

Academic Challenges/Olympics at High Schools and Colleges

St. Monica School has a long history of academic and creative success. The students are well rounded and have many occasions to share their gifts. The Junior High Students have multiple opportunities to participate in academic and creative contests throughout the community. As a faculty, the Junior High teachers select students for these events, after considering students' content area strengths. These events are held throughout the school year and are generally held during the school day, but some activities are held on weekends. All events take place off campus. From a writing workshop at the Milwaukee Art Museum to university-sponsored science fairs to academic contests for individuals and teams at local high schools, the students can proudly share their gifts and special abilities. The students have the potential to receive certificates, awards, prizes or tuition scholarships as a result of their success in these programs.

Art Club

During the 2005-2006 school year, St. Monica School launched its very own Art Club. The goal of the SMS Art Club was to utilize the beautiful Art classroom and the many Art resources we have on-hand to offer students additional opportunities for art education. The staff advisors for the Art Club are Mrs. Miller, SMS Art teacher, and Mr. Mlada, SMS Development Director.

The Art Club officially meets approximately three to six times each school year. All meetings are held after school hours, typically running from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. The fee is \$15 per student, with money collected being used to purchase additional resources needed for each session. Each session begins with a snack and then moves into discussion of the session's art focus. These areas of focus are age-appropriate and in the past have included "photojournalism," "multiculturalism," and "use of color." Club members are broken down by grade level, with the primary grades (1st-2nd), intermediate grades (3rd-5th) and junior high grades (6th-8th) meeting separately. A total of about 75 students have participated in each of the first two years of the Art Club's existence.

Mrs. Miller and Mr. Mlada are excitedly looking forward to new activities for upcoming school years. Why not join in the fun? Beyond student involvement, they are always looking for parent help during each session; you need not be "gifted" artistically! Should you wish to help, please let Mrs. Miller or Mr. Mlada know!

Art for Youth

Art for Youth is a program run by our Home & School Association to increase our students' exposure to art knowledge, including type of art, artists and insight in looking at a wide assortment of art prints.

The Art for Youth program is run by two parent chairs who oversee the program, and parent volunteers from each homeroom. The parent volunteers attend an informational meeting where they learn about the theme for their grade and the prints to be shared. Then, these volunteers give presentations to their respective homerooms two to three times each semester.

Some of the types of art include: impressionism, expressionism, realism, pop art, cubism, modern art, etc... A wide range of artists are included, i.e. Leonardo da Vinci, Andy Warhol, Michelangelo,

Duane Hanson, James Rosenquist, Jacob Lawrence, Thomas Moran, Henry Matisse, George Tooker, Rembrandt van Rijn, Robert Rauschenberg, Hale Woodruff.

Author Opportunities at the Art Museum **(Young Author's Conference)**

This year marks the 21st annual Young Author's Conference which is sponsored by the Kettle Moraine School District and the Milwaukee Art Museum. Each year several motivated and gifted writers from Saint Monica's seventh grade are invited to participate in this annual Metropolitan Milwaukee conference.

This event celebrates the abilities of our young writers while uniting the surrounding school districts in a cooperative academic pursuit. The masterpieces within the Museum serve as inspiration for each author, while fifty of Wisconsin's finest teachers guide the young authors through the writing process during this daylong conference. Over 400 students from public and private schools collaborate their talents into one book, the *Art of Writing*. Each child attending this conference receives the book where his/her work has been published.

Band

Students who are entering grades 4 and higher this fall at St. Monica School are eligible to participate in band. Students in grades 4 and 5 will have an opportunity to try out instruments during the first two weeks of school. Students in grades 6 and up are also welcome to join band. Please contact the director to indicate your interest and make further arrangements.

Each week, band students have one half-hour lesson during school, a 1-hour band rehearsal Thursdays after school, and meet their practice goal with at-home practice.

This year, all band rehearsals and lessons will be on Thursdays. Band rehearsals will be held immediately after school for an hour each week. Rehearsals will be on the same days as lessons. Beginning band students generally wait until second semester to join band rehearsals.

