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Newsletter—February 12, 2021

We Teach Truth - Build Character - Inspire Service

Play for Comets! We have been thrilled by the initial support of our Play for Comets fundraising campaign. We promised more information this week and are here with some answers to frequently asked questions.

Donor Recognition

We are incredibly grateful for generous donors from our parish and school families who will make this project a reality.

We will be placing a permanent fixture at the playground to recognize all donations above \$500 in the following tiers:

- Comet Level: \$10,000+
- Platinum: \$7,500 - \$9,999
- Gold: \$5,000 - \$7,499
- Silver: \$2,500 - \$4,999
- Bronze: \$1,000 - \$2,499
- Maroon: \$500 - \$999



Additional recognition in different areas of our outdoor design will be given to donors at the Gold, Platinum and Comet levels.

An appropriately sized playground, with site work and installation, will run St. Thomas School about \$50,000.

We are looking to install this in the grassy green area on the side of the school, but have several site options available. We have met with three separate companies to gather quotes and explore options.

This initiative can be as big as you want it to be! There are big dreams of adding swings, gaga ball courts, interactive panels, climbing walls and more if we can exceed our goals.

As a reminder, the easiest way to donate is directly via check to St Thomas School and deliver it to the school office. Online donations are also possible at the parish website.

From Our Kids

If you haven't seen it already, check out this great video from our kids. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T5yIHQcRKc&feature=youtu.be>

Their excitement about this new playground is contagious! They are working hard at their penny wars to raise money in their own way.

Each class is collecting coins and many classes have already had to get bigger buckets.

Check social media for our weekly update on our overall progress this Friday 2/12!

Let's PLAY!



The Playground Fundraising Committee



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First Grade celebrated the 101st day of school and helped the pets find forever families in our community!



Students were encouraged to donate items to the Foster Pet Outreach program.

“The mission of Foster Pet Outreach is to help at-risk animals with a focus on dogs and cats. Through an all-volunteer base, we determine the individual needs of vulnerable dogs and cats in our foster home program until they find a forever home. All donations stay local and go directly to foster pet care.”

Students learned the important role God gave Adam and all people during religion in the fall. We are to be stewards of creation. We are putting that in action today! Happy 101st Day of School!



PNC Grant - Motivating Music Makers submitted by Mr. Philip Holt and is awarded \$1,000; the project will provide students with more musical instruments for use in their music studies.

Congratulations Mr. Holt!



Julie Selburg



15 Year Anniversary
Serving Catholic Education



Preschool students were very interested in learning about the church and have enjoyed Catholic Schools Week VERY much!



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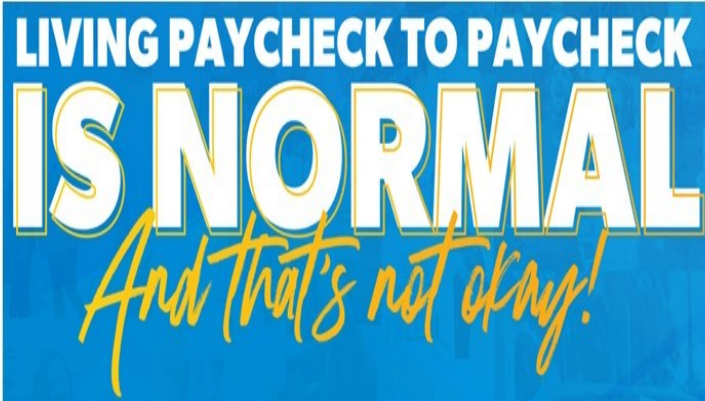
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Never worry about money again with *Financial Peace University*! It's the proven plan to help you master budgeting, beat debt, and live the life of your dreams. Through nine lessons rooted in biblical wisdom, you'll learn from Dave Ramsey and his team of financial experts.

Class starts Tuesday, March 2, 2021 in the St. Thomas Parish Hall.

We have a limited number of memberships at the discounted rate of only \$80. Call the Parish Office @ 309-688-3446 to register.



