

**Open House — Monday, Aug. 23, 4-6pm!**

Drop off  
your  
supplies!

# THE BUZZ!

What's buzzing around the halls of Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School

August 2022

Hello Saint Thomas Family,

Whether you are joining us for the first time or have been with us for a while, welcome to the 2022-23 school year. This is already shaping up to be another amazing year. The school theme for this year is **"Small Things, Great Love."** This phrase comes from a quote of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Our theme is also tied to the scripture Matthew 25:23: "His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'"

By focusing on **small things with great love**, we are reminding ourselves of our **strength**. Our strength does not come from within ourselves, but from God, who provides all of our needs. When we present to him our little gifts, our kind words, our acts of service, our thoughts and prayers, He will use these things to bring about **great love** in our community and in our world.

Saint Thomas school is an extraordinary place. I have learned what makes us truly unique are the little things that we do with intentionally. Making the sign of the cross as we pass in front of the church, sitting up in our seats and listening attentively to teachers, greeting visitors with a warm **"welcome to Saint Thomas,"** making eye contact, shaking someone's hand, eagerly responding to the needs of others, all these **small things** make this a place of **great love**.

I am so excited for the school year to start. I just can't wait for everyone to show up! I invite you to join us this year on our journey of educating children, building up God's kingdom, and being the Church. Thank you, for all you have done for Saint Thomas. Thank you also for all the ways you will bless us with your gifts and talents this year!

Ryan Corcoran, Principal

2022-2023 Saint Thomas the Apostle Catholic School Theme  
**"Small things with great love."**

# Important Dates in August/September...

Date	Event	Time	Location
August 22	School Open House	4-6pm	All classrooms
August 23	First Day of school Grs 1-8 Home & School meeting K and P3 Meet & Greet	8am/3:30pm 8:15am Assigned times	Blacktop PreK/K classrooms
August 24	P4 Meet & Greet First Day of Kindergarten & Enrichment	Assigned times 8-11am/8-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom Kindergarten Classroom
August 29	First day of P4	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom
August 30	First Day of P3	8-11 am/ 12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom
August 30	First day of P4 Enrichment Uniform Holiday	12:15-3:30pm	Preschool Classroom
Sept. 2-5	No School - Labor Day Holiday		
September 6	Middle School Orientation	6-7:30pm	Church Lower Level
September 21	New Family Parent Meeting	6-7:30pm	Ministry Center
September 21/22	School Pictures		Ministry Center

Check our online [2022-23 School Calendar](#) and our [Events Calendar](#) for more!

## Back to school information...

### School office contact info

Email [melissafischer@stthomasgr.org](mailto:melissafischer@stthomasgr.org)  
Phone number (616) 458-4228

### School pictures

School pictures will be taken on Wednesday, Sept. 21 (P4-Grade 8) and Thursday, Sept. 22 (P3). This is a uniform holiday. Refer to the student handbook for guidelines.

### School communication

The Buzz Newsletter – a bulleted look at the week ahead, emailed out weekly during the school year. It is only available electronically.

- Remind 101 – urgent text messages sent directly to your phone.
- Facebook – [www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr](http://www.facebook.com/saintthomasgr)
- Twitter feed – @SaintThomasGR
- Instagram – SaintThomasGR
- YouTube – Saint Thomas the Apostle GR
- Teachers' newsletters – emailed weekly.

