



## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2009

I hope that all of you had a pleasant summer and had some time for rest and relaxation. I am looking forward to a great school year ahead. I would like to welcome those who are new to our St. Ephrem family and hope that you feel at home here. We have many support systems in place here to help you find your way around and I hope that you will avail yourselves of that support if you need it. Our Home & School board and Mrs. Rose, our secretary, are great resources and are always here to assist in any way they can – as is anyone on the faculty or staff. Please do not hesitate to ask for assistance.

We say goodbye to Mrs. Corlies who had to leave her position as PE teacher because family circumstances have called her to other responsibilities. We wish her well and thank her for all she has done for our students.

We have two new members on our faculty: Ms. Diane Myers who will be teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade this year and Mrs. Donna Ellis who will be teaching PE. I know that you join me in welcoming them to our school. We are happy to have them as part of our faith community. There has been an internal change as well: Mrs. Maryanne Burgmann, who taught the upper grades in her previous school, will be moving from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

As we continue with the implementation of the Rigor and Relevance plan being used across the diocese, we will strive to prepare our students to be innovative, problem solving, and able meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The home is a child's primary environment of learning and faith development. We are all here to assist you in any way we can to form your child in our faith and to develop his/her full potential. It is my sincere hope that all of us, parents/guardians, teachers, and staff will work together to foster in our students an enthusiasm for learning and an appreciation for quality Catholic education. As co-instructors of your children, our faculty and I appreciate and depend on your assistance and cooperation with us in nurturing all aspects of their development. None of us can do it alone, it takes teamwork.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to our teachers who spent many hours decorating and organizing their classrooms before school opened and to our office staff who have done many *behind the scenes* organizational tasks. I also thank our maintenance and cleaning staff for all their hard work painting and preparing the building for a new school year.

Sincerely,  
*Sister Mary Barbara Brahl, IHM*

## School Safety

As you know, the health department expects the H1N1 virus to return with a vengeance. Every school has been asked to have a plan of extra vigilance in place. All students will be required to wash their hands at both recesses and surfaces will be disinfected more frequently.

I ask that parents not send their children to school if they are ill. I know this is difficult when both parents are working, but we must take into consideration the wellness of all our students. If your child exhibits flu-like symptoms, please have him/her checked by a doctor. Also, have your children wash their hands frequently at home. Awareness and vigilance are the only weapons we have against a school-wide health crisis. I ask that everyone do his/her part to keep our students healthy.

## **Back to School Reminders**

The school day will begin at 7:55 AM and end at 2:45 PM. Car riders and walkers who arrive after 7:55 AM will be issued a late slip. (Please note that lateness eliminates a student from perfect attendance).

On their first day of class, all students in grades 1-8 will report to their previous class rooms and be taken to their new classrooms from there. Kindergarten students will report right to their new classrooms.

Students new to the school are to report to the cafeteria.

**Grades 1-4** will begin school on Wednesday, 9/9 and have off on Thursday.

**Grades K, 5-8** will begin school on Thursday, 9/10.

All grades (K-8) will report to school on Friday, 9/11

All students should be in their complete uniform beginning their first day. Please make sure that the students have the correct uniform (**girl's skirts should not be more than 1 inch above the knee**), shoes, and hair styles. Since everyone has a stationery list, each student should have a school bag and supplies with him/her on the first day. All copybooks and theme tablets must be purchased at school and will be sold starting the first day of school in the classrooms.

## **KINDERGARTEN**

There will be an Open House for our new kindergarten students and their parents on Wednesday, 9/9 from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. All kindergarten students are welcome to come and see their classroom and meet their teacher on that day. Representatives from Bensalem Transportation will be here to answer questions and give the students a short ride on the bus.

**Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 11:30 AM on both Thursday, 9/10 and Friday, 9/11. Since there is no bus transportation for early dismissals, PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILD'S TRANSPORTATION HOME BOTH DAYS.** (They may ride the bus to school on those days).

