

# IB Update



Fall/Winter 2010

## News and information about NDPMA's International Baccalaureate Programme

### News from the Primary Years Program (JK-5)

#### Notre Dame Marist Academy Lower Division receives official IB Authorization

On August 25, 2010, Notre Dame Marist Academy Lower Division became an authorized IB World School. Of the more than 3,000 IB schools in the World, only 155 offer all three IB programmes. Notre Dame is one of only ten schools in the United States to offer the PYP, MYP, and DP, and it is the first and only Catholic school in the U.S. to do so.

As the PYP Coordinator I am very proud of our staff at the Lower Division. They put a lot of time and energy into making our good school a great school! Going through the process was challenging, but it has also been very rewarding, especially for students. With implementation of the PYP, students have become great thinkers, they know how to analyze what they are learning through different lenses, and they are becoming more reflective of their learning and their actions.

#### Listen to the Wind

International Day of Peace, on September 21<sup>st</sup> began with a kick-off of our year-long community read, *Listen to the Wind* by Greg Mortenson. We also started our year-long service project: Pennies for Peace. Pennies for Peace is a program of the Central Asia Institute (CAI), founded by Greg Mortenson. CAI is a registered nonprofit organization that promotes and provides community-based education and literacy programs, especially for girls, in remote mountain regions of Central Asia. Founded in 1996, CAI has built nearly 100 schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which serve more than 28,000 students – over 14,000 of whom are girls.

As a school we will continue to revisit the book and engage in various activities that focus on its messages. *Listen to the Wind* aligns with our IB Programme as we analyze it through our Transdisciplinary Themes to gain a better understanding of the world around us.

#### IB PYP Assembly on Units of Inquiry

On October 27<sup>th</sup> we had a school-wide IB Assembly about the Units of Inquiry that had been taught to that point. The students were responsible for presenting information and material from their unit of inquiry which they did through skits, presentations, and activities. The kindergarten class learned that school was a community and they asked every student and staff member to draw a self-portrait. *Our School Community* is hanging in the hallway going into the gym; please stop by and take a look. Our next assembly is on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome!



Brad Blakeslee and Eric Marx pose for a picture while making their three minute self-portraits



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## Coming Soon: The First Annual Fifth Grade Exhibition

Now that we are an IB World school, we are required to hold a Fifth Grade Exhibition. The Exhibition is an opportunity for students to display themselves as PYP learners. They will conduct an inquiry into an issue with global and local relevance. The goal is to achieve a deep understanding of the issue and then communicate their research effectively. Students will choose an appropriate way to communicate their learning and present their information in a clear and creative way. We are very excited to invite all of you to mark **February 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** on your calendars as the First Annual Fifth Grade Exhibition at Notre Dame Marist Academy Lower Division!

Fara Galati  
PYP Coordinator  
Notre Dame Marist Academy  
fgalati@ndpma.org

## News from the Middle Years Program (grades 6-8)

### Flowers of Peace

In preparation for International Peace Day, middle school students at Notre Dame Marist Academy considered the question: *What does peace mean to me?* Each student wrote a few sentences in response to this question and transferred their statements to one petal of a colorful paper flower. The petals were assembled into “sunflowers” and attached to bamboo poles. On International Peace Day (September 21) a ceremony was held around our peace pole in which students learned about peace day and the meaning of the peace pole. Several students who speak a second language recited the peace pole phrase in their languages (May Peace Prevail on Earth), including Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, German, Arabic, Polish, and Lithuanian. Father Joe led a prayer for peace and students then “planted” their flowers around the peace pole. Students were asked to remember to pray daily for peace in our world. In March of 2008, NDPMA joined thousands of others around the world in planting a peace pole as a constant reminder to keep world peace as a vision we hope to achieve.



## MYP Technology News at Notre Dame Marist Academy Middle Division

In the IB Middle Years Programme one of the eight required subjects is Technology. There are three main branches in MYP Technology: Information, Materials, and Systems. The focal point of technology is the Design Cycle. Similar to the scientific method, the Design Cycle teaches students a method for conducting research. Following are some of the ways we are using technology at Notre Dame Marist Academy, and utilizing the Design Cycle to investigate, plan, create, and evaluate products, systems, and solutions.

### Have you read a zine lately?

A zine (an abbreviation of the word fanzine, or magazine; "zeen") is defined as “a small circulation publication of original or appropriated texts and images.” ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zine)). Students in Ms. Pauwels’s 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language A class recently created zines using the MYP Design Cycle. Students researched topics, planned the pages, made a rough draft, and then created their zines with a partner having a similar topic interest. Some of the elements included were graphics, color, ads, articles, a table of contents, and an attractive cover. The zines were constructed of only one piece of paper, cleverly folded into the shape of a small book. Topics chosen by students included MSU sports, the latest movies, fashion, intense sports, and Halloween.

