The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012 is “Catholic Schools: Faith. Academics. Service.” The theme expresses three priorities that make Catholic schools stand out from other educational institutions. Our children learn about faith – not just basic Christianity, but how to have a relationship with God. They concentrate on academics, which in Catholic schools are held to the highest standards, so they can reach their highest potential. They practice service – giving time, talent and effort to help others – as an expression of both faith and good citizenship. This combined focus on faith, academics and service prepares students for full and meaningful lives. During Catholic Schools Week, most of our schools will have local celebrations and activities. Representatives of all the schools will come together on Wednesday, February 1, 2012 for a Catholic Schools Week Mass to be celebrated by Most Rev. Christopher J. Coyne, SLD. Bishop Coyne is the Apostolic Administrator of the archdiocese.

In this issue of The Good Word for Catholic Schools Week, we highlight a new Catholic school marketing campaign: “Catholic Schools: the Good News”. We provide information to families who may be able to take advantage of the new school choice initiatives of the State of Indiana including school vouchers and tax credit scholarships. Also, read the words of Dr. Tony Bennett, former Catholic educator, now State Superintendent of Public Instruction, about the meaning of true school choice in Indiana. Learn about our newly honored Four Star Schools and take a look at our impressive Senior Profile for the Class of 2011.
National Catholic Youth Conference 2011

Indy by the Numbers

Days: 3 (November 17-19-2011)
Participants: 20,915 (15,287 Youth and 5,628 Adults)
Clergy: 250 priests and 30 bishops
Groups/States: 170 groups representing 45 States
Local Committees: 75 (local Steering Committee and sub-committees)
Volunteers: 650 including: 76 priests from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Diocese of Lafayette, Diocese of Evansville, and additional priests from around the country who signed up to assist with Confessions and Mass; 166 seminarians representing St. Meinrad and Bishop Simon Brute’ Seminaries
Archdiocesan: 1,171 attendees representing 61 parishes/schools including: 17 groups (237 people) who commuted each day and 44 groups (934 people) who stayed at the JW Marriott in 172 rooms
Youth Workshops: 132 including 20 mega-workshops offered during 5 time slots over 2 days
Parent Workshops: 32 with 3,000 attendees and 2,100 attending other adult sessions
General sessions: 4 held in Lucas Oil Stadium including the Closing Mass Saturday
Youth Animators: 106 with 19 representing the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Masses Celebrated: 1 archdiocesan mass, 9 regional masses, 2 daily masses and the closing mass
Closing Mass at Lucas Oil: attended by 24,000, including 8 bishops, 250 priests, 30 deacons, and 175 seminarians
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 6,000-7,000 over 2 days with 100 priests hearing Confessions at one point in time
Exhibit: 205 representing 53 religious orders, catholic artists, colleges and universities, charities, ministries, businesses and other organizations
Performances: 32 by various artists at Joe’s Place Coffee House in the Thematic Park
Service Projects: 10 completed during conference: 25,000 cookies baked and packaged for area prisons; 260+ “pillowcase” dresses with 100 matching drawstring purses for Haiti; 15 pallets (24,000 lbs.) of non-perishable food collected and donated; 500 “Foster the Love” duffel bags made and filled for youth in transition; 400 Christmas Cards written to service men and women; 1,200 books collected for libraries/organizations devastated by flooding; 36 scarves knitted for local homeless shelters; $7,000 collected for “Fountains of Hope” water purification in Haiti, 5 Called to Glory icons made in the Creative Corner and given to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Archbishop Buechlein, Bishop Coyne, and NFCYM; and, 1,000 wooden plaques inscribed with prayer intentions to be displayed at Maryknoll in New York City

“I was inspired by the youth and their faith, which also helps me to evaluate my own faith life and how enthusiastic I am. The Church is in good hands and hearts with our youth and they will continue to lead us in our faith through the century.”
- Mary Jo Thomas Day Volunteer

Our Education Bishop

This year’s Celebrating Catholic School Values event honored Archbishop Emeritus, Daniel M. Buechlein, OSB for his 19 years as our “Education Archbishop.” After suffering a stroke Archbishop Daniel began disability retirement with a farewell at the Catholic Center on September 21, 2011. During his time as our spiritual leader, extraordinary progress was made in many areas and the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis became a national model of all that is good about Catholic Education. A special video highlighting Catholic education in the archdiocese during his years was made for the CCSV event and is now available online at www.archindy.org/ccsv. DVD copies can also be ordered from the Office of Catholic Education at 236-1430, (800)382-9836, ext. 1430 or indyoe@archindy.org.

