

Principal's Bulletin
2008-2009 Series #1
June 6, 2008

Dear Students, Parents, Alumni, and Friends:

Welcome to School Year 2008-2009! After two months of well-deserved rest, we now embark on another segment of our journey towards academic excellence. This marks my fourth year as principal of SMS. As I reflect on the many achievements, hurdles, successes, and failures that have marked our progress through three years, I can proudly say that the school has made a positive difference in the lives of our kids, both current and past. First, I would like to thank the many alumni and friends (both individual and corporate) who have given moral and financial support to the school, particularly for upgrading the school facilities and enabling us to have the tools to deliver our promise of academic excellence. I also thank the parents who continue to place their trust in the school by sending their children to study here. I also acknowledge the hardworking faculty who continue to give their time and effort beyond contractual obligations to prepare our kids for college and responsible adulthood. Finally, I thank our students who provide all of us the inspiration and motivation to do more for the school. I am truly honored and proud to be part of St. Mary's School!

The first two phases of the gym were completed this summer in time for the opening of the school. The steel trusses, foundation, and the roof were erected by the end of March; the concrete floor was completed at the end of May, thanks to the generous pledge of SMS Class of 64 and the proceeds of the LHL project during the Alumni Homecoming. In addition, thanks to the donation of St. Luke's Medical Center c/o Mr. Robert Kwan, the Art Room and the school kitchen have been renovated, and a 10th classroom and a new girls' toilet have been added in the basement level of the school.

Next year, we hope to finish the entire basement level by renovating the Student's Center which will house a dining area, school lockers, and a walk-out veranda and picnic area. The current textbook room will be transformed into an 11th classroom; the current Audio Visual Room will be turned into a Guidance Office with a library for college catalogues and career reference material; and the Physics lab (which will be relocated into the 10th classroom) will be the site of the second computer laboratory. By this time, all the school interiors in all three levels would have been renovated and upgraded. By then, we will gear our efforts towards the external facelift of the buildings and the beautification of the grounds.

As regards to the gymnasium project, a 20' x 30' x 8' cistern will be constructed under the student center veranda to collect rainwater for the shower room from the roof of the gym and the school. Also in line with this third phase, is the construction of the 20' x 40' x 28' proscenium stage with a pair of 10 sq. ft. stage wings, under which the athletic locker room and the shower room will be situated. The fourth phase is comprised of building the walls of the gym, the construction of bleachers, the installation of solar panels for hot water, and the purchase of lights, scoreboard, sound system, and other equipment. There are also plans to construct a weight room, dance/martial arts room, PE offices, and storage for athletic equipment. By then, the gymnasium (which can seat 1,000 people, theater style) can easily be the suitable venue for an Alaska Basketball Team demonstration game and performances for Ballet Philippines, and the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music Orchestra and Chorus, all of which are anticipating to be invited as guests for the grand inaugural of the gym. Some unbelievers may say that these are just dreams or mere talk. But after seeing what has been accomplished in only three years, I am confident that, with your support, we can accomplish what we set out to do.

SUMMER EVENTS

SMS hosted the Social Studies Workshop for elementary and high school public school teachers last May 19-23, 2008. Sponsored by the Department of Education and spearheaded by Mrs. Irene Bakisan of Sagada National High School, Leones Gonsoden, Michael Benter, Gluardo Butic of SMSS, and Mrs. Tan-ay Peccadsen of Ankileng National High School, the workshop was attended by over 75 teachers from the Mountain Province, most of whom were housed in Stapleton Hall. The workshop dealt with topics that included mapping the curriculum, dramatics as a teaching strategy, writing rubrics for assessment, and developing an effective philosophy for the teaching of social studies. In spite of the delay caused by the typhoon, teachers from all over faithfully attended the intensive workshop. Some sessions went up to 11:00 p.m. Many teachers saw for themselves the many changes that SMS has undergone and inquired about their former elementary pupils who are now in SMS. Dr. Mary Anne Langayen, the DepEd superintendent for Mountain Province, thanked SMS for hosting the successful event, and expressed her hope that this event would be the start of a partnership between private and public schools in the common quest to improve the delivery of education to the children of our province.

