CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2013

Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. This year’s theme is “Catholic Schools Raise the Standards.” The theme celebrates the constant attention our educators pay to increasing growth in learning and faith of all students. The logo illustrates a chart of steady growth culminating in the highest achievement — a cross representing the Faith that underscores all Catholic education.

Celebrations are planned across the archdiocese that will underscore the academic, faith development and service activities students pursue throughout the school year. Activities will recognize and honor those who contribute to the success of our schools — students, families, faculty and staff, volunteers, community supporters and local and national leaders.

One of the highlights of the week is the opportunity for student representatives from across the diocese to formally welcome Archbishop Tobin on Wednesday, January 30, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Another highlight is the publication of The Criterion Catholic Schools Week Supplement, which is used for Catholic school publicity throughout the year.

The “Standards” theme also draws attention to the launch of a new initiative, the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools — the first-ever standards for operating Catholic schools nationwide. While our schools have long been known for their focus on high standards for academics and spiritual growth, the new document provides a compass for schools as they continue that effort, offering clear guidance on a full range of school-related practices that should be included in any Catholic school’s policies. The theme also complements the year-round theme of the National Marketing Campaign for Catholic Schools — “Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education.”

ARCHDIOCESAN SCHOOLS THRILLED TO WELCOME ARCHBISHOP TOBIN

Student representatives will formally welcome Archbishop Joseph Tobin as our Sixth Archbishop at the special archdiocesan Catholic schools Mass by presenting him with a quilt, hand made by Mary Ellen Kucher, mother of Central Catholic PK teacher, Stacy Alexander. The quilt is a gift of hospitality and gratitude for answering God’s call to serve as our Shepherd. We are confident that Archbishop Tobin will help our schools continue to “raise the standards” for quality Catholic education for all those we serve.

Theresa Mendez, librarian/teacher at Central Catholic School collected T-shirts from each Catholic school in the archdiocese and Mary Ellen Kucher created this quilt to welcome Archbishop Tobin at the Catholic Schools Week Mass.
Celebrating Catholic School Values Event Celebrates State Scholarships

The 17th annual Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards (CCSV) event took on a decidedly new look when it was held on October 30, 2012. Over 600 people came together at the Crowne Plaza, Union Station, Indianapolis, for a grand reception and awards program. This year’s event was aimed primarily at raising funds for the new Indiana Tax Credit Scholarships through our local Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO), the CHOICE Charitable Trust.

These scholarships when received by entry-level students in Kindergarten or first grade are considered “the neutral entry point” for new children enrolling in our Catholic schools. Once a child has been on the SGO Scholarship for two semesters in kindergarten or first grade, he/she can become eligible for an Indiana School Voucher if the parents’ qualify on the income scale. This could result in a family receiving vouchers for $4,500 a year and significantly more for high school. Furthermore, the donor can claim up to 50 percent of the donation as a credit against Indiana state income tax liability and still claim a federal deduction.

There has never been a better opportunity to help families afford a Catholic education. A one-time gift of $1,000, that costs well less than $500 to give, can potentially result in 12 years of Catholic Education worth more than $60,000.

For the first time the CCSV Steering Committee decided to host advance events to better tell the story of tax credit scholarships to a wider audience before the event. Eleven local breakfasts, luncheons, or evening receptions were held in all parts of the archdiocese last spring. By the time of the CCSV event some $350,000 in donations to CHOICE could be directly attributed to these events. Another $481,000 was raised through the efforts of the schools, and the CCSV Development committee raised an additional $118,000 for event sponsorship and regular (non-CHOICE) scholarships. A total of over $950,000 was celebrated that night. All these gifts were recognized in the event program and with complimentary event tickets for donors of $1000 or more and their schools.

As in the past, outstanding persons were recognized on October 30. Sr. James Michael Kesterson, SP and Dennis Sponsel received Career Achievement Awards as outstanding products of Catholic Schools and Fred Klipsch received the Community Service Award for his work on educational choice in Indiana. Rodney Byrnes, an alumni of Cardinal Ritter High School and Harvard University, was the event speaker.

