

THE FACES OF ST. AUGUSTINE

by Julie Corbett

Meet Mrs. Jill Aman, 1st grade teacher at St. Augustine Indian Mission. Mrs. Aman has been with St. Augustine's for 12 years, making her one of two teachers that has taught at the Mission for the longest period of time. Mrs. Aman, started her career at St. Augustine's as a 7th and 8th grade teacher. After two years, she moved to the 1st grade, where she has been ever since. Mrs. Aman, along with her husband Steve and children, currently live on an acreage outside of Sergeant Bluff, IA and she commutes about 25 miles every day to Winnebago to teach. She is currently finishing her last semester at Wayne State College, where she will graduate in May with a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instructions.

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It's obvious that Mrs. Aman is an energetic individual who is extremely enthusiastic about being a teacher. During our brief conversation, she told me that she was really excited to see the progress in the students reading. She said that they are a great group of kids who have really taken to the Guided Reading and the Daily 5 Program. The Daily 5 is set-up for the students to Read to themselves, Read to others, Listen to reading, Write about what they have read and then complete Word Work.

When asked what she would like people to know about St. Augustine Indian Mission, Mrs. Aman quickly answered, "I really like that we work to blend cultural identity with education, which helps to make the students more successful, to be proud of themselves and their culture".



Mrs. Jill Aman with some of her First Grade Students

Mrs. Jill Aman is just one face that you will find working with the students of St. Augustine Indian Mission.

If you would like to take a tour of the school and meet some of the amazing teachers and students. Please contact Mr. Don Blackbird to schedule a time to visit.

St. Augustine Wish List

- LCD Projector • Smart Board • Teacher Laptops
- Teacher Printers • Television • DVD Player • Software
- Audio Centers for use with reading program
- Science Text Books for 5th grade
- TV Cart • Adjustable Overhead Cart

Large Building Ideas

- New Lunchroom and Kitchen attached to building
(the lunchroom currently doubles as a performing multi-purpose room for the church and school)
- New Library

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St. Augustine Indian Mission

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A Letter From Father Dave

Dear Benefactors,

As you read this issue of the Trumpet Call, I will be in the midst of my two month sabbatical study program at Tantur Ecumenical Institute located in the Holy Land (Israel – on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem).

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Omaha that priests qualify for a sabbatical every 7 years. Most of the sabbaticals are 4 - 6 months in length. I am in my 18th year of priesthood and this is the first time I am taking advantage of this program. I will be gone from Feb. 13th to April 13th. I will return just before Easter, and will be here for the end of the school year. Then, if the Mission finances are in good shape, I will go on retreat for the month of June, for a total of three months.

I told my parishioners that I will then come back and subject all of them to all of that rejuvenation! Some people have speculated that I am getting ready to move to a new assignment. That is not the plan. I don't know how long Archbishop Lucas will allow me to stay here, but it is my desire that this sabbatical mark the halfway point of my stay here.

I want to thank Fr. Mike Eckley, pastor of the four parishes and Assistant Director of the Mission for making this possible for me. I spent a long time trying to make up my mind about doing this. I knew this would put everything

on his shoulders, so I hesitated in making the final decision. But he is the one who encouraged me to do it. So now I can say to him, "You asked for it!" Just kidding! I recognize how blessed I am to be working along side someone as good, generous, and talented as him!

Know that you all will remain in my prayers, and I ask that you do the same for me! I also ask that you generously support the Mission while I am gone, so the children of St. Augustine's will not have any ill effects of my being away for this time period.

Blessings,



READING INITIATIVE . . . UP, UP, AND ON ITS WAY

As earlier reported, St. Augustine Indian Mission was given a challenge by Dr. Anne Hubbard, to improve the reading scores of the students. Realizing the importance of reading, the educators took a hard look at what low literacy rates do to individuals. The overall message was clear, low literacy rates condemn children to failure in school, and as adults, to low-paying jobs, dependency on government assistance, higher crime rates and life-long poverty.

Therefore, it was decided that something needed to be done as soon as possible. With the help of the Metropolitan Reading Council of Omaha, an intensive professional development program in reading strategies was implemented. Sessions are being held at SAIM every three weeks for four hours and include training on guided reading, student acquisition skills, vocabulary and decoding.

Understanding that more individualized instruction is imperative for students to be taught at the correct level of difficulty, brought about an additional change. It was decided that technology will also be infused into the curriculum at St. Augustine Indian Mission as a vital part of the overall plan to positively impact student learning, particularly in the areas of reading and math.

