



Teachers share a message with students during spring 2020 E-learning

WHAT'S INSIDE?

A Note From the Principal	2	End of the Year Speech	5
A Word From Father Bob	3	PIE Program	6
Class of 2020	4	Annual Fund Update	7
Safety and Tech Updates	4		





A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Not all superheroes wear capes. Some have teaching degrees.

The wait is over! The kids are back! On Thursday, August 13, Little Flower students returned for in-person learning, and our building was alive again!

Our school theme this year is The Justice League to highlight that 1) we are all superheroes in the fight against COVID-19 and 2) we are vigilant advocates for social justice.

Little Flower teachers have certainly been heroic this year. In March, they received a day's notice that all Indianapolis schools were being moved to online. They stepped up, they planned, they learned, they reinvented their jobs overnight.

This summer they have faced a constantly changing target for what opening school would require and what it would look like. Again, they studied, they planned, and they replanned. Teachers met throughout the summer making sure Little Flower students would have the best learning opportunities in the fall.

We opened this year with 20% of our students choosing to

begin with online learning. Our teachers are providing both in-person and online classwork and instruction. They are helping kids cope with the trauma of this year while pushing them to gain back losses from missed academic time last year.

Little Flower teachers are superheroes.



LF teachers on the first day of classes

MISSION STATEMENT

Little Flower Catholic School, an educational ministry of Little Flower Parish, exists to provide quality Catholic education for the Eastside and beyond as it has since 1926. Little Flower is a compassionate, caring community for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade that celebrates the growth of each person. We welcome all families who share our philosophy and mission.

Our school provides a safe, nurturing environment, a challenging academic curriculum, with an emphasis on the arts, that prepares students for higher education and helps them develop into confident, responsible citizens. Following the words of St. Therese, our patroness, "Love is repaid by love alone," we promote a dedication to the Catholic values of peace, justice, and service.



A WORD FROM FR. BOB

Dear Friends,

Little Flower School opened for in-person classes on Thursday, August 13, with 303 students enrolled for this year. Last year we opened with 342 students and finished with 326 students. New teachers this year include: Katie McGannon (Music), Angie Robb (Middle School English and Language Arts), Madeline VanMeter (Grade 2), and Micayla Watroba (Grade 3). Welcome to all of them and to all our returning administration, faculty, staff, and students and their families.

When in-person classes ended last spring, we were under the impression that school would only be closed for a couple of weeks. However, very soon Governor Holcomb ordered all schools closed until July. Most of our teachers and students had limited experience with e-learning. E-learning was for occasional snow days! Suddenly e-learning was the only vehicle for education.

Once again I want to thank and compliment our administration, faculty, and staff for all their efforts to continue to provide quality education for all of our students. However, e-learning is not the same as in-person learning. Everything I read suggests that students will return

this year behind where they should be. Likewise, everything I read suggests the negative impact of e-learning is not limited to academics. It also includes social and emotional learning. Professionals suggest that more children are suffering depression and anxiety.

This year Little Flower School will face a host of challenges. Kevin Gawrys, the leadership team, and the faculty have spent the summer trying to prepare for this school year despite frequently changing mandates and instructions. Because some parents will opt for e-learning, this year teachers will face the challenge of providing both in-person and e-learning every day. At the same time, we understand that if the virus spikes in Indiana or Marion County or we have one or more cases at Little Flower, all of our plans might have to change.

As we prepared for this year, we projected an enrollment of 320 students. Our opening enrollment is 303. This will have a negative impact on our budget. Likewise, because attendance at Mass is low, our parish income has also decreased. Dealing with both lower school and parish income will be another challenge that we will face. In the Archdiocese of New York, it has already been decided that at least 20 Catholic schools will close permanently. In Indiana we have been blessed that the State provides vouchers to parents to enable them to choose the best school for their children.

Another consequence of the pandemic is that we have decided to cancel our All-Class Reunion that was scheduled for November 7. This was a very difficult decision. The All-Class Reunion is an opportunity for us to say thanks to you for your support, a way for you to reconnect with classmates and friends, and a way for us to honor outstanding alumni.

As I mentioned in the spring newsletter, this pandemic has taken a toll on everyone physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. For example, one thing that I have learned about myself is how much I need to be around people even though I am a very strong introvert. Little Flower Parish and Little Flower School are Christian communities. As Christian communities, we are called to support one another in faith, love, and hope.

It is good that school has opened for the 2020-2021 school year. It will be good for the students, both those who are here in person and those who are doing e-learning, to be connected to a community that cherishes and cares for them.

Thank you for all you do to support Little Flower Catholic School. Your support enables us to go over and beyond in caring for and educating our students.

