

Mrs. Greco' Notes for August 2004

Many blessings on you and your family as you continue to enjoy this summer season. In choosing Catholic school you are contributing to a great tradition. Within the story of our church there are admittedly some dark moments, but there are shining moments as well, and these are our heritage. Tradition doesn't refer to something stuffy and dead. It means that the holiness that fired the hearts of the curious people who came to hear Jesus is available to us as well. It can be real and exciting and effective in your life and in the lives of your children. Many problems are beyond the ability of any one person to solve. The church multiplies our effectiveness in trying to create a better world. We're pleased to have you as partners in this educational year. We want to assure you that we will do our best to help your child experience academic, social, emotional, and spiritual growth. Immaculate is an environment that creates a strong social bond among students, faculty and administration. We strive to actively develop a sense of personal accountability and responsibility. This is a time of high expectations, hard work, good resolutions and a little bit of excitement. We look forward to greeting your children as they bring their youth, enthusiasm, and curiosity to us.

Our school opening begins on Wednesday, September 8th for students in grades 5 to 8. There is no school on Wednesday for students in grades 1 to 4. Thursday, September 9th is the first day of school for students in grades 1 to 4. There is no school on Thursday for grades 5 to 8. On Friday, September 10th, school is in session for all students in grades 1 to 8. All days are FULL DAYS. Please be sure your children have a bag lunch and drink. Our Milk/Beverage preordered drinks are not in effect. Our hot lunch program begins in October. It is a commitment to nutrition and is a great benefit for your child. School begins at 8:15 every morning and will end at 3:05. Uniforms are to be worn beginning with the first day of school. Summer uniforms are allowed until Tuesday, November 2nd. On cooler days, uniform sweaters and navy blue sweatpants for gym are worn. Please remember that our uniform suppliers are Flynn & O'Hara along with Rose Uniforms.

We will continue to follow the goals established with our Middle States reaccreditation in the spring of 2004. It is our hope that we will demystify assessment with the use of more formative assessment. With this evidence-centered teaching approach, student work will be our guide. Our teachers' evaluations will also be evidence based this year as our schools were asked to pilot the Archdiocesan rubric based model.

Immaculate was the recipient of three sizable grants this year that will help to enrich our school. The first was our Connelly Grant to fund \$30,000 for our laptop cart and software. Thanks to the sweat and dependability of parents (especially strong fathers), and 8th & 9th grade students, our library has undergone a major "redesign." As a result, the laptop cart will be a part of the library where it will be convenient for all the students to use. The second Connelly Grant was for 20 hours of in service for all of our teachers to increase our proficiency with Microsoft Office.

Our third grant is a \$10,000 mini grant for the state of Pennsylvania to fund a project we titled, "Seeing Philadelphia Through the 'Palms' of Our Hands." It will focus on the study and research of the city of Philadelphia and its historic and cultural sites. Students will compile their research to design and create a mosaic mural at school. It will be a year-long curriculum study that integrates History, Language Arts and Fine Arts. We partnered with mosaic artist Carol Stirton-Broad from the Abington Arts Center who will guide the students through the mural design process and teach them the art of mosaics. After giving children in grades 7 & 8 an overview of historic and cultural sites in Philadelphia, students will compare and analyze contemporary and historic meaning of the sites with each other in order to prepare for field trips to Center City. Students will visit the sites equipped with sketchbooks, digital cameras, handheld Palms, and disposable cameras to document their visits. Once photos are put on the Hard Drive at school, social studies teachers will help the students assemble their research using spreadsheets and charts, describing the sites in writing and giving oral presentations on each site to their peers. Children in grades 7 & 8 will use handheld Palms for this aspect of the project. A "PowerPoint Day" will take place after Christmas break so that each grade can share their presentations with the whole school. Then in the spring, the mosaic artist will begin work with all of the students in grades K-8 to sketch designs for a school mural based on their research of the City of Philadelphia. Students will learn about and create their own tiles using the entire mosaic process from beginning to end. During this time, students will be asked to write a reflection on the project using computer applications to publish their writings. The project will culminate with an official presentation of the mural to the school at the Annual Fine Arts Presentation 2005. Needless to say, we are very excited that we received funding for this project!

Curriculum changes in our support materials this year include Science Court, a technology program for grades 4 to 8 that introduces core science concepts using the Scientific Method. GramTech has been added and can be used for all grade levels. It is a program that provides progressive lessons in grammar regardless of a student's level of proficiency. Additionally, grades 2 to 8 will be using a vocabulary text along with our literature based reading program. Fourth grade students will be using a new Scott-Foresman Social Studies for their Pennsylvania course. All classes will participate in The Second Step program and teachers will receive their follow up training at our Organizational Day. The program emphasizes how the values of a school are reflected through everyday practices and in the physical surroundings. When the prosocial strategies are used consistently throughout the school, students and adults develop a common language, a sense of safety, and a trusting acceptance of self and others.