ECA 2011 Results (End-of-Course Assessments)

All students enrolled in Algebra 1, English 10, or Biology 1 must pass the ISTEP+ (ECA) End-of-Course criterion-referenced assessment in order to graduate from high school. Many of our Catholic elementary/middle schools offer these courses, as do all of our high schools. In the following chart for the most recent ECA for which we have scores, one can see that our schools exceed the state passing rate in all areas tested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>ARCHDIOCESAN TOTAL STATE SCHOOLS</th>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>(Public &amp; Non-Public)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NUMBER TESTED</td>
<td>NUMBER PASSED</td>
<td>PERCENT PASSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra 1</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 10</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>1359</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology 1</td>
<td>1225</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012 National Blue Ribbon School Nominations

Since 1982, America’s most successful public and non-public elementary, middle, and high schools have been honored through the U.S. Department of Education’s National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Schools with students who achieve at very high levels or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap are recognized through this prestigious program. In fact, the Blue Ribbon Schools Program is known for setting a standard of excellence for all schools striving for the highest level of achievement.

Each state is able to nominate a specified number of schools based on the number of K-12 students and the number of schools in the state. Once a school is nominated by the state, the extremely rigorous application process begins. Only schools that have not received the designation within the past five years are eligible to apply again, assuming all other criteria are met, and priority selection is given to schools that have not received a Blue Ribbon since 2003. Applications are sent to the Council for American Private Education and CAPE determines which non-public schools they will officially nominate from those across the nation who apply.

This year, two archdiocesan schools were eligible and applied for the National Blue Ribbon category of “Exemplary High Performing Schools.” The criteria states that these are “schools that are ranked among the state’s highest performing schools as measured by state assessments in both reading (English/language arts) and mathematics or schools that score at the highest performance level on tests referenced by national norms in at least the most recent year tested.” If a non-public school administers both the state test and nationally-normed tests, the school must be among the highest in both. Congratulations to St. Luke (Indianapolis) and St. Lawrence (Lawrenceburg) and for being recognized in the top 15% of schools in Indiana and for being eligible for this auspicious award. Both have received the Blue Ribbon designation in the past and are exceptional candidates for the honor.

By January 30, St. Lawrence and St. Luke will learn whether they are in the top 50 nominated by CAPE to move forward in the process. Announcements of the Blue Ribbon awardees will be made in September 2013. The Office of Catholic Education certainly supports their nomination!
WHAT A YEAR OF FAITH!

Visit the Year of Faith webpage frequently at www.archindy.org/yearoffaith to learn great ways to celebrate our Catholic Faith in this special year and beyond. And, know that our Office of Catholic Education continues serving, by God's grace, as a catalyst for authentic evangelization and catechesis.

So far the Year of Faith declared by our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has generated exciting activity throughout the archdiocese. This stretch of time (October 17, 2012 to November 24, 2013) is focused on exploring and celebrating our Catholic Faith with all the young people from 175 dioceses from across the country at the closing Liturgy at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC 2013) that will be held on Saturday, November 24, 2013. The stretch of time (October 17, 2012 to November 24, 2013) is focused on the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC 2013) that will be held on Saturday, November 24, 2013 in Lucas Oil Stadium, Indianapolis, Indiana. To learn more about NCYC, visit http://NCYC.NFCYM.org.

Indianapolis Catholic Youth Conference

Youth Ministry has strived to weave the Year of Faith through all of its programming this year. We kicked off the year with the Indianapolis Catholic Youth Conference on November 4, 2012. Some 550 youth and 125 chaperones participated from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. The conference was built around a theme developed by the Archdiocesan Youth Council based on the Creed. They cleverly captured the theme in the twitter phrase, #IBelieveICYC. The keynote presentation by Katie Prejean, the music by Ceili Rain and the many workshop presenters focused on various aspects of our Catholic Faith, including but not limited to morality, prayer, life issues, exorcism, voting, purgatory, theology of the body, answering difficult questions, fear and suffering. The conference concluded with Eucharistic Adoration and Mass.

March for Life

Next on our agenda is the annual pilgrimage to Washington, DC to the March for Life on January 24-26, 2013. Not only will the high school pilgrims and their adult chaperones once again be in DC to support all life from womb-to-tomb, they will also have the opportunity to enhance their own spiritual lives with a pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to celebrate Mass. Per a decree by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict the XVI, making a pilgrimage will obtain an indulgence upon visiting this shrine during the Year of Faith. For information go to: http://www.usccb.org/ beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/year-of-faith/plenary-indulgence-for-the-year-of-faith.cfm

KUDOS TO OUR STUDENT ATHLETES!

