from the parish, many are Hispanic, some have not lived in the area for very long. The need is great and we need your help. Most of you probably met your student's 5th hour teacher, so you will be familiar with the person coordinating your student's Christmas Family. We will be delivering on the morning of December 21, after Mass, and we must have adult drivers for every family. This activity is one of Catholic Central's most beloved traditions.

On December we will have an All-School Reconciliation Service in the Cathedral. The focus of the Prayer Service will be preparation for Advent Reconciliation. This will include an Examination of Conscience, some Scripture readings, some music and some time to reflect. The following day, December 6, students will be given the opportunity, during their Religion class time, to meet with a priest and receive absolution. This will be happening throughout the day. We hope to have 8 to 10 priests available for students.

We will have two more All-School Masses before the New Year. On December 12 we will commemorate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with a combined English/Spanish language Mass. We have many Hispanic students and the majority of our foreign language students study Spanish, so when the Immaculate Conception falls on a week-end we can celebrate in a multi-cultural way. On December 21 we will gather for our traditional Advent/Christmas Mass which precedes the delivery of Christmas Families.

On October 23, Mary Koss and Fr. Steve Cron and I trained 25 new Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. This training is designed for high school students and emphasizes Eucharistic theology and the History of the Eucharist as well as the rubrics of distribution of the Sacred Body and Blood. Students can still Eucharistic Minister at our school liturgies if they have been trained in their Parish for this ministry. We do ask for a phone call or note from someone at the Parish notifying of the training.

Many of our students are signing up for all the service opportunities this season. They still seem to find time to meet the needs of others although we all know they too are living very busy lives. God bless them!

The Liturgy Planning Team and Dennis Rybicki are looking forward to planning a fun week for Catholic Schools Week at the end of January. It is always fun to celebrate who we are after we have gone through the stress of exams.

God bless you and your families during this Advent season. Liturgically, it is a season of waiting and preparing. I hope you can make the time to prepare spiritually and take advantage of all the wonderful readings and activities throughout this season. Many parishes have evening services during the week, some families try to have a prayer time every evening around an Advent wreath. Find some time together. Please keep those who are lonely, sick, and mourning in your prayers. I will remember all of you in my Advent and Christmas prayers. Thank you again for your children and all you give and do for our school.

We Care News

WE CARE provides safe social experiences for the students of CC and encourages networking between parents. Experience has taught us that when parents know each other, kids are safer. Plus, the parents have fun too.

This invites you to help support the activities of WE CARE so that it most represents all of the parents that form it.

WE CARE formed in the early 1980's and has supported many different activities since that time. We respond to the changing needs of families and students. Direct participation in the WE CARE activities has always been strong, as evidenced by the large number of parents that return the volunteer forms that are included in your packets each August.

It has been the tradition of WE CARE to have a senior's parent as the chair of WE CARE's steering committee and a parent representative from each class (usually one parent volunteers, but all are welcome). We also have event chairs. Examples of event chairs are Kathy and Larry Nienhaus for this year's Parent Speaker Series and Mary Ackert and Wendy Powell for the organization of the events/food for juniors and seniors at the CAT after football games this past fall.

The steering committee of WE CARE is in the planning process for the 2008-09 school year and are currently inviting you to consider taking a leadership role in the WE CARE, whether on the steering committee or as a chair for an event.

Please consider areas where you have previously volunteered, or would like to become involved, to determine if you might help create safe social situations for our kids into the upcoming year. If you are interested in becoming more involved in a leadership capacity, please let us know, either at wecare@grcss.org or call Colleen Boland 942-9465.

Other WE CARE NEWS

Our second presentation in the Parent Speaker's Series featured Mark Thomson, Executive Director and Chris May, Clinical Director, Discovery Program, from **St. John's Home**. From unparalleled performance in residential treatment to a truly revolutionary adolescent drug and alcohol program, St. John's leads the way in creating high achievement programs that children and teens genuinely enjoy. <http://www.stjohnshome.org/>

The session was very well received and generated a great deal of discussion. Mark and Chris provided participants with information regarding signs of substance abuse, risk factors that may cause abuse, and a list of bad ideas for parents (see summary below).

There may be many things that will cause teens to use alcohol and drugs. Once the teen turns to using alcohol and drugs, the substance use becomes the **primary problem, replacing** the problem that originally caused the substance use in the first place.

In addition, parents need to **trust their instincts** with respect to their kids. Although teen age years are often times of emotional changes, that not all emotional changes are normal. And if the story your teen tells you does not add up, it does not add up. Substance abuse does not go away by ignoring it. It also exacerbates existing problems.

Mark and Chris encouraged parents who think there **may** be problems not to delay in seeking help. If your child is experiencing behavioral problems, assessing the use of substances must be included to determine the appropriate course of action.

Watch for more information on the final speaker of this series is scheduled for mid March. The speaker will be identified in the next newsletter. The topic will address teenage stress, anxiety and depression – recognizing warning signs and coping skills.

Regards,
Colleen Boland, Chair ~ WE CARE

We Care News Cont.

Second Best Dress Sale

We Care is sponsoring at "Second Best Dress Sale" on Saturday, January 12 in the CC Gym. Semiformal dresses and accessories including shoes will be sold on a consignment basis with We Care receiving 25% of the price of items. Funds will be used to sponsor We Care events throughout the school year. We will collect items for sale on Friday evening, January 11 and open the Gym from 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. on Saturday for shopping. We hope this gives our girls an opportunity to 'sell' some of their items as well as shop for Sno-Shuffle and Prom. Students from area high schools are encouraged to come and shop too! Anyone interested in helping, please call Laurie Daum at 954-1776.

Thanks

We Care would like to thank Mary Ackert and Wendy Powell for all their hard work concerning CAT parties. Without you they could not have happened. Also, many thanks to the parents who assisted the committee in providing a safe hang-out at the CAT for our CC juniors and seniors after each evening football game. Your assistance came in many forms—cash, food and drinks—and even chaperoning.

We would also like to thank Kathy and Larry Nienhaus for bringing in guest speakers to talk to our parents on important issues facing our teens in today's society.

Lastly, thank you to all parents who volunteered in one capacity or another to make the Homecoming Dance a huge success (valet parking, coat check, supplying/serving refreshments, etc).

Blue & White Newspaper

A tribute to deceased graduate, Saron Jenkins ('07), the dangers of driving as a teenager, advice on how to get the most from a concert experience, and tips on how to beat stress: these were just four of the articles featured in our 16-page November issue of The Blue & White, which was distributed on the 15th.

If you paid for home delivery but did not receive your copy, or if you would still like to order a home subscription, please e-mail the Blue & White staff at maryburns@gcss.org.

Additionally, please consider The Blue & White for your advertising needs. Our paper will put your business name directly into the hands of Catholic Central students, families and alumni.



Holiday Gift Ideas:

Happy Holidays from the Cougar Den! Can't figure out what to get your student or CC fan for Christmas? How about CC Spirit wear. We carry many items for your discerning Cougar. We have Blankets, Fleece Jackets & Vests, Hooded Sweatshirts, Crewneck Sweatshirts, T-Shirts, Baseball Hats, Golf Umbrellas, Youth Sweatshirts & T-Shirts. Cougar Den hours are M-F 7:30-3:00, it is located outside the Guidance Office - see Lauri in the Guidance Office or Tricia in the Main Office.

Junior Parents:

Save the Date!!

Junior Parent Party

Saturday, February 9, 2008 at Tavern on Kraft



Look for invitation in January. If you have questions or would like to help contact Randi Wilson at 682-9218 or Randi5kids@aol.com.