

# Focus on Curriculum

Building Foundations for the Future

March 2009



## **Third graders understand the literary genre, biography.**

During the month of February they researched, wrote about, and either orally presented the life of a person of accomplishment or illustrated their life on the cover of a TIME magazine. In their language arts curriculum, the boys chose a person – scientist, president, artist, person of good will. After researching and writing, the students presented their findings to classmates. Some even dressed the part. As part of the third grade religion curriculum, a second biography focused on an African American of great accomplishment. Through the study of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the students understood the importance of the principle of Catholic Social Teaching that stresses the importance of community and the common good.



This work on biographies in third grade might have given sixth graders an advantage in this year's **History Fair** theme – Influential People. Students did an exceptional job of planning, researching, and presenting their work. Influential people ranged from Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of Special Olympics to John Brown, abolitionist. History Fair, like Science Fair, has a strict set of guidelines that must be followed. Both are large-scale projects that involve time management, organization, and creativity.

## **Service is part of St. Aloysius Academy curriculum.**



that, Ash Wednesday is a very special and now a traditional day of service. After a Lenten prayer service and distribution of ashes, Maureen Rilling of the Holy Childhood Association shared how the missionaries bring Jesus to

the world. Each student received a coin envelope. Mrs. Rilling said the Pope would like to see the students make their own sacrifices to fill the envelopes so the funds could be used to help people around the world. Monsignor George Tomichek, a missionary priest working in the Philippines for thirty-two years, told the boys that the people he serves need their prayers. They live in extreme poverty, but the sisters and priests bring

hope to them through Jesus. He also challenged the boys to consider a vocation to the priesthood. The students were then asked to make rosaries, chains of love. Some of the rosaries are earmarked for seminarians at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia. Others are earmarked for people served by the missions.

## **First graders love to celebrate - whether it is in honor of Presidents' Day or Dr. Seuss' birthday.**

For Presidents' Day, they went online to read the story of Abraham Lincoln's life as written and illustrated by a second grade class. They used the SmartBoard to look at Gilbert Stuarts' painting of President Washington and discovered why he wore silver buckles on his shoes. If you are curious, ask a first grader or go to



<http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/kids/portrait.html> As part of an art appreciation program, children are learning about focal point, use of light and the influence of the times on art.

**The Spanish curriculum** not only teaches students the vocabulary of the Spanish language, but also appreciation of the culture of Hispanic people. As Americans celebrate Halloween, students see Mexicans celebrating Dia de Los Muertos. At Christmas, students are online to see how this feast is celebrated in South America and Europe. Fifth graders learn of Cesar Chavez, the American farm worker who fought non-violently for the rights of people in the fields.

**Eighth graders have come full circle with their exposure to Catholic Social Teaching.** In religion, the students researched a person who was a beacon for one or more of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Papers ranged from Craig Kielberger, a Canadian teen who founded Free the Children, to Joseph Rotblat, an anti-nuclear bomb advocate who once was a member of the Manhattan Project to the more famous Nelson Mandela and Rachel Carson.

**The first crocus has bloomed in the courtyard!** As part of the science kindergarten through grade five have planted perennials over the years that brighten the view from Drexel Hall, especially in the spring. Daffodils, tulips, lilies, and others will follow shortly.

