

ST. AUGUSTINE INDIAN MISSION the Trumpet Call

WINTER 2009

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF EDUCATION, TRADITION AND FAITH

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Happy New Year! I'm not sure how long you are able to say that, but here at St. Augustine we have been saying it quite a bit to each other. We have anxiously waited for the New Year to arrive. 2009 is our Centennial Celebration year! 100-years ago on March 13, 1909 Sister Katharine Drexel first arrived in Winnebago, Nebraska. Even as I write this now, it's hard to put in perspective the significance of this milestone for the Mission. We have had many friends, supporters, teachers, and directors along the way, but the one thing that has remained constant is our Mission – educating kids through body, mind and spirit.

In this issue we discuss some of the upcoming centennial celebrations as well as a story about a remarkable young man who left an impression on my staff, and me, but more importantly on the students. You'll also notice our "going green" insert. We are thrilled to be able to do our part in helping the environment (along with cutting printing and postage costs) by offering this publication to you via email. Wow, we've come a long way in 100 years!

Above all, we must continue to remember why we are here. Our kids. Without them, we would not have made it to this wonderful milestone. Their continued strength, courage and eagerness to learn is an inspiration to all of us in the community. They deserve all the celebrations this year and I look forward to sharing those with the kids and with you.

Blessings, Fr. Dave Korth

St. Augustine Christmas Program



St. Augustine Students sing for family and friends during the Christmas Pageant at St. Augustine.

St. Augustine's annual Christmas program took place later than usual this year, but the postponement didn't dim anyone's spirits.

The program, originally scheduled for December 18th, had to be re-scheduled because of a snowstorm before the kid's Christmas break.

Jerry LaMere, the parish musician, directed the program and did an excellent job preparing the children for their performance.

One of the highlights of the program was when the children sang "Silent Night" in Ho-Chunk, the language of the Winnebago people. All grades participated in the concert, which included the Kindergarten and First Grade Bell Choir, led by Dr. Kathi Sanders.

"It was wonderful to see the parents come out and support the students and all their hard work. Everyone really enjoyed the program and left filled with a reminder of the Holiday Spirit", said Head Teacher, Don Blackbird.

A Musical Journey



A few weeks before Christmas, the Mission's office manager, Sister Agnes, received a phone call from college student James LaFlin of El Cerrito, California. His family had recently received the 2009 St. Augustine Centennial Calendar and James's mother noticed the volunteer opportunities at the Mission. James was interested in exploring those opportunities.

After talking to Sister Agnes, it wasn't long before James made plans to arrive in Winnebago and begin a two-week volunteer stint at St. Augustine.

James was intrigued by the opportunities available to him about St. Augustine. An aspiring elementary music teacher, he recently became interested in Native American music. "Native American music is so rich, old and full of ideas," LaFlin said. "All music is a story – this music tells a story about the different tribes, what they are about, what their ethics are", LaFlin said.

James is currently attending a community college close to his home studying music. He will soon be transferring to the University of California, Irvine to study his instrument of choice, the Bassoon. UC Irvine is one of the only colleges in the country to offer coursework in the Bassoon.

What seemed a world away has turned out to be an incredible journey for both LaFlin and the students at St. Augustine. Don Blackbird, Head Teacher, was able to create a schedule for LaFlin to work with each grade.

"The openness and kindness of everyone has been wonderful. The Native American culture has made a lasting impression on me."

LaFlin's plan was to teach basic rhythm, scales and perhaps chords if they seemed interested. "I was surprised at how they caught on and how quickly," LaFlin said. Some of the kids, however, were hesitant to try something new. One morning he had the children listen to music and think about what musical elements they would want in a piece if they were the composer. A few of the students said, "I can't, I can't". James pushed them a little and they came around with courage and made wonderful observations. James asked the students to talk about how the music made them feel and the connections between music and emotions. After the exercise the kids wanted to compose again. "The children here are very open, welcoming and genuine," James said.

James said he would love to come back to the Mission someday. "The openness and kindness of everyone has been wonderful. The Native American culture has made a lasting impression on me," James said.

James will be heading back to the west coast on January 17th, but not without an experience of a lifetime and the memory of the kids who touched his heart in Winnebago, Nebraska.

Mission's Centennial Celebration

This is an exciting time for St. Augustine Indian Mission. 2009 marks the Centennial celebration of the school. Mother Katharine Drexel first arrived in Winnebago on March 13, 1909.

