



CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

School Newsletter

School Newsletter
October-November 2008

From the Principal's Desk:

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Thank you for your support in getting this school year off to a great start! Your attendance and participation in our "back to school events" was outstanding and shows the commitment you have made to your student's education.

The months of October and November are packed with school events and activities that are all a part of the plan to educate our students in spirit, mind, and body.

The All A's Walk (October 1st) gives students the chance to work together to raise funds for tuition assistance that aids 25% of our student body and helps keep tuition costs down for all of our families.

On October 6th all CC students will have the opportunity to grow in their faith through a variety of retreat or service experiences. These spiritual growth opportunities are planned out at each grade level to help students reflect on their relationship with Jesus Christ and how they are living out that faith in their own lives.

On October 15th all 9th - 11th grade students are given standardized tests that are part of a testing program that helps us assess the academic growth of our students and how we compare to other high school students around the United States.

National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists:

- Killian Burns, Lisa Daum, Madalyn Esch, Kevin Greene, Norm Pelak, Josh Underhill, Andrew Whalen, Jordan Yondo

Commended Scholars:

- Ogechi Aririguzo, Jordan Milanowski, Hong An Nguyen, Shelby Norman, Olivia Swailes

We also use the results of the testing to assess our school's areas of strength and weakness. By department these scores are analyzed and evaluated. The aggregate scores of our students help us determine if there are gaps in our curriculum, or if teaching methods need to be changed to help our students learn the material more efficiently.

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
Todd Kolster, Athletic Director
Kathryn Walsh, Campus Minister
Mary Ottenwess, Technology Director

From the Principal

As you have seen on the calendar we have moved **parent-teacher conferences** up to **mid-October (15th and 16th)**. The change was made to give parents an opportunity to meet with teachers earlier in the school year. This will allow parents to work together with the teaching staff to identify concerns and to collaborate on ways to correct areas that need improvement. Please remember that you do not have to wait until conferences to connect with the teachers. Infinite Campus provides you with the opportunity to check your student's grades at your convenience and to communicate with teachers any questions or concerns.

On Saturday **October 18th** we are trying something new. The **CC Preview Day** is an "open house" for all prospective students and their parents. It is an opportunity for us to showcase the newly improved campus and to provide prospective students and parents the chance to explore the many great things that are happening at Catholic Central High School. You can help by talking to prospective families in your neighborhood and parish about attending this event. The event will be focused on students from 5th through 8th grades in our community. You are all invited to attend as well.

Last spring parents were given the opportunity to take a School Satisfaction Survey through Sure Vista Solutions. We appreciate those of you who took the time to respond to the survey and to give us feedback. The results are being used to give feedback to individual departments, help us write the goals for the 2008-2009 management plan and also to help us develop strategies to market our school. What follows is a synopsis of the results of the survey.

Satisfaction by Dimension

Academic	88%	Technology	76%
Spiritual	81%	Facilities	76%
Social	72%	Transportation	60%
Social Atmosphere	75%	Administration	80%
Fitness	67%	Central Office	77%
Athletics	61%	Safety	80%
Teachers	79%		
Extra Curricular	79%	Overall Satisfaction	85%

(Satisfaction is determined by a survey rating of a 7 or higher on a scale of 1-10)

Each of the dimensions listed above were broken down into more specific components and the anecdotal comments on school improvement from you were also very helpful in giving us feedback and constructive criticism. Sure Vista Solutions, who facilitate these types of surveys for schools across the country, said that we should be very pleased with these results. The results validate the many positive things that are happening in our school and also give us the opportunity to evaluate areas that need improvement.

So that we can receive formal feedback from you on a regular basis it is our plan to conduct this survey on an annual basis.

Thanks again for your continued support of the many aspects that make Catholic Central High School one of the best!

Steve Passinault

From the Assistant Principal

Dear Parents,

This past spring the Thomas B. Fordham Institute published a report on Catholic education entitled: "Who will Save America's Urban Catholic Schools?" The opening line of the executive summary declares that American urban Catholic schools are in crisis. The authors claim that over 1300 schools have closed since 1990, displacing over 300,000 students at a cost to taxpayers of \$20 billion dollars. The opening paragraph ends with several questions: "Is this a crisis worth addressing?" "Should church leaders, parishoners, philanthropists and/or public policymakers reverse these trends?" "Should they try?"

