



SMPA Middle School News

Principal's Desk Publisher Volume No. III Issue No. 4 January 30, 2008



Catholic School Week

This week we are joining with Catholic schools throughout the country to celebrate the amazing contribution these schools have made to our communities. St. Martin de Porres is an independent Catholic school financed primarily by private donors and through their assistance we are able to offer young people in the New Haven community a tuition-free education with a spiritual component unavailable in public schools. The plan for this week has been sent to all of our families. We hope everyone enjoys the week and that our families will join us Friday afternoon at 5 p.m. for our annual Soul Food Dinner!

Sunday – Student representatives Briana Woods and Branden Rose join students from Ct. for celebratory Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral in Hartford

Monday – academic uniform – Ice Cream Sundae Day

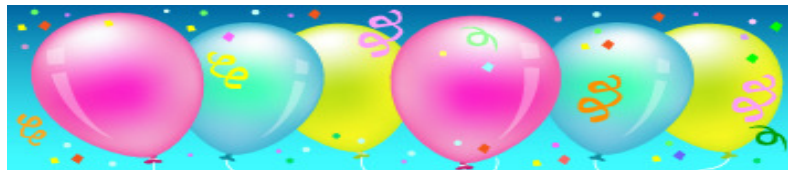
Tuesday – academic uniform – Do Unto Others Day

Wednesday – gym uniform – Pep Rally and 4 on 4 Basketball Tournament

Thursday – gym uniform - Ice Skating Day

Friday – Business Dress Day for all students; Jazz Ensemble presentation; Honors Assembly & Soul Food Dinner @ 5 p.m.

On Tuesday, several of our classes will be volunteering their services at the Catholic Worker, the animal shelter, our Pre-K and cleaning the school and parish grounds and Trowbridge Square Park-chances to make our school and community a better place. On Wednesday we will be having our first Basketball Tournament at the Boys & Girls Club organized by Mr. Eloi. We will also be honoring our cheerleaders and basketball team with a Pep Rally. Thursday our kids will be enjoying an afternoon at the N.H. indoor ice skating rink. This event has been organized by Ms. O'Leary. Friday, students will come to school dressed up as if they were going to work. Last year this was an especially fun day as we had a preview of the lawyers, business CEO's, educators that our kids aspire to be in twenty years. In the afternoon we will have a concert by a Jazz Ensemble and top off the week and open African American History Month with our annual Soul Food Dinner.



Spelling Bee Championship Winners

Our annual Spelling Bee Championship was held Friday, January 18 at our Community Gathering.

The competition was preceded by classroom runoffs and each class had three competitors. Boys and girls competed together for the championship.

Grade 5: Champion: Maliek Williamson and alternate: Malik Joyner

Grade 6: Champion: Xena Cordero and alternate: Xena-Aixa Greene

The seventh and eighth grades, while not officially spelling bee competitors, also had winners:

Grade 7 & 8 Boys: Champion: Kahdeem Cohens – third year in a row!

Girls: Champion: Ki'Yonta Stevenson

Reminder: February 13 at 5 p.m. Monthly Parent Forum Please join us!



Gala Band and All-State Band Rosters Announced

Once again our music program will be represented at the FMI concerts for all star students. This year we expect to have students on the Gala Band and the All-State concert bands. Those students who will represent our school this year are:

All State Concert Band

Maria Gant, Chanttal Cabral and Drew May on flute; Alexandria Doyles on clarinet; Charles Williams on saxophone; Philip Morrison on trumpet, and Akayla McKinnie on percussion. These young people will also be performing at Lincoln Center in New York City in May. Auditions were held this past Friday and Saturday.

Gala Band

Justin Colville, Xena Cordero, Tiera Edwards, DeAndre Handley, Quaseem Hunter, Myah Moye, , Kenneth Reddick, Jaelin Robinson, Javier Stephens, Ki'Yonta Stevenson, Ali Testman and Thomanique Welch.

