

Thursday Thoughts
October 22, 2009
Carlton Rider
Principal

We received word that one of our eighth grade students, Courtney Slay, is in Nationwide Children's Hospital. Her mother, Laurie, has created a CaringBridge website. You can follow Courtney's progress and show your support by visiting Courtney's website in two ways:

1. Visit the CaringBridge website by clicking the link below.
<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/courtneyslay>
2. Enter the website name, courtneyslay, at www.CaringBridge.org
When you visit you'll be asked to log in since this is a private site.

Please keep Courtney and her family in your prayers!

Late this past Monday we received a packet of information from our local Department of Health concerning the H1N1 influenza vaccine. This information will be shared with our parents/guardians by way of this week's Thursday folder and posted on our website (www.saintmarylancaster.org). The vaccine will be given here at school during the school day on a date yet to be determined. The packet will include a cover letter from Mrs. Wilson, our school nurse as well as a letter from the Department of Health addressed to our parents/guardians and a vaccine consent form that must be returned to school before the vaccine will be given to the student. We will continue to disinfect all of the student desks, keyboards, doorknobs, etc. on a daily basis and encourage students to wash their hands frequently and ask that parents keep their children home when they are sick and avoid sending them back too soon. Please check with your physician if you have any questions concerning your child's health or the H1N1 vaccine. During the all-school Mass this week, the cup was not offered during communion and ways other than the handshake were used at the Sign of Peace. On Monday, October 19th there were 58 absences reported, most with flu-like symptoms and 48 on Tuesday, October 20th. I can't emphasize enough the importance of refraining from sending your child back to school too soon, even if they tell you they feel fine or their fever has just returned to normal. That extra day at home could help prevent the spread of this flu even more than it is now or at least lessen the possibility of a widespread outbreak.

There has been concern expressed by some of our parents about making up the Terra Nova Achievement Tests that students may be missing due to illness. We will make every attempt to make up those missed tests next week and may have to call in some of our substitute teachers to help administer the tests. I feel that the health and well-being of our students, parents, faculty, and staff should be our main concern at this time.

The Advisory Board, with the assistance of our Home and School Association, would like to know the best way to communicate with our parents. A survey has been posted at <http://tinyurl.com/yh99yjx>. I would ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the survey online. The results can be tabulated instantly and will enable us to make decisions as to the best ways to communicate with our parents.

A reminder that there will be a Protecting God's Children workshop on Saturday, October 31st between 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the St. Mary Spirit Center. For those wishing to attend, you must register on line at www.virtus.org. A reminder that, according to diocesan policy 4110.1, every volunteer in a program or ministry for children and youth, regardless of their level of contact with children and youth, is required to complete a civilian criminal background check and participate in a *Protecting God's Children* training session.

BCI background checks are done at the Sheriff's office, the building on the corner of Main and High streets. You will need to bring your social security card and driver's license. More information will be sent home as regards a possible Saturday opportunity for parents who need a BCI report.

Finally, I am sending home information that we received earlier this week concerning cuts in funding for Catholic School students. The information comes from the Catholic Conference of Ohio and affects every child who attends a Catholic school in the state of Ohio. Please take time to read the information and then take time to write our state senator and representative and governor about your concerns about proposed cuts in funding for children in Catholic schools. This funding is vitality important for all Catholic schools in Ohio and we need to make our senators, representatives, and governor aware of this fact.

Those are my many thoughts for this week!