

WITH GRATITUDE AND AWE...

We have much to be grateful for at St. Theresa, and most recently it is the very successful Social Justice Week, January 12-16, with our Artists-in-Residence, Hans Peterson and Larry Olson from Dakota Road Music!! Water: Quenching Our Thirst was our theme, and the H2O challenge raised over \$3500, with our parish Finance Committee generously choosing to donate another \$1700, for the Sister Water Project of the Sisters of St. Francis from Dubuque, Iowa: **A total of over \$5200, to date!** With our donation, we are helping to drill water wells in Honduras and Tanzania to provide safe drinking water to communities where clean water shortages have brought poverty, disease, and death.

The planning for this special week starts much in advance of the actual event, in September. Many ideas and much thought and time go into making Social Justice Week happen. We plan for a week of learning, growing, sharing and serving...and pray that it might touch all involved in a permanent way.

I am totally in awe of the time, effort and dedication that went into your social justice week and immensely grateful that you chose to support the Sister Water Project. What great generosity from the people at St. Theresa's. You are helping save lives...truly...the difference the monies will make in the lives of so many. The need is great and we pray that the "well" of our funds for SWP will never dry up. People like you all make it possible to continue our efforts...

Sr. Virginia Jennings, OSF

January 18, 2009

Many, many thanks go to our Monday in-school retreat speakers:

Sr. Virginia Jennings, OSF who spoke of The Sister Water Project, the benefactor of our fundraising efforts; **Dr. Tom Neal**, Director of the St. Joseph Educational Center who spoke of the biblical references of water; **Gail Peckumn** of Des Moines Water Works who presented a puppet show to primary students about how water is cleaned and where it goes in our city; **Diane Bland** of Des Moines Water Works who presented to our intermediate students "Water, Precious Water" about using water wisely; **Kathy Wipf**, St. Theresa Director of Faith Formation, who helped the students remember their baptism; and **Jeana Wescott** of Lutheran Church of Hope who spoke of her experiences on several mission trips to bring wells and clean water to the people of Ghana.

Thanks, too, goes to our parent volunteers who assisted with the in-school retreat on Monday: **Becky Rogers, Carolyn McCarthy, Will Utter, and Jean Johnson** (stand-by!). The day ran smoothly because of you!!

Of course, we are tremendously grateful to **Mrs. Stemler**, our principal, for her resounding "YES" to the entire week, and to **our awesome teachers** who are so flexible and willing to make changes in their regular routines to make this whole week happen. The week was FULL of special music and faith sharing by Hans and Larry, field trips to Des Moines Water Works, and water quality, global issues, spirituality rolled into the curriculum. Special banners hanging in the school, created by each classroom express the sentiment of Social Justice Week. Thank you, **Mrs. Hingtgen** for coordinating banner production!

A special thanks to **Rebecca Beierschmitt**, our music teacher for her time and energy in scheduling the week for each class, and for all of the extras she did to make the week happen from a school point-of-view! Thanks, too, to **John Gaffney**, our Middle School Religion teacher and Youth Ministry Director, who coordinated the collection of various resources for our teachers and students. And thank you, **Fr. Larry** for coming home from vacation just in time to help us celebrate Mass on Friday, and spend some time with our Pre-K classes talking about water in the Bible.

Thanks, also to **Kathy Wipf**, Director of Faith Formation, and **Barb Woods**, RCIA Director, who hosted an inspiring Adult Faith Formation retreat which included music by Hans and Larry, as well as a reflection by **Char Weisenhorn** of our parish of her experiences in Togo, Africa with water accessibility or lack thereof in the village of our sister parish, St. Theresa of Nyassive. **Mary Baker and Mary Bishop** helped prepare and serve the luncheon to nearly 30 parish members. Mary, Mary, and Char, THANK YOU, TOO!! And yet another thank you to **Faye Akers**, who along with Kathy Wipf worked hard to plan the Wednesday Night Faith Formation involvement in the week. Social Justice Week touched the entire parish!

For financial support we thank our generous **St. Theresa PTC**, as well as the **Social Concerns Committee** and **Faith Formation** of our parish. The week would not have happened without you.....

And to all of you for helping support the H2O challenge, The Sister Water Project, and the entire week so that we could embrace the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Care of God's Creation, our focus being water, and make it REAL for our students, families, parish members....we are immensely grateful.

Blessings,

The Social Justice Week planning committee:

Brett and Geleen Toresdahl, Lindsay Amadeo, and Cindy Mumm