

September Newsletter

Notre Dame Elementary School

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Welcome to Notre Dame Elementary School! This is the first of the monthly newsletters that will be published for the 2011-2012 school year. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform you of happenings within our school. It is our intention to publish the newsletter at least one week before the beginning of the next month. While this is a hard copy, future newsletters will be posted to our website at the above address. If you have Internet difficulties we would be very happy to supply you with a copy of the newsletter on a monthly basis. Please contact the school office to make these arrangements.

In order to facilitate communication please feel free to contact me by either phone or email with concerns about school policies, facilities issues, tuition, or anything pertaining to grades Kindergarten through Grade 6. You may call me at the above number or email me at jhauck@syrdiocese.org. Mrs. Polito, the assistant principal, is the director of our Pre-K program and oversees the cafeteria. If you have any questions or concerns about those areas please contact her by phone or email cpolito@syrdiocese.org. Mrs. Maio, our administrative assistant, may be contacted for information concerning upcoming events, activities, busing, etc. You may call her or email her at vmaio@syrdiocese.org. Dismissal and arrival times are very hectic. Please avoid those times if at all possible when calling the school. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Notre Dame Elementary School's mission is to create an environment that is Christ centered while offering a quality academic program. Please let us know if we can improve in some way. I hope that you and your child have a wonderful school year.

Mrs. Hauck

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Our first day of school is on September 8 when all services will begin: cafeteria for breakfast and lunch, busing and before and after school care. Children are required to be in school by 7:50 in order to be prepared for the bell at 8:00 A.M. If your child arrives between 7:20 and 7:50 A.M., please have him/her go directly to the cafeteria for Before Care. After 7:50 A.M children should report directly to their classroom. Homeroom teachers will pick up their students from the cafeteria at 7:50 A.M. and no child is to be left unattended in the cafeteria.

Dismissal in the afternoon begins with Pre-K at 2:15 P.M. To alleviate congestion in the hallways, we ask Pre-K parents to use the door by the fire lane where you will be greeted by two Pre-K aides who will help you locate your child's classroom. They will be at the door until 2:30 P.M. At 2:30 P.M. the remainder of the Pre-K children will be taken to After Care.

Dismissal begins at 2:25 P.M. for all Kindergarten through Grade 6 students. Prayers and announcements take place at that time followed by the calling of buses and then car riders and walkers. The estimated time for dismissal for car riders is 2:40 P.M. Parents and guardians of students in grades kindergarten through six are asked to remain outside at dismissal time to alleviate congestion in the hallways.

Classroom teachers will dismiss car riders. The children will be instructed to meet their siblings in the classroom of the youngest sibling where they will then leave the building together. Children in grades kindergarten through 2 (with their siblings) will exit the building from the Barton Ave. side of the building through the door closest to Genesee St. Children in grades three through six will also exit the building on the Barton Ave. side but from the door closest to Sunset Ave. The same teacher will dismiss the children daily to aid in safety.

OPENING LITURGY

Our Opening School liturgy, the Mass of the Holy Spirit, will take place on September 16 at 9:00 A.M. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Families and friends are always welcome at our school Masses.

“MY STUDENTS PROGRESS” AND SCHOOLREACH

We are continuing to use My Students Progress for reporting student progress to parents. In order to access the web-based program, parents need to provide the school with a current email account. A password will then be assigned to that email and parents will be able to view their own children's grades as posted by their children's teachers.

Currently we use Schoolreach which allows us to contact all of our parents with one phone call. When you get such a phone call from the school, the system will leave a message. If at all possible, listen to that message instead of calling the school. In cases of emergency, it is important not to tie up the school's phone lines with incoming calls.

As communication is vital to the safety of your children, please make sure that all of your contact information is constantly updated. Send in changes of address, phone numbers, emails, as soon as the changes occur.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS FOR PARENTS

This year we will be hosting two “Back to School” nights. Parents of Pre-K students have very different questions than Kindergarten through Grade Six parents. Therefore we have

decided to have two separate “Back to School” nights. Kindergarten through Grade Six parents are asked to come on September 28. Future plans for our school will be presented at that time.

Pre-K parents are invited to come the following night, September 29 for information regarding their programs. Both presentations begin at 7:00 P.M.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

The United States’ bishops have adopted a policy to keep our children safe. This policy includes screening adults who have access to the children in our school. All adults who are employed by the school are screened through a company called *Virtus*. This policy is also used for volunteers, including chaperones for field trips or other school functions.

Many parents desire to be involved in the school by volunteering. We encourage that involvement. If you have been screened by *Virtus*, you do not need to go through the process again for five years. If you have never been screened, the process can begin for you on September 21 here at our school. Mr. Murphy, our music teacher, is a facilitator for the diocese. He is offering the screening which includes a three hour presentation on September 21 at 6:00 P.M. in our auditorium. If you are interested, please sign up at www.virtus.org. Be sure to indicate that you are in the Diocese of Syracuse. If you have any questions, please check with the office or Mr. Murphy.

FALL SOCIAL FOR FAMILIES

Plans are underway for a fall get-together on Friday, September 16. Families are invited to attend from 6:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. for refreshments and activities. There is no cost for families to attend. You are asked to share a snack. Drinks will be provided. If you are able to help in any way please return the volunteer sheet that was available on Orientation Day.

NEW YORK CITY TRIP

On Saturday, September 10 a bus will be leaving our school at 6:00 A.M. for New York City. This trip is not a fundraiser for our school, but an opportunity for staff and families to spend time together in an informal environment. The cost of the trip is \$40 per person which will cover the cost of the transportation.

Once we reach New York you will be free to visit sites including Ground Zero, attend a show, or shop. The day is yours to do as you please. The bus will leave New York at 7:00 P.M. with arrival back in Utica at approximately midnight. You will be notified by the bus driver of the exact location of pick up in New York.

Seats are \$40 and the cost is non-refundable.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a vital part of our budget. The cost of educating each student, including Pre-K, is approximately \$8000. With tuition under \$4000 we need to find ways to fund that gap. Local pastors assist our school through parish subsidies. But that still does not meet our expenses. Therefore fundraising is a necessity. Your participation means that we can keep our tuition at current levels instead of the actual cost. We hope that you will do your best with our fundraising.

Our first major fundraiser is the World's Finest Chocolate Sale. Order forms are available with your children's teachers. Please return them by September 12. Chocolate will be distributed on September 14. As always, thank you for your participation.

PINWHEELS FOR PEACE

We join with the Montessori class in celebrating a day of peace on September 21. Mrs. Farley invites the school children to join in the celebration. All children make pinwheels which we place along Genesee St. to draw attention to this special day.

RUNNING AT NOTRE DAME ELEMENTARY

A sport that you can continue all your life is running. Mr. Ted Petrillo who coaches cross country at Notre Dame High School has volunteered to coordinate a running program for students in our school in grades five and six. A signup sheet is available with your child's teachers in those grades.

Community outreach is also an important component of who we are at Notre Dame Elementary. We are participating in the Falling Leaves Road Race on September 25 by sponsoring a water station on the corner of Oneida Street and the Parkway. Students in grades five and six are invited to help in handing out water to the runners. More information will be going home to those classes as the event approaches.

UPCOMING

School pictures take place in early October. Children wear clothes of their choice on that day. Students in grades Kindergarten through Grade 6 should wear their dress up uniform on group picture day.

Teachers will be attending an **in-service on October 14**. There will be no school that day, but daycare will be provided.