On Sept. 23rd. and Oct. 4th. Bishop Hurley and the Diocese of Grand Rapids will celebrate the Dedication/Grand Opening of the Cathedral Square project. A project committed to maintaining a Catholic presence in Grand Rapids for the next century and beyond. It also represents an affirmative response to the above questions. "Yes" the Diocese is addressing the critical issues facing the Catholic education; "Yes", the trends should be reversed; "Yes", we should all try.

The Fordham report makes the argument that much would be lost if Catholic education ceased to exist. Inevitably, such reports make us think locally: What would be lost if Catholic Central ceased to exist in Grand Rapids? In answering the question we find our value and it is surprising to know the reach of Catholic Central within Grand Rapids and beyond.

First and foremost, Grand Rapids would lose a unique way of educating students. Ours is a unique and vitally important mission which is to provide a four year college preparatory education and to provide such in the context of the Church's overall mission---to educate, train, and inspire students to seek Truth, serve others (ad extra) and to serve the Church (ad ecclesiam). While other schools provide sound academic programs, only Catholic Central's is based on a Catholic intellectual tradition thousands of years old: a transformative and integrative way of instructing students. For over 100 years Catholic Central has not only helped students discover "Truth" through a liberal arts education, but has also prepared them for the challenges they will face as professionals, spouses, parents, and neighbors.

As such, Catholic Central has been identified as Grand Rapids most accomplished developer of leaders. Our graduates found businesses that contribute to the local economy; they serve in and are helping to revitalize Grand Rapids via the burgeoning health care industry as health care providers and administrators; they promote social justice as Church leaders, lawyers, social service providers; as educators much of the history of Grand Rapids that we teach was made by people we taught.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II confirmed this unique way of educating when he noted: "It is the honor and responsibility of a Catholic [school] to consecrate itself without reserve to the cause of truth....a Catholic [school] is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God...it is completely dedicated to the research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with the supreme Truth, who is God." Because of the integrative nature of Catholicism, our methods of instruction and hermeneutical investigations incorporate literary analysis, philosophical and historical criticism, sociopolitical and cultural studies, and the disciplined integration of the critical reason used in the sciences with our faith. No other system of schooling in Grand Rapids can do this.

Because of the great value that Catholic Central brings to Grand Rapids and the importance of Catholic education in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, our urban Catholic Central High School is in a vibrant and growing Cathedral Square community. Thank you for your continued support.

From the Assistant Principal

CC Preview

On Oct. 18th. Catholic Central High School will be hosting CC Preview, an open house type event for parents and students thinking about and planning for high school. This Sat. afternoon event will give families in the Grand Rapids area a chance to see our beautiful campus and learn about our unique Catholic way of education. Please pass this information on to friends who are looking for a different and Catholic high school experience. The event will run from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Parking

Staff and students have settled into parking at school. Between the two student parking lots and Goodrich there is sufficient parking for all who drive, plus a few spaces for visitors.

I would ask those dropping off and picking up students to please avoid parking in the lot across from St. Andrew Elementary. That lot is for staff and serves as the pick up and drop off site for the school.

Maple and LaGrave may provide safe room for drop off and pick up.

Campus Security

In the next couple of weeks we will run a several drills: Fire and Critical Incident drills. Oct. is fire prevention month which means the Grand Rapids Fire Dept. will also conduct a drill.

Our campus security plans developed in conjunction with GRPD, GRFD, and Lack's Industry Security experts, meets city, state, and federal government standards for the protection of staff and students. While no plan is fool proof ours is fully implemented by staff and rehearsed. Additionally, GRPD and GRFD continue to make us a priority as needed.

Student Activities Update

Greetings from Student Activities!

I have been busy trying to keep your students active and apprised of all the activities going on. October promises to be just as busy:

Monday, October 6th is our Retreat Day which includes:

Freshman First Day - This allows your freshman to get to know each other and start unifying as a class. This religious retreat is run by senior volunteers and the Religion Department right here at CC.