In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, students are encouraged to use their God-given talents. Teachers, administrators, coaches, and parents work with students to develop a strong Catholic foundation along with valuable life skills such as collaboration, work ethic and balance. Therefore, it comes as little surprise that our student athletes represent their schools and communities well on fields, courses, courts, and mats throughout the state! Shown below are the seven high school teams that already made it to a State Championship during the 2012-13...and the second semester has just begun! Gina Fleming, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, states: “Our student athletes are privileged to have such wonderful opportunities for growth and development throughout their elementary years thanks to the valuable programming offered through the Catholic Youth Organization. The CYO staff, referees, and thousands of volunteers who coach and serve on parish athletic boards are all to be commended for the excellence of our high school athletic programs. When we couple this background with exceptional high school coaches, administrators and programs along with supportive parents and committed student athletes – this is a winning combination!

FOOTBALL

4A STATE CHAMPIONS
Cardinal Ritter High School
Coach: Vince Lorenzano

2A STATE RUNNERS-UP
Bishop Chatard High School
Coach: Rick Streiff

1A STATE CHAMPIONS
Our Lady of Providence
Coach: Kevin O’Shea

2A STATE RUNNERS-UP
Seccina Memorial High School
Coach: Mike Lingenfelter

GIRLS SOCCER

1A STATE RUNNERS-UP
Our Lady of Providence High School
Coach: Djamel Charmat

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

3A STATE CHAMPIONS
Bishop Chatard High School
Coach: Nick Wolf

2A STATE RUNNERS-UP
Our Lady of Providence
Coach: Mike Lingenfelter
Aligning Our Hearts with Jesus: Being Disciples of All Nations

Peg McEvoy, Associate Director for Evangelization and Family Catechesis, Br. Moises Gutierrez, Coordinator of Hispanic Ministry and the Adult Formation Team have developed a workshop for parish leaders, both staff and volunteer, entitled Aligning Our Hearts with Jesus: Being Disciples of All Nations. In order to introduce and familiarize parish leaders with the content and approach of this workshop, it was presented to parish administrators of religious education and youth ministers at their respective business meetings and will also be offered to principals. The workshop utilizes recent research from the social sciences as well as our Catholic understanding of conversion and community to address the reality of bringing people of various backgrounds together. The intended outcome of the workshop is to help parish leaders understand and address some of the dynamics that may be operating in their parishes.

For information, contact Peg McEvoy at pmcevoy@archindy.org, 317-236-1432 or (800)382-9836, ext. 1432.

INDIANA’S A-F ACCOUNTABILITY

Starting in the 2010-11 academic year, the State Board of Education changed the labels for school categories based on student performance from using the terms: “Exemplary, Commendable, and Academic Probation” to simple letter grades (A, B, C, D and F). The intent of the new A-F labels is to enhance communication on how well Indiana schools perform and to help all students achieve positive academic outcomes. Indiana’s A-F Accountability Model, authorized by Public Law 221, incorporates student academic growth and graduation rates in addition to college and career readiness.

The Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis rank among the top schools in the state. Some 52 of the archdiocese’s 68 state-accredited schools (77%) received “A” ratings and a total of 93% received either an “A” or a “B” rating. No schools in the archdiocese received an “F” rating. Statewide, Catholic schools in the five Indiana dioceses set the standard for all schools in the state with 75% earning an A and less than 1% receiving a failing grade.

