

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 9
August 7, 2009

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

On behalf of the St. Mary's School family, I would like to express our sincerest condolences to the family of Jim Alacyang, 1st Year, who passed away last Saturday, August 1, 2009. Jim is the third son of Angel Alacyang (Bugang) and Rebecca Bolinget Alacyang (Madongo). We will always remember Jim for his positive attitude, vivaciousness, and affectionate character. We truly miss him, but we take comfort knowing that he is happy and safe with his Creator.

It can be truly said that last week can be appropriately named "hell week" for the school. An outbreak of Influenza A H1N1 broke out after the second school dance on July 24 whereby 113 students were sent to St. Theodore's Hospital for medical check-up. Thirteen SMS students and one teacher were confined. On Saturday, July 25, while on the way to school for the PTA YCAP work detail, two SMS students discovered the body of Winnie Dumakit, a 16-year old student from Bangaan National High School, who was raped and killed in Tangeb. Unbeknown to all of us at SMS, another killing occurred in Madepdeppas, Data, Sabangan, whereby a Kalinga man was killed by a man from Taccong, Sagada, bringing about anxieties of a possible tribal war that could affect Sagada. Because of the A H1N1 outbreak, classes were cancelled for one week to quarantine the school. The worst blow of all was the quick and sudden death of one of our own students, Jim Alacyang, who succumbed to pneumonia at the end of the week.

We resumed classes last Monday, August 3. To deal with these crises, we applied intervention measures, such as group and individual counseling to those who were affected by the tragic death of a school mate, providing students and faculty with face masks as a precaution to prevent a recurrence of the A H1N1 outbreak, and communicating and coordinating with other schools, the government authorities, and the community regarding misinformation, and more importantly regarding plans of action. Life on campus seems to be back to normal, as the school gears up for the 1st Quarter exams which have been pushed back to August 13 and 14. Nevertheless, all of us need to continue vigilance over the health and behavioral patterns of our kids. For example, if a child displays symptoms of the flu, please consult the hospital or the RHU immediately. Keep the child off the streets. If the child exhibits any strange or unusual behavior, please alert us, so we can deal with a possible psychological trauma or depression.

Please note that there is a moratorium on all school extra-curricular activities (athletic practices, rehearsals, and club meetings) this entire week, the forthcoming weekend, and next week until exams are over. The library and the computer lab will be open until 6:00 p.m. daily this week and next week (except Sunday) to enable the kids to do research and encode their final projects. No student should be loitering on the streets after 6:30 p.m.

The following make up classes have been scheduled to compensate for the week-long closure of the school. **July 25**, Saturday, during which the PTA YCAP took place, will be considered a school day. Last Wednesday, **August 5**, classes were held in spite of the nationally declared holiday for the funeral of Cory Aquino. We will have classes tomorrow, Saturday, **August 8** (following a Wednesday Schedule). Finally, classes will be held on the forthcoming national holidays in August: **August 21** (Ninoy Aquino Day), and **August 31**, National Heroes Day.) Barring any typhoons or other emergencies, we would have made up missed school days by the end of August, and our calendared holidays for the semester and Christmas breaks will not be affected.

OTHER PAST AND FUTURE EVENTS

In spite of the school's week long closure, 29 SMS students hurdled through the UPCAT exam, held in Bontoc last August 1. The school provided transportation for the examinees that had to leave Sagada at 5:30 a.m. for the morning session as well as to bring home students who took the afternoon exams. Thanks to Mr. Mario Aligo and Mr. Melvin Magsanoc for chaperoning the students. According to the examinees, the UPCAT exam was a "little tough."

On Friday, July 31, 20 new lap top computers were turned over to Ambasing Elementary School by the Department of Education – headed by the National ICT Director Paul Soriano, Zen Dimalanta of ABS-CBN E-Media, and Venancio Bal-us of the DepEd Regional Office. On hand to accept the donation were: AES Prinicpal Christina Semon, Ambasing, Mountain Province Governor Maximo Dalog, DILG

Officer Ray-Fair-od and Councilor Emiliano Dontogan representing the Mayor's Office and the Sangguniang Bayan, Barangay Captain Francis Kilongan of Ambasing and Walter Tulingan, Jr. of Demang, and Mountain Province Dep-Ed Assistant Superintendent Sally Ullalim. Special guests included Atty. Inglay Fokno who represented the AES alumni, Fr. Domingo Mayapit who performed the blessing of the new computer laboratory, and myself as the representative of SMS being a partner of DepEd and ABS-CBN. The AES teachers received on the spot training on the use of the student computers by the staff of the Dep-Ed National Office-ICT Division, headed by Mr. Roel Bonito. In spite of the problems that affected Sagada during the weekend, and the imminent tropical storm, the turnover ceremony went on as scheduled and everyone was in a celebratory mood. Students of AES will undergo a pre-test in Science, Math, and Hekasi on Friday, August 7, in order to establish a baseline from which ABS-CBN can monitor student academic progress throughout the school year. SMS Guidance Councilor Jenny Bicarne will administer the exams.

On August 22-23, a teacher training session for all Sagada elementary teachers will be held at SMS, sponsored by the ABS-CBN Foundation and DepEd. During this time, dictionaries donated by National Bookstore will be distributed to Sagada teachers, and a training session focusing on the use of a dictionary and a workshop on the expansion of vocabulary will follow. Part of the two-day workshop will be handled by Dr. Agnes Kollin on refreshing teachers on the concept of multiple intelligence and Division English Coordinator Annie Wallang.

1st Quarter exams have been re-scheduled as follows: Electives, Social Studies, and Science on Thursday, August 13; and English, Math, and Filipino on Friday, August 14.

4th Year students, please note the following test dates. Remember that it can take at least a week to process applications to take these exams.

National Career Assessment Exam (NCAE) – August 26 (during school)

Philippine Military Academy – August 30

Ateneo de Manila University – Sept 19

Mapua Institute of Technology – August to March

University of Santo Tomas – October 4

St. Louis University – weekends of October to December

DOST – SEI – November 14

Philippine Normal University – no later than December 5 for exam and interview

We are still awaiting information on the exam date for Benguet State University. The following universities and colleges have no entrance exam for incoming 1st Year College students: University of Baguio, University of the Cordilleras, and Easter College. Further information and test dates are available at the Guidance Office.

The following advisory was issued by the local and provincial representatives of the Department of Health regarding the outbreak of the Influenza A H1N1.

- 1) All the samples taken from those confined at St. Theodore's Hospital indicate a positive result. In short, the whole community has been exposed to the A H1N1 virus.
- 2) Influenza A H1N1 is caused by a new virus that resulted from a re-assortment of 4 viruses from pigs, humans, and birds.
- 3) The virus causes illness in people that may lead to serious illness or death. The newspapers state that there have been four deaths in the Cordilleras due to complications caused by the A H1N1 virus at this time. Children, the elderly, and those who have existing respiratory problems are most vulnerable.
- 4) There is no vaccine yet to protect humans from this virus.
- 5) Symptoms are similar to the common flu such as fever, fatigues, headache, cough, sore throat, muscle and joint pains, lack of appetite, and runny nose.
- 6) Infection can be transmitted through exposure to droplets from cough or sneeze of infected persons.
- 7) For protection, cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, and use tissue paper if possible; always wash hands with soap and water; avoid unnecessary visiting of sick persons; avoid crowded areas.

Until next week, and hoping for better conditions in the future,

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal