From the Principal

Happy Friday, St. Martha Families and Friends!

What gorgeous weather we have been blessed with this week. We are now into the month of October, and the calendar is quickly filling with many activities for this month. Please keep checking with the school website for all updates or save the weekly e-Blast for a quick reference.

With this beautiful weather we become aware of the many blessings God sends to us even through the simple change of cooler weather. The warm earth cools in the evening producing areas where morning mists arise from the ground floating upwards creating heaven-like backdrops. The eighth grade teachers sent us the picture of Fr. Richard sharing an outdoor Mass with our eighth grade students (we sent it out in a Flocknote this week). The students and staff on the annual eighth grade leadership trip experienced many blessings as they spent the past four days participating in the outdoor Camp Allen Discovery Program. Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. Koenig, Mr. Norman, and Fr. Richard all shared these experiences with the students as the students learned to challenge themselves, deepen their faith, and develop a better understanding of each other.

The parish Fall Festival & Market is Saturday, October 8, and we would like to see as many families take advantage of this event as possible. The festival committee has put much time and effort into planning activities, food, and music for this day and all they need is YOU and your families to join in the community spirit. Please visit the church website with any questions or if you would like to donate or volunteer for this parish community event.

The students will be out of school Monday, October 10, due to the Catholic Schools Office in-service day that all archdiocesan teachers must attend. Our service projects in October will be in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. On October 13, we will have our annual Think Pink Day to raise funds for MD Anderson Cancer Research Center (Houston) and the Kathy Ensley Memorial Tuition Assistance Fund in memory of Mrs. Ensley, a former SMCS teacher. Later this month, you will be receiving information about the Beta Club’s first-time Color Run event here on the Faith Formation Campus on November 4. This event is a service project for Beta Club, and proceeds also will benefit MD Anderson Cancer Research Center.

If you drive through the school carline, you will see the new electronic sign that was purchased through the 2015-2016 Crusade for Excellence funds. The new sign should help our efforts to better communicate upcoming school events to all of you. We are doing our best to provide a multitude of communication opportunities so that you may stay informed: school website, Flocknotes, eBlasts, RenWeb Parent Portal, and all teacher communication.

Thank you for sharing your child and your time with St. Martha Catholic School.

Many Blessings,

Mrs. Tina Lewis
Principal
THANK YOU to all our families and volunteers who participated in the 8th grade service project to bring hope and much needed supplies to our brothers and sisters in Christ affected by the recent floods in Louisiana. Grade 8 student Alex Benedict was moved to help and initiated the school-wide service project to collect buckets and cleaning supplies for donation to Louisiana flood victims.

Our SMCS community demonstrated its usual overwhelming generosity by donating enough supplies to fill 50 buckets plus two bins with extra supplies! Donations were sent in from families in every grade level and also some community businesses. Our 7th and 8th grade students worked together to assemble the bucket kits and load them into vans for delivery to the United Way and Catholic Charities in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

During this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis calls us to be witnesses to mercy and to "find the joy rediscovering and rendering fruitful God's mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time." We are grateful that our SMCS community has answered this call by showing mercy through giving comfort to our neighbors in Louisiana!

THANK YOU to these Kingwood businesses for their generous support of this 8th grade service project:
Alspaugh's Ace Hardware for donating the buckets
Tim O’Neil State Farm for donating the bleach
Pat Cunningham State Farm for a monetary donation
Cross Country News

The St. Martha Cross Country team started running in the middle of the summer with optional practice in the early mornings. Practice has continued into the school year with runners rising in the early morning to be at practice at 5:30 a.m. every other day. But their hard work has paid off with excellent performances in the first two meets of the year.

So far, our cross country athletes have completed the first two of six meets for the season. In the most recent, we were faced with hot afternoon temperatures and a thick two-mile grass course with many hills and lots of mud. It was very challenging, but everyone finished and seven of our students received medals for placing in the top 15.

SMCS Student Ambassadors

Fr. Richard gave a special blessing at the September 7 school Mass to our awesome Student Ambassadors. Thank you to this special group of students for representing SMCS with a welcoming and helpful presence at school events.

"Your character isn't based off your accomplishments, it is based off of how you react in defeat."
- Jack
It was a GREAT DAY for Crusaders as SMCS students and family members joined Deborah Duncan on Monday, September 19, for the live audience of the Great Day Houston show. Our Crusaders were an enthusiastic crowd whose presence was noticed and appreciated by the KHOU team. In addition to showing Houston their Crusader pride, our SMCS families were there to help support and promote the upcoming St. Martha Parish Fall Festival & Market which will take place from noon to 8 p.m. on Saturday, October 8.

