



The Beehive

Summer 2008

June 2008

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ROLL OUT THOSE LAZY, HAZY, CRAZY DAYS OF SUMMER!

Dear Saint Ambrose Parents,

It is already time to start thinking about pool parties and barbeques. It seems like yesterday that we all met in the school gymnasium for ice cream before the school year officially began. In no time at all, we met for the Christmas concert; and the Gala followed close on the heels of Christmas this year. We celebrated an early Easter and, as predicted, time seemed to accelerate, bringing us here to the end of another very successful school year. As we say in the Army: "HOOAH!"

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the concerned parents who volunteered their time and talent to our great (though small) school. Through your kindness and generosity, we have been able to set an example for our children and foster the loving atmosphere we have all come to know at Saint Ambrose. Thank you also for your generosity during our Pledge Drive and at the Gala. As we laid out for you last month in the *Beehive*, your monetary donations are returned to the school through procurements of ACTIVBoards, computers, classroom supplies, field trips and so on. Our partners in the Parish and on the Saint Ambrose Development Committee have also provided substantial donations, whether funding or materials, to help keep our school competitive with other elementary and middle schools, both locally and state-wide. Thank you all!

On behalf of the PTO Membership, I want to congratulate the graduating eighth graders and wish them God's blessings as they commence their high school journey. Our ambassadors to the Diocesan school system are our students. These rising ninth graders are our scholastic and Christian-witness representatives to their high schools, and I am certain they will continue leading by example and setting high standards as they have done here at Saint Ambrose.

Enjoy your summer and remember; you do not have to be a PTO Board member to serve our school in a significant way. There are many opportunities for you to get involved through voluntary service. Take the summer to think about how you can make a difference at Saint Ambrose in the next school year and ask a PTO Board member to help you get involved. Once you get involved, you will wonder why you did not do it sooner.

God bless you and keep you in His care,

Brian K. Frank

PTO President

THE "BUZZ"



*"May the road
rise up to meet
you, may the
wind be ever
at your
back. May the
sun shine
warm upon
your face and
the rain fall
softly on your
fields. And
until we meet
again, may
God hold you
in the hollow
of His hand."*

-Irish Blessing

Dear Saint Ambrose Families,

When I came to Saint Ambrose three years ago, I was made to feel immediately welcomed by the children, the parents, and the staff. I was determined to keep a certain "professional distance" because I knew how hard it was to leave Holy Spirit and I thought that if I could just keep things in perspective and not get too emotionally involved then I would be fine. Well, you know me well enough to see how long that lasted! The children soon chipped away at my resolve and I felt that Saint Ambrose was my home (and I spent the hours here to support that!).

I cannot thank all of you enough for your support. I have been strengthened by your prayers, your smiles, and your kind words. Please know that it is a difficult and challenging role to be a principal. The responsibilities can seem overwhelming at times, and the many hours that are required are given at great sacrifice to family life. I am very blessed with a loving and supportive family who strongly shares my belief in the importance of Catholic education.

We are very blessed at Saint Ambrose. While many other schools are experiencing enrollment concerns, we continue to have new families register at our school. I meet with them and am so proud to hear the wonderful reputation that our school has throughout the area.

I want to give a special thank you to those who worked so hard to give me such a special send-off. The gathering last night was wonderful and I will carry many memories away with me. Thank you to those who braved the elements to come and enjoy the delicious food and special fellowship. Thank you, also, for your generous contributions to the "Mrs. Yates Reading Nook" in the library, the beautiful statue of the Holy Family, the Papal Blessing, and the rosaries blessed by the Pope. Thank you to Father Irace and the parish community for the beautiful crystal candle sticks. I told my husband that I need a new dining room set to match the new candle sticks!

Thank you, most of all, for the gift of your children. The cards and pictures that adorn my office, their smiles, enthusiasm, and love fill my days with such joy.

Please know that you will be in my prayers – I am always just a phone call away!

God bless,

Joanne Yates



Joanne Yates

SPOTLIGHT ON MRS. CUCCIAS BY DEBBIE CAFFI

How blessed our Kindergartners are at St. Ambrose! Mrs. Cuccias is a wonderfully energetic and enthusiastic Kindergarten teacher who brings her strong Catholic Faith into the classroom. When Mrs. Rosapep moved to Colorado with her husband in December of 2007, Mrs. Cuccias was the perfect fit to take on the St. Ambrose Kindergarteners.

Mrs. Cuccias was born in northern New Jersey and is the youngest of four girls. As a young girl she had two favorite hobbies; softball and dancing. After a blow to the mouth

with a softball, Mrs. Cuccias decided to put all her energy into dancing. She started at the age of 5 and has danced ever since.