# Teachers, staff and new families...

## 2022-2023 Teachers and Staff

Mrs. Veronica Perdue	PS3
Mrs. Sue Hieshetter	PS4/Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Teacher
Mrs. Lori Schumaker	P4 Enrichment
Mrs. Mary Ann Bridge	Kindergarten/PM Enrichment
Mr. Jeremiah Sluggett	Kindergarten/PM Enrichment
Mrs. Bonnie Burke	Preschool Classroom Aide
Mrs. Katie Morrow	Kindergarten Classroom Aide
Mrs. Kate Casey	Grade 1
Mrs. Brenda Tietema	Grade 2
Mrs. Kelly Donohue	1/2 Multi-Age Class
Mrs. Molly Mester	Grade 3
Mrs. Samantha Linn	Grade 3
Mrs. Kailey Malonek	Grade 4
Mrs. Abby VanDyke	4/5 Multi-Age Class
Mrs. Amy Zakrajsek	4/5 Multi-Age Class
Mr. Mike Mester	Grade 5
Mr. Ed Carr	Teacher Emeritus
Mrs. Mary Schafer	Middle School Language Arts
Mrs. Nicole Hoedeman	Middle School Math
Mr. Adam Baxter	Middle School History
Mrs. Jen Bendon	Middle School Science
Mrs. Cathy Buehler	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Cheryl Coderre	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Clare Delgado	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Sarah Faber	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Shawn Schuring	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Rachael Kohn	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Katherine Lewis	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Rachel Stohl	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Meg Sullivan	ESS Teacher
Mrs. Jeanne Walch	Enrichment Teacher
Mrs. Sue Edgerly	Librarian
Mrs. Karen Willams	BAS Shared-Time Art
Mrs. Ashley Emmerson	BAS Shared-Time Physical Ed
Mrs. Becky Keane	BAS Shared-Time Spanish
Mrs. Angie Dressander	BAS Shared-Time Technology
Mrs. Emily Brunner	BAS Shared-Time Music
Mrs. Veronica Perdue	Preschool and After-Care Director
Mr. Anthony Giovannetti	Technology Coordinator
Mr. Ted Coon	Maintenance Supervisor
Mr. Don Serba	Maintenance Staff
Mr. Drew Edgerton	Maintenance Staff
Mrs. Cammi Lawrence	Admissions/Marketing
Mrs. Betsy Edgerton	Director of Dev./Outreach
Mrs. Melissa Fischer	Administrative Assistant
Dr. Marygrace Tyrrell	Assistant Principal
Mr. Ryan Corcoran	Principal

## Welcome, new families!

### New students

Harrison Baar (grade 1)  
Clay Babbitt (kindergarten)  
Mari Brown-Holzgen (grade 5)  
Alexis (grade 5), Hannah (grade 4), Olivia (grade 2) and Vivian (kindergarten) Buehler  
Onalie (P4) and Quinn (P4) Bulliment  
Isabel Combs (kindergarten)  
Briggs (P4) and Taygan (grade 1) Dakoske  
Jack (grade 3) and Leo Duncan (grade 5)  
Adeline (grade 2) and Sebastian (P4) Eakin  
Calvin (grade 1), Keagan (grade 3) and Canaan (P4) GerkeGreen  
Frederick Gilmore (kindergarten)  
Nari Giovannetti (P4)  
Thomas Goebel (P3)  
Elouise (grade 1) and Jane (P4) Grutter  
Julian Gurumendi (P4)  
David (kindergarten) and John Paul (grade 2) Hicks  
Bryson Huyge (P4)  
Dominic Jakubowski (grade 7)  
Lennyn Johnson (kindergarten)  
Maesie Kammel (P3)  
Jaclyn Keegan (P4)  
Jude Lachman (grade 7)  
Eric Lewis (P4)  
Bridgett (kindergarten) and Scarlett (grade 2) Linn  
Clara Martin (kindergarten)  
Emily Perks (grade 7)  
Caleb (grade 4) and Naomi (grade 1) Phelps  
Luenne Roche (grade 4)  
Eden (grade 5) and Jude (grade 7) Rosser  
Katerina Stephanoff (P4)  
Edward (P4), Martin (grade 4), Sophia (grade 2) and Thomas (grade 3) VanderHyde  
Tobias Walquist (kindergarten)

# Daily Details...

## School day schedule

### Grades 1-8

8am	School begins
8:00am	Chapel
8:15 am	Classes begin

### Lunch/Recess Schedule

K-2nd recess	11:00-11:25 / lunch - 11:30-11:50
6th-8th recess	11:30-11:55 / lunch - 12:00-12:20
3rd-5th recess	12:00-12:25 / lunch - 12:30-12:50

3:17pm	End of Day Prayers
3:20-3:25pm	School dismissal

### Preschool & Kindergarten

8-11am	P3, P4, K (AM)
12:15-3:30pm	P4 (PM), P4 and K Enrichment

## Hornets' Nest

The Saint Thomas After-School Program begins on the first day of school, Tuesday, Aug. 23 and runs from 3:30 - 5:30pm. Please contact Veronica Perdue for more information.