Four trainers from St. Scholastica College, Beacon School, and the University of the Philippines conducted a four-day UPCAT review for our incoming seniors and faculty development workshop for our SMS faculty last May 12-15. The objectives of the workshop were: 1) to assess the capability of our students in taking the highly competitive UP college entrance exam through a pre-test; 2) review and hone our students' skills in science, math, Filipino, and English, and 3) analyze their improvement through a post-test. With a one-to-one consultation, members of our faculty were also given tips to address our children's deficiencies or weaknesses in preparation for

the forthcoming college entrance exam reviews which are scheduled on Saturdays in June and July. Many thanks to the following professors who rendered their services free of charge: Dr. Luchris Agnir-Paraan (English), Ms. Amy Rebanco (Science), Mr. Reynante Tejano (Math), and Ms. Mary Anne Cruz (Filipino). In response to the warm reception by our students and faculty, the group promises to come back to SMS next summer.

CURRENT NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW FACULTY AND STAFF:

Please welcome the following new faculty and staff: Ms. Krishtine Centeno, whose mother hails from Sadanga, will be teaching English and Public Speaking; Mrs. Jimmylyn Doyog, a Sagadan from Bangaan, will serve as a part time Math teacher; and Sundunnze Afidchao, a native of Bontoc, is the new network administrator and computer maintenance person.

Current enrollment is 198 as of today, with the following breakdown: 40 freshmen, 52 sophomores, 60 juniors, 41 seniors, and 5 fifth year students. We are still awaiting a few more latecomers that have signified their intent to study at SMS.

PTA NEWS: Please attend the first SMS PTA General Meeting on Saturday, June 7, at 10:00 a.m. in the school theater. The introduction of old and new faculty, the calendar of activities, projects for SY 2008-2009, the re-organization of PTA officers, and an orientation for new parents are on the agenda.

On Monday, June 9, being a holiday, the Scholarship Committee will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Principal's Meeting. **Starting at 9:00 a.m., the sub-committee on Screening Financial Grantees will interview the applicants and their parents.** As this committee only meets once, the decision on renewals and giving new grants will be made right after the interviews. It is imperative that the student-applicant must be accompanied by at least one parent or guardian for the interview process.

Kindergarten News: Classes for Kindergarten 1 and 2 will start on Tuesday, June 10. All spaces for two sections have been filled up. Ms. Lissa Octaviano will teach Kinder I in the morning and Kinder II in the afternoon. Both sessions will be held in the Kinder II building next to the Girls' Dorm. Mr. Daniel Ambasing will handle the PE classes for both levels.

Friday Night at the Movies will begin on Friday, June 13 in the School Theater, with Episode IV of the Star Wars series. All SMS students and parents are welcome to this free screening. The movie starts at 6:30 p.m., and is expected to be finished no later than 9:30. Please be advised that we take attendance, and students who attend this activity are expected to be home before 9:45 p.m.

UPCAT EXAM: Applications forms for the upcoming UPCAT exams scheduled on August 3 in Bontoc are now available. Deadline for submission of application forms is on June 25. Please consult your 4th Year advisors.

UPCAT REVIEW: Review classes will be held on Saturdays, starting June 14. Please note that these review sessions are not only for UPCAT but also for the upcoming NCAE exams, also slated for August. The latter exam is a requirement for entrance in all college and universities and will be administered by the government to all 4th Year students.

Parents, and Guardians, we'll see you all on tomorrow, Saturday at 10:00 p.m. for the 1st PTA General Assembly!

Dates to remember:

Saturday, June 7	1 st SMS PTA General Assembly at 10:00 a.m.
Monday, June 9	Financial Grant Interviews starting at 9:00 a.m. Independence Day Celebrations (no classes)
Friday, June 13	Friday Night at the Movies at 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 14	UPCAT Review begins, and continues every Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, June 14	SMSSI Board Meeting in Baguio at 2:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 15	SMSSAA Board Meeting in Baguio after Mass in Baguio
Monday, June 23	Deadline for submitting application forms for UPCAT exam
Friday, June 27	1 st School Dance (school theater)

Have a happy 3-day weekend!

Dennis Gomowad Faustino