Please take care of yourselves.

fr. Bob

THE CLASS OF 2020

They missed so much this year. No Washington DC trip, no luncheon, no Last Walkout. The Little Flower class of 2020 missed a lot. Their mural shows special things they did and the moments they didn't get to experience. But they persevered. They did a virtual Living Stations. They came in during the summer to paint their class mural. And they had a graduation Mass and party. Sure it was late (July 23), but it was sweet nonetheless. Congratulations to the Little Flower Class of 2020. You made history, and you did it with distinction.



8th Grade mural

CLASSROOM DOORS

Safety is always priority number one at Little Flower. This past year, thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friends and a Homeland Security



matching grant, we were able to replace 29 classroom doors. The new doors are solid core, with emergency locks, and bullet resistant glass. To top it all off, the new doors are beautiful and a perfect match to our renovated cafe!

As for the old doors that have so many memories attached to them... stay tuned!

CHROMEBOOK UPDATE

In March when schools were forced to go to online learning, Little Flower was fortunate to already have 1:1 computing in grades 3-8. We were able to provide devices to any family who needed a Chromebook. With the additional wear and tear of them being in homes all spring, and the possible eventuality that we may have to send them home again, Little Flower needed to replenish our Chromebook supply.

Thanks to a grant from the Hare Family Charitable Trust, Little Flower has been able to move to 1:1 devices for K-8. Each grade (K-2) or classroom (3-8) has its own charging cart. We are prepared!



END OF THE YEAR SPEECH

By Isabella Walters

These last three years have gone in the blink of an eye. It feels like hours ago I was walking into Mrs. Jackson's 6th grade classroom for the first time. Honestly, through the years, it felt like a dream to one day be in 8th grade when we would be able to get first pick on almost everything and when we would be the oldest students in the school. I never actually thought I'd get there, and now I'm standing in front of you all, and I'm graduating. After all those years of wishing to be in 8th grade, to be looked up to by the lower grades, I am now unfortunately back at the beginning by being a freshman. But as I stand here, I think about the classmates graduating beside me, and I think about the various durations each of us have been part of this class. Some of us have been here since day one, and we have known each other our entire lives. Others came later, but that didn't make a difference because we treated all the same. We also lost a couple classmates along the way who'll be graduating with a different set of people at a different school. And I acknowledge the fact that it's wonderful how some of us will continue to be in each other's lives, but some of us are going different paths, and we might not see one another for a long time. Nevertheless, we will hold onto the good memories.

We learned a lot from one another. We learned our colors and shapes together; we learned multiplication and division together. We learned

that we ended up having a few teachers leave or switch grades after their year with us. We also learned that a debate class with us would not be the best decision. We learned how to trust, how to accept, how to hate something but have to do it anyway, how to give someone a hug or a pat on the shoulder when you can tell they're having a bad day. But most importantly, we learned what it was like to grow up together. Yet we are still learning what it's like to move on. To move on to a new school and to walk new hallways, to move on to a new classroom where you'll enter and expect to see all of our familiar faces, but you'll only be given half.

Some of us hope we will wake up from this horrible nightmare, some of us are ready for the change, and some of us are so excited to depart, but when we get there, all we want to do is go back. You may not choose to accept that you want to go back to eating silent lunches because you couldn't find a pair of scissors, or to go back to finding out someone broke a teacher's water bottle, or to go back to arguing over what the mural should look like. You may, however, be thinking about having dilly bars at the end of every year, or pie day with Mrs. Hanzel, or even Catholic Schools' Week when we would wear the most ridiculous outfits. You might not accept that you're feeling homesick, but, in the end, you are.

A few of us dreaded coming to school, waking up early and putting on a uniform, but a few of us used it as a sanctuary, and most of us switched on and off. We would get into a fight at school and dread coming back, but

then something would happen at home, and we couldn't wait to walk through our classroom doors. My point is, no matter what's happened at Little Flower, no matter how many stupid and immature mistakes you made that you wish you could take back, no matter if after I end this speech and everything went in one ear and out the other, we will all miss Little Flower and the people we grew up with. Although it may come at individual times and moments for all of us, I personally didn't know how painful it would be to leave behind the people I've known all my life, and I didn't realize it until Tuesday.