### A Minute to Win It

In Ms. Brown’s Algebra 8 and Honors Algebra 8 classes, students recently used the Design Cycle to create a *Minute to Win It* game. The MYP unit question was: *How do people solve problems?* Working in pairs, students created a math problem which had to be solved in one minute. Students used the Design Cycle to create a blueprint for their challenge. Included in the design was a visual representation of how to play the game presented through a PowerPoint, Smartboard, or other medium. If the team playing the game did not complete it in one minute, the design team had to show that it could be done. One team created a game in which CDs had to be stacked vertically as opposed to horizontally. The team discovered that by seeing beyond the constraints of the closed CDs, easy vertical stacking



was possible just by opening the covers. Reflection and evaluation of their games using the design cycle was completed by students at the end of the project.

## Middle School University

Eighth graders in Mr. Jezdimir's *Integrated Technology* class recently used the MYP Design Cycle to research three possible universities to attend based on a career they might pursue. The MYP unit question was: *How do my decisions today affect my future?* Students explored one university outside of Michigan, one international school, and one Ivy League school. After choosing one of these universities to attend, students investigated the possibility of being accepted into the institution, its location, population, and famous alumni. Students wrote a personal statement essay and created a product through which they could present their university to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. The presentation could be in the form of a PowerPoint, tri-fold, moviemaker, or other medium. Sixth grade students were then invited to view the presentations and learn about careers and universities. The final step for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students was a self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in researching and presenting their final products.

Brenda Kambakhsh  
MYP Coordinator  
Notre Dame Marist Academy  
bkambakhsh@ndpma.org

## News from the Middle Years Program at Notre Dame Preparatory (grades 9-10)

### What is a Personal Project?

This is an exciting year for us as this year's freshman class will be the first to complete the Personal Project. Completed in the students' sophomore year, the Personal Project is the culminating project of the Middle Years Programme. This is one of the most popular and interesting pieces of the MYP. After choosing a topic of personal interest, each student researches the subject using an investigative method called the Design Cycle. A prescribed set of MYP criterion is used which is designed to guide their work on the project. Each sophomore will have a staff mentor from the NDPMA community to help him or her complete the project. Students must decide how they will present their research, information, and project to others. Personal projects can range from designing a skateboard ramp, to writing a play, to organizing a community outreach program. The

possibilities truly are endless. Based on a student's passion about a particular subject or event, remarkable projects are completed. The current freshman class of NDP students will be introduced to the Personal Project in April of 2011.

## MYP Criterion-Referenced Grades

You may have noticed that several teachers have started using MYP assessment rubrics and grades. The MYP grades help teachers to evaluate individual student achievement through criterion-referenced assessments. The number and point value of specific assessment criteria varies from one subject to another, but all encompass four core components of the MYP. These components are *knowledge*: facts the student should be able to recall to ensure competence in the subject, *understanding*: how the students will be able to interpret, apply, or predict aspects of the subject, *skills*: exemplified by tasks that allow the student to apply what has been learned to new situations, and *attitudes*: ways the student is changed through the learning experience. While these grades do not affect the students' NDP percentage grades, they do help both students and teachers understand the individual student's strengths and weaknesses based on prescribed expectations. As MYP implementation continues, you will see more and more evidence of MYP grading along with the current percentage grading system.

Please visit our website for complete MYP course descriptions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Heidi Newby  
MYP Coordinator  
Notre Dame Preparatory  
hnewby@ndpma.org

## News from the Diploma Program (grades 11-12)

### DP Information Night for Sophomores

On Monday October 18, 2010, we hosted an information night for all sophomore students and their families to introduce them to the various components of the IB Diploma Program offered in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades at Notre Dame Preparatory. We were fortunate to have some of our current DP juniors and seniors present, as well as some recent DP graduates from the class of 2010. Witnessing our former students discuss their current success at college was very rewarding and beneficial.



We are proud that our recent graduates earned up to one full year of college credit. We are also delighted to watch them succeed in their current studies, understanding and knowing the advantage they will have in their academic pursuits.

### Update on Current Diploma Program Students

The current Diploma Program juniors are finishing an intense twelve-week government course and looking forward to their upcoming introduction to Theory of Knowledge (TOK), a unique course taught in the DP. Soon they will “know what they know, and why they know it!”

The DP seniors are happy to note that the first full drafts of their extended essays have been turned in to their supervisors. At this time, they are awaiting revision notes and will soon be preparing their final drafts. We wish them much luck in this academic venture. Senior Internal Assessments are soon coming in some of the classes; most DP classes will use this year to prepare for the May exams. This year’s group of DP students is exceptionally talented; they have just completed their first round of college applications and are awaiting acceptance letters. The dedication and devotion they have given to their senior year course of studies is a beneficial addition to any college application.

Good luck to all of our IB Diploma Program Seniors!

*Sharon Derico*  
DP Coordinator  
Notre Dame Preparatory  
[sderico@ndpma.org](mailto:sderico@ndpma.org)



*If you have questions about the International Baccalaureate Program at NDPMA, please feel free to contact any of the IB coordinators at the email addresses listed in the **IB Update**.*



*Diploma Program seniors test water samples for E. Coli from the stream near school. The students will use their data for a DP Lab report, part of the Diploma Program Biology internal assessment program.*