Golf Fore Faith Third Annual Outing!

The Office of Catholic Education is thrilled to be hosting the “Golf Fore Faith” outing for the third year at Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel on Monday, May 14, 2012. Proceeds support the A Promise to Keep Program.

Any opportunity to play Crooked Stick is always unique, but especially this year as Crooked Stick is the home of the 2012 BMW Championship! Imagine playing the course that will host the top 70 players in the world in September 2012! The Golf Fore Faith outing will provide players the opportunity to compete for prizes and awards like “Closest to the Pin” and “Longest Drive” on selected holes. In anticipation of the 2012 BMW Championship, players will compete for a 2 year lease on a BMW for the first “Hole in One” on a specific selected par three. And as we did last year, there will be the chance to compete for some nice cash prizes for the first “Hole in One” on other selected par three holes!

Whether you want to play golf or take advantage of an opportunity to advertise your business in the form of sponsorship, we have developed several levels of participation. Sponsorship in this outing will provide your organization with name recognition at CSGC and to the individuals participating in the outing. Based upon the past two years, we can assure you this outing will be “second to none!” We know there are many organizations that desire your support, so be assured that we appreciate any consideration you can give to the Golf Fore Faith outing!

Contact Margaret Hendricks, event chairperson, at 317.441.8956 or mhendricks@archindy.org. Information and registration is also available on line at: www.archindy.org/golfforefaith.
★★ Four New Catholic Four Star Schools ★★

On December 22, 2012, Dr. Tony Bennett and the Indiana Department of Education announced Indiana schools that had achieved Four Star status for the 2010-2011 school years. Both nonpublic and public schools are eligible for Four Star status. Nonpublic school students had to score in the top quartile for all grades levels that participated in the state’s standardized testing.

“We are very pleased with these results in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis,” said Ron Costello, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, “...because in many cases it means that the students receiving the 3 or above will receive college credit for taking these AP courses in our Catholic high schools. I truly want to commend the students and staff that have made these results possible.”

Archdiocese of Indianapolis Schools on AP District Honor Roll

Catholic high schools in the archdiocese have been placed on the College Board’s Second Annual AP® District Honor Roll for significant gains in Advanced Placement® student performance. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis as a school system is one of fewer than 400 school systems in the nation being honored by the College Board with a place on their AP® Honor Roll. The honor was earned for simultaneously increasing access to Advanced Placement coursework while maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP exams. Achieving both of these goals is the ideal scenario for a system’s Advanced Placement program, because it indicates that the school system is successfully identifying motivated, academically-prepared students who are likely to benefit most from AP coursework. Since 2009, schools in the system increased the number of students participating in AP from 1122 to 1388, while improving the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher from 64 percent in 2009 to 65 percent in 2011. The Indiana 2009-10 state average was 12.2 percent with scores of 3 or higher. The majority of U.S. colleges and universities grant college credit or advanced placement for a score of 3 or above on AP exams.

One in Christ Helps Expand Opportunities for Preparation for Holy Matrimony

As we continue to review and expand our offerings for preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the archdiocese, the Office of Catholic Education has started working with a new, solidly Catholic marriage preparation program called One in Christ. It was piloted at Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis through the efforts of coordinators Mark and Michelle Overholt and Sr. Diane Carollo, director of the archdiocesan Office for pro-Life Ministry. The goal of One in Christ is “…not just to present information on marriage, but rather to help couples see the what, why and how of the Church’s teaching in relation to marriage. That is why we begin with the basic catechesis on the Catholic Faith and interweave it throughout the seminar.” With the help of the One in Christ volunteer presenters, the program will be offering five sessions around the Indianapolis area in 2012. For more information, go to www.oicindy.com or contact Peg McEvoy, Associate Director for Evangelization and Family Catechesis at pmcevoy@archindy.org.

Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship and School Vouchers

The Indiana Legislature passed two types of educational choice legislation as part of the comprehensive reform package for education in Indiana in July 2011. Both of these had great impact on our Catholic schools for school year 2011-2012 and should have an even greater impact in future years. The Criterion Catholic Schools Week Supplement published January 27, 2012 has a color center section with information about Indiana School Vouchers and Indiana Tax Credit Scholarships for your information.

Donors for Indiana Tax Credit Scholarships, can claim a 50 percent tax deduction against their corporate or individual state tax liability for their donation through the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust to benefit specific Catholic or other non-public schools. Over $64,000 was raised for this purpose through the annual Celebrating Catholic School Values event in October and individual schools have raised over $130,000 for 2011-12. For information contact www.choicetrust.org or contact Rosemary O’Brien in the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development, robbie@archindy.org.

Voucher Program Ruled Constitutional

In Meredith v. Daniels, Marion County Superior Court Judge Michael Kellee ruled on January 13, 2012 that Indiana's school voucher program is entirely constitutional. In doing so, he rejected all the claims made against the program by school choice opponents, and accepted all the arguments in favor of school choice made by Solicitor General Tom Fisher and Bert Gall from the Institute for Justice. Opponents of school choice in Indiana – backed by the National Education Association – claimed that the voucher program improperly benefited religious schools and violated the Indiana Constitution. All of these claims were rejected by the trial court in a summary judgment. This is a huge victory and it means that the nearly 4,000 low and middle income children in Indiana who are participating in the program can continue to attend a high quality, non-public school using public funds. While we expect opponents of school choice to appeal, the summary judgment in favor of school choice is very strong. The ruling states, "This Court therefore concludes that the degree of religiosity of the participating schools is immaterial to the case at hand..." and that the Choice Scholarship Program "...bestows benefits onto scholarship recipients who may then choose to use the funding for education at a public, secular private, or religious school."
SPRED Retreat: A “Smile-Inducing” Success!

A Smile Says it All – This SPRED Friend participating in our SPRED retreat feels the warmth of God’s love and shares His love with a smile!

On December 10 and 11, 2011 the Archdiocese of Indianapolis SPRED Friends and their catechists enjoyed a wonderful Advent Retreat. A fantastic turnout of 25 Friends and 24 volunteers made this weekend an experience that produced many smiles by God’s grace. Our archdiocesan Young Adult and College Campus Ministry office helped find several new volunteers for this event.

Catechists are already looking forward to our next retreat. One Friend said, “Getting together with our Friends on retreat is like a family reunion.”

SPRED Friends worked together making cookies for local homeless shelters. The Minute-to-Win-It games built unity and facilitated team-building as participants assembled Christmas puzzles, did the “Jingle Bell Shake-Out” and enjoyed some Wrapping-Paper Bowling.

In this retreat, as often happens, the leaders gained as much as or more than our participating Friends. This dynamic reality reminds us that our Special Friends are like angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly. Those who attended were lifted up by the entire experience and although going home physically tired, they felt spiritually renewed. Stay tuned for information about our next retreat — with more smiles to come!

Catechesis in Young Adult Ministry

By God’s grace, the Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry (YACCM) has seen great fruits from its labors in the three years since its launch. One area that has impacted the young adult community has been the growth in opportunities for catechesis.

After a successful retreat this summer that focused on living the authentic, Catholic life and even moreso after a fruitful pilgrimage to World Youth Day – a week filled with catechesis – there has been a great desire in our community for more opportunities to seek the Truth. In response, we have focused some of our efforts on small group catechesis and formation. New Bible/book studies are being formed throughout the city that offer young adults opportunities to learn about various facets of their Faith and to create a greater sense of discipleship and evangelization in our community. Small groups are building discussions around topics like virtue, JPII’s Theology of the Body and our Blessed Mother, just to name a few.