Our special congratulations to Philip Morrison who earned second chair in the All-State Concert Band and to all of these young people who will be worthy representatives for SMPA and to our unsung hero, their teacher, Mrs. Peters, who works so hard to ensure that our kids can compete on this high level of competition. Most importantly, our thanks to those special donors who have made this entire music program possible for all of our kids – whether an all-star or one who is still a novice. They each have been given a lifetime gift of music.

Welcome!

Saint Martin Welcomes New Staff People

With the return of students in January we were faced with the loss of Ms. Araujo who had returned home to Texas early because her mom has suffered an accident. The severity of her injuries compelled Ms. Araujo to stay with her mom. So, we set out to find a new Spanish teacher. We interviewed and had three teachers conduct Spanish class. Ultimately, we decided that the best fit for us was Mrs. Martha Baloga. A West Haven resident, Mrs. Baloga is a native of Ecuador and a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and is presently pursuing her Masters in Spanish. She has three children, two daughters and a son. We are excited to have Mrs. Baloga with us to fill this very important position at SMPA.

Our cocurricular program has also added several new people to its staff. Jen LeCuyer, a graduate student at the University of New Haven, will be working with Ms. Anderson three days a week organizing activities. In addition, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Luke Hill, a senior sociology major at Quinnipiac University, has joined our staff. A musician, Luke has some interesting ideas about new programs we can start. Finally, Gabriel Velazquez, a student at Gateway Community College, has reconnected with our school. Mr. Velazquez will be working primarily in the office – a need that was expressed to us by our families at the January Parent Forum. With the addition of Mr. Velazquez, the main desk will be attended during that period 4 to 5:30 which has been a concern. Mr. Velazquez has worked with us while a student at Notre Dame High School and was a student at the former Sacred Heart St. Peter School so he is very familiar with the building and our students. Welcome to all!

Second Term Report Cards Issued

Second term report cards will be mailed to our families this Wednesday. Families who wish to schedule a conference with the teachers should contact the homeroom teacher who will arrange an appointment that is convenient for everyone. First and Third term report cards are issued at mandatory family conferences, but the second term is optional. Reminder: Join us this Friday as we honor students for their achievements for second term at 5 p.m.



We Have Lockers!!!

When we returned to school on a recent Monday, we were thrilled to have lockers installed outside the classrooms. No more messy bins or milk crates! No more class interruptions to find the wayward book! No more books dropped into the wrong bin – Alleluia!

Students were assigned lockers and were responsible for providing their own combination locks if they wished to lock their lockers. It is great to walk through the halls and see the lockers neatly aligned – no loose papers – well, almost none.

Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Nancy Harold, one of our most energetic volunteers, we were able to have 100 lockers donated to the school from the Farms Country Club in Wallingford. They are huge – big enough even for those gigantic coats some of our kids wear in the cold weather. The club is in the midst of a renovation project for their locker rooms, and was generous to not only donate, but deliver them too.

Many of the students have already decorated their lockers with mirrors, and pictures – and we hope they are keeping them neat so they can easily find their books etc. Thanks again, Nancy!



School Newspaper Staff Visits WTNH-TV

The Columbus Avenue Press, the St. Martin de Porres Academy student newspaper, has recently published its third edition. Under the guidance of their faculty advisor, Ms. Kalimon, the staff has been able to produce a wonderfully readable publication. Two weeks ago, Ms. Kalimon took her staff for a visit to WTNH-TV to see the 12 noon news show. They met Dr. Mel and the anchors of the show. It was an opportunity for our rookie reporters to see how much work goes into producing a news show. Perhaps it was also a glimpse into the future for some of our cub reporters. Special thanks to Kitty Champlin, our Development Director who arranged this trip.



Carnation Club Sponsors Talent Show on February 8

We have a new club at SMPA – the Carnation Club, and its off to a fast start. As its first activity they will be sponsoring a Student Talent Show on February 8. Students wishing to participate had their auditions last week and will continue to practice. All acts were previewed for suitability and expertise by Carnation members and their advisor, Mrs. Swift. We will have singers, dancers, poets, and gymnastics. Audience members must purchase a ticket from Carnation Club members. The cost??

