8th Grade Newsletter
August 27-September 9, 2010

Mrs. Bernie VanArsdale—Language Arts
Literature: the class is completing the first short story from our new textbooks. "Clean Sweep" focuses on the "Big Idea" in life—What is really important? Along with the main idea of the story, the students are also recognizing conflict, theme, and plot. Vocabulary words are included which are also included in the work of the short story. The class should have a test over "Clean Sweep" tomorrow. "The Treasure of Lemon Brown" by Walter Dean Meyers is the next story. Students have been given their AR logs and the first quarter goal they asked to reach.

English: the students have started the year with two poetry assignments. The first assignment was to remember summer, noting the best and worst of the summer months. The second assignment has just been completed. The class discussed a quote from Mark Twain in which he says that we are all moons with a light side and a dark side, we just don't let the dark side be known. The students, with a partner, then drew a silhouette—one side dark and the other light. A poem was written to describe those sides of the student. The silhouette was completed with pictures that depicted the light and dark side and the poem. The results are extraordinary and can be found hanging from the ceiling in the language arts room. The class will begin working in the writing textbook. They will have taken a pretest to determine prior knowledge of elements of grammar and punctuation and writing a personal narrative. Vocabulary from Latin and Greek roots will begin on Monday.

Ms. Dorothy Starnes—Math
The 8th graders will be working with multiplying and dividing integers the week of August 30. They will also be working with properties and coordinates. They will have a vocabulary test the week of September 5 and a Chapters 1 and 2 test that week. Good reviews for these tests are pages 46 and 47 and 100 and 101 in the textbook. The property and definition test will have a study guide coming home September 2.

Mrs. Tina Wendling—Religion

We have spent this first week reviewing classroom procedures and working toward a group consensus as to what commitments we are willing to make to each other and ourselves in order to succeed this school year. We opened our first class period with a discussion of the lines used by Nelson Mandela, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, but rather, that we are powerful beyond measure; it is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us . . ." I challenged the eighth graders to be brave in letting their light shine this year. They are off to a great start! All classes will be planning Masses in the upcoming weeks and assuming leadership roles as cantors and lectors. We are delving into the first topic for the year – "What is faith?" We will cover several chapters in one text entitled *Creed* and by the first of the year, we will move to a second text, *Morality.*

Mr. Bob Jacobsen—Science
The students are off to a great school year. They have just completed the study of the human endocrine system and are beginning to focus on the human nervous system. A test over this system is scheduled for later next week. A separate test over the specifics of the central nervous system is scheduled for the week of September 6.

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Mrs. Dianna Youngblood—Social Studies

Dear Parents,

My name is Dianna Youngblood, and I will be teaching your child social studies this year. I am a graduate of U.M.K.C. and have been teaching for 26 years, four at St. Augustine and 22 at St. Peter's. I live in Lee's Summit and have three children and eleven grandchildren.

The year is off to a great start. Students seem eager to be back and teachers are excited about the new school year. I think our eighth grade students are already tackling the responsibilities of being the "upper" classmen this year. I have already seen so much growth in them since the end of last term

Eighth grade social studies looks at more modern (sasha) American history. Ask your child about sasha and zamani history. They have learned quite a bit already. During the next two weeks we will be reviewing American history from the earliest days through the American Revolution, and studying the Declaration of Independence. Next we will study the U.S. Constitution and then review American history through the Civil War. After our review we will begin our new studies on America's post-Civil War history. There will be a test tomorrow over the 50 states.

I am looking forward to a fantastic school year. If you wish to contact me for any reason email (dyoungblood@stpeterskc.org) is the best option. I check it at least twice a day and will get back to you as quickly as possible.