

IB Update

Phase Two 2011

News and information about NDPMA's International Baccalaureate Programme

Welcome to the **IB Update** for Phase Two from the Middle Years Programme of Notre Dame Marist Academy. In this newsletter we share some of our MYP units and other learning activities and events in our middle division. Please feel free to contact Brenda Kambakhsh if you have questions about our IB MYP program at bkambakhsh@ndpma.org.

Seventh Graders head to Subiaco Retreat House

Seventh Graders attended a retreat at Subiaco Retreat House at the St. Benedict Monastery in Oxford, Michigan on November 2 & 3, 2011. The activities offered by the Benedictine Fathers and Brothers gave students an opportunity to share some time together away from the classroom. Students experienced meditation under the guidance of Mrs. Mary Kaye Cummins. Clay medallions were made by each student as a religious remembrance of the retreat. The day culminated in celebrating the Liturgy in the chapel of the monastery. Back in Sister Barbara Ann's classroom, students took time to reflect on their experiences and then recorded in their journals some of the memorable events of the day.

National Junior Honor Society Update

The Notre Dame Marist Academy NJHS - Fr. Joseph P. Hindelang Chapter participated in selling

pizza and soda at *Arts in the Village* in Clarkston in early September. With funds generated, our school chapter voted to donate \$100.00 to each of the following causes:

- The Rochester Leader Dogs for the Blind
- The Susan G. Koman Cancer Foundation
- Braille Books for Blind Children

The membership has also taken on supporting M.A.R.L (Michigan Animal Rescue League). Each month, Sister Barbara Ann delivers a variety of student donated dog and cat supplies to the organization located on Featherstone Avenue in Pontiac.



A different breed of shelter.

Notre Dame Teachers Attend Professional Conferences and Workshops in November

Ongoing professional training is necessary for our teachers to stay current in their teaching practices and in pedagogical understandings about 21st century education. All teachers at NDPMA attended the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) conference on November 3-4, 2011.



NOTRE DAME

We were fortunate this year to attend as a whole faculty/staff since the conference this year was at COBO center in Detroit.

Three of our new teachers, Ms. Thomas, Ms. Keogh, and Mr. Forrester attended an IB MYP workshop in their main subject areas on November 12-13, 2011. These required IB workshops are meant to provide a forum for MYP teachers to increase their understanding of the IB philosophy, inquiry-based methodologies, and to recognize best practice in the MYP classroom.



On November 21, 2011, Ms. Kambakhsh and Ms. Patterson attended the 5th annual Internationalizing Michigan Education Conference in Lansing, Michigan. This year's speakers focused on education technology, developing critical thinking skills on the Net, developing global understanding and communication skills, and creating collaborative content that contributes to a library of learning resources.

What's Been Happening in Our Middle School Classrooms?

Following is a sampling of units and activities taking place within classrooms on the Notre Dame middle division wing. Ask your student about the relevant inquiry-based learning experiences below.

Helping Monarch Butterflies in Michigan

In Maestra Novak's Spanish classes, students have been studying the migration patterns and the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. The unit question:

Que puedo hacer para mantener un ecosistema saluable? (How can I help to maintain a healthy ecosystem?) Students learned that monarch butterflies are an important part of our ecosystem in Michigan. They learned how to explain the monarch's cycle of life in Spanish and also how to help monarch butterflies survive and flourish by planting native plants and reducing the use of pesticides. Students created posters and brochures explaining the cycle of life and migration patterns in Spanish.



Ms. Nemon, Notre Dame's Teaching Librarian, taught students how to create a waystation for monarch butterflies. A waystation ensures that monarch butterflies have host plants and nectar source plants. In early November middle school students planted a butterfly waystation on the school grounds. The plants included swamp milkweed, butterfly milkweed, common milkweed (host plants); joe-pye weed, butterfly bush, golden rod, sedums, and purple and yellow coneflowers (nectar sources).





NDMA students planting a butterfly waystation at Notre Dame

An application was sent to monarchwatch.org in order that we might to be a certified waystation. We received word that we are a certified site and are currently awaiting certification documents and signage. Watch for the date of our inauguration ceremony!

Eastern World Culture Quilts

In Phase Two, 7th grade students in Eastern World learned more about the five themes and six essential elements of geography. They also explored their own cultures by creating a culture quilt. The culture quilts show each student's heritage, traditions, language, food, flags, and other cultural elements students chose to include. The unit was a continuation of Phase One, with the unit question: *Why is it important to have a geographical perspective of the world?* Have a look at the culture quilt created in Ms. Pauwels's class which is displayed on the lockers.

Are You Fed Up with Numbers?

If you are fed up with numbers these days, how would you like to invent your own number system instead? That's what our Honors 6th grade students did. We first took a look at symbols and how

number systems started in different cultures around world. Then we looked at different bases for number systems, like the binary system, so important in computers. We converted regular numbers to binary and binary to regular numbers.

Then we got down to business and created our own number systems. There was a lot to decide. How will your numbers be written, up and down, across, left to right, right to left, diagonally, or on a curve? What base will your system use? Why is place value your friend in designing large numbers? How does the base of the system effect how many symbols you will need for your numbers. Does it matter if the symbols you choose are easy or difficult to make or how much they are alike? What symbols will you use for different mathematical operations?

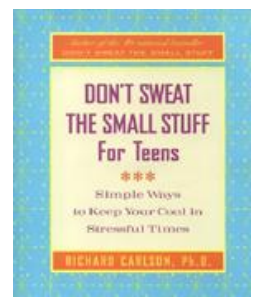
After students worked out all the elements of their personal number system, they presented their system to the class explaining their symbols and how to convert from our decimal system to their system and from their system to ours. They explained how to do add and subtract problems in their system and then challenged the class to do problems in their system.

