

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 5
July 3, 2009

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, Alumni, and Friends:

As we enter the 6th week of school on Monday, students should have an idea how they are progressing academically. Many have undergone and continue to undergo adjustments—some of which are difficult and threatening. New students need to cope with our style of teaching—whereby they need to muster courage to actively ask questions and seek clarifications from their teachers. Learning is only accomplished when an exchange of ideas is communicated between learner and teacher. Speaking out, in the proper forum and in a respectful manner, is never a sign of disrespect. Rather, it is an indicator of inquisitiveness and motivation to learn something new or to confirm something that has already been learned. New teachers also undergo many adjustments. Being strangers to Sagada and SMS, they are challenged to deal with the school's culture—what is valued, what is believed, what has been accepted, and what is practiced in the past. Though every school has its own unique identity, identity is never stagnant; it evolves and transforms dynamically, as it should be, in order to meet the needs of all. New teachers and new students make an impact on and contribution to this metamorphic process. Finally, veteran students and teachers also make adjustments. More important, they need to exercise patience in order to help the newcomers cope with adjustments; they need to reach out and help their colleagues and peers by giving advice, sharing experiences, and in the least, assume the role of mentor and friend. We have all experienced being new to a given environment—whether it is a classroom, or a job site, or a place of residence. It is through this interchange and process of adjustment that the veterans also learn new things or re-affirm what they already know and believe. Through this process, everyone in school—students, teachers, parents—effectively become a community of learners.

PAST EVENTS

The SMS High School PTA held its 1st Quarter meeting last Saturday, June 27 in the school theater. The new officers for the SY 2009-2010 are Fr. Moreno Tuguinay, president; Mr. Ciano Baldo, vice-president for PTA projects; Ms. Kym Ledesma, secretary; and Ms. Shilan Addag, treasurer. (Mr. Epifanio Daoas, who was elected last March as vice president, tendered his resignation due to his acceptance of an overseas job.) Highlights of the meeting included:

- the introduction of the SMS faculty and staff for SY 2009-2010
- a presentation of financial statements for SY 2008-2009
- the DepEd memorandum regarding suspension of classes due to typhoons and other emergencies
- the reiteration of school policies and disciplinary actions regarding attendance, smoking, drinking, drugs, lethal weapons, theft, and forgery of parental notes
- the schedule of school activities and events for 2009-2010

The PTA also discussed the following issues:

- the re-affirmation of PTA membership fees, annual dues, fines for non-attendance of meetings, and fines for non-participation during PTA YCAP work details
- the re-affirmation of the PTA approved 24/7 observance of school rules by SMS students
- the creation of a phone tree for general announcements like school closure generated from cell phone numbers of parents, guardians, or adult neighbors
- the establishment of a pool of foster parents, with whom out-of-town SMS students would be invited to experience family life in a Sagada-based family during breaks and long weekends

The following dates have also been set:

- July 14 (Monday) – PTS conference for 1st year students
- July 15 (Tuesday) – PTS conferences for 2nd year students
- July 16 (Wednesday) – PTS conferences for 3rd year students
- July 17 (Thursday) – PTS conferences for 4th year students
- July 25** (Saturday) – PTS conferences for out of town students and others

The 2nd school dance, sponsored by the PTA, will be held on Friday, July 24, from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Dubbed as “the Parent-Student Dance” parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to attend this annual dance. As I pointed out, this will be the first time for parents to dance with their freshmen sons and daughters, and perhaps, it might be the last dance with their senior children, prior to their wedding. Please be there for your children!!!!

The PTA YCAP Day is scheduled the whole day on Saturday, July 25, starting at 8:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided, the cost of which will be shouldered by those who cannot make it on this day. The Mamas and the Daughters are assigned to clear the school orchard, and the Papas and the Sons will undertake the clearing of the cistern area and start the work on the gym cistern. Thanks to Mayor Edward Latawan who is lending his back hoe equipment to excavate the shower rooms and the cistern next to the gym. Parents and students, please bring the necessary tools to do the job. In advance, thank you SMS PTA, for your dang-as!

