

October 12, 2009

Dear Parents:

Next week we are starting our annual "Communities" Program. This is a series of activities where we divide the whole school into small communities with an eighth grader and a seventh grader as leaders of the group. Each community usually includes at least one student from each of the other grades (K through 6). The community meets about eight times throughout the year and the final "Communities" event is Field Day. During their meeting time, the communities explore a topic through books, skits, drawings, writing activities, and videos. Time is also set aside for each community to play cooperative games in the gym and solve movement problems by working together. The seventh and eighth grade leaders learn about the topics ahead of time and practice their leadership skills. When the communities meet, the seventh and eighth grade leaders direct the activities and work with the younger students. Teachers or staff accompany each group but only assist if needed.

The purpose of communities is threefold. First, we want to help our older students learn leadership skills. Training in leading a group and working with different ages and personalities are so important in life. Second, we want our students to know each other at different grade levels. It is great to see the younger students rooting for their eighth grade leaders when we have the annual balloon toss or waving to the older students in the hall. Each year the older students send cards to their second grade community members for their First Communion. Third, we pick a topic each year which focuses on service to others. In addition, each year we also spend time working on learning to respect each other and ourselves.

Last year we started a cycle of studying one of the seven social teaching themes set by the Catholic Church and spent the year learning about "Caring for God's Creation." This year our theme is "Call to Family, Community, and Participation." Through various activities, we expect our students to have a better understanding of this important social principle.

This program is just one of the extra activities that we create at St. Brigid to expand our students' learning beyond the basic curriculum. Teachers and staff meet at extra meetings to create this program and Ms. Abel directs it. Ask your child about "Communities" and you are sure to hear about the fun learning experiences we have with this exciting program!

Attached is an outline of the upcoming dates as we begin our year of Communities. Volunteers are needed to supervise groups as there are not enough teachers or staff members to cover all 19 groups. If you can assist with the dates in October and November, please e-mail Ms. Abel at [jabel@stbrigidxenia.com](mailto:jabel@stbrigidxenia.com). Thank you for considering this service to our students.

Sincerely,

*Patricia L. Harner*

Patricia L. Harner,  
Principal

## **Communities – 2009-2010**

### **The Catholic Social Teaching theme for this year:**

#### **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

#### **Event # 1 – Meeting the Community Members and Going to Mass Together**

Tuesday, October 20            1:45-2:30 pm            Meet for the first time, play some ice breaker games, and create the group's pennant. Ms. Abel will go to each group and take a group photo to be added to the pennant once the photo is printed.

Wednesday, October 21       8:15 am                    Go to Mass in Communities. Groups will gather together in the school before going over to church. Pennants will be hung at the end of the pews.

#### **Event # 2 – Three Activities with a Theme of Family & Helping Our Neighbor**

Planned by Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade teachers

Thursday, November 5        9:00-9:45 am

Thursday, November 12      1:00-1:45 pm

Tuesday, November 17      10:15-11:00 am

#### **Event #3 – To be announced**

Planned by 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade teachers

#### **Event #4 – To be announced**

Planned by 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade teachers

#### **Event #5 – Field Day**

Planned by Ms. Abel

Thursday, June 3