We also continue to focus our efforts on discernment. The first Friday of every month is dedicated to an event we call “First Fridays: Hearing God’s Call”. Speakers come to share the Church’s wisdom on discernment and vocation while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. The night ends with small group discussion and a community meal. For more information on young adult ministry happening in the archdiocese, please contact Matt Faley at mfaley@archindy.org

State Superintendent, Dr. Tony Bennett, Keynotes Celebrating Catholic School Values Event

“Everything I Ever Needed to Know About School Reform, I Learned in Catholic School”

Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Tony Bennett was the keynote speaker for the 16th annual Celebrating Catholic School Values event in October. Dr. Bennett is a product of St. Anthony School and Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville. He began his career as an educator at Providence. His self-proclaimed subtitle for his address was: “Everything I Ever Needed to Know About School Reform, I Learned in Catholic School.” He spoke about Catholic school values and how these have influenced his life and career; especially his recent successes in introducing the most expansive school reform and school choice package in the nation.

When asked why he supported non-public schools, he said, “My public is 1.2 million children. It is not necessarily public schools; it is every child in the State of Indiana who receives an education.” He spoke about three issues and how his Catholic values have influenced him on those issues. First, “…great teachers; great principals matter.” As examples he cited his teachers, Elizabeth Canter at St. Anthony and Ron Velleta at Our Lady of Providence. “…I wish with all my heart I could pay Ron Velleta and Elizabeth Canter what they were worth …and that is what we intend to do in Indiana.” He also recognized former St. Anthony Principal, Sr. Anna Rose Lueken, OSB.

His second issue was how …the demography of a child often determines his or her destiny and how this can be changed through school choice. He cited his experience as a student at St. Anthony where some of the parish children could not attend Catholic school and others had to leave because of family finances. “Through the school choice initiatives in Indiana we have said demography in Indiana will no longer determine destiny and we passed the nation’s most expansive voucher program.”

The third issue was “resolve.” “I can best describe resolve in two words: ‘Bob Larkin’. …Bob Larkin was the principal of Providence High School in the early 70’s when a decision was made that maybe Providence High School should close. Bob Larkin put Providence High School on his back. …Bob Larkin was a paraplegic and walked on crutches. And, he put Providence …on his back and saved Providence High School!”

“…The issue of school vouchers in Indiana is one of resolve. Do not think for a minute that 2013 will not bring a concerted effort to take choice away from our children. We must be prepared to expand opportunities for children!”

For a video or transcript of Dr. Bennett’s remarks, please visit www.archindy.org/ccsv
**TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS**

What are Tax Credit Scholarships?
The Indiana Tax Credit Scholarship Program provides scholarship support to families who want to enroll their children in the private school of their choice. Qualifying students in grades K-12 can receive a minimum of a $500 Tax Credit Scholarship.

Who qualifies for a Tax Credit Scholarship?
- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart on next page), AND
- A student who is entering Kindergarten or 1st grade, AND/OR
- A student who is coming to a private school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school.

Why should I apply now?
If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 13 years. Kindergarten and 1st grade students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for a Tax Credit Scholarship?
1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
2. To apply for funding, visit choicetrust.org/apply.

**INDIANA SCHOOL VOUCHERS**

What is an Indiana School Voucher?
A Voucher is a state-funded scholarship that helps cover the cost of tuition at a private school. Qualifying students in grades 1–8 can receive a maximum of $4,500 per school year. High school students can receive up to 90% of the local per-student state funding amount.

Who qualifies for a Voucher?
- A student whose family meets the income eligibility guidelines for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program (see chart on next page), AND
- A student in grades 2–12 who is coming to a private school after attending at least one year (two semesters) in an Indiana public school, AND/OR
- A current private school student in grades 1–12 who has received a Tax Credit Scholarship in a prior year.

Why should I apply now?
If your family qualifies for assistance, but you do not apply when your child first enters school, you may lose the opportunity for a Voucher or Tax Credit Scholarship for the next 13 years. Kindergarten and 1st grade students CAN receive a Tax Credit Scholarship, making them eligible for a Voucher the following year.

