

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

St. Mary School, Choir and Orchestra Program

Dear Parents,

With each new season comes a challenge to share new learning with our children. During Advent, the message is one of anticipation and preparation for the coming of the Lord.

December is filled with activity at St. Mary School and our voices are raised in singing ... lot of singing and beautiful music from our orchestras! We look forward to our annual Christmas Concert for vocal and string when our students and staff present their gift of music to parents, relatives and friends. Through Advent, we will continue to organize Christmas baskets for our refugee families in St. Mary's parish.

May your homes be filled with the joys of the Advent Season and the blessings of the child, Jesus, at Christmas.

*In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low ...
Isaiah 40: 3-4*

Welcome to our New Principal!

Please welcome Mrs. Ginette Marrinan, appointed as Principal of St. Mary School, Choir and Orchestra Program, effective January 1, 2010.

Mrs. Marrinan comes to us from St. George Catholic School in London where she has been principal.

Mrs. Marrinan has an extensive music background and will truly be a strong advocate for the Choir and Orchestra Program.

As I tell your children when greeting those who are new to our school, "Please give Mrs. Marrinan a warm St. Mary's welcome!"

Parent Invitation--Mrs. Fraumeni's Retirement

We welcome parents to join with staff, colleagues and Kathy's family and friends as we pay tribute to her in a joyous send off on Tuesday, December 15th. The celebration of the Eucharist will begin at 4:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church and a reception will follow in the school gymnasium from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. A separate note regarding this event was sent home with your children last Thursday. (Please note that children cannot be accommodated at this event.)

Kathy is leaving us with a lasting legacy that will echo in the halls of St. Mary's and in our hearts long after she leaves the building! A model of faith, she has led us with compassion and conviction, always keeping Catholic values and the delivery of a rich arts-based education at the core of her practice. Kathy will be so very missed!!!

It is Concert Season!

Thank you to both our vocal conductors Christine Petrasianas and Cathy Lourenco and our String teacher, Mary Case, who have so skilfully prepared our students for multiple concerts this season at Christmas.

We thank both vocal teachers as well as our Grade 5, Grade 7 and Grade 8 choirs who performed in concerts on Friday, November 27th.

Gr. 5's sang at the Victoria Park "Lighting of the Lights" and entertained the outdoor audience while the park was lit for Christmas.

The grade 7 & 8 choirs sang together with the 100 voice Fanshawe Chorus London, led by Gerald Fagan at Centennial Hall. What a joyful evening! Thank you to parents for all your support! Our Gr. 6 students will be singing as part of Orchestra London's Christmas Pops concert Dec. 4th in Chatham at 8:00 p.m. and again Dec. 6th in London (Centennial Hall) at 2:30. Thank you to Mrs. Petrasianas for preparing our students so well.

Our very own Christmas Concert with Grades 5 – 8 students singing and our Christmas Orchestra playing will be Dec. 9th at St. Peter's Basilica at 7:00 p.m. A detailed note will go home this week.

Upcoming School Council Wed., Jan. 20, 2010, Library

Parent seeking car pool

One of our families is seeking a carpool in the Maisonville area of the city. If you can help, please call (519) 433-0821

Christmas Concert at St. Peter's Cathedral

Wed., Dec. 9th, 7:00 pm

We are very pleased to be able to hold our annual Christmas Concert this year at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica in downtown London.

Students and staff will be rehearsing in the cathedral during the week of the concert and a detailed letter of rehearsal times and transportation was sent home Monday.

Seating is ample and there is no charge for admission. We do provide an opportunity to "pass the basket" for your generous donation. This helps to cover concert costs. We recommend that "babies" and little ones may find it a long sit.

Call time for students is 6:30. Expect the church to fill quite early!

Please refer to the sheet about Uniform Requirements as you help your child prepare for this beautiful concert. There will be a CD available of the concert for purchase before Christmas. The information letter and uniform reminder goes home this week.

Ways and Means

Coffee Fundraiser – All Year

Thank you for your responses to our new year-long fundraiser to purchase coffee, tea and hot chocolate. All information about ordering went home in mid November. Thank you to Stephen Paul and Som Pravongviengkham for agreeing to gather all orders each month for the whole school and place one order online. If you need additional forms, please call the school. The

company website is
www.pistolandbarnes.com

Parents who have paid the flat fee of \$105.00 for fundraising need not participate. We are hoping for at least one order from all other parents.

