



June 10, 2010

Dear Notre Dame School Families

With the completion of the school year, we would like to say thank you for your commitment, enthusiasm and contributions over the course of the year. It has been an amazing year of teamwork across the School Administration, Faculty, School Board, PTG and parents resulting in a renewed sense of confidence and increase in total enrollment heading into next year. We can celebrate many wonderful accomplishments that have added to our collective goal of offering an enriching Catholic education for years to come. Some of the positive steps from this year included:

- Introducing the Discipline with a Purpose program to ensure there is a heightened sense of awareness for proper social conduct as well as a zero tolerance attitude toward bullying.
- Ms. Sarah Migas, Internet Safety Specialist, spoke to the 6<sup>h</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students and all interested parents to provide coaching on ways to keep our children safe with the rapidly evolving social media.
- Implementation of a teacher mentoring program that started last summer which has helped all of our teachers to share ideas and grow as educators.
- Renewed marketing efforts aimed at insuring that current families are more informed as well as creating more awareness to prospective families of the wonderful offering and value that our school brings to the community.
- An unwavering commitment from Fr. Bob to ensure that all of the necessary resources and funding of the school remain solvent during tough economic times while other schools were facing budget cuts.
- Launching Full Day Kindergarten for the 2010/2011 school year as one more way to expand our academic offering. Combined with the ½ day Kindergarten program, families of our youngest students will have even more options to help meet their individual needs.

With all of the positive steps forward that we've seen this year, one of our most valued accomplishments comes from the students of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduating class. Once again, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students tested extremely well on the high school entrance exams resulting in 100% gaining acceptance into their school of choice that included notable Catholic schools such as Fenwick, St. Ignatius, Benet, and Nazareth. We are all very proud of our graduates and filled with anticipation and hopefulness as they start high school in the fall.

Even with the positive strides from this year, Notre Dame School is not alone when it comes to the strategic issue of funding that is facing most Catholic schools today based on the rising operating costs and new funding guidelines set by the Diocese of Joliet. The attached chart illustrates the costs and revenue sources for the upcoming school year. As you review, you'll see that tuition only covers approximately 68% of the total operating costs of the school. The balance of the funds come from the parish and other revenue/donations. Fortunately for Notre Dame School, we have a positive outlook with an increase in enrollment and a commitment to the school families that we are striving to identify new and innovative ways to raise more funds.

For the upcoming school year, we are introducing a new revenue source that will help us to meet our goal of providing an excellent educational environment while also providing a potential tax deduction for the parents. The new program is called the Notre Dame Parent Pledge. With the new Parent Pledge drive, we are reaching out to all of the school families asking for a donation. The appeal is asking for a commitment of \$200 per student for the upcoming school year. To help ensure the program is equitable across all of the school families, we are placing a cap on the funding request per family at \$500.

The benefit of this new appeal is that all of the donations will go directly to funding the school's operating budget while offering the parents the option of a tax deductible gift.\* As a result of the Parent Pledge being a donation, families are not obligated to make a contribution as part of enrolling your son/daughter at the school. Instead, the gift appeal is asked of all school families to contribute what they can afford with the understanding that gifts at all levels are welcomed.

Attached is a brief Q/A summary to help provide more information on the Parent Pledge. To ensure that we fully address any of your questions/concerns regarding the Notre Dame Parent Pledge, we will once again have a Back-to-School Parent Meeting to directly cover this topic as well as other important school information regarding the 2010/2011 school year. Please mark your calendars for the B-T-S meeting scheduled for August 25<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you in advance for your continued commitment and generosity to Notre Dame School.

Growing in grace and wisdom,

Father Robert Schuler, Pastor  
Mary Ann Feeney, Principal  
Notre Dame School Board

*\* Please consult your tax advisor as to your personal finances and relevant tax filings.*



## **Notre Dame School Parent Pledge Program**

### **Q: What is the Parent Pledge Program?**

A: The Parent Pledge is a contribution, over and above tuition and fees, asked of all parents to help cover the annual operating budget.

### **Q: Why is there a Parent Pledge?**

A: The actual cost of educating your son or daughter is \$5,161 with the tuition covering 68% of our annual operating expenses. Based on guidelines set by the Diocese, the parish direct contribution can not exceed 25% of the school's total budget. As a result, the remaining \$508 per student expense must be covered by fundraising through efforts in conjunction with the PTG, 3<sup>rd</sup> Party fundraising and our new Parent Pledge. We are asking for a Parent Pledge contribution of \$200/per student (family cap at \$500) that would be in addition to your efforts to support the other fundraising activities that occur throughout the year such as the Dinner Dance, Market Day, etc. See attached budget summary.

### **Q: Why does the school ask current parents to contribute to the Parent Pledge?**

A: We are asking the current parents to be primarily responsible for the costs of annual operations since their children are the primary beneficiaries of all the school's programs. In an effort to keep tuition affordable, a per student parent pledge is requested. The generosity of the parental support, over and above the cost of tuition, allows the school to pay for the cost of operating expenses.

### **Q: What exactly does Notre Dame expect from parents in the Parent Pledge Program?**

A: A fair and specific pledge is needed. The ask is for your fulfillment of the pledge by October 1, 2010. Any family that is willing to donate more than their parent pledge would be greatly appreciated

### **Q: If my company has a matching gift program, does the company gift count towards my pledge obligation?**

A: Your company's matching gift will be fully credited toward your pledge. Please be advised, most companies only match outright cash donations. A matching gift form, which you obtain from your company, must accompany every gift you send to Notre Dame. Please remember to fill out your portion of the form before sending it in.

### **Q: How are the records kept?**

A: The Parish Development Office in conjunction with the School Administration will keep track of the pledges and contributions. It is necessary to have your pledge form accompany your contribution. In February, a final statement will be sent thanking you for completing your pledge or asking you to do so at that time. If at any time you wish to know the balance of your pledge you can contact our office.

### **Q: Do other Catholic schools include a pledge program in addition to tuition?**

A: Yes, within the Joliet Diocese, 45 (over 70%) of the Elementary and Preschools have relied on a parent pledge program to meet all of their operating experiences. The pledge amount across the schools within the Diocese range from \$200 - \$1,000 per student.



**Notre Dame School Parent Pledge Program**  
Donation Submission

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ family, enclosed is our donation gift of  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ that is to go towards the Notre Dame Parent Pledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature (date)

Please mail-in the Parent Pledge submission form and donation to:  
Notre Dame School ATTN: Parent Pledge Program. 66 Norfolk Ave.,  
Clarendon Hills, IL 60514