We are also looking for people who would like to be a substitute in the Hornet's Nest. If you are interested in being on our "Sub List," contact Veronica ([veronicaperdue@stthomasgr.org](mailto:veronicaperdue@stthomasgr.org)).

## Sign up for Remind.com

We use a text/email system to notify parents of school closings and other important Saint Thomas information.

If you are new to Saint Thomas or have not signed up, you can sign up by texting the number 81010 with the message @stafam6gr. You may remove yourself from getting these notifications at any time by following the directions that come in the email or by responding to the text with the word "stop."

## Diocesan busing information

Grand Rapids Area Catholic Schools Transportation Consortium provides busing for students. Families must register each year by signing a new contract. If you have not registered and are interested, call Maureen in the Transportation office at 616-246-6470.

## Be on time...

School begins at 8am. Make every effort to be on time. After 8am, the administration and staff cannot be present at the gate or car line. If you are late, escort your child to the main office door. Ring the bell and your child will be admitted into the building.

## ...but not too early!

It is important that your student is NOT dropped off before 7:45am.

## And if you're absent...

Email ([melissafischer@stthomasgr.org](mailto:melissafischer@stthomasgr.org)) or call (616-458-4228) the school office, between 7:30-8:30am **each day your child will be absent**. Please leave your child's name, grade and reason for absence.

## Student drop off/pick up

- Students must NEVER be allowed to cross Wilcox Park Drive to enter or exit a car. DO NOT drop off or pick up students at the curb in front of school or church. **For the safety of all our children, please pick up and drop off students in the "Car Line" or "Gate Line" only.**
- Please make sure your children know which of the two "Lines" locations you will be using so to avoid confusion at pickup. The Car Line is near the Church parking lot, off of Wilcox Park Drive. The Gate Line is near Children's Healing Center, off Fulton Street.
- If you are picking up in the Gateline or Carline, please put a large sign on your front dashboard with your last name.
- Dismissal is in waves:
  - Preschool/Siblings 3:20pm
  - Gateline/Walkers 3:22pm
  - Carline/Hornets' Nest 3:23pm
- To aid in speeding up the drop off/pick up procedure, **please treat Wilcox Park Drive as a ONE WAY street (westbound only). Use Hope Street to travel eastbound.**
- When exiting the parking lot, turn right onto Wilcox Park Drive. By creating this ONE WAY environment, we can make the beginning and end of our school days more relaxing for you and our neighbors.

## Recess/Lunch/Aftercare supervisors

We are looking for recess, lunch and aftercare supervisors. If you love spending time with children and are available between 11am-1pm one or more days per week or from 3:30-5:30pm, this is the job for you! Enjoy the smell of fresh air and earn money. If you are interested, email [marygracetyrrell@stthomasgr.org](mailto:marygracetyrrell@stthomasgr.org).

# Faith and service...

## Saint Thomas Mass/prayer

There is Mass at our Parish 7:15am before school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for our community and any school families who would like to attend.

Our students will attend Mass on Monday (Grades 1-3) at 9:55am and Friday (Grades 4-8) at 9:55am. Students need to be in Mass attire on their Mass day.

Each day, we pray the Holy Spirit Prayer and The Universal Prayer. In addition, we recite the Pledge of Allegiance as a school community.

During daily Morning Chapel, we offer our students silent prayer time with a daily devotion and a virtue lesson.

We end each day in prayer with a time for reflection and Examination of Conscience.

## Virtus training

Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions  
If you are new to our school or still need to attend Virtus training (live or online). This is required for all school volunteers.

### Online training is now available!

Upcoming live sessions:

#### St. Robert of Newminster Parish

6477 Ada Dr., Ada, Michigan

- Monday, August 29, 2022 at 1:30pm
- Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022 at 6pm

Register online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). On the left side of the page, select "First-Time Registrant." Then select "View a list of sessions." Click in the box stating "Select your organization." Scroll down and select "Grand Rapids, MI (Diocese)." Scroll down the page to see the locations. Go to the top of the page and select "Start Registration."  
Complete the registration.

## Servant leaders

Servant leadership is a hallmark of what we do and who we are at Saint Thomas. Our students will participate in service to family, service to parish and service to community through our Saint Thomas serves service initiative.

