

# the Trumpet Call

ST. AUGUSTINE INDIAN MISSION

WINTER 2017

CELEBRATING 107 YEARS OF EDUCATION, TRADITION AND FAITH

## ***Sr. Frances Betz – Missionary/Educator...***

***Sharing, caring and finding successes with St. Augustine students***

The alarm clock goes off at 4:30 a.m. each morning for Sr. Frances Betz, a member of the Benedictine Sisters Order of Norfolk, NE. She starts each morning with a meditation, then at 6:00 a.m., Lauds with her Community, Mass at 6:30 a.m., followed by breakfast. Sister Frances makes the short two-minute commute from the convent, on the grounds of St. Augustine's, over to the school library at 7:30 a.m. and begins to get ready for the students to arrive for the school day.

Sr. Frances meets each of the eight grades weekly but she is available to help students all day. Her passion for teaching shows as she interacts with the different grade levels and individually with the students. She reads to the students, conducts book discussions and facilitates book quizzes. "She has high hopes for all the students and it is easy to see the joy flowing out of her when she sees a child finding success, especially in reading," shared Don Blackbird, principal of St. Augustine's. When asked what, she likes most about serving at St. Augustine's and working with the students Sr. Frances stated, "I love to show the children the progress they are making in reading, displaying the good results, and seeing the children walk away proudly with quiz results in hand."

Sr. Frances first served St. Augustine's from 1978 to 1982. After assignments in Appalachia and South Africa she returned in 2001 and has been at the Mission ever since. "She brings with her years of real life experience as a missionary and is such a valuable living resource for the students," said Don Blackbird. "She gladly shares her stories of service in Africa, her childhood during World War II in Germany and her vocation story of how she resisted her family's objections and left home to become a Benedictine sister as a young woman." *(continued page 2)*



Sr. Frances with 4th Grade Students Fall 2016



Sr. Frances with students working in the library 2015



## A Message From Father Mark

Dear Friend,

One of my goals for this school year is to learn more about St. Katharine Drexel, who founded the St. Augustine Indian Mission. I have looked up quotes from our beloved foundress and one spoke to me about working together:

*"Christ wishes the Christian Community to be a body that is perfect because we work together towards a single end, and the higher the motive which actuates this collaboration the higher, no doubt, will be the union."*



At the Mission, we always try to connect people to our students and their families. We want those who support the school to know that they are giving to a community of people and not just an institution. Many of our donors and volunteers participate in our "Sponsor a Child" program. It directly links people to our students', which is a huge joy for me to see these links growing and developing.

Earlier today, I heard about a graduate of our school who is now a senior in high school. While at St. Augustine's, she was sponsored for years by a couple through our "Sponsor a Child" program. Over the years, this couple stayed in contact with this young lady. As this young lady looks forward to going to college, the sponsor couple has decided to continue to support her by helping with her college tuition.

This is truly a wonderful success story of our "Sponsor A Child" program. A real connection was made between the student and this couple. This connection made a real difference in both the student's and the sponsor's life. This high school senior is not in this alone; she has people praying for her, encouraging her, and supporting her. It is a little glimpse of what it means to be the Body of Christ.

As St. Katharine Drexel reminds us in another quote, we are called to "Work together toward a single end...the glory of God." We are united by a common purpose, especially living in a culture that sometimes tells us that we are all on our own. St. Katharine reminds us that just the opposite is true. We are individuals, but we are also connected as the Body of Christ.

I hope you know that everyone here is praying for you. Please continue to keep us in your prayers and thank you for your continued support. We are in this together.

St. Katharine Drexel and St. Augustine, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Mark Beran – Director of St. Augustine Indian Mission



## (Continued) Sr. Frances Betz – Missionary/Educator...

Sr. Frances has served in many capacities at the school, including principal, religious education teacher, and now as librarian. She has served at the parish level as CCD teacher, adult bible study leader, and continues today to serve the parish as sacristan, decorating the church for big feast days, and visiting in the nursing home in Macy. "Sr. Frances is a wonderful example to the students and to the communities of Winnebago, Walthill, and Macy and her joy is very apparent as she lives and shares her Catholic faith with our students," shared Fr. Mark Beran, Director of St. Augustine Indian Mission.



Sr. Frances reading to students

When asked what, she thinks she needs to do her job better, Sr. Frances replied, "A few more teacher aides or para professionals would help carry out our program; and a keyboard software program, but we don't need any more gadgets. We will energetically use what we have". Sr. Frances also shared her deep appreciation for our donors who make a difference in the lives of our students.

"The kids keep us educators on our toes and we need to keep up with progress in the education world so that we can offer the best that is available to bring out the best in the children". "But aside from technology it is the goodness of the heart that we share day to day. Our supporters and donors helps us to carry out each day the beautiful mission of sharing God's love and the gift of a good education at St. Augustine Indian Mission."

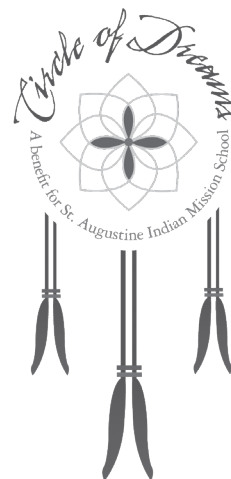
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# Save the Date - Circle of Dreams 2017



The Circle of Dreams Annual Fundraiser for St. Augustine Indian Mission will be held at "A View on State" venue in Omaha, NE on Saturday, March 25th, 2017. We are very excited to have, as this year's Honorary Chairs, two board members and their wives, Justin and Nicole Vossen, and Ryan and Rachel Schroer. Invitations will be mailed out in early February. We hope you will be able to join us and help support the Mission. If you have any questions, please call Kelly Vazquez at 402-557-5652.



## From the Principal



The students are getting back to work after a wonderful Christmas break. It is always hard to come back to the day-to-day school routine, but the students seem energetic about getting back to learning; and the teachers are eager to continue to challenge the students with new classwork. The administration has been busy these last few months trying to make improvements by creating an environment conducive to learning while trying to hold down costs, especially energy costs.

This past year we conducted an extensive energy audit and have begun the process of making changes where we can conserve energy and reduce costs. We have been changing out light fixtures in the classrooms and hallways, while also reducing energy consuming electronics that are outdated and not efficient.

This winter we have seen some challenges. Even though this winter has been mild by Nebraska standards, it has also held its fair share of extremely cold days. We continue to struggle to find ways to save energy costs, which tend to skyrocket in the winter months. We have begun planning to replace our heating and cooling system, which is no longer able to keep up with the cold of a Nebraska winter or the heat of a Nebraska summer. Our current system is

outdated and is a system of patched equipment and three separate heating and cooling systems being run by a computer that is over sixteen years old. The new system is going to cost \$100,000, but will ultimately be much more

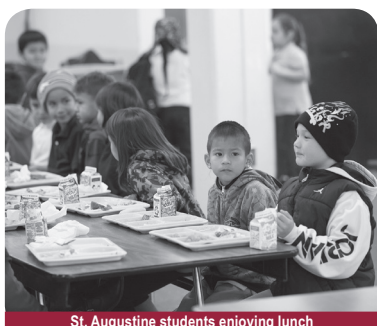
energy efficient and make a much more pleasant learning environment for our students and teachers. A grant was submitted in December and we are praying that we hear some good news soon so we can plan on the replacement of the heating and cooling systems this spring.

We continue to use your support as we work to be more responsible with our energy consumption and to make changes that will have positive environmental impacts on the future for our children. Please continue to keep us in your prayers. We are grateful for your support of St. Augustine Indian Mission.

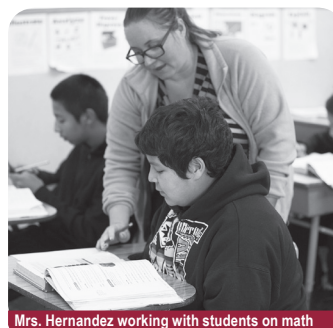
Thank you and God Bless,  
Don Blackbird



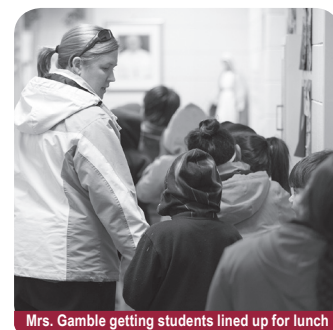
Don Blackbird



St. Augustine students enjoying lunch



Mrs. Hernandez working with students on math



Mrs. Gamble getting students lined up for lunch



# Sponsor A Child Program...

Director of Development– Kelly Vazquez

St. Augustine Indian Mission strives to give our children the best education possible. St. Augustine Indian Mission relies on the generosity of our benefactors to help defray these costs through our “Sponsor a Child” program. Through this program, prospective donors can sponsor one or more children with a gift of \$5,000 each for a full year, and \$2,500 for six months. Donors are then assigned to a specific student whose progress throughout the year can be measured. Students are asked to write to their sponsor regularly and 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.



The “Sponsor a Child” program helps cover the costs of educating the children at St. Augustine Indian Mission. Each family at St. Augustine’s is asked to pay \$500 toward their student’s tuition. This only covers a small amount of the costs to educate each student. The “Sponsor a Child” program is a wonderful way to help the Mission, and allows the donor, the opportunity to get to know the children of St. Augustine’s.



The “Sponsor a Child” program allows students to take full advantage of the opportunities for intellectual, spiritual, and emotional growth offered at St. Augustine Indian Mission. The “Sponsor a Child” program is vital to the success of the Mission and we are always looking for new sponsors to the program. Your help in supporting the children of St. Augustine Indian Mission is greatly needed. If you are interested in sponsoring a child, contact Kelly Vazquez – Director of Development at 402-557-5652.

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*\*denotes tribal representative*

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**How to contact us at the St. Augustine Indian Mission: [www.staugustinemission.org](http://www.staugustinemission.org)**

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