The data used to determine the school grades at the elementary and middle school levels include overall performance on ISTEP+, participation in the testing process and (value-added) growth data from one year to the next. At the high school level, college and career readiness indicators are used (such as success in Advanced Placement courses), graduation rates, performance on end-of-course assessments (ECA) and student improvement. All archdiocesan schools utilize this data to determine the best practices and to create and implement their required School Improvement Plans. Should a school attain less than a “B” grade, additional supports such as external review team visits and enhanced professional development will be put in place by OCE to assist the school in improving.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis continues to lead the way not only in academic growth and success, but in our fervent desire to develop the “whole child” as an individual who comes to know, love, and serve God. While there is no “grade” for the service and Christian leadership our students and staff members display, we have great confidence that all of our schools would attain an “A” in this category!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archdiocese of Indianapolis**</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C, D, or F*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>State of Indiana</strong></td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** % rounded to the nearest percent


NATIONAL STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS DEVELOPED

National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) includes nine defining characteristics of Catholic schools based on Church teachings, 13 standards and 70 benchmarks. “Together, they describe what it means to be a Catholic school, and how the most mission-driven, effective, well-managed, and responsibly governed Catholic schools operate.”

In the archdiocese, schools will utilize the NCBECS as part of a comprehensive approach to quality Catholic education. These standards will serve as the framework for accreditation particularly as the archdiocese partners with NCA AdvancEd and the other four Indiana dioceses to develop the first state-wide accrediting model AdvancEd has ever supported.

Dr. Lorraine Ozar, Director of the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness at Loyola University, Chicago, states, “The publication of these effectiveness standards gives the entire Catholic community a common framework of universal characteristics of Catholic identity and agreed-upon criteria for Catholic school excellence. With this framework, we can and must hold ourselves accountable for the excellence and rigor, faith and nurturance that have been the hallmark of Catholic education and which we must now guarantee for future generations.”

For more information, visit: http://www.catholicschoolstandards.org/standards

2013 SPRED DINNER DANCE!

"All Aboard the Love Boat"

Mark your calendars for the 13th Annual SPRED Dinner Dance on Saturday, March 2, at the Marten House Heritage Ball Room in Indianapolis. SPRED is a program of religious education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that reaches out to persons with developmental disabilities and special needs and celebrates the unique gifts of each individual. Currently, SPRED is working with over 100 children and adults with special needs throughout central and southern Indiana.

For more information about the SPRED Dinner Dance or the SPRED program please contact Kara Favata at kfavata@archindy.org 317-236-1448 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1448.
“HOW DO I KNOW IF MY STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THE FAITH?”

“How Do I know if my students are learning the Faith? Both parish religious education program catechists and Catholic school teachers naturally ask this question. “Assessment” is the answer and we encourage both school teachers and parish program catechists to assess learning in various ways.

ACRE will be administered to sixth, eighth and eleventh grade students in our schools and parish catechetical programs beginning this year. The results will give us insight regarding students’ knowledge of the Faith as well as their religious attitudes and practices. Another section of questions helps us glimpse students’ perceptions of various difficulties (i.e., alcohol use) in their school and parish communities.

ACRE results are one way of helping us gauge our effectiveness in sharing our Catholic Faith with young people and their families. Look for more information related to ACRE in your parish catechetical program or Catholic school throughout the months ahead.

An exciting new resource for standardized assessment in religion is becoming a part of our efforts this year. ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education) has been offered via the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) for several years. We are replacing our former survey instrument with ACRE.

Blogging at Central Catholic

Have you ever felt discriminated against? Do you feel that as a teenager, your opinions or thoughts do not matter? What would you do to help a friend or family member to stay safe? These tough questions motivated junior high students at Central Catholic School to begin their adventure into the world of blogging (web logging).

In classrooms everywhere, blogging is being used as a tool for literature responses, discussions and assignments. At Central Catholic, Kim Witka, junior high language arts teacher, designed a new website where students can blog and also keep up with current technology. The website is www.misswitkalearningcenter.weebly.com. It has places for each class to blog and respond to forum questions as well. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classes have been blogging for over a month about literature they are reading as part of their Holocaust unit.

Kim states, “I felt the Holocaust unit was a great place to start, because it addresses many challenges the students could or could not be familiar with in their own lives. It amazes me how much they still have to learn about writing, but the engagement in the blogging has been wonderful!” Eighth grade student, Adam Mattingly, said, “Blogging has helped me understand and really think about what I have read. Blogging has also taught me to respect others opinions and their views on things.”

Most students are not able to blog at home because of lack of internet support, so they spend time during English class and technology class to post their literary responses. “I felt this was a way to keep my students engaged in this competitive educational world,” Miss Witka states. It has become an excellent tool for positive interactive communication!”

Student postings can be simple and may have some spelling errors, but what a constant learning outlet for these students! The blog is public, but comments are moderated by the teacher. This integration of technology and language arts may be the wave of a successful future. What a great jump the students of Central Catholic School have on this new wave!

NEWEST SCHOOL BUILDING IN GREENSBURG

There has been talk about building a new school at St. Mary’s Parish, Greensburg, for many years. The original part of the previous building was built in 1916 with an addition in 1956. It became apparent that there had to be either extensive repairs or a new structure. Msgr. Harold Knueven was pastor at the time the capital campaign got into full swing and this past fall those involved got to see their work come to fruition. So many people gave something to this project. Some were involved financially with huge monetary donations, some were involved in planning and others were physically involved in the construction process. The first day of school at the new location was on August 1, 2012 and the dedication took place on September 12, with Rev. John Meyer, the new pastor, and The Most Rev. Christopher Coyne, Apostolic Administrator presiding. This state-of-the-art school building is truly a culmination of years of faith and planning and will serve the Catholic students and families of Greensburg for many generations to come. Nancy Buening is Principal. For more details go to http://greensburgdailynews.com/local/x328561564/New-St-Marys-opens-doors.

The Office of Catholic Education is thrilled to be hosting the fourth annual Golf Fore Faith outing at Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel on Monday, May 13, 2013. Proceeds help the “Promise to Keep Program.” Any opportunity to play Crooked Stick is always unique! Imagine playing the course that hosted the top 70 players in the world in September at the 2012 BMW FedEx Championship! The Golf Fore Faith outing will provide players the opportunity to compete for prizes and awards such as, “Closest to the Pin” and “Longest Drive” on selected holes. In our “Hole in One” contest players will compete for a two-year car lease on one selected par three hole and for $10,000 in cash on the remaining par three holes.

Whether you want to play golf or take advantage of an opportunity to advertise your business as a sponsor, we have developed several levels of participation. Sponsorship will provide your organization with name recognition at CSGC and to participants. Based upon the past three outings, we can assure you this Golf Fore Faith outing will be “second to none!”

Contact Margaret Hendricks, event chairperson, at 317-441-8956 or mhendricks@archindy.org. Information and registration is also available online at: www.archindy.org/golfforefaith.

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“Assessment of Catechesis

NCEA ACRE

Religious Education

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Roncalli Peer Mentors Helping Children with Special Needs at St. Jude

Welcoming children with special needs to religious education is one goal of St. Jude’s new Inclusion Ministry. Several months ago, Tammy Stewart, Administrator of Religious Education at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis; Fr. Stephen Banet, Pastor; the Faith Formation Commission; and the Inclusion Team researched ways to better include students with disabilities in the religious education program. Kara Favata, Assistant Director for Special Religious Education at the Office of Catholic Education, met with Tammy about ways to enhance parish inclusion efforts.

Through the collaborative efforts of St. Jude Parish, Roncalli and OCE, the “Peer Mentor Ministry” was born. This program pairs a high school student with a special needs student in the religious education program. With the guidance of OCE, the Peer Mentors are trained on disabilities as well as individual learning styles. They are taught how to adapt lesson plans in order to provide more visual aids, greater flexibility and additional “hands-on” activities for their special needs student.

Children are most influenced by their peers and young children look up to high school students as role models. “It is cool to get help or attention from a high school student,” said Kara Favata. “Now, kids who are having trouble participating in a traditional classroom setting can be part of the group.” “And, it’s more fun for everyone,” remarked St. Jude Catechist Casey Strange. Mary Kathryn Allen, Peer Mentor from Roncalli, signed up for the Peer Mentor Ministry because “…those with special needs have a unique way of filling your heart and soul. It is difficult to describe this fulfillment but the best word I can use is ‘joy.’” She hopes to develop a better appreciation and understanding of those with special needs as well as those who care for persons with disabilities.

“We are a single flock under the care of a single Shepherd. There can be no separate Church for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities, especially children, are particularly beloved of the Lord and are integral members of the Christian community” (NDC 49). Inclusive religious education helps other understand the unique gifts and talents that persons with disabilities bring to their faith community.