We will focus on this initiative through daily chapel talks, reflection before Mass and during the celebration of Mass.

If you have service ideas or needs and/or would like to help organize additional service projects, contact Genevieve Boyle (Home & School president) at [genevievemytb@gmail.com](mailto:genevievemytb@gmail.com).

## Parent volunteer opportunities

Your gifts and talents will be celebrated at Saint Thomas. Fill out the following [form](#) and you can quickly become immersed in our school community!

If you have questions about volunteer opportunities, contact our Volunteer coordinators Becca Maguire at [rebecca.maguire11@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.maguire11@gmail.com) or Becca Kohn at [rrkohn@gmail.com](mailto:rrkohn@gmail.com).

# Student information...

## PE class dress/shoes

Students wear their school uniform for PE. All shoes used in the gym must have light colored soles. No dark soles will be allowed. Check shoe for indication of a "non-marking" sole.

## School supplies

School supplies are tools that help with learning. Check out the website for [lists of school supplies](#) (select Parents, then School Information, then Supply Lists).

## Infinite Campus information

Infinite Campus is the student management system for all diocesan Catholic schools. This online system gives parents access to student attendance, grades, lunch account balances and report cards.

The Infinite Campus is <https://micloud1.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/parents/grcss.jsp> Bookmark it or find it in the lower right corner of the school home page. New families will be given a user name and password for the Infinite Campus Student Management System during the first week of school.

## Canvas information

Canvas is a learning management system that will let Saint Thomas students and parents easily navigate learning and expectations from any device. Log into Canvas at <https://canvas.grdiocese.org/>. Find a link to Canvas at the bottom of our school website. Here is a quick [Canvas app tutorial](#) and [navigating Canvas](#) video.

## School uniform policy

My Aplus Uniforms is the Saint Thomas school uniform provider. To order online, please visit [My Aplus Uniforms website](#).

The last Tuesday of every month is a uniform holiday for Saint Thomas students. Please check these [Uniform Holiday Guidelines](#) for clothing that students should avoid wearing even on uniform holidays.

**Mass uniform requirements:** White shirts and ties (boys). White shirts and skirts/jumpers or white shirts, pants and ties (girls).

**Mark your calendar! Uniform holidays (non-uniform days) are the last Tuesday of each month.** Our first Uniform Holiday will be Tuesday, August 31.

## Cell phone policy

Cell phones are not allowed in the classroom at Saint Thomas, unless permitted for assignments.

If your student needs to bring a cell phone or any other electronic personal device to school, their teacher will collect it and store it in the classroom during the entire school day.

Students who need to contact parents during the day must use the classroom or office phone. Likewise, a parent who needs to get a message to their student may call the school office and we will deliver the message.

Our goal is to provide a dynamic Christ-centered education for your child. Let's work together to eliminate unnecessary distractions!

## School lunch...

We will return to paid hot lunch for this coming school year. Because of our partnership with West Catholic, we are able to keep lunch prices low and food quality high. There is again the opportunity for families to apply for the free and reduced lunch program. Please check out the links below for more details about this year's lunch program.

[Letter from School Lunch Program Director](#)

[Free and reduced lunch form](#)

[Food service payment instructions](#)

Classrooms that have a student with severe food allergies will post a notice of a specific allergens that could cause a life-threatening reaction. Classroom teachers will inform parents when there is a student with food allergies in the classroom to avoid known foods with allergens.

Please check out our [Allergen and Health Snack Management Policy](#) for more information.

## Required notifications...

### Asbestos notification

To comply with the requirements of the EPA's Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, all of the school buildings in the Diocese of GR have been inspected for asbestos containing materials. If you would like to review the Management Plan for Saint Thomas, it is available in the school office. The Management Plan will state recommended activities which will maintain the asbestos materials in a non-friable condition. ~ Ted Coon

### Pesticide notification

As a part of our pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied. You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the grounds or buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but notice will be following any such application.

## Receipts...

### Receipts for cash!

Our school can earn \$1,000 from SpartanNash, by shopping at any Family Fare Supermarkets, D&W Fresh Markets, Forest Hill Foods and Ada Fresh Market. Through the Direct Your Dollars program, we can turn eligible receipts into cash for our school!

