

Dear St. Ethelreda Family,

Joyous is the word that describes the atmosphere at St. Ethelreda School these days. Our first “Meet the Author” program and the dedication of the school hall in memory of Harold Washington were both phenomenal. The school hall has been officially named the “Harold Washington Assembly Hall”. We were thrilled to have politicians, community leaders and friends of the late mayor present to share their memories of the late mayor with all of us. This program ended with the students singing an original song composed by Mrs. Hannah and Mr. Carter honoring the first African American mayor of Chicago.

- Immediately following this historical program was another first for our school. This school year we have formed a book discussion club with the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students along with the faculty, staff and parents. Our first book selection was “Finding the Good” by Lucas L. Johnson. This book tells the story of a young journalist who meets the curator of the Alex Haley Museum in Henning, Tennessee, Fred Montgomery. Alex Haley was planning to write a book about his best friend, Fred Montgomery, but he died before he could finish this task. Fred shares his life stories with Lucas, who sees parallels with his own life. After much thought and prayer, Lucas writes the book for Mr. Montgomery. The book teaches us that faith and prayer will always sustain us through good and bad situations in our lives. Mr. Lucas L. Johnson graciously accepted our invitation to fly to Chicago from Tennessee to discuss his book with us. He also autographed all of our books and encouraged everyone present to “pray and always find the good in others.” Needless to say, we were all star-struck on November 30. You can read about it in the Bulletin and the Beverly Review Newspapers.

Eagle Explosion Science Club made it to the state finalist for the First Lego League competition! First Lego League (FLL) presents students with a problem challenge and teaches them to build and program a robot to accomplish missions. Everything is built out of Lego blocks. The students had to select a building in the community, complete an energy audit of that building and provide solutions for alternative energy resources that would help to lower the electrical bill. The students worked long hours after school to learn how to write programs and how to program the robot. They researched and typed their presentation, created a blog page for the science club, took pictures and presented a power point. Their determination diligence paid off. They came in third place out of fifteen teams in the city and earned a spot for the state competition in January. Congratulations to Eagle Explosion and thank you to the parents, friend and volunteers who worked with us to attain this goal!

Have you checked out our website lately? The webmaster has been changing information on it to keep you aware of all of the good news that is happening at St. Ethelreda. He has even included a section for you to post your comments. He would love to hear from you.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- We are collecting winter coats, hats, gloves and boots. Please make are items are clean and in good condition. Non perishable food items are also being collected for Christmas baskets. Please send all items to school Thursday, December 13.
- The fifth grade class will be the lectors for this month's Family Mass. Immediately following the Mass, please visit the Christmas Bazaar in St. Kilian's Gym. This is the bazaar that Mrs. Irene Burgess sponsors every year.
- School Spirit Day.....wear your blue and gold on December 11! We are having a pep rally to congratulate our flag football team, introduce our cheerleaders, pompom squad and basketball teams.
- The junior high students have special religion projects to complete this month. Check with your child and read the school calendar for the due date.
- Our annual Christmas program will be held in the Harold Washington Assembly Hall on Sunday, December 16, at 3:00. This is the first year that the program will not be in the church. However, we will not let that stop us from presenting a really good show to you. Santa will be available with his photographer to take pictures before and after the program.
- The entire student body is going to the AFC Theater to see "Cinderella, the Sister" on December 20. We are going to leave school at 9:30 and should return by 12:00. Parents are invited to attend this live performance of an old fairy tale with a new twist. The classes will have their Christmas parties when they return to school.
- School will close at 12:00 on December 21 for Christmas vacation for all students, including preschool. There is no after school care on this day. Classes will resume on January 7, 2008.
- Don't forget to place your Market Day order on December 19. Orders will be ready for pick up on January 7.
- The December basketball game schedule is on the calendar. All are welcome to attend the games and cheer our teams on to victory.
- Adopt A Family new toy drive.....Each grade will be given the name of a family and the names of the children and their ages. You are asked to buy an age appropriate toy or gift for the children in that family. Please wrap the gift and send it to school on the 17th. We would like to give the boxes to the families that evening. We want our children to understand that Christmas is for giving, not just receiving.
- The fruit pick up date is December 14. If there is a change, you will receive a special notice.

Finally, have you noticed the new lights throughout the building? Finally, the light project was approved and completed. Thank you, Lord, for those energy efficient lights.

THE FACULTY, STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION WISHES ALL OF OUR STUDENTS AND PARENTS A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR!