



## Good News from St. Pius V

### Violence Prevention: Empowering Parents

St. Pius V Parish was selected for Governor Quinn's Neighborhood Recovery Initiative and will lead the parent training component for Pilsen and Little Village. The initiative is designed "to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors associated with family violence," according to the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority.

The parish will train 20 parents of adolescents for leadership in community violence prevention. Participants will be educated in factors that lead to violence among youth. The parent leaders will then promote strategies and interventions to help youth prone to or affected by violence.

The governor's office selected St. Pius V based on decades of community organizing and its already strong parenting program. The parish currently receives public funding for the Healthy Families program that includes 50-75 parents each quarter participating in 5-week parenting courses and support groups.

### Promoting Peace Throughout the Parish

Violence prevention and peacemaking are at the heart of all our parish ministries. St. Pius V School recently hosted its annual Peacemakers Assembly, which recognizes children who stand out for embodying the ideals of Martin Luther King (see article, p. 2). Our parish youth center, Casa Juan Diego, was



Casa Juan Diego participants develop strategies for building peace and responding to violence.

### Want to Escape?



You can support the important work of St.

Pius V Parish and dream of taking the wheel of a brand new 2011 Ford Escape XLS!

It's car raffle time and a \$5 donation per ticket could win you the Ford Escape or another cash prize (including early bird drawings). We will draw the winning ticket on June 12, 2011 at the end of our summer street festival. For more information please call the parish office at (312) 226-6161. Many thanks to our car raffle sponsors!

founded 13 years ago to give children a safe after-school environment in which to do homework, make friends and develop life skills.

The parish's H.O.P.E. domestic violence program not only provides services to victims of intimate partner violence but also works to prevent abuse. H.O.P.E. has a counselor for children and adolescents who have witnessed domestic violence at home and who are more likely than their peers to become adult abusers themselves. H.O.P.E.'s counselor helps these youngsters work through their traumatic experiences and deal with emotions before they are expressed violently.

### Turning from Violence to Peacemaking

Another H.O.P.E. counselor works directly in violence prevention through individual and group counseling with male abusers. This unique program - one of the few not involving court-mandated abusers - empowers abusive men to end the cycle of abuse that would lead them from one victim to another. This past year, the men's group has seen a 20% increase in participation with 40-45 men in the group session each week. Retention in the group is high - many men stay for over a year - because the men find the support they need to reject violent behavior.

## St. Pius V School Pride

As part of our annual Catholic Schools Week festivities this year, we unveiled a new mascot for our school: St. Pius V Pride. The Pride image incorporates a lion's head and embodies our school's values of community and cultural pride. It is also the symbol of our new marketing and enrollment campaign to better share the good news of St. Pius V School.



For the January 31 kick-off, special guests joined us including Sr. Mary Paul McCaughey, superintendent of Catholic Schools and Leigh-Anne Kazma, school patron.

### Be Our Guest - Twice!

Friends of SPV School will be excited to learn that *Noche Mexicana*, our popular annual fundraiser, is moving this year to the more spacious venue of Carnivale on April 28. Our former location, Zocalo, will be the site of our inaugural "Party for Pius," a gathering for our school's alumni, on March 3; a \$35 donation includes appetizers and two drink tickets. Please call our school for more information about both events: (312) 226-1590.

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## New Literacy Initiative at CJD

Homework assistance and study skills workshops have long been a part of our youth program at Casa Juan Diego. With a majority of children who are English language learners and many parents working extra shifts to make ends meet, young people in our youth center need that extra help from our staff and volunteers after school.

This year we are taking academic assistance one step further with the launching of our Family Literacy Initiative at CJD. The program involves all children at every grade level and even has moms and dads reading at home in Spanish or English. Research shows that literacy work positively impacts academic performance across all age groups and will improve students' grades and confidence in school.

The center is seeking funding to support a rehab of the library, literacy training for staff and computer software to measure student progress. The staff is creating a reading environment at CJD and will also accept donations of books, chairs, bookshelves, throw rugs, lamps and other furnishings to make our readers comfortable.

## Parents Praise Our School

Parents can be a school's toughest critics, so we held our breath while opening the results of our latest parent satisfaction survey. To our delight, most of their valuable feedback was overwhelmingly positive! Parents weren't afraid to suggest areas of improvement (e.g., more after-school activities, new science equipment) but 96% say they're highly likely to recommend St. Pius V School to family and friends.



Pre-schoolers dressed up as their favorite saints - including Mary - to celebrate All Saints Day.

Some of what our parents say we do well:

- "Educate, mentor, manage, counsel and encourage."
- "Listen to the needs of parents as well as children."
- "Teachers and staff seem to truly love what they do."
- "The education is great. My child is learning very well in this wonderful school."
- "You make us feel like we're part of a huge, loving and caring family."

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## Peacemakers Assembly

On January 21, St. Pius V School recognized 18 students with the school's highest honor: the Peacemaker Award. Each year, students from every grade select one or two classmates who best represent Martin Luther King's

message of non-violence. Whether helping a friend with homework, bringing calm to a classroom or comforting a troubled classmate, these students stand out.



Principal Nancy Nasko presented a medal to each of the honorees but thanked the entire student body for creating a school of peace and non-violence. "You make our school a better place for everyone to learn," she said. "I congratulate all of you and am so proud of you."

