New Music Faculty: Alexandra Prast

We welcome Miss Alexandra Prast to the Fine Arts faculty as the new LS music instructor and MS Chorus Director. She was born and raised in Michigan City, Indiana where she was brought up in a family of educators and where teaching has always been present in her life. She has two younger siblings and a chocolate lab named Coda. Her favorite hobbies include singing, dancing, acting, and painting and she has performed in musical theater productions as a member of Young People’s Theater Company. She graduated from Ball State University and earned a degree in Music Education. Alexandra was involved in several college level choirs, Kappa Delta Phi National Teaching Honor Fraternity, attended the Music Educators National Conference, and was a member of the American Choral Directors Association.

Alexandra believes that every student should have the opportunity to be educated in music through many different meaningful experiences. She also believes that one of the most important skills to be taught in the music classroom is music literacy. When students are able to successfully read rhythms and tonal exercises, they will then be able to use these skills to read melodic exercises. Alexandra wants to give all of her students the tools they will need to be successful at SCS and in higher levels of music education. She plans to embrace many of our musical traditions as well as beginning new ones. Miss Prast has a deep passion for music and is very excited to share it with all of her new students!

7/8 Fall Production:

As everyone looks toward the future, Deborah Girasek-Chudzynski feels it is also important to know one’s past. Our past, our family roots, is what shapes us as individuals and as a nation. Most of us have roots in countries all over the world. Deborah’s mother came to America as a child from Belgium. Before her, many children struggled to survive in America. It took courage and ingenuity. Those traits will be celebrated in the SCS production of The Orphan Train, by Aurand Harris. The “Orphan Train” movement began in 1852 when immigration began to swell the population of New York City. Over-crowding and disease were rampant and there was a breakdown of family life. Charles Loring Brace and the New York Children’s Aid Society believed the answer to this problem was to reduce the urban population by sending children to live with farm families in the West and the Midwest. It was not always successful. When the “Orphan Trains” stopped running, approximately 250,000 children had been relocated, some settling in Indiana and Michigan.

The 7th and 8th grade students, Fine Arts faculty, and parents will produce The Orphan Train by Aurand Harris, a highly theatrical story with music, which will run Thursday and Friday, November 3 and 4. It is both a moving and amusing story of nine orphans on a train that left New York City on May 28, 1914 and traveled west in search of homes for the children. Auditions will take place in September. Please check your Friday Folder for more information.
Grades 6-8 Speech Team

Congratulations to all members of the 6-8 grade SCS Speech Team who auditioned at the end of last year for the 2011-2012 team. The list was posted on the speech team bulletin board at the end of May. If there are any new students who have not yet had the opportunity to audition, please speak with Ms. Girasek-Chudzynski as soon as possible. Again this year, many parents will be needed as coaches and judges. We are pleased to announce that new faculty member, Matthew Younts, 7/8 Math teacher, has joined the coaching ranks. Mr. Younts participated in speech team at the state and national level as a student in Greencastle, IN and has been a volunteer judge. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Ms. Girasek-Chudzynski. All new speech team members will be joining the National Junior Forensic League. A brochure of information about this organization will be sent home with new team members after the first meeting.

Thespian Troupe Information

A student who is involved in theatre at SCS is qualified to join our school’s International Thespian Society troupe. Thespis was an ancient Greek playwright and actor who was the first to step out of the chorus and speak alone. He is considered the first actor and is honored by the international theatre organization named after him.

Thespians receive the membership recognition in the world’s largest theatre honor society when they have demonstrated commitment and excellence in their school’s theatre program. If you would like more information about SCS’s Thespian Troupe, please contact Ms. Girasek-Chudzynski.

You’re Invited!!!!

Upcoming Fine Arts performances:
Fall Concert Tuesday, November 22
LS Holiday Program
Thursday, Dec. 15

8th Grade Art Option Offered

The traditional ART EXIT PROJECT that served as a culmination of a student’s SCS art experiences will now be encouraged, but not a mandatory part of the 8th grade art curriculum. The project will be offered in the form of an art option in the second trimester, whether students are scheduled in art class first, second, or third trimester. This option will be available only to 8th graders who are interested in creating an exit project.