There's nothing like starting from scratch and creating something yourself to make you appreciate what you've been using all along!

I Can't Take It Anymore!

The eighth grade Language A classes are working on a unit called *I Can't Take it Anymore!*

Students are learning how stress affects their bodies and are reading *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Teens* to learn ways to



help reduce their stress. At the end of the unit, students will compile all of the information learned into advertisements, brochures, and/or videos encouraging others to reduce their stress levels.

What Makes a Person Unique?

In Ms. Wang's 6th grade Chinese class, students are considering: *What makes a person unique?* In Chinese, students explored many aspects of uniqueness such as appearance, fingerprints, birthdates, hair color, eye color, favorite day of the week, family titles and occupation. Students are learning how to write Chinese characters needed to write the various elements that make individuals unique. Students are tracing handprints of their family members around which they will write in Chinese, all the unique traits of their family. These will be assembled on a poster and presented to the class.

How Does Culture Influence People's Buying and Selling Habits?

In Ms. Wang's 7th and 8th grade Chinese class, students are exploring: How does culture influence people's buying and selling habits? Students are learning about how to buy clothes in a Chinese market. They investigated the value of their clothing

in Chinese currency using the internet, and then decided for how much they could sell the clothing after understanding the bargaining culture of a Chinese marketplace. The classroom was turned into a simulated Chinese market with Chinese currency. Students then learned how to buy and sell clothing using bargaining strategies. Students are following the simulation by writing dialogues in Chinese about how the successful deals were made and why some deals were unsuccessful.



Mandarin students learn how to buy and sell in a Chinese marketplace

Counseling and Guidance News from Ms. Smith

Mrs. Smith, our middle school counselor, recently presented a session on tolerance (anti-bullying) to the 6th graders. Students first heard about types of bullying including: Physical, Relational, Verbal and

Notre Dame Christmas Concerts

The Notre Dame Middle Division Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Bands are rehearsing for their Christmas Concert. The concert will take place in the gym, on Tuesday, December 6, at 7:00 PM. Both the Notre Dame and Notre Dame Marist Bands will be featured, and it will be the Beginning Band's premiere performance!

The Notre Dame Middle Division Choir concert will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The Choir Concert will feature all Notre Dame choirs. Come and enjoy the beautiful sounds of our students as they sing Christmas carols and songs..



Cyber bullying. They then talked about four possible roles in bullying situations: Meanie, Doormat Bystander, and Empowered One. Students participated in an exercise regarding the label they wear or create. Each student created their own label of things they like about themselves. all leading to an increase in self-esteem, which increases tolerance. The next step was to design the perfect friend and then reflect on how they are as a friend. Finally, Ms. Smith discussed destructive behavior and constructive behavior and finished with some role playing examples of how to handle bullying situations. Ms. Smith's homework for students was to say five nice things to five different people a day (in and out of school). Students kept their worksheets, so ask your student to share!

Ms. Smith plans to check every couple of weeks to hear how the homework is going and what students are seeing as they become more tolerant and kind.

Note to Parents: Ms. Smith encourages you to visit the following website on bullying she heard about at the ISACS conference from presenter James Bisenius: <http://bullyproofingyouth.com/>

Structured Study Hall (SSH)

Our newly created program, *Structured Study Hall* (SSH), is a result of our many ongoing conversations about how we can best support our students. *Structured Study Hall* is a program designed to prevent students from becoming so overwhelmed (academically) that they “give up.” Each Tuesday, student averages are examined and students carrying a percentage grade below 70% are issued a pass to attend a mandatory *Structured Study Hall* during lunch (Wed, Thurs, Fri and Mon) beginning that week. Students bring a bag lunch and report to room D9 where they are monitored by Sr. Barbara Ann Borkowski. Upon achieving 70%

(or better) in class, the student is obligated to present a copy of NetClassroom grades to Sr. Barbara Ann, at which time he or she will be dismissed from SSH. We hope this offers an opportunity for students to improve their grades and notice the rewards of their efforts.

Every day we work as a team to help form “Christian People, Upright Citizens, and Academic Scholars.” We believe SSH not only offers students opportunity to improve their grades, but also helps to show them the rewards that can grow from even the simple decisions they make on a daily basis.

Thoughts from our Students about Notre Dame Marist Academy (Middle Division)

Students in Ms. Patterson's 7th grade Language A (English class) recently wrote about why they love Notre Dame Marist Academy. Please see a sampling of their responses below.

“All of our teachers are great mentors and will help you to do your best and make sure you understand the topics.”

“I regard NDMA as pretty much the perfect school. One of the reasons I love this school is the kind of projects we do. Not only do these projects teach us stuff we never learn in school, but they let us help the community!”

“I think that the education here is fantastic. The teachers really give you a challenge and always make sure that you understand the work.”

“There are many things I love about NDMA, but one in particular is the fantastic athletic program.”



“I love the kids here at (ND)Marist. The kids here are not only scholars, but they have the greatest and most colorful personalities.”

“I love the students, lunch and intramurals. The students are funny and friendly, the lunch is delicious, and the intramurals are super fun.”



Clay medallions created by 7th grade students at the Subiaco Retreat House

Brenda Kambakhsh
MYP Coordinator (6-8)
bkambakhsh@ndpma.org

Emily Giacona
PYP Coordinator (JK-5)
egiacona@ndpma.org

Heidi Newby
MYP Coordinator (9-10)
hnewby@ndpma.org

Shari Derico
DP Coordinator (11-12)
sderico@ndpma.org

