

## St. Mary's to offer all-day kindergarten program

By Pam Mettler

Saint Mary's Parish School will open the fall, 2011 academic year by offering an all-day, five day a week kindergarten program for children five years of age.

The school is located at 421 E. Exchange Street in Spring Lake. Kindergarten registrations are now being accepted for the 2011-2012 school year.

"Research shows many strong benefits of having students in school five days each week," said Mike Devitt, principal of Saint Mary's Parish School. "The benefits of having all-day every-day kindergarten include more in-depth instruction. A full day program will allow a more relaxed atmosphere where our teachers can teach in an unhurried way, allowing for more instruction in the basics of language, math and science. This ultimately leads to better first grade readiness and academic preparedness for the future."

The school launched a Young Fives program during the fall 2010-2011 school year and Devitt reports it has been met with much enthusiasm.

"Since the beginning of the school year, we have developed events and other opportunities to bring children in the Young Fives program together with students in all other grades at our school. They have been introduced to each other and this type of welcoming started the year off on a positive note and helped create a greater sense of school readiness for the youngsters," said Devitt.

"We believe the thing that makes us different is our faith-based educational curriculum that creates opportunities for students to learn about world cultures, participate in service projects, and take an active role not only in their education, but their community. We are also blessed to have an excellent, dedicated teaching staff that live and work in this area and have had their own children go through our school system," said Mike Devitt.

Saint Mary's Parish School is fully accredited by the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools. Over 180 students are enrolled at Saint Mary's parish School in first-through eighth grade.

Anyone from the community, particularly newcomers to the Tri-Cities, who are interested in visiting the school or obtaining a kindergarten enrollment packet is invited to contact the school office. Tours can be arranged, and information can be provided about the academic subjects, enrichment activities, sports and service projects available by contacting Mike Devitt at (616) 842-1282. •



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