Sophomore Community Day - This builds on the foundation of Freshman First Day to continue unifying the class. Part of the religious retreat program, these small groups sessions are supervised by the Peer Ministers.

Junior Experience - The junior class is encouraged to cross boundaries and work with each other in team building exercises. They do so in a setting that allows each of them to appreciate the gifts and talents God has blessed us with.

All A's Walk will take place on **Wednesday, October 1st**. This student fundraiser helps fellow students attend CC. Please encourage your student to donate to this worthy cause through can collections, babysitting, mowing lawns, etc. and donating their earnings to the All A's fundraiser or through sponsors.

Freshman Elections will take place on **Tuesday, October 14**. Any freshman interested in representing their class on student congress will have a chance to speak to their classmates. Voting will follow the next day.

If your student missed Club Sign-ups during the second week of school and would still like to join, have them drop by room 510 and I will be happy to direct them to the right sponsor!

Jeanine Gasper

From the Guidance Office

Catholic Central's annual Testing Day will take place on Wednesday, October 15. Students should come prepared for testing; they will need No. 2 pencils, their Social Security numbers and their calculators. The cost of these tests is included in tuition; Catholic Central students will not be charged any additional fee. Dismissal will be at noon for Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors. Seniors are strongly encouraged to use this day to visit a college campus.

The **Freshmen** class will be taking the EXPLORE test – with subtests in Reading, English, Mathematics and Science Reasoning. Individual results are an important factor in appropriate placement of students into sophomore classes, and the class results will be helpful to teachers planning curriculum improvements. Scoring on the EXPLORE test is linked with the sophomore PLAN test, and the ACT college admissions test.

Our standardized test for **Sophomores** is the PLAN – a test designed to mirror the ACT Assessment taken for college admissions. The scores are primarily used as a career and educational counseling tool. In addition to test sections in English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning, students respond to some career interest questions and will receive career information along with their scores.

Juniors will take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), which gives them an opportunity to experience the testing format and questions of the SAT. The PSAT is also a scholarship exam (NMSQT); The National Merit Corporation will use these scores to identify National Merit semifinalists next fall.

As in past years, we will offer the opportunity to a limited group of sophomores to take the PSAT on the testing day. **In order for us to obtain accurate school-wide data, these sophomores will also be required to take the PLAN test, which will given again for them on Saturday, October 25.** In other words, they may take the PSAT in addition to, not instead of, the PLAN.

We recommend the PSAT for sophomores who may be potential candidates in the National Merit competition as juniors; that is, if they are a student whose test scores would place them in the **top percent (99th percentile) of students nationally**. The counselors will explain this option to the sophomores when they visit classrooms during October, prior to Testing Day. Sophomores who typically score above the 90th percentile on standardized tests and who are in honors level courses in both English and Math may want to consider taking the PSAT. While they would not be eligible for the scholarship competition this year, the test would serve as a practice for when they take it again during their junior year. The PSAT is designed for students who are juniors, so sophomores would feel prepared for this test if they are advanced in their math curriculum, and are very strong in reading comprehension and vocabulary skills.

In order for a sophomore to take the PSAT, they need to see their guidance counselor by October 3rd for pre-approval; they must also have an authorization form signed by a parent, and they must agree to come to school on October 25 to take the PLAN.

Seniors are encouraged to complete their college applications as early as possible this fall. They will receive optimal consideration in the admissions process and for scholarship opportunities. Information and reminders for seniors are communicated at PrepHQ (go to www.grcatholiccentral.com/GRCS/CCHS/Academics website links) and in the Daily Announcements.

Parent Programs- Don't forget to mark your calendars and attend informative workshops hosted by the Guidance Department.

Monday, 9/29 – Study Strategies w/ Wendy Marty, Academic Coach

Monday, 10/27 – Career Cruising w/ Brandy Lovelady Mitchell, KISD

Wednesday, 12/10 – Financial Aid w/ Dave Steffee, Aquinas College

We Care News

We Care would like to thank Kellie Koncki, a senior prosecutor with Kent County, and GRPD Undercover Detective Maureen O'Brien for their valuable information on September 12th. The information they shared was on teenage drinking and substance abuse. Kellie also commented on other areas she has had to deal with juveniles in our court system.