The lesson schedule is released at the beginning of the semester for the entire semester. Most lessons are scheduled during the school day, once a week. We rotate lesson times so students usually only miss the same time slot two or three times each semester. For instance, a student may have a 9:00am lesson one week, 9:30 the next, 10:00 the week after that. Limited after-school spots are reserved for students who need academic help during school hours.

Our band program follows state and national academic standards for band. Our lesson books begin with curriculum from the Essential Elements 2000 series, which combines important conducting, listening, and composing skills with those necessary to become well-rounded musicians. Ensemble playing also uses important repertoire to follow the academic standards, performing selections from the state-sanctioned list. Our St. Monica band plays for the entire school each spring at the Spring Showcase. As a band, we also perform at least one recital each semester for our families and friends.

The semester band fee is \$265 for all students. It includes 14 lessons each semester, band rehearsals,

concerts, and a contribution to the equipment/supply fund. Many beginning players will participate in semi-private lessons (three students or fewer), while older students will have one-on-one lessons to allow us to tailor lesson material to their specific talents and interests. Please ask about the band-only fee if you are taking lessons with another teacher. At St. Monicas, the band fee is paid directly to the instructor.

Band is taught by Mrs. Jen Wszalek. Mrs. Wszalek has taught the band at St. Monicas since 2005. Mrs. Wszalek has her teaching certification in K-12 Instrumental Music Education from Cardinal Stritch University. She is also the band director at the Catholic Schools in West Bend: St. Frances Cabrini and Holy Angels.

For more information or to sign up, please contact the director, Jen Wszalek: cabrinahasband@yahoo.com or 414-745-8980.

Battle of the Books

Battle of the Books (BOB) is an optional extra-curricular reading program for students in grades 4-6. In June, students are given a list of 45 books that will be the official BOB list for the next school year. They may start reading them over the summer if they wish. When school resumes in fall, students who wish to participate form teams of three. They split up the list of 45 books among the three of them, with each committing to read and make a summary note card for 15 books by February or March. Students get a small prize for every three books for which they fill out a note card. During fall and winter, one fun BOB activity is held each month after school—mini-Olympics, BINGO, sledding, etc. Students who have filled out note cards for the requisite number of books that month may participate. In spring, a series of four in-school battles are held, where the teams of three compete against one another answering questions about the books, without using notes. The team with the highest score in each grade represents St. Monica at the metro BOB invitational, held in March or April. Reading levels for BOB books ranges between third and seventh grade. While the program has an element of competition to it, the main purpose is to expose kids to great children's literature and help them find new favorite authors. It's very fun! Cost is \$3 per child for the year-long program.

Liturgical Music Opportunities

The cantor program at St. Monica School is designed to give students a chance to share their musical gifts with our parish. Students in fifth through eighth grades have the opportunity each fall to audition for the position of cantor. Last year, we had seven excellent singers and role models who took turns cantoring at each school Mass. Their job is to proclaim the Word of God through song. Students who become cantors rehearse regularly on Mondays during recess and on Tuesday mornings before Mass. Extra rehearsals are scheduled when it is convenient for the cantors. Occasionally, instrumental musicians are included.

In addition to our cantors, we also have a rotating church choir. This choir is open to anyone who wants to take part in making music at Mass. The choir members meet before Mass and support the cantors and accompanist by being a model of singing for the congregation. They are an instrumental part of our music at school Mass!

Chess Club

The SMS Chess Club officially started in January and ran through May 2008. It is open to students of every skill level in grades 2-8 and is held every Tuesday after school, running until 4:30 PM. The Chess Club provides an after-school alternative for kids who want to learn or improve their Chess skills. It's also a great alternative for kids who are not involved in a winter sport. The Home and School Board funded new chess boards last year, so students would not have to remember to bring one from home each Tuesday! Last school year approximately 25 students participated in the SMS Chess Club. Chess Club members can represent SMS at the Richards School Chess Tournament held in March.

