



April 20, 2010

Dear Parents and Students:

While it may seem like a long time ago, it has only been about three months since we began the process of creating Saint Francis International School. It has truly been an amazing time. The vast majority of families in St. Mark and St. Camillus Schools have committed to being part of Saint Francis International and more than 100 new students have applied. Interest in Saint Francis International has been particularly high at the preschool and middle school levels. Just before Easter we decided to expand to six preschool classes because we had filled all available spaces.

As I have watched the trees and the flowers bloom during this Easter season I have thought often that Saint Francis International School is doing the same thing. Our new community is blooming as a sign of hope and vitality for the future.

Teams of St. Mark and St. Camillus parents are developing the framework for the new parent organization, seeking bids for the hot lunch program, and making recommendations for the new uniforms. This is truly a community effort. Our students have had opportunities to spend time with each other at both schools. Our choirs have sung together; the fourth graders were together at the mission fair. Many St. Mark students have shadowed at St. Camillus, and the middle school students from both schools will have a joint science fair at St. Mark at the end of April. Fr. Dillon and I have been blessed to participate in reconciliation services at both schools. It reminds us of how Saint Francis International School will improve the faith formation we offer the children of both parishes.

Matt Russell and Toby Harkleroad have been working many long hours and weekends to shepherd this project. We owe them (and their families) much appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

Over the last month, our teachers and staff have gone through the application and interview process for Saint Francis International School. We had many excellent candidates from among the St. Camillus and St. Mark faculties as well as from outside. My thanks to every teacher and staff member who applied.

Through a thorough application process that included interviews by outside experts, Matt and Toby have chosen a leadership team for the new school that I believe will enable Saint Francis International School to bloom into an amazing community of faith and learning. One of the core principles upon which Saint Francis International is founded is the concept of collaborative leadership. The women and men you will meet on the following pages were chosen because they have skills, talents, and experiences that complement one another.

Together this team has the potential to guide our new school to greatness!

Sincerely,

*Fr. Mike*

Fr. Michael Johnson, OFM

***Co-Head of School: Tobias A. Harkleroad***

***Education:*** M.Ed. in Catholic School Leadership from Marymount University, B.S.Ed. in Social Studies Education from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, Diploma from St. Lawrence Seminary

***Certification:*** Administrator I/II and Social Studies Educator (6-12) issued by the Maryland State Department of Education, Catechist issued by the Archdiocese of Washington

Toby has been the principal of St. Camillus School since 2008. Prior to his appointment at St. Camillus, Toby served as an administrative intern and Theology instructor at DeMatha Catholic High School. Toby also taught middle school social studies and religion at St. Peter's Interparish School as well as middle school social studies in public schools. Toby represents the Archdiocese of Washington as a member of the Maryland Catholic Conference Department of Education and Family Life. He has written in national journals and presented at conventions on the topic of whole person formation in Catholic school. Toby and his family are parishioners of St. Camillus, where Toby has served on the parish council.

***Co-Head of School: Charles M. Russell***

***Education:*** M.S. in Education Administration from St. John's University, B.S. in Political Science from George Washington University

***Certification:*** Administrator I/II issued by the Maryland State Department of Education

Matt has served as the principal of St. Mark the Evangelist School since 2008. Prior to taking over the leadership at St. Mark, Matt served as the vice principal, testing coordinator, and middle school social studies teacher at St. Jane de Chantal School in Bethesda. He has served the Archdiocese as a member of the professional development committee for Catholic schools. Matt also has extensive experience as a crew coach, winner over 25 national championships. Matt and his family are members of St. Jane de Chantal Parish.

***Assistant Head of School: Lynn Farrell***

***Education:*** B.A. in History from University of Maryland – College Park

***Certification:*** Social Studies Educator (6-12) issued by the Maryland State Department of Education

Lynn has taught grades three through eight at St. Mark as well as in the public schools and she has served as the assistant principal at St. Mark since 2007. Lynn also has extensive experience working in youth programs and camps with M-NCPPC and the Takoma Park Recreation Department. She has conversational ability in Spanish. Lynn and her family are members of the St. Andrew by the Bay Parish in Annapolis, MD.

