

# Visitation Upper School News

Renee Genereux, Upper School Director

## Upcoming Events:

- September 27 - Freshmen & Sophomore Parent Night regarding College Information 7:00
- October 4-11 - Power School access to mid-term grades online
- October 10 - Upper School Band/Orchestra Concert 7:00
- October 14 - Mother Daughter Mass and Dinner
- October 17 - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat; PSAT Test for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades
- October 18 & 19 - No school (MEA)

## Settling into the Rhythm of the School Year

I hope you are settling into the rhythm of the new school year. It is such a blessing to part of a school where the spirit and mission is lived everyday, in so many ways. You will read more about this on page two of the newsletter.

We are so excited about all the new students who have to come to the Upper School at Visitation and continue to be grateful to have so many students returning to the Upper School at Vis!

We certainly wish all of our graduates much success in their new endeavors. They have certainly left their mark on the Visitation, and we are looking forward to hearing about their new adventures!

At Visitation, we are so

blessed to have parents who are so willing to partner with us to provide the best education for their children, our students. Please know how committed we are to providing "excellent academics within a Catholic environment rooted in Salesian spirituality." To that end, we hope you enjoy this first issue of the Upper School Newsletter, which will be published on web every month.

I hope you all catch the joyful and optimistic spirit that our students inherently possess. I am lucky to be a part of this time in their lives.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, suggestions or pieces of good news. Have a great year!



**Visitation Flag Raising Ceremony**



**Graduation 2007**

## In the Classroom— *National Merit Semifinalists Named*

The National Merit® Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) – a test which serves as an initial screen of approximately 1.4 million entrants each year.

Of the 1.4 million entrants,

some 50,000 with the highest PSAT/NMSQT® Selection Index scores (critical reading + mathematics + writing skills scores) qualify for recognition in the National Merit® Scholarship Program.

In early September, about 16,000 students, or approximately one-third of the 50,000 high scorers, are notified that they have qualified as Semifinalists. Commended students are named in late September

and finalists in April.

This year Visitation has two semifinalists: Martha Enderby and Delaney Leighton, and eight commended students: Pamela Donohue, Anna Dourgarian, Alissa Gerber, Ani Goerdts, Sarah Griffin, Emily Mannix, and Torra Spillane. In the past four years Visitation has had 37 (13%) seniors named as National Merit finalists, semifinalists or commended students.

Congratulations to this year's semifinalists and commended students and to all the students who work so hard every day. We are blessed to have students who are motivated to be the best they can be, thus realizing our school motto of "not for school, but for life."

## School Life—Homecoming 2007

The Upper School students have 'come home' to Visitation for the 2007-2008 academic year. Under the leadership of excellent teachers and support staff and an enthusiastic senior class, the 325 students in the Upper School are engaged in the life of the mind and heart at Visitation. As I visit classrooms and activities I see so much learning going on. Here are a few snapshots of the past three weeks:

- The Senior Retreat at the end of August—a wonderful experience of uniting as a class in prayer, discussion, and a renewal of dedication to leading the school in the best of the Vis spirit.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> grade Orientation activities with games, tours, meeting teachers, Big Sister/Little Sister picnic. We continue to orient our 9<sup>th</sup> grade students through meetings with Jeanne Doyle, Guidance Counselor and Study Skills sessions led by Susan Russomanno,
- Learning Specialist.
- Science classes in which students engage in “the egg drop” project, problem solving in Honors Chemistry,
- Social Studies classes in which I heard discussions of the Constitutional powers of the president and the precipitating actions leading to the American Revolution
- The Fine Arts students exhibiting their works and receiving awards at the Minnesota State Fair
- Strains of *Amazing Grace* from the Bel Canto choir and grace-filled *Battement tendu* movements in Ballet class
- The rest of the story—an imaginary essay on the future of Esperanza from *The House on Mango Street* in a Sophomore English class
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Health students learning about the importance of Emotional I.Q.
- In the Quest for God religion class, students discuss-

ing the faith and ‘impulses of grace’ that inspired spiritual heroes such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day

- And all the activities of Homecoming Week: the spirit filled Pep Fest and House Competitions, Crazy and Spirit Dress Days, Swim, Tennis, Volleyball and Soccer games, Faculty holding their own in a volleyball game with the students (well, almost!), the lovely dance chaperoned by so many generous parents and faculty members.

I am grateful each day for the opportunity to serve as director of the Upper School. Your daughters continue to amaze me with their intelligence, creativity and leadership. I'm convinced again and again of the strength of Visitation's educational program, a strength that comes from the combination of our Salesian roots, an all-girls environment and dedicated teachers and parents.

## Salesian Corner

We chose Humility as our Salesian virtue for this year. The quote “Humility is True Knowledge” is displayed and integrated into every classroom in the upper school.

During our retreat with the seniors, Sister Marie Therese reminded us that the truest knowledge of ourselves, that we must hold on to through good times and bad, is that we are infinitely

loved by God. With this as our foundation, we can and must, not only accept, but also, develop and share our God-given gifts and those of others, even as we acknowledge our limitations. **That** is true humility.



***“Humility is true knowledge.”***

*Saint Francis de Sales*