# Holidays at St. Pius V: Keeping the Faith

## November

At St. Pius V, the holidays begin with Volunteer Appreciation Night on Thanksgiving Eve. This year the parish thanked more than 250 people at its celebration with food, music and dancing.

Thanksgiving Day, many returned to the parish hall for the annual dinner, bringing together volunteers and people in need, especially homeless men, all grateful to share a meal and some holiday cheer.



Two of the many families (above and left) who volunteer each year for parish events and ministries.



Images from our Guadalupe celebrations in December.



## December

For most Hispanic Catholics, December 12 - the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe - is a day above all others. At St. Pius V we began the celebration nine days before with a Guadalupe novena (Mass, dramatizations, music and sharing of sweet bread and hot chocolate) every night, building toward midnight Mass, "las mañanitas" (early morning Mass) and a day-long celebration on the actual feast.

Just as the dust settled on Guadalupe, we began the traditional Posada celebrations every night for the octave before Christmas Eve. At these lively gatherings of a few hundred people, we ritually and musically re-enacted Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem. Prayer, music, food and piñatas - as usual - were shared in abundance.

Thanks to our friends at St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Walter parishes and other donors, we celebrated our annual "Christmas Store" on December 18. Volunteers from St. Vincent set up tables full of donated toys and gave families from our parish programs the opportunity to select gifts for their children and receive Target cards for each child. This year 151 families in need were able to give Christmas presents to 428 grateful children. With food and pictures taken with Santa Claus, the event is one of the highlights of Christmas for these grateful families.

## January

In much of Latin America the Feast of Epiphany, or the Three Kings, is the primary day to exchange gifts during the Christmas season. In keeping with this custom, our Religious Education program hosts a celebration on the first Saturday of each new year. The day is open to all 450 children in our program and begins in church with a prayerful re-creation of the story of Jesus' birth and the visit from the Magi.

The party then moves to our parish hall with a meal for the children and a visit from the Three Kings themselves (three of our catechists in costume), who pass out toys. This year we received donated toys from Toys for Tots, St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, St. Walter Parish and from a toy drive among our generous neighborhood produce wholesalers: Panama, Anthony Marano, JL Gonzalez and Enriquez.



Our friends from JL Gonzalez Produce (above) present donated toys to Fr. Brendan; a certain jolly volunteer (right) makes the Christmas Store memorable.



## Online Donations

More and more of our generous donors choose to support the mission of St. Pius V Parish through **online donations**. This method is convenient, secure and makes a positive impact on the lives of those in need. To donate online go to:

[stpiusvparish.org/donate](http://stpiusvparish.org/donate)



Fr. Brendan presents the parish's Community Service award to Cook County State's Attorney, Anita Alvarez at the annual parish banquet, **Celebrating the Harvest**, on October 23, 2010. With some 300 guests and Julian Crews of WGN News as emcee, the event also honored Jim and Martha Maddock and Adolfo and Socorro Vega.

Guests enjoyed delicious food donated by local restaurants and heard testimonies from families who have benefited from St. Pius V programs. This year's Harvest raised over \$50,000 for the ministries and social outreach of St. Pius V Parish.

To save on paper and mailing costs, we are transitioning many of our newsletter readers to an email/online version. If you would prefer to receive our newsletter by email please send us a message: [contact@stpiusvparish.org](mailto:contact@stpiusvparish.org).



## Fr. Chuck Offers Inauguration Blessing

*Today, O Loving Creator, we ask your blessings upon these men and women whom your people have chosen to steer our ship of state into safe waters and a future graced with many blessings.*

Governor Pat Quinn called on Fr. Chuck Dahm to deliver the final benediction at the January 10 inauguration of newly elected state officials in Springfield. Governor Quinn has expressed his personal appreciation for the outreach of St. Pius V Parish, in particular for the work of the youth center, Casa Juan Diego. Funding from the State Board of Education, Illinois Justice Authority and Attorney General have supported youth and domestic violence programming at the parish for many years.

## On the Road to Stop Domestic Violence

Fr. Chuck continues to answer the call from other parishes and organizations seeking to implement domestic violence ministry based on the model of St. Pius V Parish. In the past year, he has helped set up ministries in these parishes: Blessed Sacrament and Holy Cross parishes in Chicago, St. Raymond in Mt. Prospect, St. Joseph in Harvard, St. Anne in Barrington, St. Victor in Calumet City and St. Anne in Great Bend, Kansas.

He also spoke to social workers in the Diocese of Wichita and to the Presbyterial Council in the Archdiocese of Chicago, urging them to create a ministry to victims of domestic violence. His plan this year is to form a network of Chicago parishes working together to stop domestic violence and support victims.

## Thank you!

As these cold winter days give way to the welcome breezes of spring, we are warmed by the generosity of the friends of St. Pius V Parish! When you choose to share your gifts with us, you are providing a nutritious meal to a hungry family, giving a child of immigrants some help with her homework and helping a domestic violence victim end a situation of abuse. Many blessings to you and your loved ones!

Brendan Curran, O.P.  
Pastor

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

Charles W. Dahm, O.P.  
Associate Pastor

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

Matthias Mueller, O.P.  
Associate Pastor

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