In selecting our support texts for our curriculum programs, an important component in our selection process is the integration of technology with the program. To that end, we continue to improve the technology software accessible to students. In the middle grades, our Prentice Hall Math and Science texts are available for student purchase as an interactive i-text. Our ICS web page (www.icsjenkintown.org) will continue to be updated by our 8th grade students to help keep you abreast of developments in all areas. We received 70 responses to our survey at the end of the school year with only four "no" responses to our plan of eliminating many of the "hard

copy” items in our Thursday communication. We noted the reservations that our “yes” replies had and will make the necessary revisions needed to be user friendly. At our Home & School meeting on November 18th, we will provide an online guided tour and explanation of the website.

We welcome three new staff members: Ms. Carrie Chirillo will be teaching Honors Math. She is Catholic school educated (a product of Honors Math) and a graduate of the University of Delaware. Ms. Chirillo is certified in Elementary Education and Middle School Mathematics meeting the federal definition of highly qualified in these two areas. Mrs. Denise Germont-Risser will be teaching Music. She is a graduate of Gwynedd-Mercy College and her love of music has allowed her to realize her creative capabilities. She has produced cassettes and CD’s of original music for children as Miss “D.” Ms. Kathleen Lauletta will be teaching Physical Education. She is a graduate of West Chester University in Health & Physical Education and her experience includes teaching at St. Martha’s. She also has the distinction of being named the MVP Catholic League in Track & Field. We welcome these talented teachers and look forward to their becoming members of our Immaculate community.

Home & School is helping us again this year with some capital improvements. New bathroom stalls will soon be in place in the cafeteria lavatories. Look for our Innisbrook Sale, Back to School Night, and our Pancake Breakfast in September. Then in October, our parish auction/social, “Homecoming” takes place. Your help is always appreciated. We depended a great deal on your support last year to make needed improvements and our moving forward with our academic goals often depends on our having the necessary funds in place. We use our funds carefully and always with the common good in mind. Last year’s auction enabled us to pay for the Church’s sound system, purchase banquet tables for the Church hall, purchase 16 computers for a complete Technology lab, purchase bookshelves for the library, purchase lavatory stalls for the cafeteria bathrooms, purchase area carpets for 3 classrooms, purchase and repair various items for classroom use by all the children of the parish.

As always, we thank you for your support and for welcoming all of us into your children’s lives,

- Pastor: Reverend Monsignor John J. Conahan
- Pastoral Associate: Mrs. Deborah Brown
- Principal: Mrs. Diane Greco
- Kindergarten: Mrs. Leslie Overmier
- Kindergarten Aide: Mrs. Veronica Parkes
- Grade 1: Miss Noelle Gola
- Grade 2: Mrs. Margaret Cooney
- Grade 3: Mrs. Margaret Pulicari
- Grade 4: Mrs. Rita O'Hara
- Grade 5: Mr. William Cooney
- Grade 6: Ms. Catherine Mamrol
- Grade 7: Ms. Megan McHugh
- Grade 8: Mrs. Georgina Hagarty

- Art & Computer: Mrs. Teresa Heinz
- Band: Mr. Alexander Schmauk
- Honors Math: Ms. Carrie Chirillo
- Library & Grade 6 Math: Mrs. Teresa Zygala
- Liturgical Music: Mrs. Stephanie Twohig
- Music: Mrs. Germont-Risser
- P.E: Ms. Kathleen Lauletta
- Secretary: Mrs. Mary Zeccardi
- Secretary: Mrs. Mary Beth Albrecht
- Custodian: Mr. Joseph Mooney
- Intermediate Unit Staff:
- Reading & Math: Mrs. Marge Ruppel
- Speech: Ms. Randi Chud
- Psychologist: Mr. Jeff Bellos

*NOTES***NOTES***NOTES***NOTES***NOTES***NOTES***

--Just a reminder, please remember that in addition to jumpers & kilts, uniform pants, shorts, and skorts are to be purchased from our uniform suppliers. The quality and appearance is obvious. It is our uniform code. Uniforms are checked periodically during the school year and infractions are issued for students who are not in compliance. Shoes with soles that don't leave black marks on the floor are a plus in keeping our building clean. Your continued support is appreciated.

--The calendars enclosed today do not have activity practices and meetings. They will be finalized at the Teachers' Organizational Day.

--We need Lunch Aides and Substitute Lunch Aides. This is a paid position and an important part of your child's day. Please call the office if you are able to help or have any questions.

--Our Library Birthday Book program will continue this year. Look for more information in September. Our Book Fair will take place in the fall and we plan to have it open on the weekend this year.

PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED INFORMATION. IT'S IMPORTANT! BE SURE TO CHECK BOTH SIDES.

God bless,
Mrs. Greco