Statements for Childcare & Tuition for Taxes:

If you go to the FACTS Family Portal you can get all of your tax information. Next to the words PAYMENT PLAN AND BILLING, you can click on VIEW DETAILS. On the next screen, you can click on VIEW PAYMENT SUMMARY. That page breaks down tuition and other expenses by child for the calendar year.

Even though the Box Tops program has gone digital, there are still some products out there with traditional clips. If you find one on a package, you can still get credit for it as long as it's not expired! Please send Box Tops to school!



Outdoor Recess:

Students should be encouraged to engage in physical activity during recess year round...including winter--- unless temperatures are dangerously cold or when it is raining. Every child, unless excused by reason of ill health, is expected to comply to the outdoor guidelines set at St. Thomas. Please keep in mind that winter air does NOT cause or worsen minor symptoms as long as children are dressed appropriately. Extended indoor recess requests require a doctor's note.

Guidelines

Students will be outside before school and at all recesses when the temperature (including wind chill) is 15 degrees or above and it is dry. Temperature is checked throughout the day during cold weather. Students need to dress adequately for cold weather by wearing coats that close, hats or ear bands, pants or tights/leggings, and mittens or gloves. Students will also be required to stay within the designated areas to avoid unnecessary wetness. Students may bring boots to wear for warmth, however, *playing IN the snow during recess is not allowed.*



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Financial Assistance Available

Tuition assistance scholarship grants from the endowment fund established as a result of the Diocese of Peoria ROOTED IN FAITH Campaign and named in honor of Archbishop Spalding, the first Bishop of Peoria, will be available for the 2021-2022 school year for students enrolled in or intending to enroll in grades Kindergarten through 12 in any Catholic school located in the Diocese of Peoria whose families are active members of a Catholic parish in the diocese. All grants will be based on financial need objectively assessed.

Information about the grants and application materials may be obtained from any Catholic elementary or secondary school in the Diocese of Peoria or on the Diocesan website www.cdop.org under **Catholic Education** and then under **Financial Assistance**. Consult the detailed protocols and procedures and checklist for all requirements necessary to be eligible for an award.

Parents must apply online at: online.factsmgt.com/aid. Families of students currently receiving grants are reminded that all grants are for one year only, and anyone seeking to renew a grant for the 2021-2022 school year must reapply.

Deadline date for the completed application is **April 30, 2021**. Notification of grant awards will be made by the end of June 2021.

Another funding opportunity is also available due to the Invest in Kids Act legislation in Illinois. Students may be eligible for up to 100% of tuition and fees under a new program for tax credit scholarships (TCS). Details on how to apply and who qualifies are available on the Empower Illinois website at www.empowerillinois.org. Students who receive a TCS are ineligible to receive a Spalding award.

Anyone interested in doing the Peoria Area **Performing Arts Studio's Summer Theatre Institute** this year. I'm so looking forward to this year's Institute. #ProcessMeetsProduct.

Last summer Dedra Kaiser and I produced a Youth Summer Theatre Institute outdoors. This summer it will be returning with two large scale musicals with an educational component. Our Musical is *High School Musical* at Peoria Players and *Oklahoma* at *Three Sisters Park*. Information on auditions and the summer institute itself can be found at our website listed below. We have opportunities for (1st-6th grade) and (7th-college aged)

Visit www.performpeoria.com to learn more. Simply click on the headline: Summer Institute. We will also have opportunities for our younger performers to attend our *Cowboy and Cowgirl Camp/HSM Wildcat Camp* (1st-6th grade). These campers will be a part of *Oklahoma* and *High School Musical* productions, depending on which camp they sign up for. Our Institute will bring in various instructors and professionals to conduct workshops and sessions on Stage Combat, Hip-Hop Dance, Cheer and Basketball Technique, Storytelling through song, Square Dancing, Mental and Physical Health for the Performer, and more.

[CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO ABOUT OUR INSTITUTE](#)

Sincerely,

Bryan Blanks

Assistant Director/Education Outreach

Theatre Specials Instructor and Director- Pleasant Valley Middle School

Theatre Program Director, St. Vincent de Paul School