



Our U.S. Bishops defined the perfect role model of Stewardship for us, the Blessed Virgin Mary. *“All of the essential elements are found in her life: she was called and gifted by God; she responded generously, creatively, and prudently; she understood her divinely assigned role as “handmaid” in terms of service and fidelity.”*

*The Annunciation artwork pictured is a gift to St. Robert’s from Jerry Toohey.*

# GIFTS

## St. Robert Bellarmine Parish

### Stewardship Publication

January 2012

Volume I

Gifts come in many forms. Some have shiny paper with loops of ribbon. Some are spiritual moments of quiet prayer. While others involve time spent with friends or

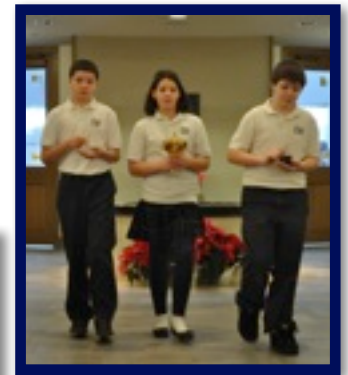


loved ones. There is no greater gift we can foster as parents and as parishioners than to nurture our children and young adults to a greater understanding of our Catholic Faith. St. Robert’s has been graced with wonderful teachers, administrators, volunteers, students, and parishioners who share this common goal. St. Robert’s Parish has established a wonderful School, Religious Education Program, and Youth Ministry which inspires youth to achieve their highest potential, develop Catholic principles and values, live meaningful lives inspired by the teachings of Jesus, and serve others while becoming leaders of all to Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ transforms our soul and leads to strength of character and a life of prayer through the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

This publication, GIFTS, is presented as a way to highlight and celebrate some of the gifts being shared among the parishioners of St. Robert Bellarmine Parish. Each edition will focus on a different aspect of the

incredible community we all have a part in creating and nurturing. For this, the very first edition of GIFTS, we focus on the most priceless gift of all – the youth of our parish. In the following pictures and text, you will see examples of the youth of St. Robert’s helping others, working to better themselves, and exercising their faith

in pursuit of a loving relationship with God. To the parents of St. Robert’s, thank you for sharing the “gifts” who are your children with all of us.



### ST. ROBERT'S STUDENTS HELPING LESS FORTUNATE THIS WINTER

For their annual "Warm & Woolly" clothing drive, students in Preschool through 4th grade collected new and gently used coats, gloves, hats, scarves, and boots to donate to the St. Martin de Porres Center. The friendly classroom competition collected over 700 items, nearly double last year's total. The students were not even offered prizes for



collecting the most items. Students in 5th through 8th grades participated in their own friendly classroom fundraising competition entitled "Bring a Buck for Christmas Dinner," benefitting the Sienna Francis House. The students raised over \$500 including a donation made by a teacher who matched their classroom's total as well as money collected by Mrs. Jane Sibilia's 2nd grade class that decided to participate in BOTH drives! What an incredible group of students.



### CHRISTMAS FOR A NEEDY FAMILY

The 6th through 8th grades collected nearly \$900 in an effort to provide Christmas for a needy family of three, including a mom, 5 year old boy and a 20 month old girl. The students did the shopping and wrapped the gifts which were delivered to the family via the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

### MY HEART FEELS GOOD

Even in Kindergarten, students are taught that service to others can give you what student Brian Smith said was "a good feeling in your heart".



### 8TH GRADER'S SERVICE PROJECT

Caitlin McFadden decided one day that for her eighth-grade service project she wanted to help raise money for and bring awareness to our Parish's Tuition Assistance Fund, which helps families give their children the gift of Catholic education at St. Robert's. So far she has raised over \$4,000 through her efforts.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL GOES ON THE ROAD TO WALT HILL, NE



Forty members of the Youth Group and adult sponsors spent a week in Walt Hill, Nebraska. They hosted the children of Walnut Hill to Vacation Bible School and also spent the week transforming an old building into a new youth center. It is now a boxing ring, training center and study center.

At one point in the week, volunteers went looking for a job and took it upon themselves to remove the weeds from a public garden in the community. In the process, they uncovered a rock with the word "God" painted on it.



Last summer, part of the proceeds from the annual parish fundraiser *Bella Festa* were designated to the Winnebago and Omaha Tribes. A portion of the money was used to purchase signage for the tribal cemetery.

With the good Lord providing a beautiful day, it was truly a prayerful experience to watch adult and youth volunteers set the foundation and raise the sign.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Last summer over 300 campers registered for Vacation Bible School held at St. Robert Bellarmine. There were 200 volunteers that logged over 4,500 hours of service through set up, decorations and the camp itself.



PARENTS' DAY OUT

Each year during December, student volunteers give their time on a busy Saturday morning, so parents can have a "day out" to prepare for Christmas. This year 95 volunteers kept 200 children busy with games, crafts and even a magician!



### FRIDAY MORNING ROSARY

Every Friday morning, our students, their parents and teachers have the opportunity to pray the Rosary before school starts beginning at 7:50 AM in “the pit”. This Friday tradition began over 20 years ago with various faculty leading the prayers. Most times, the area is so crowded students spill into the nearby hallways.