Thank you to the following SMCS students and their family members who participated in the Great Day Show: Macy Banmiller, Sofia Castillo, Mikayla Cox, the Hyatts (Callie, Cayden and Connor), Breanna Johnson, Rebecca Salamanca Manosalva, Brandon Smith, Claire Timme, Ella Valdez, and Madelaine Wright!

We are Crusader proud!

SMCC FALL FESTIVAL

Many volunteers are needed to help make this the best SMCC Fall Festival ever!

Please sign up at http://goo.gl/xKfZdP to volunteer your time.

Youth volunteers are welcome - great opportunity for service hours!
Did you know…

Kroger food stores are a SMCS Rebate and Redemption partner? Each time you shop at Kroger, SMCS will receive a portion of sales. In order for SMCS to receive this benefit, you must assign SMCS as your organization of choice. This must be renewed each year on or after August 1. Assigning an organization is easy after you have created a digital account.

Simply visit [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com) or download the Kroger mobile app from the appropriate app store for your device and select register. Once you have entered your information, you can select SMCS as your organization of choice. You will need our NPO number 80234. If you have any questions about our Rebate and Redemption programs, please contact Mary Hays at maryarro@hotmail.com.

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Rebate and Redemption Pep Rally

Our SMCS students were given the challenge of raising $2,000 in Box Tops and other rebate programs during the 2015-2016 school year. Our students not only met but exceeded this challenge. The prize for meeting this challenge was Mr. Norman stepping into our Splash 'em tank at our Rebate and Redemption kick off pep rally on Friday, September 9.

Everyone had a great time watching several of our 2015-2016 classroom winners take their turn at splashing Mr. Norman. It was a wet and wild kind of day. Thank you to all of our students who donated Box Tops and other rebate items, and a big thank you to Mr. Norman for being such a great sport!

Remember to turn in those Box Tops and keep an eye out for more information on other Rebate and Redemption Programs. If you have any questions regarding any of our Rebate and Redemption Programs please contact Mary Hays at maryarro@hotmail.com.
One of Kindergarten's first Language Arts lessons was Environmental Print. We took a field trip around the school identifying all the signs around the school as well as on Oak Shores. Of course, the favorite signs were "STOP," "DO NOT ENTER," and "SCHOOL SPEED ZONE 20." The best part was making our own signs. Kindergarten is ready to be copilots in the car! They are watching to see if you're obeying the road signs.

Homeroom Happenings: 8th Grade is a very busy year. We are only five weeks into the school year, and we have begun tutoring for the high school entrance exams, chosen our class T-shirt, prepared for our four-night trip to Camp Allen and visited St. Pius X High School (co-ed), Incarnate Word Academy (girls) and St. Thomas High School (boys). We took the Camp Allen trip this week, and we will visit Frassati High School (co-ed) in October and St. Agnes (girls) and Strake Jesuit (boys) in November.

8th Grade: The past four weeks we have reviewed important concepts before moving into more complex concepts. Students have written algebraic expressions from word problems, reviewed the meaning and how to use variables to represent numbers, and have practiced all operations with integers. We will move into writing equations from word problems, solving equations with all operations, and learning all about inequalities.

7th Grade: We have been reviewing all operations with decimals and practicing all operations with integers. This has led to more complex expressions to simplify using the order of operations. Lastly, we reviewed all measurements of central tendency. In order to truly understand the meaning of each, every student made a paper airplane and recorded the distance flown. We then took the class data, computed all measurements, and discussed.

6th Grade: We have been busy reviewing large whole numbers, their place values, and reading and writing these larger numbers. This led to a deep understanding of decimals and their place values. Students have been learning and practicing all operations with decimals. It always helps to look at the tenths and hundredths place in terms of money. Everyone has jumped right in, and we have had a wonderful start to the new school year. The 6th graders have been impressive, way to go!!!
Middle school science news....

6th graders have been focusing on the nature of science and scientific inquiry. They are starting their unit on Earth-moon-sun and the interactions between them.

7th graders have reviewed the nature of science and scientific inquiry and are now studying the atmosphere. They discovered the challenges of hiking at high altitude and why magicians can flip a glass of water over with a piece of card stock over the opening and the water does not pour out!

8th graders reviewed the nature of science and scientific inquiry too. They just finished working with speed and acceleration and will be applying that knowledge as the study Newton’s Laws.

Welcome back to middle school literature. We are beginning this year with varied lessons. Sixth graders are reviewing and learning more about literary elements. One literary element students have been learning is how to find the five parts of plot by watching Pixar short movies. They also read a detailed version of “Jack and the Beanstalk” to use their newly acquired knowledge to find the elements of plot in a story. We will use all literary elements to interpret our first novel, which we will begin reading in a couple of weeks. Isn’t it too hot to start A Christmas Carol?