THE “PERFECT STORM” FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

The convergence of several developments in education and technology has created “the perfect storm” for instructional technology implementation and innovation in our Catholic schools. The new national “Common Core” curriculum standards will require increased digital resources to support instruction at the same time that new, capable tablet computing technology is becoming available. Tablet computers such as the I-Pad, Android and MS Surface, are now, for the first time, affordable enough to consider putting this technology in the hands of every student.

Digital infrastructure – adequate servers, storage and internet bandwidth capacity – may be the biggest challenge for schools to enter this 1-to-1 student-to-computer environment. Schools will need financial incentives and assistance to build the necessary framework for this environment. They will also need to be able to assist parents with reasonably-priced tablet devices that will slowly but surely replace the textbooks that parents now have to buy or rent. As tablet computing increases, the need for local computer maintenance should also decrease.

Research has shown that “…(computer) access alone does not create change.” Therefore, teachers must receive the technology and simultaneously participate in intensive, ongoing professional development or the potential for enhancing the instructional experience will not be realized.

Another challenge will be to leverage the federal “E-Rate” discounts now available to most schools from communication providers. Schools can receive 20 to 90 percent off on their internet and telephone access charges, and, in some cases, on their purchases of infrastructure. However, the E-Rate process is somewhat daunting, and school administrators will require consultative assistance in this area. There may be opportunities to centralize some infrastructure to take better advantage of the discounts available and to provide economy of scale to the schools.

From left: Fr. Stephen Banet and Peer Mentors, Ashley Wagner, Maddi Wincek, Delaney Collier and Tammy Stewart. Mentors, Mary Kathryn Allen and Elaina LeMasters were absent for the photo.

Four times a year for two years I found myself traveling to St. Meinrad for a weekend of Certificate classes. The Certificate Program in Youth Ministry Studies is offered through the Center for Ministry Development and is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. At the completion of the courses, a Certificate in Youth Ministry is achieved. I have coordinated the youth ministry program at St. Ambrose Parish since July 2003, and every weekend throughout this course I walked away learning how to do my job better. Additionally, I implemented the materials and ideas into my programs immediately.

The classes offer so much including the opportunity to connect with others who also want to learn more about youth ministry. This is priceless! The presenters are ministry professionals from a variety of backgrounds and parts of the country. I found it very encouraging that outside of class time the presenters spent time with us on a personal level giving advice, offering suggestions, and socializing with our class. The group with which I completed this course is from a variety of ministry backgrounds and years of service which leads to insightful discussions. Regardless of experience, taking the Certificate Class is something people in ministry should do for themselves and for those to whom they minister. In our class we had part-time and full-time directors of religious education, youth ministers, principals, and college students. Each of us walked away from the course better than when we started, plus we now have life-long friends and colleagues to lean on for support.

~ Chris Smith is Youth Minister at St. Ambrose Parish, Seymour

www.archindy.org/oce
National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry

As a young youth ministry professional, I try to attend a variety of professional development opportunities. Different experiences offer a variety of ways to grow as a minister and expand our ministries. Over the past six years, the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry has become a favorite of mine. Gathering together on the national level to hear speakers, attend workshops, and explore the Resource Expo is an opportunity I rarely miss.

Prior to attending, I establish personal goals. In previous years I have focused my energies on volunteers, junior high ministry, and networking with other ministers from across the nation. This year, my main goal was to learn to incorporate multimedia into our ministry. The workshops I attended in Orlando gave me the resources, tools, and empowerment to do this. Learning how to appropriately incorporate music, make video prayer presentations and utilize technology to the fullest were things that I hoped to learn more about. And, I walked out of the workshops with ideas to do just that. In fact, after one workshop, I pulled out my laptop during a break and began to put together a video prayer presentation to use at our advent gathering at home.

However, it is the general sessions and keynotes that provide the challenge — or affirmation — of my ministry. Listening to Jack Jazreel, I realized that my parish is already providing social outreach in ways I had not considered. Speaker VaLLimar Jansen provided the biggest challenge: how can I be a light to others? Often we get bogged down and forget that Christ’s light dwells within each of us. NCCCYM is the one conference that I will not miss because of the depth to which it leads us as ministers. Aside from spending quality downtime with colleagues, we come home renewed, refreshed, and re-energized to share our faith in new and exciting ways with the young people we encounter.