Mr. Gawrys was hosting a meeting to discuss the mural, and Gavin, Alex, Reanna, Hannah, Adriana, Olivia S, and I were sitting in the cafeteria talking. Mr. Gawrys brought us paper and pencils to sketch our ideas, and then he left the cafeteria for a short bit to do something. I wrote down my ideas as we were talking, and I used up my entire paper in about 5 seconds. We were laughing at my ideas and joking about them when Alex grabbed my paper, crinkled it up into a ball, and threw it at the trash can. He missed and hit the ceiling. We all couldn't stop laughing, and in that moment, I realized what I was leaving. I was leaving behind a class that I am comfortable around and a class that made me laugh. This class has given us all so much, and each classmate is an essential slice to our whole. This class, these memories, are the foundation for who we are, who we want to become, and what we will create. And that is not so easily replaced.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT EDUCATOR PROGRAM

Michelle Dunahee has been incredibly involved at Little Flower. As a parent, as a classroom aide, as PTO President, Michelle has worn many hats. "My connection to Little Flower began years ago when my closest friend frequently shared stories about her Little Flower family. Over the years we had tried many options for school and had not found the right fit for our family. Seven years ago, we made the switch to Little Flower and became a part of a family."

In Fall of 2018, Michelle Dunahee took on a new role at Little Flower, new to her and new to our school. Michelle became our Parent Involvement Educator and built a program where none existed before. "When I first began in this new position, I struggled to know where to start," Michelle explained. "I decided to get to know the parents. We need real relationships built on trust and friendship to be able to support each other. I have learned over the years as parents we all need help. For each family that looks different. Sometimes we need financial help, sometimes we need spiritual help, sometimes we need a connector to connect us to resources, and sometimes we just need a sounding board."

Michelle has been an Eastsider for 20 years. She is passionate about building relationships, especially between home and school. Three of her six children have learning disabilities, and that has

pushed her to be an advocate for her kids and for all kids. Michelle recently completed her Bachelor's in Elementary Education with a certification in Special Education. She has combined her personal knowledge and her classroom experience to build strong relationships with students, parents, and teachers. "I am passionate about building relationships."

Michelle will use that passion to foster greater trust and communication between parents and teachers and also among parents. Her goals for the PIE position are to create social opportunities for families even during social distancing. She continues to plan and hold Family Night events, connect families to needed resources, and coordinate an on-site uniform exchange room and food pantry. But, mostly, she is building relationships.

"As relationships have been built, I have witnessed students who feel better about themselves and about school. I have watched parents who needed more support at home become empowered to speak up and advocate for their students."

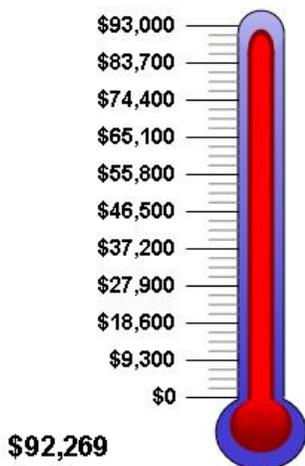
This year Michelle will be joined in our PIE program by Mary Rodriguez. "I am so excited for Mary to join our Little Flower team. She will be able to help address language barriers within the school. Ms. Rodriguez will also be able to help ensure that we can reach out to our whole community."

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL PARADE



ANNUAL FUND UPDATE

2019-20 Annual Fund



Since November 1, the Annual Fund has generated just over \$92,000.00 towards our goal of \$93,000.00. We are almost there! Thanks to all who have contributed so far. Your support goes a long way toward accomplishing our goal of making Little Flower School a safe and healthy environment for our students.

Please continue to pray for God's continued blessings on our school.

SUMMERFEST 2020

As you may be aware, we recently announced that our annual festival, Summerfest 2020, was cancelled due to concerns and complications surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Summerfest typically takes place the weekend after Memorial Day. When it became clear that heavy restrictions would still be in place at that time, we attempted to plan a rescheduled, smaller version for mid-September. After much thoughtful and prayerful consideration, we decided the most prudent choice was to forego the festival for this year to protect the health and safety of our Little Flower community.

This year the proceeds of the festival were to go toward a new cooling system in the rectory, a project that is long overdue. Because we feel this project is necessary, we have decided to proceed with these plans. We reached out to parishioners, friends, and business partners asking them to consider a donation to this project while considering their own current financial situations. If you are interested in donating to the **"Chillin' With Fr. Bob"** fund, please visit our parish website www.littleflowerparish.org and click on Get Involved and Give Back, then click On-line Donations.

2020 ALL-CLASS REUNION CANCELLED

With heavy hearts we must announce the cancellation of this year's All-Class Reunion. Because the primary purpose of the reunion is to socialize, reminisce, and catch up with fellow alumni, it did not make sense to plan an event where social distancing measures must be incorporated. We care very much about your health and safety.

We plan to honor this year's special anniversary classes on media platforms in addition to honoring them at next year's reunion. We hope to be able to make the 2021 All-Class Reunion a wonderful celebration! Mark your calendars for **Saturday, November 6, 2021.**





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