



Our Mother of Consolation Parish School

17 E. Chestnut Hill Ave ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19118 ♦ 215-2470430 ♦ www.omcparish.com

1862 ♦ Celebrating 150 Years of Catholic Education in Chestnut Hill ♦ **2012**

August 2011

Summer Salutations Parents and Guardians,

First off let me apologize for the length of this letter. I do ask, however, that you find a few uninterrupted, calm minutes, maybe with a cool drink and take the time to read it over. I say this because there is an array of darn, good things that I want to tell you about.

The 2011-2012 school year approaches. As the header above indicates 2012 will represent a historic milestone for Our Mother of Consolation Parish School. It will mark the 150th year since the Sisters of St. Joseph established our school. 2012 will not just celebrate 150 years of our existence but more importantly 150 years of providing a quality education steeped in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Over the past century and a half Our Mother of Consolation Parish School has graduated literally thousands of young men and women who have contributed to what's good in the world. We endeavor to continue to make this contribution well into the future.

A qualified, dedicated and faith-filled faculty is essential to helping students fulfill their academic and spiritual potential. Fortunately we have a faculty who, in this biased opinion, is unsurpassed. I'm happy to report their return. Our faculty and staff for the 2011-2012 school year includes:

8 th Grade – William Brennan	Library – Sr Theresa Cargan Diane Luffy
7 th Grade – Richard Leonard	Spanish – Madeline Leonard
6 th Grade – Anthony Iraci	Technology – Melissa Nash
5 th Grade – Nancy Rowbottom	Art/Music – Beth Mead
4 th Grade – Melissa Logan	Physical Education – Jenna Filipone
3 rd Grade – Lisa Feeley	Advanced/Horizons Math – Megan Zakrzewski
2 nd Grade – Nancy Weir	Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – Betsy Puntel
1 st Grade – Maryanne Tobin	Aides – Cory Hansen Judy Clark
Kindergarten – Vikki Mayberry	Chris Brennan- Hagy
Pre K – Christine Gallagher	

Ms. Beth Mead has joined our faculty to teach both *Art and Music*. Ms. Mead is a graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art and acquired her Master's in Education from Arcadia University. In addition she has more than 75 credits in formal music study at the college level. Ms. Mead has her teaching certification in three states and has taught Art at all grade levels in the Philadelphia public and parochial schools over a 12 year period. In addition, she has been a performing musician and teacher of instrumental and ensemble music for the past 15 years. Most recently she has taught

music at the college level. Her instrumental lessons include instruction in guitar, ukulele, mandolin, piano and banjo. We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Ms. Mead's talent with us. Please welcome her warmly.

Ms. Jenna Filipone will be our new *Physical Education* teacher. Ms. Filipone is a recent graduate of McDaniel College (formerly Western Maryland College) with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Exercise Science and Physical Education. She holds K-12 teaching certification in both Pennsylvania and Maryland. Ms. Filipone was a four year varsity athlete at the college level. Over the past year she has taught Physical Education in suburban public and parochial schools. Ms. Filipone brings an energetic, positive approach to Physical Education and we also welcome her among us.

I am very happy to report that we have received two grants over the summer. One is from the **Connelly Foundation**. We have been chosen as one of twenty-seven schools in the Archdiocese to receive an *Access Grant*. This grant will afford our students the opportunity to view and participate in a variety of cultural programs created by some of the finest arts, historic and scientific organizations in the Philadelphia area. All ticket prices and bus fares are covered through this grant and it is extended to us for the next three years. What a gift!

We've also received a small grant through the *Chestnut Hill Community Fund* to begin some new landscaping of the outdoor Pre K play area in front of school. We are endeavoring to enter into a partnership with Philadelphia University *Landscape Architecture* students to plan a revitalized play area while keeping nature in mind. Thanks goes to Rob Remus for his help in acquiring this funding.