***Director of Student Services: Carolyn Chabolla***

***Education:*** M.A. in Education Counseling and Guidance from Loyola Marymount University, B.A. in History from Loyola Marymount University

***Certification:*** Reading/Language Arts Specialist, Pupil Personnel Services, Social Studies Educator, and Bilingual Certificate of Competency issued by the State of California

Carolyn has experience teaching Kindergarten and middle school both in the United States and in Mexico. She comes to us from St. Andrew the Apostle School where she has been serving as resource teacher and school counselor. Carolyn has extensive experience working as both a resource teacher and classroom teacher in a bilingual school setting; she is fluent in Spanish.

***Literacy Coordinator: Tiffani James***

***Education:*** M.S. in Reading Education from Bowie State University, B.S. in Elementary Education from Morgan State University

***Certification:*** Elementary (1-6) and Middle School Educator issued by the Maryland State Department of Education

Tiffani comes to us from St. Hugh of Grenoble School where she has served as principal since 2008. Prior to her tenure at St. Hugh, Tiffani had been the middle school language arts teacher at St. Mary of the Mills. Her background also includes teaching grades two through four, teaching middle school social studies and religion, being an SAT prep instructor to high school students, and serving as a curriculum specialist. In addition to her experience in Catholic and Christian schools, Tiffani has worked in the public schools. Tiffani has been recognized by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as an exemplary teacher.

***Mathematics Coordinator: Katherine Derickson***

***Education:*** M. Ed. In Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Nebraska, B.S. in Education from the University of Nebraska

***Certification:*** Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Science (4-9) and Dance (K-12) issued by the State of Nebraska

Kate most recently taught at St. Peter's Interparish School where she was the middle school math teacher and middle school team leader. Kate has extensive middle school teaching experience in both Catholic and public schools as well as over twenty years experience as a professional dance instructor. Kate's experience includes many activities beyond the classroom including serving on the school-wide discipline team, the student assistant team, and the standards and assessments committee, as well as being a teacher mentor. Kate has much training and experience in differentiated instruction and cross-curricular integration.

***Early Childhood Team Leader: Elizabeth Smith***

***Education:*** B.A. in Elementary Education from Boston College

***Certification:*** Elementary (K-6) Educator issued by the Maryland State Department of Education

Liz currently is the PreK teacher at St. Mark, she has previously taught Kindergarten, second, and fourth grades at St. Mark. In addition to St. Mark she has also taught elementary grades at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Virginia and public school in Texas. From 2003 to 2005 Liz served as the assistant principal at St. Mark. Liz's leadership experiences have included coordinating St. Mark's re-accreditation process and expanding and improving the preschool program at St. Mark.

***Primary Grades Team Leader: Janet Davies***

***Education:*** M.Ed. in Elementary Education from the University of Toledo, B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education for Clarion State College

***Certification:*** Reading Specialist (K-12) issued by the Maryland State Department of Education

Janet has experience teaching all grades from Kindergarten through eighth grade in both Catholic and public schools. Most recently she has taught third and fourth grade as well as middle school math and science at St. Mark. Her undergraduate training specialized in mathematics education and her graduate training specialized in reading education. Beyond the classroom she has served on the student services screening committee, created a parent volunteer program, been a member of curriculum and re-accreditation committees, and been the advisor to the *It's Academic* team.

***Middle Grades Team Leader: Henry Wroblewski***

***Education:*** M.A. in Education from The Catholic University of America, B.A. in Philosophy from Oblate College

***Certification:*** Administrator I/II issued by the Maryland State Department of Education, Catechist issued by the Archdiocese of Washington

Henry is currently the middle school science and religion teacher at St. Camillus. Prior to coming to St. Camillus Henry served as the principal of St. Mary, Star of the Sea School in Indianhead and St. Joseph School in Beltsville and as assistant principal at St. Ambrose School in Cheverly. Henry has extensive experience as a middle science, math, and religion teacher at St. Ambrose and at St. Mark. In addition to his long career as both a teacher and a leader in Catholic education, Henry serves as the organist at the historic Sacred Heart Parish.