The project may include drawing, painting, three-dimensional art, or a project motivated by interdisciplinary themes. Students are encouraged to visually express their feelings, observations, personal experiences, or philosophy about some subject in their lives using almost any material with which they feel comfortable and skilled. The project goal is to increase individual understanding of themselves as unique individuals, developing and practicing responsible, independent behaviors, and reinforcing appreciation of art as a form of expression. This art option will be offered for 8th grade students who are personally committed to producing an independently initiated art project. Students will work outside SCS on their projects, and their finished projects will be showcased upon completion. MS art instructor, KC Miars will serve as a consultant/guide for individual students who choose to create the exit project. For more information please contact Mrs. Miars.

Thanks to the generosity of the SCS Parents Association, the 8th grade students started the year with a field trip, a collaboration of the Theatre and English Departments, to the Decio Mainstage Theatre at DeBartolo Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Notre Dame to see a performance of William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, part of the Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival.
Art Bags for the CASIE Center

The Art Bag Project for the CASIE Center (an acronym for Child Abuse Services, Investigations, and Education) is an important component of the 3rd grade art curriculum. The project combines creative expression in the visual arts with service learning and was designed to provide the clients of the CASIE Center with a gift bag decorated by student artists and filled with donated art supplies. This art partnership began in 2005 after many years of generous donations of warm hats, gloves, and mittens to decorate a holiday tree in the LS hallway for the CASIE Center. The art bags are given to children of all ages by the Center’s volunteers in order to encourage creative expression, easing stress and tension before they return to a safe environment. In May, Carolyn Hahn, Executive Director of the CASIE Center, spoke with students to personally express her gratitude.

During the school year, 3rd graders have the opportunity to assist in the collection of aluminum cans placed in the recycling tubs on the SCS campus to raise additional funds for the project. The money earned from this recycling effort is used to purchase the bags the students design and any additional art supplies needed for the project. The goal is to reinforce the community-minded attitudes we want to encourage in our students. Thanks to many generous families, 3rd grade teachers Ms. Sapikowski and Mr. Matthys, and the hard work of the young artists, the 2011 Art Bag Project was again a success!
Fine Arts Liaison Committee

Calling all fine arts lovers! Parents with a specific interest or ability in the areas of the performing and visual arts are needed throughout the school year to assist teachers with certain aspects of student performances, events, displays, and to explore possible opportunities for fundraising.

A chairperson who enjoys coordinating volunteers will be needed to work directly with the Fine Arts faculty as the need arises. If you would like to help support the efforts of our fabulous PS-8 students and their teachers in art, drama, movement, or music, please contact Kristi Harman, PA president.

Performance Opportunities Grades 4-8

The Music Department makes available many performance opportunities to 4-8 students during option periods. Options in band, chorus, and strings are offered in such a way that students may participate in all three. The music instructors will coordinate a schedule and classes will begin after Labor Day. Options include:

- **Beginning Band (4th grade):**
  - meets three days a week.

- **5/6 Band and 7/8 Band:**
  - meet three times a week.
  - 5/6 and 7/8 Bands will also participate in the ISSMA Band Festival in March.

- **MS String Ensemble (4-8):**
  - meets once a week.

- **4th Grade Chorus:**
  - meets once a week.

- **5/6 Chorus and 7/8 Chorus:**
  - meets three times a week.
  - Second trimester, the third chorus day will be for ISSMA vocal contest participants, solos or ensembles. Other chorus students will go to study hall for the third chorus day.

- **The 3:30 Jazz Ensemble** is offered to band, chorus, and string students in grades 5-8 and meets after school once a week.

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Once signed up for an ensemble, your student has made a commitment to be a member of that group for the entire academic year. The exception to this is 4th grade chorus which can be chosen a trimester at a time.

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**String Ensembles at SCS**

The Beginning String Ensemble is for students K-8 who want to learn to play a stringed instrument. The class will meet on Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. beginning September 6. The Intermediate String Ensemble is for LS students who have played at least one year and for Suzuki method students who would like to perform in the fall and spring concerts. This class will meet on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. beginning September 1. Students must provide their own instruments. Help will be given to determine the proper size. For more information, contact **Emilie Grondin**.

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**Save the Date!**

**Arts For the Mind**

**November 11, 12, and 13**