



## *An Exemplary Recognition School ~ Mission, Community, and Climate*

### **PROUD TO BE ST. MONICA SCHOOL: We Celebrate Some of our Recent Alumni, Student, and Staff Successes!**

*Several weeks ago, the SMS 8th grade class returned from its annual class trip to South Dakota. This trip is in all actuality a culmination of a yearlong “journey” for the students and the pinnacle of their service and ministry efforts. Throughout their 8th grade school year, St. Monica School students learn about Native American history and culture; correspond with students and other tribe members on the reservation; meet with various advocates for Native Americans; and involve surrounding communities through fundraisers and supply drives to benefit the Lakota people. Then, after nine months of study, reflection, and action, the students embark on a five-day trip to South Dakota.*

*In June 2003, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee presented St. Monica School with its “Justice and Peace” award for this 8th grade class journey to South Dakota. The award recognized the contributions made by staff and students toward justice and peace through their work with the Lakota people.*

*Each school year, the 8th grade class journey is a challenging and enriching yearlong experience for SMS students. On this page, you are invited to share in the experience through the perspectives of two of them, Margaret Crocker and Marnie Wallach.*

#### ***Margaret Crocker***

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip to South Dakota was a lot of fun and very educational. After visiting Wall Drug, the Mammoth Site and Devil’s tower and Dining at Al’s Oasis and The Flying T Chuckwagon, it was time to experience the real meaning of our trip, visiting Pine Ridge Reservation and helping its people. We drove through the Badlands and prepared to meet Marion Whitemouse. When we met up with her, however, she informed the bus driver that heavy rains had caused the dirt roads to turn to mud and it would be impossible to get the bus through. We were all disappointed, but Marion said that she would talk to us about the reservation. She was a very inspirational speaker and her message and the time that she spent with us will not be forgotten by anyone. She talked about the hardships on the reservation and about how her people were struggling. The most moving part of her speech was her description of the faith of the Lakota people. The Lakota have strong religious beliefs and have faith in God. They often pray and know that God is with them.

We were disappointed because we could not get to Pine Ridge Reservation. We had all saved our money in order to purchase crafts and jewelry made by the people of Pine Ridge. While waiting on the bus, we decided to have a collection of the money we had saved. By the time we had finished collecting the money, we had a total of \$550 dollars to give to Marian, her family and her larger family, the people of Pine Ridge.

That night, we were still thinking about Marian and her family. We wanted to help everyone on the reservation, but did not know how. Mr. Klotsche, one of our school parent chaperones, and Mrs. Stewart, our school’s Guidance Counselor, encouraged us to remember that while it is sometimes impossible to help everyone, making a difference in one person’s life will help. They also reminded us that not all good in the world is done by adults – children can make a difference, too.

We were able to give so much to the people of Pine Ridge Reservation thanks to the generosity of our St. Monica family. In return, Marian Whitemouse and her family gave us the realization that there are people that need our help and the satisfaction that we have made a difference. We also learned that the Lakota people of Pine Ridge may be poor in wealth, but they are rich in culture and spirit.

#### ***Marnie Wallach***

The 8th grade Class of 2008 traveled together on a journey of mind, body, and spirit we will never forget.

We embarked on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, loading onto a Badger Coach Bus and driving over 15 hours. On our way, we stopped at the Akta Lakota Museum, learning some more background about the Native Americans we had been studying all year. We saw a tipi, all different moccasins, and the ingenious ways in which the Lakota people use every part of the buffalo.

The next day, after finally arriving at our hotel and getting a good night’s rest, we set out bright and early for the Mammoth Site, where mammoth bones are kept and preserved for viewing. After that, we went to Wind Cave, where we traveled with a tour guide through the underground maze of tunnels and had our first prayer service. Crazy Horse Monument was exhilarating, and it seemed unbelievable that it took 50 years to carve the warrior’s face out of stone. Next on our agenda was Bear Country U.S.A., where we were up close and personal with animals such as buffalo, mountain goats, and a favorite of many- baby bear cubs. When we all were back on the bus again, we headed over to The Flying T Chuckwagon Dinner and Show. We all danced along when Mrs. Bond (SMS science teacher) was pulled up on stage to join the band.

Wednesday, we started off by heading over to Devil’s Tower. This was a favorite site of most of the 8th graders, because we got to climb massive boulders up to where it was vertical rock, a challenge that required skill and team work. Our prayer service here was about nature’s beauty. We then traveled on to Mount Rushmore and marveled at the beauty of the presidents’ faces flawlessly carved into stone. After this, we had another prayer service, during which we were even photographed and joined by fellow tourists.

Thursday, our last day in South Dakota, we loaded back onto the bus and drove to the Badlands, where we had our last prayer service and we climbed around for a while. It was a great place to take pictures and it had a wonderful view for miles around us. A little while later, our class met Marion Whitemouse, one of the leaders of the Lakota people. We were all disappointed when we learned that there was no way the bus could safely arrive on the Native American reservation where we were planning to have dinner. While several classmates and adults loaded all of our school's donations into Marion's car, the rest of us were busy collecting all the money we had saved. We made this donation to the Lakota people.

During this class trip, every single one of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders grew in mind and spirit, and we all became closer. We learned that we have so much to be thankful for, and we experienced the need to help those less fortunate. We witnessed the value of cooperation and generosity. We will always remember the good times with our classmates in the Class of 2008.

### ***SMS 5th Grade Student a Kohl's "Kids Who Care" Scholarship Winner!***

St. Monica School 5th grade student Eileen Comiskey has been honored as a winner in the six – 12 year-old age group of the local Kohl's "Kids Who Care" Scholarship program. Eileen was the recipient of a \$50 Kohl's gift card and now is eligible for the regional competition. She was nominated by SMS 5th grade teacher Donna Wulz.

At the regional level, Eileen is eligible to win a \$1,000 scholarship toward post-secondary education. Ten national winners will then be named at the close of the competition, with each of the 10 receiving \$5,000 scholarships.

A criterion for entry in the scholarship competition is based primarily upon service and volunteerism, with efforts being described as "above and beyond" what is normally expected of children in the specific age group. In short, through their actions nominees must have demonstrated a significant positive impact on their surrounding community, with creativity, initiative, generosity, leadership, and outreach being important elements of the service efforts.

As the SMS community well knows, Eileen typifies all of the above characteristics in difference she makes for others.

At 10 years of age, Eileen has been living with Juvenile Diabetes for five years – and she has been trying to help others with the same illness ever since. Each year, she walks with her family team, "Eileen's Galloping Machine" to help raise money for Juvenile Diabetes research. And, each year, she has hosted spaghetti dinner fundraisers – this year, she raised almost \$21,000! – in addition to a Valentine's Day bake sale (which raised nearly \$2,000 this past year!).

But beyond her fundraising efforts, Eileen has stepped forward to serve in a spokesperson role to help educate others about Juvenile Diabetes. This year, she served as Southeast Wisconsin Chapter's Youth Ambassador, visiting corporations, speaking at company kickoffs, and Juvenile Diabetes events. She has been a model of strength and courage for others living with the disease – and an inspiration to all of us as an example of how to take positive action to help others.

### ***SMS 6th Grade Student Invited to Attend National Leadership Conference***

SMS 6<sup>th</sup> grade student Carrie McNally was recently invited to take part in a national leadership conference with junior high students from across the United States. McNally was nominated by SMS Spanish teacher Mrs. Mary Klovers.

The Junior National Young Leaders Conference was held from April 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>. The theme of the conference was "Voices of Leadership: Reflecting on the Past to Create the Future." Each scholar was given the chance to interact with other peers and teacher-advisors in order to experience history and relate it to their lives now as young Americans. To this end, each student was assigned to a group to take turns leading, writing and speaking about their insights on our country's history. The goal for the scholars was to expand their critical thinking skills, ability to problem solve and appreciation of others' viewpoints.

Most of the activities for the junior high students from around the nation took place in Washington, D.C., where they walked around Capitol Hill and the other National Memorials, and capped it all off by seeing the National Portrait Gallery.

However, several of the most exciting activities took place in historic places surrounding Washington D.C. Carrie took in the sights of Philadelphia, including viewing the Constitution and walking in the steps of our founding fathers. The students learned about the Civil War, including its causes and consequences, by traveling to Harper's Ferry, where John Brown made his stand against slavery. The final night of the conference involved a sleep-over at the Maryland Science Center.

Carrie said she enjoyed the experience and believes it will help her become a more reflective student and leader.

### ***SMS 5th Grader Earns Statewide Recognition for Arbor Day Artwork***

SMS 5th grade student Hannah Glinski won third place in the state of Wisconsin's 2008 Arbor Day Poster Contest! There were over 1,700 students from 100 classrooms throughout the state who participated. Hannah's picture will be featured on the 2009 Arbor Day calendar distributed to schools around the state. Hannah was also invited to a special recognition ceremony at the State Capitol on Arbor Day (Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>).

This marks the second consecutive school year in which a SMS 5<sup>th</sup> grade student has earned special recognition through the Arbor Day poster contest; last school year, SMS student Mary Grace Grogan won an honorable mention award.

You can view Hannah's Arbor Day artwork on the St. Monica School website via the following link:

[http://www.st-monicaschool.org/userimages/glinski\\_artwork\\_apr08.pdf](http://www.st-monicaschool.org/userimages/glinski_artwork_apr08.pdf)

**Congratulations to all of our students featured in this update! We are proud of you and your accomplishments!**

***If you know of a student or alumni success we should be celebrating, please contact Tom Mlada, St. Monica School Development Director, at (414) 332-3660 ext. 123 or tmlada@st-monica.org.***