## **IDENTIFICATION**

It is necessary for all kindergarten, first, and second grade students to wear a tag indicating their name, address, phone number, AM and PM bus number, and bus stop until October 2nd. An index card and safety pin may be used for this purpose; sticky tags tend to fall off during the day.

## **CAR RIDER INFORMATION**

Please check the map with the directives for car riders on the website. Enter the driveway, keep to the right, and drive along the side of the parish center to the back of the school building. In the morning, students will be dropped off at the door nearest the Catapult trailer. In the afternoon, you will park in two side by side lines and the students will be released to get into their cars. For safety reasons, you are asked to turn your engine off while waiting for the students to be dismissed. When everyone is safely in their cars, the teacher on duty will signal for you to begin to leave. I caution you to look for buses and cars as you emerge from the back of the building at both times of the day. **Buses have the right of way.** Please note that for the safety of the students walking across to Hidden Valley and those on buses, the car line will continue to be dismissed last.

## **CARES**

The CARES program will begin on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. CARES is available before and after school hours. Forms for CARES information and registration are available on line and at the school office.



## **ST. EPHREM WEBSITE**

In an effort to go green and keep costs down, we have done away with paper communication. Updated school news, homework, teacher messages, and our parent-student handbook may be found on our website: [www.saintephremschool.com](http://www.saintephremschool.com). You will receive an e-mail reminder each week with a link to the website. Generally, communications will be posted on Monday and remain until they are no longer relevant. News that cannot wait until the following week may be sent as they come in. Some communications we receive to pass on are already printed, so we will continue to use the family envelopes for those communications, but school generated messages will be posted on line.

**Please remember to check your e-mail daily!!**

## **\*\*\*EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

We have asked for an e-mail address for every family and if applicable, a text message address. There is no fool proof system that will allow us to contact everyone. If there is an emergency closing **other than a snow related one**, your child will be safe and not sent home until you come for him/her. If the weather is bad, you need to check your e-mail or our website or use KYW for that information. Those who have provided us with a text address will be notified of all emergencies immediately.

I ask that you **not call the school office for dismissal information** as it ties up the lines and does not permit Bensalem Transportation to contact us. As soon as we know, it will be posted and e-mailed; calling will not get you the information any sooner and only adds to the confusion and tension which already accompanies emergency dismissals.

## **ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL**

School buses generally arrive at school around 7:40 AM, therefore we ask that those of you who bring your children by car not to drop off your child before that time. Since the drop off point is in the back of the building, no student should be left in the church lobby. **There is no supervision provided in classrooms prior to 7:40 AM.** If you wish to bring your child(ren) to school before 7:40 AM, please enroll them in the Before School CARES program.

### **\*\*\*APPOINTMENTS**

Please remember that appointments must be made to see a teacher or the principal. Teachers are responsible to supervise their students before the bell rings. Some parents are in the habit of the “*I just need to speak to you for a minute*” excuse. Parents/guardians may not just drop in; as we all have responsibilities that do not allow for unscheduled meetings. You may send in a note or call the office for an appointment and we will get back to you to discuss a mutually convenient time to meet.

### **GYM CLASS**

Gym classes will begin on Monday, 9/14. Please make sure that your child wears his/her complete gym uniform to school on the designated day.

### **INDIVIDUAL EARLY DISMISSALS**

Students should not leave school early -for appointments or trips- unless it is ABSOLUTELY necessary. There are a number of abuses in this area. These dismissals are disruptive to the student as well as to the classroom and the office. Since it is too difficult for Mrs. Rose to locate students during their lunch period, you are asked to pick them up before or after they eat lunch. Please be aware that students who leave early are not eligible for perfect attendance, just as they are disqualified for lateness to school.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

We have posted a revised tentative yearly calendar for this school year. Please discard the one received in June and keep this calendar in a safe place so that you can refer to it throughout the year. Monthly calendars will also be posted with updated events throughout the year.

