

## I AM ST. CLARE SCHOOL!

Can you say this with your whole heart?

A suggestion was made by one of our parents that I write a letter to the families of St. Clare to provide an update on the measures we are taking to continue academic excellence and ensure a supportive learning environment for our students, in spite of some tangible economic challenges. Foremost, to put to rest any rumors, we are not closing nor do we have any intent to do so in the future.

For more than 80 years, St. Clare has provided a faith-based, quality education—and we will continue to do so! Still, as is evident all over Michigan, schools are experiencing financial difficulties and St. Clare is no exception. Our enrollment has decreased by approximately 20-30 total students over the last several years. To adjust for this, two years ago we reorganized and went to one classroom of each grade. St. Clare Parish is also experiencing economic challenges and has been unable to provide much of a subsidy for the school. As a result, we are now almost entirely self-sufficient.

We currently have approximately 215 students from nursery school through grade eight. This year, 30 students will graduate and we have been taking in an average of 13 kindergarten children. In keeping with Archdiocesan guidelines it is my hope to keep a minimum of 200 students, which I am confident we will achieve.

I believe that we have a definite mission here on the border of Detroit and Grosse Pointe to be a gospel presence and provide quality education, as well as stability in the neighborhood. With the above being said, however, we have to be able to pay our expenses. Benefits and utilities increase each year about 12-15%. Your teachers have not had a raise in seven years. They are a dedicated lot but they do deserve a paycheck! So the question becomes how do we do this?

An increase of 20-30 students would increase our budget by \$80,000-\$120,000.

The PTO has made contributions to the general fund, the Archdiocese of Detroit has provided a large grant for seven years, the alumni and friends have made substantial contributions, and you, the parents have helped with the increases in tuition. This year we have the services of the South Lake School System for art, Spanish and computer. All of these have helped us maintain a competitive academic environment and tuition.

I said I was going to try not to increase tuition and asked our friends and alumni to donate to this cause. Right now I have received about \$11,000 from our Christmas mailing, and this is a wonderful beginning.

So what can you do?

- Pray daily for our school, each family and teacher. Pray for those who have been benefactors of our school. I am a firm believer in prayer.

- Be a positive marketing person. Tell neighbors, friends, and relatives all the things you love about St. Clare. Ask them to check out our school.
- If you are unhappy about something at school, please bring it to my attention. You cannot sell St. Clare to someone if you are not thrilled about us.
- Make a donation to the auction. Come to the auction. Help with the auction. This is our biggest fundraiser. It has been raising about \$40,000 but it could raise over \$50,000 if we each worked a little harder.
- Bring neighbors, friends and relatives to the play *Gepetto and Sons* on April 22, 23 or 24. Let them see one way we develop each child's God-given talents.
- I will be setting up an open house in April. Invite someone to it, and bring him or her to St. Clare.
- Return the letter of intent for next year when it comes out in a few weeks.
- Register early.
- If you know of someone who has money that they might like to invest in St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic School give me a call and I'll follow up.
- Put your I AM ST. CLARE SCHOOL sign on your lawn. If you have friends or relatives in the area, ask them to put the sign on their lawn.

I came to St. Clare because I wanted to come here. Your "spirit" solidified my decision. Let's spread that spirit throughout our church and neighborhood.

If you would like to respond to me about anything in this letter, or if you have suggestions to make and help with, please give me a call at 313-647-5100 or email me at [skavery@stclarem.org](mailto:skavery@stclarem.org).

God bless you and your family and St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic School.

Sr. Kathy

Principal