How do I apply for a Voucher?
1. To see how much tuition assistance you are eligible for, first register at your Catholic school of choice.
2. To apply for funding, visit doe.in.gov/schoolchoice.

archindy.org/schools
2011 Senior Class Profile Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Archdiocesan Results

Number of enrolled seniors in August 2010: 1,297
Percentage of 2007 freshmen graduating in 2011: 99.2%

Percentage of seniors receiving scholarships: 59.4%
Total amount of dollars ($) for scholarships received: $79,304,404
Percentage of graduates going to a four year college: 91.4%
Percentage of graduates pursuing post-secondary training: 8.2%
  (e.g. vocational schools, nursing programs, associate degree programs and/or armed forces)

Number of service hours contributed by seniors in the 2009-1010 school year: 54,714
Average number of service hours for each senior in 2009-2010: 42.2
Total service hours contributed by all students in the 2010-2011 school year: 164,251

Number of 2010-2011 National Merit Corporation students recognized: 25
Number of National Merit Semi-Finalists: 13
Number of National Merit Finalists: 18
Number of National Merit Commended students: 30
Number of National Merit Special Scholarships: 8
National Merit Achievement Scholarships: 12

Percentage of Indiana Core 40 graduates: 98.5%
Percentage of Indiana Academic Honors graduates: 53.0%

Financial aid in 2010-2011 given to students in grades 9-12: $9,514,272
Assistance planned for all students in 2011-2012: $7,909,236
Number of students in grades 9-12 receiving financial aid in 2010-2011: 2,166
All students in grades 9-12 receiving financial aid in the 2011-12 school year: 2,219

Number of students who took the SAT: 1,142
SAT Reading mean score: 539
SAT Math mean score: 546
SAT Writing mean score: 528
SAT TOTAL mean score (Math + Reading): 1,085
Total Number of dual high school-college credit courses offered: 50
Total Number students taking dual high school-college credit courses: 506
Total Number of AP coursed offered: 108
Total Number of students taking AP course: 1,325
Percentage of students receiving a 3 or better on AP course tests: 61.4%

* Percentage of seniors graduating will be replaced with Indiana 4 year graduation rate once released by IDOE
The Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Marian University Host Educational Summit

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Marian University hosted a Catholic Education Summit at Marian University November 29-30, 2011. The purpose of this first summit was to bring leadership from the five Catholic dioceses of Indiana together to listen to several presentations regarding our educational ministries and to provide collaboration time on several key issues. Dr. Karen Ristau, President of the National Catholic Educational Association, presented the nine defining characteristics of Catholic education and the importance of maintaining our Catholic identity as we move forward with the educational reform movement in Indiana. Mr. Jon Gubera of the Indiana School Accountability System, presented the new accountability program the state will be using to grade schools next year. Dr. Ron Costello’s presentation summarized the topics by addressing three areas. Accountability, focused on performance and improvement. As Catholic educators in the State of Indiana, our Catholic Identity must be first and foremost in all that we do, but we must follow that with Total Support, development, and enrollment. Going forward, the five dioceses are looking to create a task force to continue to look at ways to collaborate especially in the areas of Catholic Identity and accreditation, professional development for faculty and staff, new funding sources, and marketing. A complete summary of the Educational Summit is available from OCE by emailing indyoe@archindy.org.

Excellence in Catechesis Highlighted

Since 1996, the Office of Catholic Education has presented the Excellence in the Ministry of Catechesis award annually to an outstanding Parish Administrator of Religious Education (PARE). The award was established to recognize and support the significant role of the professional catechetical administrator in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis by affirming the gifts and talents of one specially-selected administrator each year. The Excellence in the Ministry of Catechesis award will be presented at the PARE Spring Celebration on June 5, 2012. The deadline for nominations is March 6, 2012. Please consider nominating a Parish Administrator of Religious Education. For a nomination packet please contact, Director of Catechesis, Ken Ogorek: kogorek@archindy.org.

Archdiocese Well Represented at March for Life

For the second year, Youth Ministry in the Office of Catholic Education organized the archdiocesan March for Life trip. Groups from across the archdiocese showed high interest for the pro-life cause and support for the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. This year, nearly 90 high school youth and their chaperones celebrated Mass on the morning of Saturday, January 21, 2012 and boarded buses to begin their pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. for the 38th annual March for Life on Monday, January 23, 2012. This annual event seeks to reverse the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion-on-demand in the United States.

