



THE ACADEMY OF SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE

BRIDGES

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NOVEMBER 12, 2021



GRANDPARENTS DAY

Although plans were underway to welcome grandparents/special persons to our school on November 24, the presence of Covid-19 and the challenge of social distancing have led to the postponement of this event until in the spring. We are sorry for any disappointment that this causes, and look forward to hoisting grandparents later this year. Look for the "Save the Date" announcement in next week's *Bridges*.



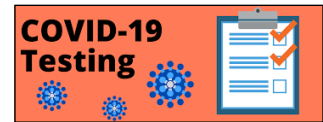
PARENT CONFERENCES



Thank you to all parents/guardians who participated in conferences with their teachers yesterday with in person or virtually. 75% of our school families took the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher. Parent conferences are an important means of strengthening the parent/teacher partnership, which strongly benefits the students. Parents who have not yet met with their child's teacher are strongly encouraged to reach out to him or her to schedule an appointment.

COVID-19 SCREENING

Our first screening was a huge success! The children were so cooperative and confident in taking part in this activity to protect their health and that of others. Our screening team was amazing and the process went very smoothly, especially for the first time. We are confident it will go even better as we move forward. Thanks to team members Nurse Self, Nurse Wright, Mrs. Bush, Mr. Loughner, and Mrs. Blackburn. The results were received 33 hours after the samples were picked up. The good news is that **no presence of Covid-19 was found** in those who participated. Our next screening will take place on November 22. Parents who did not sign-up their children may do so at any time.



IMPORTANT CALENDAR CHANGE



The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, November 24 was scheduled to be a Noon dismissal day. The Superintendent for Catholic Schools, Mrs. Branaman has directed principals to grant teachers an extra day off in recognition of the tremendous effort that our teachers are putting forth to keep children engaged, safe and acclimated to being back in school. As you know, St. Matthias has had its own staffing challenges with the resignation of the first grade teacher in September, the PE teacher in October and a shortage of people to cover these positions. We are still looking for a part time art teacher for grades 4-8. It is nearly impossible to find substitute teachers and parent volunteers for lunch and recess are also very rare. Until just recently, teachers were cleaning and sanitizing the 26 tables in the lunchroom at the end of an 8 hour day that still demands evening time to plan, grade and answer parent emails. We are very grateful to the early car line parents who now help out with this. Per Superintendent's Branaman's directive, **school will now be closed on November 24**. The half day will be moved to later in the year.



Monday, November 15
Week of Thanks begins

Thursday, November 18
God's Rods 3:00 - 4:15 pm

Friday, November 18
Pizza Friday
HSPT Registration Closes

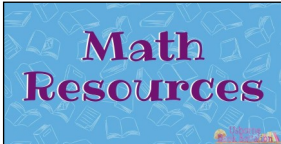


RAFFLE TICKETS

Every family will receive 35 raffle tickets to sell between now and January 31. The first drawing will take place during Catholic Schools Week. Parents may sign up to sell tickets after any of the St. Matthias masses both on weekends and after the daily 8:30 A.M. Mass. Since the raffle has been an annual school fundraiser for nearly 10 years, parishioners are very willing to purchase your tickets. They make great stocking stuffers for Christmas! If you would like to sell your tickets after Mass, please contact Mrs. Blackburn to sign-up. Please note that this participation in this fundraiser is required. Unsold tickets will be charged to individual TADS accounts in mid-February. Parents who would prefer to donate the \$350 will receive a charitable donation acknowledgement for tax return purposes.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW MATH RESOURCE TEACHER



We are very excited to welcome Ms. Gwendolyn Nolt to our staff as a part time math resource teacher. Ms. Nolt has a wealth of teaching experience with children of all ages. She is passionate about math education, has written math curricula, and taught other teachers best practices in math instruction. Ms. Nolt is currently serving in two other Catholic schools, both in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Her position is being funded through the ESSA grant and she is a contract employee of Catapult Learning, Inc, who also provides our Title 1 teacher, Ms. Lauren Linsao. Ms. Nolt will be working with select students in grades 1-8 on Thursdays and Fridays.

PICTURE DAY

Lifetouch Photographers will be at St. Matthias on December 6 to take portrait photos of the students and teachers. This is an out of uniform day. Many families have the children in their Christmas clothes and use the photos for family gifts. Please look for information regarding portrait packages soon.



CHILD PERSONAL SAFETY EDUCATION



As was discussed at the State of the School meeting on October 29, St. Matthias is committed to the continued instruction of the Personal Safety Education Program for our children in grades K-8. These age-appropriate lessons, which are taught by the school counselor in the presence of the classroom teachers, prepare students to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations. The lessons will take place between November 8 and November 22 during regularly scheduled religion classes. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Schratz.

BOOK FAIR

Thanks to all families who supported the St. Matthias Annual Book Fair. The children and staff had a wonderful time selecting books! The proceeds for the Book Fair are used to purchase new books for our school libraries. A special thank you to Mrs. O'Hare for sharing her love of literature with the children and for bringing this opportunity to our families. We are also grateful to the Book Fair volunteers for their assistance: Mrs. Concheeta Wright, Ms Mizpah Ashu, Ms. Melanie Barner, Ms. Abi Siyanbade, Ms. Camille Curvan, Ms. Kim McCafferty and Ms. Cidonne Njinkeng.



DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS?

Children who are in second grade and have attended either a Catholic school or parish religious education program last year are eligible to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in the spring. School families will receive an information folder next week with further details.

Catholic students in 8th grade will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in May. Students who are not yet enrolled in the Confirmation program, must contact Mr. Saverino.

If your child is in grades 3-8 and has not received First Holy Communion, but is baptized in the Catholic faith, please contact the school office to arrange for sacramental preparation.