Christmas Tree Raffle

The tradition continues! We have a beautifully decorated tree in our upper hall and raffle tickets are being sold at \$2.00 per ticket. The draw for the tree will be Tues., December 8th at noon.

First Prize: Fully decorated, pre-lit Christmas tree

Second Prize: Christmas wreath from Regency Florists.

Third Prize: Six seats close to the front to the Christmas Concert

Thank you to all of our generous donors who have made this draw so special. Thank you to Joanne Murphy and Carla Zubot for decorating the tree! We hope every student will sell at least one book of tickets. Parents who have paid the flat fee of \$105.00 are not expected to sell tickets (but you can if you like!!).

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Dec. 3, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. only
Report Cards for Term 1 went home Monday, Nov. 30th. Please return the interview request sheet by Wed., Dec. 2nd. We will do our best to schedule your interview(s) as close to your requested time as possible. Please return page 3 of the report card to your child's teacher.

Welcome to Mr. Herman, String Teacher for December

We welcome Mr. Karl Herman to St. Mary School. Over the next few weeks, Mr. Herman will be teaching all string classes and conducting the Christmas Orchestra while Mrs. Case is on leave.

Thank you for welcoming Mr. Herman and supporting him in this role. Mr. Herman has an extensive music background and will be able to assist students in their string music.

Thank you, Mrs. McInerney

Mrs. McInerney's placement at St. Mary School comes to an end on Friday, December 4, 2009. Mrs. McInerney has been a wonderful addition to the St. Mary School staff, bringing a wealth of knowledge and rich arts experiences to her teaching at the intermediate level. Mrs. McInerney is a faith filled teacher whose greatest goal was to connect with our students as a caring, Catholic educator. She has certainly done that. We wish Mrs. McInerney well as she continues her journey as a Catholic teacher.

Welcome Back, Mrs. Hunter

On Monday, December 7th, we welcome back Mrs. Adrienne Hunter from her one year maternity leave. Mrs. Hunter will return in her previous role as homeroom teacher for 7H and the Physical Education teacher for the Intermediate division.



Book Fair, a success!

Thank you to our librarians, Ms. Barb Deniak and Mrs. Caroline Watters for organizing the Scholastic Book Fair. Thank you also to the many parent volunteers who stepped forward to help run the book fair. Our dedication to providing book fairs for our students and parents is a sign of the school's commitment to supporting a variety of opportunities to improve literacy. Proceeds from this event will benefit our school library and other school initiatives.

Turkey Dinner

Thurs., Dec. 17th

We have an army of volunteers who are organizing this festive meal for students and staff. Thank you to Michelle Pian and the many parents who are helping with the dinner. A volunteer sheet has been sent to ask if you can

1. Cook and slice a turkey
2. Bake desserts
3. Help set up
4. Help serve

Michelle will call you with details and times once you have sent in your sheet.

Thank you to the Flaherty's who have generously donated all the turkeys once again this year. Amazing! I'm sure the meal will be gobbled up with delight on Dec. 17th. We are in need of volunteers to help us prepare, serve and clean up after the lunch. Please contact Michelle Pian at (519) 641-0246 if you are able to assist.

Upcoming Events

**London Knight's Hockey
Jan. 21, 2010**

(Purchase tickets as Christmas Gifts)
All St. Mary students from Grades 5 to 8 will be singing the National Anthem on the ice that night.

Tickets will be available at a reduced rate through the school for this great family event. Tickets can be purchased at the school for \$13.00 per person. Students must also have a ticket. Don't be disappointed. This event will be sold out. The Knights are the Memorial Cup Champs for 2004-2005! The London Knights will be here Monday, Jan. 11th to meet our students for a school assembly. St. Mary School students will be featured January 21st on the ice signing "O Canada". BE THERE!! GO KNIGHTS GO!

Advent Mass

Thurs., Dec. 17th at 9:00 am

Our final Eucharistic Celebration before Christmas will be Thurs., Dec. 17th at 9:00 am. This is a FULL PERFORMANCE UNIFORM day for all students. We will be collecting non-perishable goods in all classrooms as an offering at our Mass. Donations will be made to the St. Mary's St. Vincent de Paul Society. Thank you for your generosity.