As the Mission prepares for a year of celebration and reflection, a first step has been established. The first of three portable classrooms now sits on the west side of the building. This portable will be the home for a community museum commemorating the school's 100-year anniversary.

A series of celebrations are planned throughout the year. The kick-off celebration for the school and community will begin on March 13th followed by a special Mass and celebration with St. Augustine Indian Mission Alumni on March 15th.



The first portable gets moved into place.

As you can imagine, with this opportunity also come additional costs. A contribution to this year of celebration would be greatly appreciated. Please help us make our dreams for the future a reality by making a donation to the Centennial Fund. Thank you for your continued generosity and for helping us reach this 100-year milestone.



James putting on a concert for the students at St. Augustine.



James LaFlin and Xerxes pose for picture



Tricia Belt joins staff at St. Augustine

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St. Augustine Indian Mission is pleased to announce that Tricia Belt joined the staff at the Mission as the new Accounting Manager. Tricia's official first day was January 5, 2009.

Prior to joining us, Tricia attended Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska. Her most recent employment was as a Credit Analyst for Tyson Foods, Inc. in Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, where she worked for eight years.

Tricia currently resides in Emerson, Nebraska with her husband Kevin and their three children: Kylie (11), Nolan (7) and Jackson (2). Tricia enjoys spending time with her family and watching her children participate in their many activities.

One of the things that excites Tricia most is the opportunity to work in a school setting. "The people here seem like a great group and I'm happy to be a part of it," she said.

A bit of Divine Intervention helped bring Tricia to the Mission. "I'm so happy that Fr. Dave Belt suggested to me that his sister-in-law, Tricia, might be interested in working for us. While interviewing her, it dawned on me that I had seen her before...in high school she played against -and beat - three of my nieces in the state basketball tournament. I shared with her that I would try not to hold that against her," Fr. Dave Korth said jokingly. "Tricia seems to be a great fit in our office. She is a fast learner and a joy to be around. I hope she will be with us for many years."

"It's a new and interesting position for me, and I am anxious to get into it and learn as much as I can from my office co-workers - Kim Reising, Sister Agnes, Fr. Dave and Fr. Mike," Tricia said.

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Centennial Celebrations Calendar

February 22, 2009

- Reconciliation and Healing Prayer Service in St. Augustine Church
- 4:00 p.m. prayer service for healing any past hurts caused over the 100-year history of the Mission.

March 13, 2009

- 10:00 a.m. Kick-off celebration for students, staff, and family members: commemorating the first arrival of Mother Katharine Drexel in Winnebago (March 13, 1909)

March 15, 2009

- 10:00 a.m. Kick-off celebration for community, alumni, and benefactors. Celebration will be held in the St. Augustine Church, Winnebago, NE.
- Meal served following festivities

April 2009

- Opening of Centennial Exhibit at the Betty Strong Encounter Center in Sioux City, IA

May 9, 2009

- Centennial celebration at St. Vincent de Paul, Andover, KS (sister parish)

September 2009

- Pow-wow celebration in Winnebago, NE.

October. 17, 2009

- Circle of Dreams Celebration in Omaha, NE.

November 2009

- Theatre production at the Betty Strong Encounter Center to commemorate St. Augustine Indian Mission's 100-year history.

Please call the mission office at 402-878-2402 for additional details on any of these celebrations. Friends and benefactors are most welcome to come and celebrate the milestone with us!



Don French with his Family

St. Augustine Parish Member Ordained

Don French, a member of St. Augustine parish, was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on November 15, 2008. The ordination was the culmination of four years of study for him and his wife, Jeanie. Now that Don is a member of the clergy, he will be able to assist the priest at the altar during Mass, perform baptisms, officiate at weddings and funerals, as well as visit the sick and provide other pastoral assistance. Fr. Mike Eckley, pastor of the parishes, is grateful for the outward sign Don and Jeanie bring to the parish community of their dedication and service to the Lord.

Loss of a Loved One

Mission Associate Director, Fr. Mike Eckley, lost his father unexpectedly on Dec. 4, 2008. Larry Eckley, 65, was married to his high school sweetheart, Betty, for 44 years. He is survived by his wife, five children and ten grandchildren and preceded in death by one daughter. Larry was an independent auto dealer in Omaha for over 30 years. Hundreds of people paid tribute to him at his Wake and Funeral services at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Omaha.

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St. Augustine Indian Mission

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