For those of you that could not make it, here are some of her suggestions. Watch your child's time at the mall. Unless they are there to work or buy something, the number one crime she sees with teens is shoplifting.

Monitor your kids on "My Space" or "Facebook. Get their login and passwords. She finds pictures of teens with drugs or alcohol on these websites, and they are evidence of a crime she has to prosecute.

Talk to your kids about drugs and alcohol. Give them an excuse to say no. Have them blame the parent such as, "my dad smells my breath every time I come home". Discourage sleepovers. This is quite often when problems occur.

Get to know your child's friends, and their parents. This way you can call them up and ask them about your child's upcoming visit without feeling self-conscious. We Care agrees that when parents know each other, our kids are safer. Look for up coming news on each class' party. These are a great way to get to know other parents.

Detective O'Brien brought examples of common drugs and explained signs and symptoms of usage. It was also mentioned that prescription drugs should be locked up, as they are the most abused and most accessible drugs.

We Care invites all parents to the second in our series of informational speakers. On November 12th, at 7 pm in the school cafeteria, Fr. Mark David Janus and Dr. Carolyn King from Pine Rest will speak on the topic of teenage depression and suicide. Please join us for this very serious problem facing our kids today.

Music Department News

The Catholic Central Choral Department has been very busy this fall! The Concert Choir provided the powerful choral backing for the events surrounding the opening of Cathedral Square. In addition, the Capella Choir is performing consistently in the Cathedral and at venues throughout the community. Here are a couple of important announcements regarding our fall season:

- Our Autumn Concert is scheduled for Sunday, October 26 at 3:00pm in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew. All are welcome. There is no charge for this concert.
- The 14th Annual Madrigal Dinner (A dinner theater set in the Renaissance period) is scheduled for December 5, 6 and 7 at Aquinas College. Tickets go on sale November 1 and will be available through the Main Office.
- There is a change of date for the Christmas Concert. The Christmas Concert (which includes the choral and instrumental ensembles) is scheduled now for **December 17** at 7:00pm in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew.

The Cougar Marching Band is having a great season performing their Fall 2008 Show entitled "For the Birds". The Colorguard (flagline) won 1st place in the Auxillary caption at the Rockford Invitational on Saturday, September 20. The band will also be competing at Marching Invitationals on October 11 and 18 and participate in the MSBOA District Festival on October 14th. Look for the band at our remaining home football games as well!



Save the Date:

Attention Class of 2010 parents—Junior Parent Party on Saturday, January 31, 2009. Further details forthcoming.

Athletics

Winter Sports registration will take place in the cafeteria during lunch periods on Thursday, October 23rd. Any student intending to participate must have a **Physical Exam** on file in the athletic office, **taken and dated since April 15, 2008**. A list of students with approved physicals is posted at the Attendance Office. This is a State rule, not negotiable. Exams are available, for a fee, at various medical stations around Grand Rapids. Students may not tryout or practice without a completed physical examination. Forms are available at school and on the school website.

The **22nd Annual Booster Club Golf Outing** was another successful event. On September 8th approximately 260 "golfers" enjoyed great fellowship at The Mines and The Elks golf courses. The Outback Steakhouse on Alpine, north of I-96, donated an excellent meal for all attendees. Show them our appreciation by having dinner at their great steakhouse restaurant. We have a superb committee working hard from April to September to organize and run the Cougar Open:

Tom Madison	Larry Larsen	Jerry Rohen	Joe Tierney
Kevin Polakovich	Joe Malewitz	Mike Braun	Mike Kathmann
Fred Braun	Jeff Rohen	Kevin Sullivan	Bob Polakovich
Pat Geary	Greg Lauria	Mike Lauria	Gretchen Tierney
Joe Zupancic	Aaron Rohen		

Please thank these people when you see them, and support their projects. The Booster Club projects provide over \$50,000 each year to Catholic Central student programs.