Collections for Refugee Families in St. Mary's Parish

Once again this year, the school plans to put together a gift hamper of new items for families of St. Mary's parish who are in need. We appreciate any assistance you can provide. A letter will follow this week.

Music Fees now due

Thank you to parents for sending in the \$100/student music fee, due in October. This fee assists greatly with continued upkeep and repair of our valuable string instrument collection as well as our sheet music needs. If you have not sent in this fee, please do so as soon as possible. If assistance is needed with this payment, please contact Mrs. Fraumeni at (519)675-4423. We will be pleased to help.



St. Mary School Musical Production for 2010 Beauty and the Beast Jr. April 13 – 16, 2010

This year, we are pleased to announce that our Gr. 8 students will take to the stage in Beauty and the Beast Jr.

To add to the excitement, our Director Don Fleckser and Musical Director Chris Petrasianus will direct this production.

Parent Night for Gr. 8 Parents "Beauty and the Beast Jr."

We look forward to seeing all Grade 8 parents on Wednesday, January 6th, 2010 at 7:00 in the String room. We would like to get a head start on plans for sets and costumes and all other areas where volunteers will be needed for the show. See you on Jan. 7th, 2010.

A STUDENT'S TRIBUTE TO AN INSPIRING LEADER AND FRIEND

My experience at this school has been something I will never forget in my life. Whenever I think of St. Mary's, Mrs. Fraumeni's name comes to mind. As I look back and reflect, Mrs. Fraumeni has helped, to the best of her ability, all of her students reach their full potential, and has provided a rich learning environment for each of them. I am quite sure that every one of her students appreciates all she has done for this school and the school community as a whole.

This school holds so many memories captured within the pictures that line the walls. Have you ever had a chance to take a look at those pictures? Or do you rush by to get to class or out the front door at the end of the day? Parents, do you just rush by to pick up your children without noticing? Well, next time you are at the school, parents and students alike, I am inviting you to take a look at those pictures and you will notice almost every one of them have one thing in common... Mrs. Fraumeni is smiling back at you along with the students she has taught over the years, maybe not as a principal, but also as a teacher. She has been at this school for many years and put so much time and effort into everything that goes on in this school, it is simply amazing! It just goes to show how much determination Mrs. Fraumeni possesses. Whenever there is a play, a liturgy, or even just an ordinary day... well, as ordinary as a school day gets for us here, she becomes so involved in all aspects of "school life" and she pours all of her heart and soul into it as well. God has truly blessed this school by giving us such a determined, dedicated, and bright principal... a principal who chooses teachers for their ability to bring out the best in their students, a principal who believes in each and every one of her students and creates many opportunities for them.

Other schools might go to one or maybe two plays a year, if they are lucky. We are just finishing term one and we have gone to *three* plays, one of which was a major production in Toronto. How many schools get to do that? Also, how many grade five classes are fortunate enough to put on a production? When this year's grade eight class put together their grade five play, **The Magic Bookshelf**, everyone had a lot of fun. The grade sevens were able to collaborate with the grade eights two years back for the production **Tom Sawyer**, which was, yet again, a success. Many of us don't know just how involved our principal is in these plays. Let me give you a little bit of information, she is "thee producer" for all the musicals from the past eight years. Last year Mrs. Fraumeni extended her role by writing, directing and producing the play '**Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Go to the Opera**'... talk about talent!

Mrs. Fraumeni has been an asset to this school in so many ways. She has been a great advocator of our music program. The inspirational guest artists, which she invited, have opened our minds to the world around us. Linda Granfield, Ron Broda, Marc Tardif, and Orchestra London are but a few of the many artists who have shared their gifts with us. Mrs. Fraumeni has been a role model for us during our many liturgies in faith and in song, and she continually reminds us of the privilege we have here in our leadership roles. It has been a joy and an honour to go to this school. On the behalf of all the students, thank you for everything you have done at this school. We wish all the best and a very good and happy retirement, as you of all people deserve it. Rest assured that your memory will live on forever in this school, and most of all, in our hearts.

With the greatest of gratitude and admiration

-Cosette Marie Pin-