Community Fine Arts

The school supports student involvement in the fine arts. Many students participate in theatre, dance and music opportunities in the community and professional arenas. Classes may also provide entertainment within the community. Classes may also extend both lessons and support by attending these performances.

Forensics

The forensics club has a longstanding history at St. Monica's. This is not forensic science but rather speech and presentations. This club affords the opportunity to develop lifelong skills. The season begins in November with the group identifying categories in which to present their pieces. There is a great core group of parent volunteers and it is currently coached by junior high parent, Anne Rice. The team attends about 4-5 tournaments in January through March with the state tournament held at the end of March. A student participating in forensics can still be involved in his or her other activities, such as band and sports.

High Math Classes

The high math classes at St. Monica's include Pre-Algebra and Algebra. This is part of a total program that will "raise the bar" for ALL of our students.

The high math classes will be exposed to higher level thinking activities, such as rich problem solving and projects overlapping other curricular areas. These activities afford them opportunities to APPLY their knowledge to real world situations.

Some other components of the high math program include participation in math contests sponsored by the high schools (Dominican, Marquette, DSHA, etc.). The students will also be exposed to state and nationwide math contests, right in the classrooms. The Stock Market Game is another element of the curriculum. The students will receive background knowledge in the free enterprise system, and become very aware of daily news and global affairs and how they affect the Market. Through use of the Internet, they buy, sell, short sell, short cover, buy of margin, and purchase mutual funds. They create spreadsheets and graphs using Excel. If you would like to learn more about this, the students' web sites are: www.wisconsinms.com and <http://smgww.org>

A visit to the Board of Trade in Chicago is being considered as a future “real-world” learning opportunity!

Junior High Newsletter

The St. Monica School Junior High Newsletter – *The Junior High Monicazette* – was launched during the 2003-2004 school year. The main mission of the newsletter was and remains to provide junior high students (grades 6-8) with a love of writing and journalism an outlet to grow and showcase their talents and interests. It also serves as a forum for our entire school community to celebrate the Exemplary qualities of our junior high students and staff, the challenges and benefits of the rigorous junior high curriculum, and the culmination in these grade levels of our students’ service and ministry efforts.

The newsletter is published three times each school year. It is written by St. Monica School junior high students for the entire St. Monica School community, with the primary focus upon the junior high program. Student successes, staff biographies, major school-wide initiatives, and student work are all featured in each issue. Newsletter staff members write, edit, and publish factual essays, editorials, biographies, comics, and much more. Faculty member, Anne Rice serves as the newsletter staff’s advisor.

The St. Monica School community is honored to have such a bright and dedicated group of young men and women work on the newsletter staff. The newsletter is a colorful, informative, and fun representation of their time and talent and celebration of our school community.

Math Contests

Every year, students in Fourth through Eighth Grades participate in the Wisconsin Math League Contests. These contests challenge students to show their understanding of basic principles through numerical and word problems that encourage an open, flexible approach to problem solving. Fourth and Fifth Grade students compete with each other, while Sixth through Eighth Grade students are part of an interschool competition. Depending upon grade level, questions cover basic topics (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, time and calendar questions, shapes, perimeter, money, basic ratio and percent, rounding numbers, remainders, integers) as well as more advanced ones (exponent, fractions, reciprocals, decimals, rates, ratios, percents, angle measurement, perimeter, area, circumference, basic roots, patterns, sequences, integers, triangles and right triangles). Students are encouraged to use a variety of problem- solving methods, which enhances the student’s abilities and understanding of math while “adding” in a little fun!

Ministry through Service

Students may be servant leaders through a variety of outreach and ministerial opportunities. Students visit nursing and retirement homes and shelters, run and organize drives and donations and are called to be acolytes at weekday and Sunday Masses, weddings and funerals. Students extend prayers, notes and artwork in celebration and comfort to various parish and community groups as well.