In high school Mrs. Cuccias continued to study dance, taking classes 3-4 times a week. With her love of the arts it was a natural for her to become a part of the Drama Club. She enjoyed this extra-curricular activity and said she usually landed the "dance roles".

After high school Mrs. Cuccias attended St. Thomas Aquinas in

upstate New York for two years. She thought she wanted to go into business; she declared herself a business major. During her time at St. Thomas Aquinas Mrs. Cuccias took some Child Psychology and Childhood Education classes...SHE LOVED IT. With this new found love and interest she transferred to James Madison University in Virginia. At JMU she focused her efforts in Special Education/Childhood Education and minored in dance. While at JMU, Mrs. Cuccias was a member of the modern dance group.



VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH—IDA SMITH AND BARBARA HUVANE!

Ida Smith: Ida Smith has been a supportive parent in our school for many years. Often, before anyone realizes something needs to be done, Ida has already done it! She was a driving force in the Grace Art program and in starting the Three Kings Gift Shop. She helped run and/or decorate many a Gala and enlisted her daughter to donate the beautiful centerpieces for the Gala tables each year. And what would the Gala be without Ida's beautifully decorated Ladies Lounge! She's worked car washes, bake sales, been a room mother, secured teacher gifts, and other responsibilities far too numerous to count. Many of our 8th graders have treasured memory books from their time at St. Ambrose thanks to Ida's hard work, picture collecting and creativity. With all that she does, she is never too busy to think of others with her loving concern and prayers. Her youngest child, James is graduating this year. Like her son, Ida is entering a new stage in her life as she becomes the new School Secretary. We are heart-broken to be losing Mrs. Fox this year, but we can think of no greater replacement for the heart of our school than Ida Smith.

Barbara Huvane: Barb Huvane has been a quiet force around our school for many years. She is the epitome of the behind-the-scenes hero. Over the years she has helped with the Three Kings Shop (if your child came home with jewelry in a covered Altoids box, Barb covered that box), Grace Art, numerous bake sales, and countless other services. All any teacher or room mom has had to do is ask, and she is there to help. Barb's greatest contribution has been to our young readers. She was here with Marcia Healy years ago to help automate the library, spending hours cataloging our books in the new computer system. She has been a discussion leader for Battle of the Books and is often in the library, helping kids find books and checking them out. Even though her youngest child, Annie is graduating this month, Barb has assured Marcia that she will be around to continue to help out our school. What a wonderful gift she is to us!

*"The love we
give away is
the only love
we keep."*

- Elbert Hubbard

SPOTLIGHT ON MRS. CUCCIAS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

During her high school and college years Mrs. Cuccias held many part-time jobs to help pay for her dance classes. What a commitment that was! She worked at a pizza parlor, ice cream shop, waitressing and her favorite job was working in the Dietary Department of a hospital. Mrs. Cuccias was a very busy young lady. No wonder she has the stamina to keep up with those St. Ambrose Kindergartners.

After graduating from JMU with a degree in Early Childhood Education, Mrs. Cuccias moved back to New Jersey. She started her teaching career in the field of Special Education working with autistic and emotionally disturbed children. After a year in New Jersey Mrs. Cuccias wanted to move back to Virginia, which she fell in love with during her time at JMU. She accepted a position with the Fairfax County Public Schools. Mrs. Cuccias taught 3rd grade for 2 years and Kindergarten for 6 years at Old Creek Elementary.

Mrs. Cuccias was a parishioner of St. Leo the Great for many years while living in Fairfax. This is where she met her husband of 13 years, Matthew Cuccias. She maintained a very busy life as an active

member at St. Leos, teaching at Old Creek and dancing. During her time teaching at Old Creek Mrs. Cuccias also accepted a position dancing in a professional modern dance company. She took a break



from her dance career when she was pregnant with her first child. Mrs. Cuccias took a break from teaching for 8 years and stayed home with her children, Mitchell in 4th grade and Anna Rose in 1st grade. During her time at home Mrs. Cuccias started her own creative movement company, called Movement Matters. She

brought her love of dance to preschool age children in government run day care centers in Washington, DC.

In her spare time Mrs. Cuccias enjoys going to her children's sporting events; baseball and tae kwon do for Mitchell and soccer for Anna Rose. She also loves to cook Italian food, when she can find the time. The Cuccias family takes a summer trip to North Myrtle Beach each year and last year enjoyed a wonderful trip to the Magic Kingdom.

When asked what she loves about St. Ambrose, her response is what so many of us love, the small size, the strong sense of community, the focus on teaching the Catholic faith and the freedom to pray with her students.

So, as you can see, with her teaching background, her background working with young children and her love for the St. Ambrose community, we are so blessed to have her teaching our littlest ones.

God Bless you Mrs. Cuccias.