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September 21, 2009

Dear Villa Academy Families,

We are hitting our stride – the students and staff – as we initiate our first full week of the school year. The emphasis in all classrooms has been on procedures, expectations, and setting the tone for a positive and productive school year. The students are handling the expectations magnificently and there is an air of industry and purpose in the classrooms and common areas. Thank you for your support and encouragement, which are the most important elements of an effective home-school partnership.

Parent Volunteer Training: Going on a field trip? Working in the lunchroom? Helping on the playground or in the classroom? This important message is for you. Over the next four weeks we will be sponsoring six sessions of our required training for parents who will be working with students at Villa this year. We will be fine-tuning the training to address the needs of new volunteers vs. experienced volunteers.

Every effort has been made to provide training sessions at various times of the day to accommodate your personal and professional schedules. Please make a priority of calendaring one of these sessions. If you are uncertain whether you will be volunteering, we encourage you to commit to the training in the event you decide to volunteer, or your services are needed, later in the school year. All sessions begin in the Theater.

Training Dates:

- Tuesday, September 22, 6:30pm
- Wednesday, September 23, 1:15pm
- Thursday, October 1, 8:45am
- Tuesday, October 6, 7:00am
- Wednesday, October 7, 6:30pm
- Monday, October 12, 2:00pm

Celebrations and Congratulations!

- Grade Eight students returned from Leadership Camp at Camp Lutherwood in Bellingham tired and happy. A positive and energized tone permeated their time at camp and kicked off a most special school year for the Class of 2010.
- Christian Vanderwall, Villa Class of 2007, who is currently a junior at Lakeside, was announced as a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist. Approximately 16,000 students nationwide were among the top scorers on the 2008 SAT.
- Each year, Villa Academy informs the parents of students in Grades 6-8, whose scores on the ERBs CTP 4 in mathematics, verbal, or composites are at the 95th percentile or higher, that the students are eligible to participate in Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth Talent Search. This fall our percentages of eligible students follows:
 - Grade Six 54% of the class (19/35)
 - Grade Seven 68% of the class (28/41)
 - Grade Eight 49% of the class (19/39)

Italian Dinner and Carnival: Our annual family dinner is coming up quickly! On Friday, September 25, I hope that you will join us for some great Italian food, wonderful fun for the kids, and connecting with members of the school community. This is the only annual family dinner for the entire school and it is a lot of fun. I look forward to seeing you there!

Professional Development, 2009-2010: Highly effective teachers are creative leaders who possess a strong background in the content they teach. Additionally, they are skilled in teaching in such a way that students will understand the content. The research shows that teacher effectiveness is the single most important school-based factor in student success. Villa Academy's teachers are an amazingly qualified and talented group of educators and they work hard to stay at the top of their game. Here are some of the upcoming ways we support their ongoing efforts:

- Our academic personnel – teachers, para-educators, and academic administrators – attended the Archdiocese of Seattle's "Teacher Excellence Day" at Meany Hall on the University of Washington's campus on Friday, September 18. Rita F. Pierson, Ed.D., the keynote speaker, focused on Partnering with Parents for Student Success.
- On October 9, 2009, the academic personnel will be attending a variety of training sessions. Our religion teachers will be involved in theological updates at the Archdiocese of Seattle's K-12 Religion Articulation Day with keynote speakers Dr. Tom Curran and Bishop Joseph Tyson. The remainder will be attending the PNAIS Professional Development Day at Eastside Catholic School with Alfie Kohn as keynote speaker. He will address Performance vs. Learning: The Costs of Overemphasizing Achievement.
- In addition, we will be making use of Federal Program funding to improve our instructional practices specific to student needs.

Thank you for staying current with the Monday Memo, knowing where your Family Handbook is, and doing your part to build and maintain a strong partnership with us!

God Bless,

Polly Skinner
Head of School