Multicultural Arts Assemblies

St. Monica School has a Multicultural Arts Committee which has as a mission to strive to weave multiculturalism into the curriculum and school community of St. Monica so as to build respect and appreciation for all God's children. Recognizing that St. Monica has been historically a rather homogenous community, the committee seeks to open students' and parents' eyes to a wider world. Each year, the faculty and staff of St. Monica choose a culture or country to focus on for the year. The Multicultural Arts committee then brings in two performances or speakers to help children understand the year's culture of focus. One assembly is held each semester. These are paid for out of the Multicultural Arts Committee budget.

Music Lessons

Many students at St. Monica School take part in music lessons outside the school day. Some of the most common instruments being studied are piano, guitar, voice and violin. There are many private instructors throughout the North Shore area that are delighted to instruct St. Monica students!

Primary Reading Enrichment Opportunities

Students are offered opportunities for extending reading as well as oral and written expression. Students are exposed to novels above their reading levels to supplement the reading series. Possible other activities can include reader's theatre and author studies or visits. Students interact with older grade buddies for literature sharing, pajama story hours and visiting storytellers. Students are exposed to various authors and genres through access to classroom and school libraries, and through monitored at-home reading.

Public Library Book Clubs

St. Monica junior high students can spread their wings and join other area students at the monthly library discussion group at Whitefish Bay Public Library. The book group meets seven times during the school year to talk about different books while enjoying some tasty snacks. By sharing with other readers in the community, sixth, seventh and eighth graders establish an invaluable lifetime skill; they also get fresh ideas for new books to read. Whether delving into a science fiction or a contemporary realism, participants in the Whitefish Bay Library Book Discussion Group offers St. Monica students and opportunity to extend their reading, speaking, and listening skills beyond the borders of the school.

Public Librarian Visits

The Children's Librarian from Whitefish Bay library visits the younger readers each spring to introduce and encourage participation in a Summer Reading Program sponsored by the Library System. Children have the potential to receive incentives for devouring books.

Science Fair

At this time, all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are required to participate in the annual Science Fair. The major goal in teaching is to create an atmosphere of excitement in which students feel comfortable taking risks and in which they have a sense of ownership of their learning. With this in mind, consider these objectives in giving students a gentle push into a Science Fair project:

- 1) To provide practice in approaching a problem independently in an organized way through the use of scientific method
- 2) To provide an opportunity for the students to find real answers to real questions, thus giving them a sense of power over their own learning experiences
- 3) to enhance feelings of self-esteem by completing a major long term project and having others recognize the value of that work
- 4) To allow for the exploration of an area of interest not necessarily covered in the curriculum
- 5) To encourage divergent thinking
- 6) To practically apply science skills

Students are guided through the Science Fair project step by step over a period of six or seven weeks. Even though things may get a little frenetic in the final week of preparation, the majority of students find the Science Fair to be a positive growth experience. The Science Fair is a real opportunity to help build individuals.

Spelling Bee

The Scripps National Spelling Bee has inspired movies, plays, and national coverage in recent years. Even before media popularity St. Monica School recognized the importance of accurate spelling and the fun of spelling competition.

Each year, fifth through eighth grade classroom teachers conduct spelldowns, have written spelling competitions, or look at classroom spelling achievement to select representatives to compete in the St. Monica Spelling Bee. The top competitors advance to the Village Spelling Bee in January where students from both the public and parochial schools in Whitefish Bay compete. Many St. Monica students go on to the regional CESA Spelling Bee, which leads to the state competition in Madison and the national competition in Washington D.C. The winning word at the national bee in 2008 was “guerdon”, a reward. The spelling bee in Donovan Hall at St. Monica each year has become a rewarding activity for the participants and an exciting event for the entire school.

Spring Showcase

The St. Monica Spring Showcase takes place each year in Donovan Hall. This is a great opportunity for students who are studying a talent outside of school to showcase that talent to their family and friends. In the past we have had everything from Irish dancing and ballet to violin and piano performances, and everything in between! The St. Monica community always enjoys seeing and hearing the “Different Gifts” our students possess!

