



Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Years

# FRUITPORT Area News

To subscribe or advertise

call 865-3134

**\$1.00**

PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT No. 18  
FRUITPORT, MI

**The Hometown Paper Reaching All Homes in  
Fruitport and Sullivan Townships**

Online: [www.fruitportareanews.com](http://www.fruitportareanews.com)  
Email: [fruitportareanews@verizon.net](mailto:fruitportareanews@verizon.net)

Carrier Route

December, 2009 • Volume 27 • Number 6

The purpose of this paper is to be beneficial to the community it serves in every way possible.

## New school superintendent brings experience, vision and leadership

by Pam Mettler

Bob Szymoniak, the new Fruitport Schools superintendent, comes to Fruitport from Onaway, Michigan, where he served as principal for four years and as high school principal for two years before becoming superintendent for seven years. He also taught for five years in Holly, Michigan and became the assistant principal, then principal, for a total of eight years.



As people experience the holidays and ponder the prospects that 2010 will bring, Szymoniak has hopes for the community, the students, and staff members throughout the district.

"My wish for the Fruitport community is that all of our families are able to make it through this economic crisis so they can maintain the quality of life they had known in better financial times," he said. "We all may have to do with less, but my hope is that our spirit stays strong as we work to keep our community strong."

Since September, Bob Szymoniak has been preparing for an important school bond issue that will be decided on February 23, 2010. During these past three months, he has been setting goals and looking at the resources available to help children through a set of priorities developed with staff.

Targeted areas of concern are with the facilities at all the schools as they need upgrades and replacements. "My number two goal is to continue working on the bond issue election. This is important because the \$8.6 million bond issue will support technology, roofing and boiler replacements, transportation, athletics resurfacing, and adult education."

It is hard not to see the difficulties several students face as they attend school each day. Through listening and learning, he has developed a third goal. "I have been working with the district's business office to find ways to help get us through this fiscal crisis and still be able to maintain the programs despite what we're faced with."

His fourth goal is focused on students. "More and more students are coming to school experiencing hardship. Addressing the social and emotional issues these kids are facing, including their anxiety and stress, remains an important goal for all of us," says Szymoniak. "There are great kids here and I just love them."

There are 3,100 students enrolled throughout the district. Building and technology concerns remain of utmost importance, as does improving safety. However, the emotional well-being of students is strengthened through special programs that keep the focus on family wellness.

Since his arrival in the district, Szymoniak has made several observations about the people in the community. He feels they are "phenomenal" and he has experienced a "sincere welcome," which he appreciates.

He and his wife, Jenny, have a daughter, Ellie, who is a sixth grader at Fruitport Middle School. They are close to closing on a house within the school district. His wife is a nurse employed with a home health care company in Grand Rapids.

Aside from his duties as superintendent, Szymoniak loves to read, play guitar and fish. He prefers fly fishing and says that as soon as deer season is over, he is planning on going steelhead fishing.

His recommendation for students is to develop themselves in every way as much as possible. "You never know what talents and skills students will need to make a living in the future," he says. "You need multiple talents to find that next way of life. Our job is to make sure our students understand that after they graduate they have to be on the job or learning a trade."

His Christmas wish for all students is that they take advantage of every opportunity the school district and greater

community have to offer so they can develop into the kind of citizens that would make the Fruitport community proud.

Szymoniak believes cost saving opportunities can be developed in such a way that academic programs are not interfered with to the detriment of the students.

"I am optimistic about the future of the Fruitport School District, but I have no hope that Lansing will help solve the fiscal crisis. It will be much slower solving the challenges in Michigan than nationally. The prior administration and current administrators have taken good care of our district. We cannot rest on our laurels and have to face the fact that we have to reign in our expenses."

Bob Szymoniak says that once he knows the community well and the needs of the school system, he is looking forward to sharing a vision and working toward its realization here in Fruitport.

School district website: [www.fruitportschools.net](http://www.fruitportschools.net).

Superintendent's blog:

<http://blogds.fruitportschools.net/bszymoniak/>

## Quiet time

by Kathleen V. Busman

I'm sitting here in solitude  
To let my mind just wander,  
I've set aside this special time  
These precious moments to ponder.  
I let my thoughts flow over me  
Just like a gentle breeze,  
I think of all my family—  
These memories do please.  
My special dreams of yesterday  
My prayers for a bright tomorrow,  
These I want for my loved ones—  
There'll be less time for sorrow.  
I'm now the grandma of the "clan,"  
And my prayer shall always be,  
For happy, family memories  
As there have been for me. •



Dave and Dot Rose



Calvary Temple Praise Band

## Another successful CROP walk

By Cheryl Snow and Joyce Busman, co-coordinators, Fruitport Area CROP Hunger Walk

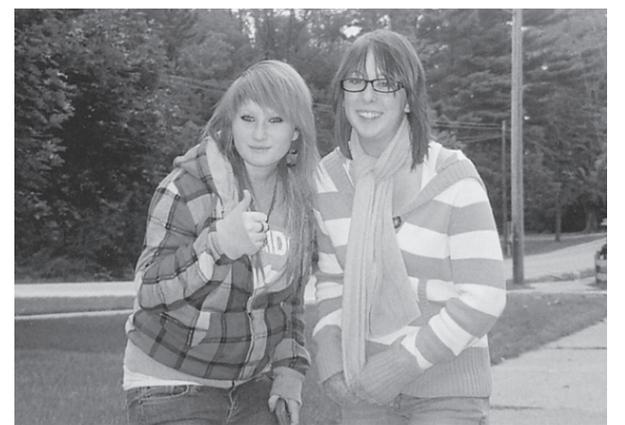
Fruitport Area CROP Walk for Hunger says thank you to all who made the 2009 walk a success. In spite of the economy and the weather, we were successful in raising

\$4,897.20. Churches participating in this year's walk include Edgewood Lutheran, First Congregational of Fruitport, Fruitport Christian Reformed, Word of Hope, Calvary Temple, Olivet Reformed Church of America, and Fruitport Congregational United Church of Christ.

Sponsors of the 2009 walk included Grover Pharmacy, Intellect Computer Systems (ICS Data), Hazekamp Meats, Stillwater Springs Condominiums, Excel Propane, The Little Brown Jug, Storage Group, Burger Crest, Baxter's Towing and Storage, Fruitport Oil Change and Car Wash, Diane's School of Dance/Pro Dance Supplies, Fruitport Orchard Market and Mary Kay Cosmetics. We also appreciate the support of the Fruitport Area News in publicizing our local walk.

Special thanks to all the individuals who worked on the steering committee and on the day of the walk with registration, logistics, refreshments, special music and all the other duties involved. Especially, we want to thank those who raised pledges and walked to support Church World Services' hunger-fighting efforts through the CROP walk, CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty and we are fortunate to live in such a community.

One-fourth of the funds raised will be returned to the Fruitport Area Food Pantry, located at the Fruitport Congregational United Church of Christ, to help feed the hungry of this area. Thank you for helping to feed the hungry locally and around the world. •



Abby Balavitch and Brianna Clark



Scott and Betsy Peterson with Russ and Kim Chapell



Sage, Stacia, Trinity, Cameron, and young Wyatt Fielstra



James Bolthouse, Dawn Bolthouse, Debbie Bos, Ellie Bos and Carole Dusterwinkle

## Tentative Newspaper Delivery Schedule

**February 13, 2010**

Valentines/Presidents Day  
(Deadline February 1, 2010)