Infusing technology into the classroom will:

- ~Allow teachers to individualize lessons at the correct level of difficulty for students within the same classroom.
- ~Allow students to practice and test themselves for fluency and pronunciation in Reading, one of the primary areas needing remediation.
- ~Support the nationally recognized "Scholastic Read 180" program that will be implemented as one strategy to improve reading skills.

SUCCESS . . .

On October 1, 2010 the school performed a standardized test to determine what grade level the students were reading at compared to where they should be for their grade level.

At the time, 19 students out of 99 tested were reading at or above grade level; 28 were reading far below and 4 were not tested. The rest fell in between. As of February 1, 2011, the students were once again tested and now 42 are reading at or above grade level; 8 are far below and all students have been tested.

Indeed, there is still a long way to go, but the results are definitely speaking for themselves.



Third grade students showing off their, books, hats and mittens given to them by Dr. Anne Hubbard

(cont.) In an effort to continue this amazing work, St. Augustine Indian Mission is still needing to meet the challenge placed before them by Dr. Hubbard. The Reading Initiative takes funding that far exceeds the Mission budget. Therefore, she proposed a \$2 million challenge; she will give us \$500,000 over the course of 5 years, if we can find 3 others to match it. So far, one of the three has been met.

SAVE THE DATE . . . SPONSOR A CHILD

St. Augustine Indian Mission School serves over 125 kindergarten thru eighth grade students from the Omaha and Winnebago Indian Reservations. The children are taught traditional Native American culture and language, along with a solid core of academic basics. However, costs to educate and feed these children of God continue to increase and has reached nearly \$5,000 per student. Families of St. Augustine students do not have the means necessary to pay the entire cost, although they are asked to make a nominal donation. Last year, 84% of our students qualified for free or reduced lunch. Therefore, St. Augustine Indian Mission relies on the generosity of people in the community to help defray these costs.

One way that we do this is through our Sponsor-A-Child Program. Prospective donors can sponsor one or more children with a gift of \$5,000 each. Donors are then assigned to a specific student whose progress is measured throughout the year. The students are asked to write to their sponsor regularly and then the donor and child are formally introduced at a recognition luncheon held each spring. It is a moving experience when child and donor meet and a fulfilling experience for those who generously give to the program.

This year the luncheon will be held at the Happy Hollow Country Club on Wednesday, April 27th at 12:00 pm.

A SURPRISE VISIT

by Don Blackbird

On Monday, January 25th the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classes were greeted with a surprise visit by Mr. Lance Morgan, C.E.O of Ho-Chunk Inc. Mr. Morgan came to speak to the students and talk about the importance of education and working hard to reach the goals you set for yourself.

Mr. Morgan shared his experiences as a young man and discussed the challenges he faced living in an impoverished community. He told the students that when he was a young man, there were not many opportunities available to Native American men and women looking for work. He said that many of the people he saw growing up had to settle for jobs that others would not take. They were forced to work for low pay and were not given opportunities to advance.

As Mr. Morgan shared his story and

**" focus . . .
work hard . . . achieve success . . ."**

interacted with the students, he told of how he decided as a seventh grader that he would one day go to Harvard. He spoke of all the hard work that it took in high school to prepare himself for success. He also shared that he was so confident that he would get into Harvard, he did not even want to apply to other colleges.

He then surprised the students by sharing how shocked he was to receive a rejection letter from Harvard. He stated that their reason for not accepting his application was his lack of having all of the necessary requirements that needed to be submitted. He informed the students that even though he was disappointed, he kept his goal of attending Harvard in front of him. After he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, he again applied to Harvard and this time was accepted.

Mr. Morgan completed his studies at Harvard law and then began practicing American Indian Corporate Law. In 1994, he turned his attention back to his people and returned to Winnebago to form Ho-Chunk Inc. In its first year of operation HCI had one employee and turned a \$400,000 profit. Mr. Morgan discussed the struggles that he and the company faced as a new organization in Winnebago. Even though times were difficult, he continued to keep his new goal in front of him.

He was determined to provide real job opportunities for Native American people. He had a vision of Native American business people with the ability to control their own destinies and the futures of their communities.



Mr. Lance Morgan speaks to the 6th, 7th and 8th grade about the importance of education and goals

Ho-Chunk Inc. has now grown into a 180 million dollar business that employs 1,400 people with offices in Washington D.C., New Orleans, California and international teams in Mexico, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Morgan also shared with the students that HCI has fourteen subsidiaries and all of those companies need leaders; he would like them to be those leaders.



All it takes, he told them, was for them "to have a goal, focus on their education and work hard to achieve whatever they dream to achieve".