Our faculty is supported each year by a number of specialists and aides but this new school year will have support that is greater and more diverse than ever. In recent years we have had three *classroom aides* and Elwyn Inc. personnel which include an *Educational Psychologist*, a *Learning Support Specialist*, a *School Counselor*, a *Speech Therapist* and a *Foundations Instructor* for Kindergarten. Also, the Philadelphia MERIT Center has provided a *Reading Consultant* to help teachers develop more effective Language Arts lessons. This year we will also have a MERIT *Improvement of Reading Teacher* who will work directly with those students needing support in Reading. We were fortunate at the very end of last school year to have two former OMC school mothers with professional backgrounds in education come back as support specialists. They will continue this next school year working with students and teachers. Their certification rests in *Special Education* and *School Based Literacy*. Also near the end of last school year through Father Bob we were able to reach out to the Sister's of St. Joseph in an effort to invigorate our school with the Sister's spirituality and teaching expertise. As a result, in the last months of last school year *Sister Mary Toole* and *Sister Kathleen O'Toole* began supporting classroom instruction in 3rd and 4th grades. This will continue through the next school year also. All this means that our school, this year, will have a minimum of **fourteen support personnel** in the school, week in and week out, in addition to our eighteen regular faculty members (full and part-time). **We, therefore, total thirty-two educators working in our school weekly.** *This is outstanding and averages out to one trained, professional educator for approximately every 6 students in the school.* This is a very low student to instructor ratio which can only benefit the students of Our Mother of Consolation.

Over the summer, our school gets a good cleaning and repairs are made throughout. Mr. John Jeffers and Mr. Marty Ward have refreshed the School library and bottom floor classrooms. We thank these men for their efforts along with Father Bob for his desire to keep our school in tip-top shape.

Your support of Home and School fundraisers this past year have allowed us to purchase several desktop computers as well as laptops and a new projector. Through one of our new parents, Mrs. Jackie Fooks, we've also received a generous donation of relatively new technology equipment from the Social Security Administration

Again this school year we will offer some **twelve After-School Programs**. Through a grant we received last summer, our school greenhouse has been rebuilt and is ready for new cultivations by the *Horticultural Club*. A new program this year will be the **FIRST Lego Program** which involves robotics. Look for flyers and announcements about all our After-School Programs and Clubs in the first weeks of the new school year.

Please remember that all families are expected to get involved with at least one volunteer activity during the school year. Enclosed in this packet is a copy of the **Parent Volunteer Program**. After reviewing it you can choose an activity and volunteer right away by sending in the form at the back of the packet the first week of school. At our Back-to-School Nights, you can speak with H& S Board members to learn more about the opportunities.

Also enclosed you will find two schedules for the school year. First is the **School Calendar**. While this is subject to changes, they will be few and minor. Please keep it for reference throughout the school year and affix it to a prominent place in the house like the refrigerator. The **Back-to-School Nights** should be circled. It is imperative that at least one parent attend. The information presented those nights lays the foundation for the entire school year. The second schedule is our **Schedule of School Liturgies** for the year. All are invited to attend so it should be retained as well.

The **Emergency Cards found in this mailing are required to be turned in on the first day of school. A fully completed card is necessary for each child you have in school.** All students are to be in proper school uniform which includes the proper school shoes and gym uniform. Specifics can be found in our **Handbook of School Policies**.

We also ask that you complete the enclosed *Parental Permission Form for Elwyn Services* and send it to school with your child on the first day. **Your child will NOT receive services unless you are notified in advance and agree.** Should your child need services and you agree, it saves time to have the paperwork already completed.

In the remaining days of this summer, endeavor to keep your children active physically, mentally and spiritually. In guiding the development of a child all three are equally important. When school and family are on the same page in this regard and supporting each other's efforts, full potential is more likely to be achieved.

I hope to see you at our kick-off **Prayer Convocation and Ice Cream Social** on Tuesday, September 6th at 6:30PM. Referring back to the opening second paragraph, please consider signing on to help us plan the celebration for the upcoming 150th anniversary. Sue Lasek has begun a committee and will welcome your participation. Just let her know.

Peace and best wishes,
Bruce Hagy
Principal