*The Athletic Code is established to improve opportunities to achieve personal and team goals. **The code applies at all times in all places. It does not matter if you are "in-season" or "out-of-season"**. ****Athletic Uniforms** are not to be worn other than during a contest unless approved by the Athletic Director.** Wearing athletic uniforms in the bleachers, at dances, other contests, etc. is prohibited. This policy prevents damage, theft, etc. of our team uniforms.*

Is there a problem? Part of our educational mission is to instill in our students the confidence to approach a coach and discuss an athletic concern. This should be the very first communication step. The dialogue between coach and student is the optimal solution format because they have spent so much time together and should be able to reach an understanding based on facts. A situation may arise where you are concerned about a team policy or action involving your student's team. Please contact the coach directly as a first step in establishing facts. Discussions with the coach should be in private, away from others, and involve only your child. If you are not satisfied with the results of this discussion, please contact Todd Kolster, the Athletic Director, at 233-5898.

Catholic Central Drama and Catholic Secondary Schools
Present

M*A*S*H



October 16 & 18 7:30pm
October 18 & 19 3:00pm

Performing Arts Center at Aquinas College

Tickets: \$6 Call: 456-6656

From the Campus Minister:

Dear Catholic Central Family,

The Class of 2009 chose **Bring on the Storm** as their COREX theme. This inspiring theme told of this year's wish to be strong enough to weather anything together and they proved that they were up to it. They had an outstanding weekend in all ways—from weather (no storms on the beach!) to participation. Bishop Hurley said the Saturday evening Mass and helped to set an amazing enthusiasm that lasted throughout the three days and continues to be seen in the Class of 2009.

The Opening School Mass was a combination of welcoming and blessing as we began this school year with each class, through their class president, explaining their goals for the year and lighting their class candle. After Mass, the seniors showed their spirit by sharing their Memories of Corex and showing their enthusiasm for their class song. Mr. Steve Passinault encouraged the seniors to continue to develop their leadership and to take their place as the leaders of the school.

Volunteering has gone into high gear, as many organizations begin their fall and winter programming. H.O.P.E. Volunteers had more than two hundred students come to the first meeting of the year. Students are signing up for activities and making commitments for many needs in our community. Last school year, our students once again documented incredible service hours, 30,090. This spring, the President's Student Service Challenge honored 68 students who earned the Bronze Award for more than 100 documented hours of community service, 16 students who earned the Silver Award for more than 175 documented hours and 18 students who earned the Gold Award for more than 250 hours of documented service! To qualify for endorsement, freshmen **must attain and document 20 hours** (*no more than 10 hours to home or school*), **sophomores must attain and document 30 hours** (*no more than 10 hours to home and school*), **juniors and seniors must attain and document 40 hours** (*no more than 10 hours to home or school*). The endorsement gives the actual number of hours the student has documented. Endorsements are made yearly and hours are counted from June 1 to May 30 of the present school year. We also keep all service forms until after a student graduates so it is a valuable record for each student. We will continue to provide service opportunities for students. Our goal is to have all students participate in some kind of service during the school year. I think we do a pretty good job, if you include the all-school activities during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Lent.

October 6th will be full of retreats, with freshmen, sophomores, and half of the juniors each having their community building retreats on this day. The other half of the juniors will have a mini retreat at Cathedral Square and the seniors will be doing service and community outreach. More on that in next newsletter and I'll let you know how the day went.

Thank you again for your commitment and presence in our school.

God Bless, Kathie Walsh

H.O.P.E.

H.O.P.E. would like to thank everyone who donated to our back-to-school supply drive for the YWCA Domestic Crisis Center. Your generosity was overwhelming! If you have any questions about H.O.P.E. or the volunteer program—please contact Kris DeYoung at krisdeyoung@grcss.org.

Students! Parents! Grandparents! All Are Welcome!

Eucharistic Adoration at CC. Our CC chapel is open everyday for students and staff. But on Mondays and Fridays the Eucharist is exposed from 8 am to 2 pm. This is a powerful witness of our Catholic faith and it is made possible by 20 parents and youth ministers who have committed to an adoration time. Please join us and call Barb at 245-4959 to set up your time to pray. Our commitment as Eucharistic adorers is to give glory and praise to Our Lord Jesus Christ as we lift in prayer the students, staff and ft in prayer the students, staff and families of the CCHS Community.

**CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS
CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
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