A donation to the Umbrella Organization. This organization helps families who are escaping abusive situations. Members distributed lists of needed items including diapers, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant etc. This is a worthy cause and we congratulate the members of the Carnation Club for their support for this organization.



Basketball Season Continues

The SMPA basketball season is continuing and has recently been joined by our cheerleading squad leading the cheers for our young men. We are fielding our first varsity team and they are competing against predominantly eighth grade squads from much larger schools. The experience our young men are garnering should hold them in good stead in the future. The boys have fought valiantly, but are yet to score their first victory. Last week their efforts were joined by our cheerleading squad who showed their skill and enthusiasm at the game at Conte School.

The young men who have been playing so tough this year are: Branden Rose, Trevonne Rose, Xavier Yancey, DeAndre Handley, Kahdeem Cohens, Joshua Blumell, and Philip Morrison. The cheerleaders are led by their advisor, Ms. Penn: Daisha Brabham, Akayla McKinnie, Myeshia Brumell, Xena-Aixa Greene, Alisha Brabham, Lavenia Darden, Janasia Brooks-Johnson, Jade Epps and Danale Frison.

The next games are Sunday, Feb. 3 at 3:45 vs. St. Mary of Branford in Branford and Wednesday Feb. 6 vs. Our Lady of Mercy at 7:15 at Conte Well Hills. Come join us and cheer the SMPA kids!

Cocurricular Activities Offer Opportunities for New Experiences

Cocurricular activities for this year have been able to give our kids the chance to try activities that they would not have tried before. Ballroom Dancing, sponsored by Yale students, Computer Savvy sponsored by Quinnipiac students, and swimming at the LEAP pool are only some of the programs that kids could choose from. We have several ongoing programs which continue to attract large interest especially our Peace & Social Justice Club and Chess. Of course we have Hip Hop, Gospel Choir, cheerleading, basketball, drama, and the newly formed Carnation Club which is unique in that it focuses its attention on improving our school. This Friday, our students will select their activities for the third term. We expect that they will continue to expand their horizons as they try something new.

P.E @ Boys & Girls Club

Last week we were thrilled to be able to have access to the New Haven Boys & Girls Club for our P.E. classes. Thanks to the cooperation of the staff of the club, we not only can use the facilities but the equipment. Mr. Eloi, our gym teacher, will no longer have to finesse the program due to the weather. With the help of Ms. Anderson, we walk the students to the club. We have contacted Professor Fede from Southern CT University to help us develop a physical education program. Ms. Fede conducted our program with her SCSU Physical Education students for the first two years when we were at our Hamden location. With our move, the arrangement was no longer practical. We want our program in physical education to meet national standards. One important note: Students must have their gym uniform and sneakers to participate.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Wednesday, Feb. 13 – Parent Forum @ 5 p.m. Feb. 18 -22 - winter recess
March 21 – no school – Good Friday March 24 – no school – Easter Monday April 14-18 - spring recess
May 3 – Spring Fling – SMPA fundraiser at Lighthouse Point: dinner,dancing, auction
June 9 – Grade 8 graduation
June 13 – Spring Concert – mandatory participation of all students – please mark your calendars.



“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think creatively. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Bowes, Mrs. Surowiecki, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Rivera, Mrs. Baloga, Mrs. Champlin, Mrs. Couch, Ms. Del Guidace, Mr. Dillon, Mrs. D’Urso, Mr. Eloi, Ms. Gazvoda, Mrs. Gongaware, Mr. Hill, Ms. Kalimon, Ms. LeCuyer, Sr. Louise, Mr. Messina, Mr. Marreo, Mrs. Moore, Mr. Murphy, Ms. O’Leary, Ms. Penn, Ms. Peters, Mrs. Shevelinka, Ms. Stahl, Mrs. Staples, Mrs. Swift, Ms. Williams.