Seventh graders are using reading tools to understand mythology. We started by comparing and contrasting origin stories, moved onto the hero journey cycle, and are now researching mythological creatures. Students will finish the unit by writing and publishing a newspaper which could be found on Mt. Olympus. A lot of myths will be read and explored in the next couple of weeks.

Eighth graders are very excited to be making their own commercials. They have been studying the newspaper, propaganda, and the art of persuasion. They will use many devices including music, lighting, and wording to try to sell their newly created products. It is a very fun few days when we all get to watch the new commercials.

All students are busy reading their novels to take Reading Counts tests. Students need to continually read to help with many aspects in education. These include increasing background knowledge, introducing new vocabulary, learning correct sentence structure, and becoming better readers. Analogies have also continued in all classes. These are great thinking tools to help students learn that sometimes they have to think before an answer comes to them.

We are already on our way to a great 2016-2017 school year!
Religion

Religion class students have been exploring the Old Testament, New Testament and beginnings of the Christian church. Here are some questions you can ask your student and discussion points for your family.

**Grade 5**
Adam brought sin and death into the world. Who was victorious over sin and death? (Jesus)
Jesus showed He loved and cared for people who were poor and sick, or shunned by society. What can we do in our family that would help us to include others?

**Grade 6**
Who prays for us to her Son? (Mary)
Take a moment as a family to discuss what it means to have the Mother of God pray for your family. Place your intentions before her and ask her to bring your intentions to her Son with the Hail Mary.

**Grade 7**
Who is the Divine Revelation? (Jesus) Whom did He reveal? (The Father)
Take some time as a family to discuss how you have seen God revealing Himself to you as a family?

**Grade 8**
What does the word martyr mean? (to witness)
As a family, discuss what it means to be a witness to the faith. We may never be called to give up our physical life to be a witness to our faith, but we are called to witness. What does that mean to us as a family?

Middle School English

Oh, the places we went...!
Mrs. Shurtleff’s middle school English students have recently completed their narratives depicting their amazing summer vacations! We began the writing process with graphic organizers and outlines, composed rough drafts, and then peer edited. To finalize the project, we used the school’s classroom laptops to type our papers according to MLA guidelines. At the top of the list of favorite activities enjoyed was... making memories and spending time with family!

Middle School Social Studies

Middle School Social Studies encompasses so much, from geography, government, economics, and of course history. Our sixth graders began the year learning about geography and culture. We are currently studying about ancient civilizations and the origins of the world’s religions. The seventh graders began the year engrossed in the geography of Texas, its many regions, and its rich cultural heritage. We are currently studying the Texas indians and the Spanish Conquistadores. Our eighth grade classes have already learned about the Native Americans from Alaska to Mexico, as well as the European colonization of the Americas. These histories have set the stage for what is to come: the colonies, the revolution and the birth of a nation.

In the second half of October, all three classes will be learning the processes of our government as a lead in to the election. We are looking forward to the eighth graders organizing and executing a school-wide mock presidential election. Every eighth grader will have an active role in the process. We will have voter registration committees, chairpersons, a decorations committee and more.
Development Updates

Crusade for Excellence Fund

Crusade for Excellence information and pledge cards were mailed to all families in September. Currently, pledge cards can be found in the main school office.

Our school goal is to reach 100% commitment through a pledge and contribution!!

If SMCS reaches 100% commitment by May 1, 2017, the entire student body will receive a FREE DRESS DAY on May 18, 2017.

Since contributions will be made per family, all students in the family will receive credit for their class, grade, and school participation. Pledges may be paid through June 30, 2017.

For questions or more information, contact Development Director Cortney Waguespack at waguespackc@stmarthacs.org.

For any of you “old timers,” you might remember Lee Williams. He graduated from SMCS in 2010 and would be a junior in college. We have learned that Lee was in the hospital all summer due to a heart condition. He is now on an artificial heart and in need of a transplant.

Earlier this year, Lee was hospitalized for shortness of breath and diagnosed with asthma. Tragically, Lee actually doesn’t have asthma, but rather suffered a second heart attack due to congestive heart failure and required a syncardia total artificial heart to prepare his body for a heart transplant. Lee has Loeffler Endocarditis, a restrictive cardiomyopathy. Fancy words that mean he’s on the top level (1A) of the transplant list for a donor heart. Once doctors are sure his body is able to withstand the surgery (and there’s a donor heart available), he will have a heart transplant.

As the community of SMCS, we all need to pray fervently for Lee and his family.

May God Bless you, Lee Williams.....