Following the 13-hour bus ride and a good night’s sleep, the group was able to spend some free time in the downtown DC area visiting museums, monuments and other DC attractions. On Sunday evening, the group attended the “Life is VERY Good” Rally, offered by the Diocese of Arlington. The Rally began with Mass and was followed by a keynote by Chris Stefanick, a concert with Josh Blakesley, Eucharistic Adoration and music by Danielle Rose. Monday morning, the group met up with other groups from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Evansville for Mass. The groups proceeded from Mass to downtown Washington D.C., joining thousands of others from around the country for the March for Life.

Saint Theodora Guerin Excellence in Education Award 2012

The Saint Theodora Excellence in Education Award was created to honor exemplary teachers in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. This year 14 teachers were nominated by principals, pastors and school parents as educators who are examples of excellence in Catholic Education. The award recognizes teachers for the dedication and commitment to the Catholic teaching profession and to the students they serve. These teachers will be honored at the annual Saint Theodora Guerin Excellence in Education luncheon hosted by Bishop Christopher J. Coyne on Thursday, March 1.

Special honorees are Mrs. Rita Parsons and Rev. Todd Reibe. Mrs. Parsons, principal at Holy Spirit School, Indianapolis, was selected by the Office of Catholic Education for her strong academic and spiritual leadership. Father Reibe is being recognized for his strong pastoral leadership of the Seton Catholic Schools in the Catholic Community of Richmond.

2011-2012 Honorees

Vicki Auger, St. Roch, Indianapolis
Mary Briscoe, Holy Family School, New Albany
Stephen Buell, St. Michael School, Indianapolis
Patricia Musgrave, Roncalli High School
Lisa Vogel, St. Mary’s School, North Vernon
Susan Chapman, St. Charles, Bloomington
Lisa Elbracht, St. Patrick School, Terra Haute
Vanessa Hammond, St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
Stacie Hernandez, St. Monica School, Indianapolis
Mary Jaffe, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis
Nancy McGarvey, St. Anthony of Padua School, Clarksville
Tamera Reardon, Pope John XXII School, Madison
Angela Therber, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis

Rita Parson, Principal, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis
Rev. Todd Reibe, Pastor, Seton Catholic Schools, Richmond
One could easily write a book on this year’s Catholic Schools Week theme, “Catholic Schools – Faith. Academics. Service.” But since space will not permit a thorough treatment of each, I would like to share a few thoughts on the one that is sometimes not considered as critical to the Catholic identity of our schools in the same sense as the other two: Service. And yet, the role it plays is absolutely essential to the Catholic identity of our schools. This is seen, for example, in Pope Benedict’s first encyclical where he explains that, “The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity” (Deus Caritas Est, art. 25). Our schools express their vital participation in this responsibility through providing students with many opportunities to serve the poor and needy. To give you some idea of how seriously our schools take this responsibility, last year our archdiocesan Catholic school students completed a whopping 164,251 hours of service! But, it’s not simply the number of service hours completed but the formation in authentic Christian living service learning provides that makes it such an important dimension of the Catholic identity of our schools. Giving students the opportunity to serve the poor, however small or simple the service activity may be, has the potential to light a fire that will burn in their hearts for the rest of their lives. After all, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta wrote, “Maybe if I didn’t pick up that one person, I wouldn’t have picked up forty-two thousand” (Words to Love By, p. 79).

One final thought. Providing students with the opportunity to serve is not only to be praised for its many religious and moral benefits. Secular research studies of service-learning, broadly defined as an educational method that intentionally connects community service, tutoring, working on environmental issues, distributing food to the poor, etc.; have rather consistently demonstrated that service programs have a positive impact on youth in three general areas: academic engagement and achievement, civic attitudes and behavior; social and personal skills (cf., www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/slresearchreview.pdf).

So let’s take some time during Catholic Schools Week and throughout the year to celebrate this fundamental pillar of Catholic school identity along with the other two — academics and, of course, faith — which both animates and binds them together for the greater glory of God.

God bless,

Harry A. Plummer
Executive Director