Student Council

Student Council is an active and special part of what makes S.M.S. such a great school. Our primary mission is service work and Christian leadership which puts our school's mission statement "...to learn, live, love through Jesus" into action. Student council is open to all Jr. High students for general membership. This membership then elects the Executive Board consisting of President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Chaplain. The moderators for this year are Mrs. Naleid and Mrs. Cameron.

Throughout the year the skills of brainstorming, setting an agenda, and running a monthly meeting are engaged – this is a student run organization. The service work that the Student Council has organized and run over the years is something of which to be proud. They have organized the House of Peace Thanksgiving Food Drive and the Christmas Gift Giving Drive. The Teddy Bear Patrol and Jump Rope for Heart were also school wide programs run by the Student Council. They were responsible for activities during Catholic Schools Week including preparing the Mass, organizing a fundraiser, stepping up as school ambassadors, and they entertained us with several days of school spirit activities. To close the year, the Student Council organized the seventh and eighth grade dance inviting all the North Shore Catholic Schools.

Each year brings new leaders with wonderful ideas, new themes and great opportunity to serve others. If leadership or service is one of your gifts please join Student Council this year.

Summer Recommended Reading Lists

Reading broadens the mind and enlightens the world view of students at St. Monica School. Our students' love for reading is a year round affair, and so students are provided with a list of recommended books for the summer months that extends what they read during the school year, and prepares them more completely for the work ahead in the coming year. Individual teachers prepare the lists to enrich the summer and to provide a measure of the genres and quality of literature that is waiting for them in their next language arts classroom. Suggestions are broad in scope so that many interests may be appealed to, as well as inclusive of a variety of authors and genres. Even during a busy summer, taking time to read is an important luxury and one that will get our students ready for the fall. .

Summer Skills Practice Program

Each spring, St. Monica School offers the opportunity for parents to purchase workbooks from the Summer Skills Company. Students who take advantage of this program are able to sharpen their learning skills by reinforcing concepts learned during the school year, identifying areas that need additional review, boosting their confidence, and preparing them to excel in the coming school year.

Skill books offered are "Summer Math Skills Sharpener" from Pre-K through 8th grade, as well as Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, High School Math, and Math for Life; "Summer Language Arts Review" for Grade Pre-K through 7th; "Foreign Language Review" for Spanish I, Spanish II, and French I; and "Touch the Future Computer Keyboarding" for grades 3 through 6.

Parents may obtain more information by visiting their website: www.summerskills.com.

Variety Show

Variety Show is a long standing tradition at St. Monica School. Under the direction of Home and School, this fun and entertaining event usually takes place in early May and is held in the Dominican High School auditorium. The purpose is to provide a grand send off to our graduating 8th graders.

Each class, under the guidance of volunteer parent directors, creates a musical dance number. The music is centered around the theme of the show which changes from year to year. There is a small fee to help defray the cost of the show. Parents may need to provide a few items for costumes or stage props. Also, additional parents may be needed to assist behind stage and up in the balcony to supervise their child's class.

In February, the students begin practicing their performance once a week during recess. The practices continue through the spring. The week before the show, students will walk over to Dominican High School after dismissal to practice on the "big" stage. Parents will pick up their children at Dominican after practice. All parents need to do the following to insure the success of the show: 1) Watch the weekly reminder for practice schedule and information related to the show; 2) Provide any necessary items as requested by the volunteer directors; 3) Purchase tickets for the show because it is always sold out and no tickets are available the evening of the performance.

For more information, contact the 8th Grade class director or any of the Home & School chairpersons.

Writing Contests

St. Monica School student writers have ample opportunity for their work to be published and celebrated. Many literary organizations, Catholic and civic groups and local businesses sponsor writing contests. Our students participate in these events in a variety ways, from whole group use of the contest activity as a writing assignment to separate out-of-class student work. Students are selected for submission/participation based on their creativity and writing skills and are matched with their strengths regarding genre and interest. Students may receive certificates, monetary awards and/or publishing opportunities through these contests.