Every time you shop at any SpartanNash grocery, save your receipts. Drop them in our Direct Your Dollars box, located in the front entryway of the school.

We are on our way to collecting another \$150,000 in receipts. Please keep the FULL receipts coming! **Do not cut your receipt** as they will not be valid.

You can also mail the receipts to 1429 Wilcox Park Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. We do need original receipts to earn the \$1,000 donation, so please **no photocopies**.

FYI...we are looking for a volunteer to organize receipts for this project. If you are interested, contact our volunteer coordinators Becca Maguire at [rebecca.maguire11@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.maguire11@gmail.com) or Becca Kohn at [rrkohn@gmail.com](mailto:rrkohn@gmail.com). Thanks!

## Home and School and stuff...

The Home and School Association extends a warm welcome to all new and returning families. As a parent or guardian of a Saint Thomas student, YOU ARE A MEMBER of the Home and School Association.

Home and School helps build the bridge between home and school. It provides support for the teachers, plans all-school social events, and helps build community in the school. On Tuesday, August 23, the first day of school, send your kids off to begin a wonderful new year! Then please stay and join us on the blacktop (in the Ministry Center if it rains) for donuts and coffee, and a rosary, followed by a short Home & School meeting and a chance to talk with other parents. We are looking forward to a great year ahead, and we hope to have many people join us on Tuesday! Little ones are welcome, of course, and we will have toys out for them.

## Immunization requirements...

State Law requires that each student entering Preschool, Kindergarten or a new school have a certificate of immunization on file at the time of registration or no later than the first day of school. In addition, Preschool students are required to have a physical dated within the past two years. Please see the immunizations required for all new students, preschoolers, kindergarteners and seventh grade students.

- **Preschool Requirements:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Signed Physical dated with the past two years. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file.
- **Kindergarten Requirements:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Vision & Hearing Screening Record on file. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file.
- **New Saint Thomas students:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record on file. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file.
- **All 7th Grade Students:** Up-to-date Immunizations Record. Consent for disclosure for immunization information on file.

For more information, see the [Vaccines required for school entry](#) and the [Vaccines required for child care and preschool](#) from the State of Michigan.

**Immunization Waiver:** If you wish to obtain a non-medical religious or philosophical waiver, you must schedule an appointment at the Kent County Health Department by calling 616-632-7200.



# Saint Thomas Education Foundation events...

The Saint Thomas Education Foundation invites YOU to these amazing events:

## Catholic Central Tailgate

Friday, September 23 Homecoming  
5pm to kick off!

## Community Picnic in the Park

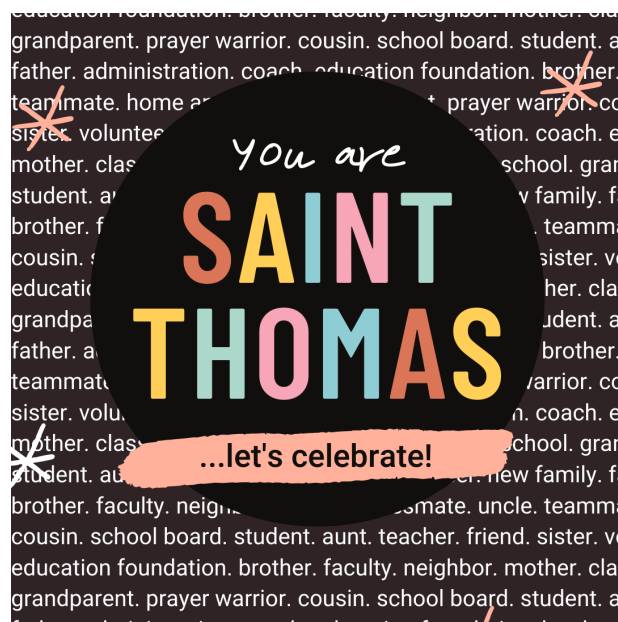
Sunday, October 2  
Wilcox Park noon to 3pm

## CELEBRATE Auction

Saturday, October 8  
Purchase tickets at: [cbo.io/tickets/STA/Bidder](https://cbo.io/tickets/STA/Bidder)

## Grandfriends Day

Friday, October 14  
Register <https://stthomasgr.org/school-news/grand-friends-day-2022/>



# Auction pre-party for Saint Thomas moms...