**SCHOOL STATIONERY can be purchased at school beginning Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. All copybooks and theme tablets MUST be purchased from the school. Copybooks will be sold in the classrooms beginning the first day of class.**

### **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS**

Please be attentive to the dates for Back to School Nights. It is important that at least one parent/guardian attend this meeting to become familiar with your child’s teacher and what will be taking place in that class this year.

There is a general Home & School meeting scheduled for October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 PM in the cafeteria.

### **SCHOOL GOALS**

We are continuing to stress courtesy this year. Please work with us to help your child be mindful of manners and respect toward others. We are also trying to develop a spirit of prayerfulness, especially in regard to responses at Mass. Please encourage your child’s full participation when you attend Mass so that they realize that participation and good behavior are not only a *school thing*, but the *right thing*. We appreciate your support on the home-front!

### **PRETZEL ORDER**

We will begin selling pretzels on Monday, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>. Last year a number of parents ordered pretzels for a half year at a time. We will again offer this option for those who wish. Please know that we cannot reimburse you for days your child is absent. Pretzels for Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> to Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> will cost \$20.25 and for Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>, \$19.75. Please fill out the order form for the first half found on the Communication section of the website and send it to school no later than Wednesday, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>.

## **GOODSEARCH.COM**

Help the school earn money by using Goodsearch.com as a search engine. The school will receive one cent for each search. If you would like to make it your home page, open the Internet, click on tools, click on Internet options, type [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com), and click OK. Please note that this is a search engine like Yahoo or Google.

## **COLLECTIONS**

The school greatly benefits from your participation in saving Acme register tapes and Box Tops for Education. These are 2 easy fundraisers that cost you nothing. If you shop at Acme or use General Mills products, please send the tapes/box tops to school. Other easy fundraisers include using Target charge cards registered for our school, buying on-line products through the goodsearch.com website, and recycling paper in the bins located in our parking lot. Using our scrip program benefits you as well as our parish. Please try to support our *No Cost to You* fundraisers.

## **FLEX** (Foreign Language Experience – Program)

Spanish classes will again be offered as an after-school program. Information and registration forms may be found on the website. We are considering additional grades this year. Your interest will determine the offerings.

## **BAND**

On Wednesday, 9/16 there will be a meeting of parents whose children are interested in band lessons. The meeting will take place at 6:30 PM in the science lab.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

School pictures will be taken on Wednesday, 9/23. Students are to wear their school uniform on that day. All students will have their picture taken for school use. Order forms from Tipping Pictures will be sent home before the 23<sup>rd</sup> for those who wish to purchase pictures. Please fill out the order form and send it in with the exact amount of money in the envelope on picture day. We do not handle the money for pictures; it is given directly to the photographer.

## **CHANNEL 99**

Be sure to check your TV channel 99 for presentations of school news done by our own students.

## **LUNCH MONITORS**

If you are interested in being a substitute lunch monitor, call the school office for information.

## **SUBSTITUTES**

We are updating our substitute teacher list. If you know someone who is qualified and willing to be a sub, have him/her call school (215-639-9488). BA or MA degree is preferred and a STATE POLICE CHECK AND CHILD ABUSE CLEARANCE are mandatory.

## **HOME & SCHOOL**

The following is a list of our Home & School Board. We are grateful for their contribution of time and talent and for all they do for our school. Be sure to check the H&S section on the website for information on all activities.

President – Michele Musick

Vice President – Chris Kirby

Secretary – Monica Lombardi

Treasurer – Donna Crane

Program Coordinator – Karen Warwick

Hot Food Coordinator – Donna Pancoast

Volunteers are always needed in our Home & School endeavors throughout the year. Volunteer forms have been posted for sign ups.

## **CAMILLA HALL NURSING HOME**

Chances will be sold at all the Masses the weekend of September 19-20<sup>th</sup> for the benefit of our IHM retired and infirmed Sisters at Camilla Hall. Prizes total \$15,000 with the top prize as \$5,000. The chances are \$1.00 each, a book of 6 for \$5. Chances may also be obtained in the school office. We are grateful for any support you can give this worthy cause.

We are all looking forward to seeing you soon!