### PARTNERING IN SPIRITUALITY

Our 8th graders and their 2nd grade partners spend time together during the year including prayer time as they both prepare for their sacraments. Eighth graders are also involved in the Ambassador Program. It’s goal is to build community and a connection to our school with parishioners who have no family attending the 5-day school. The group meets after designated All-School Masses for donuts and fellowship in the Mainelli Center. Students learn from the adults, and the adults learn from the students.



The Kindergartners attend their first All-School Mass in November. As part of this wonderful gift they are paired with a 6th grade partner who accompanies them to and from Mass and sits with them. The students get together during the year to celebrate holidays and to just have fun.

All St. Robert Bellarmine students attend weekly All-School Masses. In addition, Unit Masses are offered where grades are grouped and attend an additional Mass each week. The students have the opportunity to participate in the Mass by doing the readings, petitions, bringing up the offertory gifts and singing in the choir. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also offered to students during the seasons of Lent and Advent.



### SAINT ROBERT BELLARMIN YOUTH GROUP POSADA AND LIVING STATIONS



Students in our Youth Group preform in this year's Christmas Posada at Midnight Mass with Sean Dowd and Morgan Mosser serving as Joseph and Mary.



Our Youth Group students participate in the annual Lenten Performance of the Living Stations of the Cross with Luke Bessmer potraying Christ in the 2011 Production.



### NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH CONFERENCE TRIP

Forty-eight youth and adults from St. Robert's traveled to the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis where they joined 25,000 teens from across the country as they celebrated the Mass together.



### MY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXPERIENCE by Catherine Mormino

I have been in Religious Education at St. Robert's since the first grade, and I am now in the eighth grade. In February, I will receive Confirmation. The time I have spent in Religious Ed has been great. All the teachers have shown me that being a Catholic is a lot more than just going to church every Sunday. It is about serving others and not being served yourself. We have done many service projects through the years in Religious Ed, which have led me to do more on my own. My fifth grade year, a women from the Open Door Mission came and talked to us about what they did at the Mission. It really made me realize how many homeless people there are just in Omaha, and we really need to help them. After she talked to us, everyone in Religious Ed worked together to make blankets and donated them back to the Mission. But, I felt like I could do more.

That summer some of my neighbors, who also were in Religious Ed, and I had a mini-fundraisers. We sold homemade slushies in my front yard. We used the money from the sale to buy more supplies for each future slushie sale. At the end of it all, we had about \$60.00 left over. We used our profits to buy new clothes and donated them to the Open Door Mission. I was so happy we could donate new clothes and blankets. It made us really happy to know we did something good for people who really needed our help.

I am so thankful I met the woman from the Open Door Mission. She showed me exactly what I have been taught all these years at Religious Education... being a Catholic is to serve others and not to be served.

## ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE PRESCHOOL



St. Robert Bellarmine School has been blessed to have a preschool classroom as a part of our school for nearly 15 years. The children of the parish can receive a Catholic preschool education that builds a great foundation for their faith formation.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

This year there are 245 students enrolled in St. Robert's Religious Education classes. There is a combined 94 years of teaching experience for Religious Education classes and Sunday School, creating a legacy of faith for future generations.



## UNDERGROUND CHURCH

St. Robert's Youth Group hosts the Underground Church for parishes in the Archdiocese. This program simulates the early days of our Christian faith and religious persecution, which still exists in our world today.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CELEBRATE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK?

How can we, as parents, prepare our children for the secular complexities of our world today? As our children's primary teachers, we began their faith formation in our homes during their early childhood.

As we begin to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, it is important for us to reflect on the unique and valuable daily exposure to their Faith that our children receive at St. Robert Bellarmine. The tradition of weekly school Rosaries led by teachers, All-School Masses and Unit Masses, daily prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation : all of these opportunities will imprint

in our children the gift of Faith that we treasure as adults. There are many other opportunities for our children to grow in faith through their education at St. Robert's School. Let us thank God that they can receive this gift of faith as they navigate through our complex world.

Thank you St. Robert's School and Religious Education Program for instilling in our children these important values that they can some day pass down to the next generation. A legacy of our Catholic Faith; the reason why we celebrate this week!

# St. Robert Bellarmine

11802 Pacific St.  
Omaha, NE 68154

---

G: GRACE I: INSPIRE F: FAITH T: TRANSFORM S: SPIRIT

---



## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We hope that the images and information in this edition of GIFTS have increased your awareness of the wonderful stewardship happening at St. Robert Bellarmine, and you have found inspiration in the actions of the individuals highlighted. If you are interested in learning more about a topic covered in this issue, or want to explore the many opportunities to live, learn, and worship at St. Robert's, here are a few suggestions:

- Visit the Gifts for Saint Robert's on the Website, [www.stroberts.com](http://www.stroberts.com), Select something from the Wish Lists
- Give to the Tuition Assistance Fund

- Sponsor a student for a Youth Conference, Mission Trip, or Camp
- Volunteer at School, Religious Education, Youth Ministry, or Athletic Programs
- Join, support, or run for Home & School Association, Total School Board, Religious Education Advisory Committee

Contact Mary Buttell – Director of Stewardship at 402.333.8989 or email [mbuttell@stroberts.com](mailto:mbuttell@stroberts.com) for more information or ways to participate or contribute.

---

G: GRACE I: INSPIRE F: FAITH T: TRANSFORM S: SPIRIT