~ Annie Wolffly a Youth Minister at St. Malachy Parish, Brownsburg

The Good Word of Archdiocesan Principals Heard Around the Country!

Miss Sarah J. Watson, Principal of St. Michael-St. Gabriel the Archangels School, a newly consolidated school on the west side of Indianapolis, was recently elected as Region 7 Representative for the National Catholic Educational Association Elementary Department’s Executive Committee. Sarah will represent elementary school teachers and principals from Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Kathy Mears, Executive Director for Elementary Education at NCEA states, “I am very happy that the archdiocese supported Sarah and encouraged her to take part in the election. She will represent the region and the archdiocese very well. She will play an important role in determining the direction of the NCEA Elementary Department and all of us look forward to working with her.”

Ms. Watson and colleague Mrs. Mary McCoy were both published in the most recent edition of the NCEA Newsletter. Watson’s article detailed the life of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton while Mrs. McCoy shared a personal account of how Catholic social teachings have been brought to life at her school and beyond. Mary serves as the Principal of St. Philip Neri Catholic School on the near east side of Indianapolis. Having served the Latino population in a center-city school for many years, Mary has expanded her knowledge and passion for the English Language Learner and continues to share her experiences and expertise with others.

Ms. Amy McClain, Principal of St. Patrick Catholic School, Terre Haute, and her staff have worked diligently to unwrap and implement the new Common Core State Standards. In fact, their work is so notable that Ms. McClain was published in the September edition of the NCEA Newsletter and she then spoke on the topic at the 16th Annual NCEA Principals Forum in November.

Ms. McClain states, “Just as the teacher at the head of the room is the most important thing in the classroom, the principal is the most important thing at a faculty meeting. The time for both professionals to work together is critical to student success and should not be minimized. Respectful professionals realize that good instruction requires planning and allows for each teacher to have enough time to design quality instruction for students. When students are allowed to access the skills and knowledge of two professionals, learning is increased and students are able to excel.”

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

Social Media Guidelines: Helpful Tips and Rules of the Road for Those Who Live and Minister in the Church in Central and Southern Indiana were promulgated for all OCE ministries last spring. These are available as a free PDF download on the OCE Website, www.archindy.org/oce. Look in Public Archives, Public Downloads, Guides. The Guidelines provide simple guidance that will hopefully encourage the use of social media to spread the Gospel message more effectively and promote “...the virtuous use of technology.” While the Guidelines encourage ministry personnel to use social media, there is no mandate to do so, nor a ban against doing so – only guidance on best practices.
Reflections from the Executive Director

Years ago I heard a story about a cafeteria line at St. Mary's Catholic school. At the beginning of the cafeteria line there was a table with a large pile of apples on it. One of the nuns had placed a note at the front of the table which read, “Take only one, God is watching.” Now at the end of this same lunch line there was another table with a large pile of chocolate chip cookies on it, and at the front of this table was a note from one of the students that read, “Take all you want, God is watching the apples.”

In the Bible the psalmist cries out to God “keep me as the apple of your eye” (Psalm 17:8) and I think this beautiful expression of the desire for intimacy with God is helpful for all of us serving in Catholic educational leadership because it reminds us that we’ve been given the great privilege of helping him vigilantly nurture all the apples God has so graciously planted in our schools and catechetical vineyards. As you can see from reading this issue of The Good Word, there are a great many ways OCE is providing service in this tremendous enterprise.

At this time of the New Year, I want to renew our commitment to you. With the blessing of Archbishop Tobin, our new Chief Shepherd and Catechist, we are fully prepared to serve you in the great work of bringing into this world of change, a living and active faith. As we do so, let us all take to heart the words of Blessed John Paul II: “Let grow in you the desire for great and noble projects. Nourish a sense of solidarity; these are the signs of the divine action in your hearts. Place at the use of your communities the talents which Providence has lavished upon you. The more ready you are to give yourselves to God and to others the more you will discover the authentic meaning of life. God expects much from you.” (Message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 1996).

And so, on behalf of all of us who work in the Office of Catholic education – and on behalf of all God's “apples” we help Him watch – I want to say thank you for your continued support. If there is anything we can do for you, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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