The annual fundraiser for the PTA will be timed with the school's Greco-Roman Bacchanalia (similar to the Pista sa Santa Marya), sometime in September-October. The event is intended to re-create a Greek/Roman festival which, according to history, was a precursor of modern day fiestas and the Olympic games. Of course, we do not intend to “burn Christians or feed them to the lions” (joke only!). Instead, we intend to have a family fun day of ancient Olympic events like

marathons, races, wrestling, discus and javelin throwing, song and dance competitions, and stand-up comedy. For lunch, we hope to feast on pilaf (rice) and roast pork (lechon). More details to come later. Start designing your costume. I am sure bed sheets and loose pieces of cloth can make a wonderful make-shift Roman toga or Greek chiton! Proceeds from the sale of lechon will go to the purchase of materials to finish the gym cistern.

Visitors of note: Welcome to the **officers of St. Alfred's School student government** in Tamboan who visited the campus and joined the school dance last Friday, June 26. The SAHS students extended their thanks to the school for all its help and support in the past, such as the construction of two classrooms, a la SMS, the Service Learning program for the past three years, and the teacher training conducted by SMS for SAHS faculty. The students also extended an invitation for SMS students to do a final service learning visit to SAHS before the school is fully absorbed into the public school system as Besao National High School – Tamboan Annex, which will happen after this school year.

Welcome, thanks, and farewell to **Fr. Antonio and Nettie Gomowad** who have been in Sagada for the past three weeks. Tony, Nettie, and daughter Kim are from Guam. Kim has been attending classes at SMS for the past weeks in order to re-establish and re-affirm kinship bonds with Sagada and Tamboan. Fr. Tony has also served as a resource person in our classes, specifically on the history of Sagada, and his life in the dap-ay. The Gomowad family will be leaving for Guam after this week.

Faculty Corner: *This week's featured faculty author is Marjorie Hangdaan, who hails from Hingyon, Ifugao. Marjorie is the eldest of a family of talented artists and educators (6 girls and 2 boys). Sister Lalaine graduated last year, and sister Marciana is a back door scholar in 3rd Year at SMS. Marjorie stayed five years with the Good Shepherd nuns in Baguio as a working student (not a postulant!) as she completed her education at SLU, majoring in General Science. Marjorie teaches General Science to freshmen, Biology to sophomores, and Advanced Biology to 4th and 5th year students. She is still single and this is her fifth year at St. Mary's School. The following are her reflections as an educator:*

Teaching is enjoyable when all students are involved in the various activities, but it is also tough when the teacher feels like an outcast when students cannot discern the relevance of the activity. As an experienced teacher, I place emphasis on what is important for survival. Training students to be independent learners eventually boosts their self-confidence to face any difficult circumstances.

In this process, independent learners develop the values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to make subsequent responsible decisions and take appropriate actions. Independent learning is fostered by creating the opportunities and experiences which encourage student motivation, curiosity, self-confidence, self-reliance and positive self-concept. It is based on the students' understanding of their own interests and the value of learning per se. Here are some indications of independent learners:

- they are able to finish assignment with all the available resources;
- they perform classroom activities by following stated and written procedures;
- they spontaneously express and share their ideas in class discussions;
- they submit requirements on time without being reminded;
- they confidently display their creativity and imagination.

I often reflect on the following quotes shared by my friends, and somehow these have guided me to face everyday challenges. I hope these words of wisdom will do the same to you.

“God has given us two gifts. One is **choice** and another is **chance**.
Choice is to select a good one and **chance** is to have the “BEST” one.”

“A sense of purpose is the best driving force to live.
When you have a reason to live, never will you have a reason to quit.”

“Teachers are bridges that students cross.
When they get tired, yet successful, they joyfully collapse,
encouraging their students to build bridges of their own
. . . continuing the legacy they have left behind”

Marjorie Hangdaan

I will be out of town for the next two weeks in Manila. Ms. Nemia Lite, the Assistant Principal will be in charge during my absence.

Until later,

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal