



# St. Thomas Aquinas Grade School

The Catholic Community of Saint Thomas Aquinas Grade School is a partnership of parents, students, staff, and all parishioners that strive to nurture the growth of the whole child in a Catholic, faith-based environment. We seek to promote academic excellence in a safe and nurturing environment while fostering responsibility, positive discipline, service to others, and life-long learning.

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## Principal's Newsletter *Family and School Working Together!*

Dear STAGS Community,

Catholic Schools Week is a good time to stop and reflect on what we do and why families continue to send their children to us. In general, Catholic schools in this country have always been associated with success, which is the reason that non-Catholics have always wanted to have their children with us.

Certainly we prepare our students for Heaven! Part and parcel is our Catholic faith, which includes the Sacraments we receive and the commitment to service that we instill, but there is more than that. Studies at Notre Dame show that Catholic school students are more actively involved in our communities, vote in greater numbers and are more tolerant (less racist, sexist, etc.). On top of all that, St. Thomas Aquinas' students are well prepared for academic success as is evident in the performance of our alumni at institutions all over the Valley.

In short, it is difficult to find schools that do what we do as well as we do it. Are we perfect? Absolutely not, nor are we perfect for every student and family, but with schools all over the country trying to emulate, as much as possible, the formula that makes us successful, we must be doing something right. After all, imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

You will be choosing the direction of your children and family this month. I hope that you will continue to choose St. Thomas Aquinas.

Sincerely,

Patrick Reardon, *Principal*

## Online Re-Enrollment

for the 2012-2013 school year will open soon,  
details will be distributed this month.



## Board Members

### President

Nick Rodriguez - [nirodriguez@cokecce.com](mailto:nirodriguez@cokecce.com)

### Vice President

Matt Kurtz - [kurtzpoetz7@aol.com](mailto:kurtzpoetz7@aol.com)

### Secretary

Steve Minten - [mintens@cox.net](mailto:mintens@cox.net)

### Treasurer

Terry Tessmer - [terrytessmer@cox.net](mailto:terrytessmer@cox.net)

### Communications

Andy Mesquita - [amesquita@cox.net](mailto:amesquita@cox.net)

### WILDCATS CLUB MEETING

The next meeting will take place on:  
**Tuesday, February 7th—7pm**  
 St. Clare Hall

### WILDCAT FAMILY DINING

**Wednesday, February 8th—5-8pm**  
 Carlos O'Brien's Mexican Restaurant  
 775 N. Avondale Blvd., Avondale  
 Get your Scrip beforehand!

### WILDCAT POKER TOURNAMENT

**Saturday, March 3rd**  
 St. Clare Hall  
 Dinner begins at 6pm  
 Poker starts at 7pm  
 \$35 contribution



Please contact  
 Walter Morrow at  
[waltermorrow@yahoo.com](mailto:waltermorrow@yahoo.com) to  
 register.

## Scrip Update

See's candy for Valentine's Day is in stock - available are the mini holiday boxes and children's boxes. You can also purchase certificates for the 1lb. boxes.

For those families that have met the \$150 Scrip obligation – please continue to support our school through additional Scrip purchases. Every amount STAGS raises supports our children's education. Plus...50% of the amount over \$150 goes towards your tuition credit for next year!!

Check out [ShopwithScrip](#) for a list of over 600 vendors you can order from!

**Volunteers** are needed to keep sales going especially on Thursdays —<http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/1242345681583328032>

Questions? [scripquestions@yahoo.com](mailto:scripquestions@yahoo.com)

### Trinkets to Treasures

Date to be announced soon!



### NEED VOLUNTEER HOURS?

The Wildcat Club serves coffee at the 9am and 10:45am masses the first Sunday of each month.

This is a great opportunity for members to promote the Wildcat Club and earn volunteer hours!

If you are interested in volunteering, please email us at [stagswildcats@yahoo.com](mailto:stagswildcats@yahoo.com)

### INTERESTED IN JOINING THE WILDCAT CLUB?

We are always looking for new Dads that are interested in participating in the Wildcat Club by supporting the kids, gaining service hours and having fun in all of our volunteer efforts. Anyone interested in joining is welcome to contact us at [stagwildcats@yahoo.com](mailto:stagwildcats@yahoo.com) or feel free to attend any of our monthly meetings.

## PTO News

Happy February STAGS families, hope your January went well now that the kids are back in school. We have officially kick started our Jog-A-Thon and thank you to all the families for participating. Buff Wessman has put a lot of time and energy in making this a great one for our school. Please provide your support to her when needed. The official Jog-A-Thon is scheduled for Friday, March 9, 2012.

On behalf of the PTO Board and Mr. Reardon, we would like to thank all the parents who have volunteered for traffic duty. Your support helps us keep the school drop off and pick up a safer place for our kids and parents. We would not be able to do this without your dedication. If you have not volunteered to help out with this, please consider doing so. We need everyone's help on this.

We want to thank Clint and Jennifer Hickman for providing our teachers and staff a wonderful breakfast. The teachers and staff truly enjoyed it. Also thank you to all of our parents who volunteered to chaperone the classrooms while our teachers enjoyed their breakfast.

Mark your calendar for February 15<sup>th</sup> which is our PTO General Meeting. Your PTO Board is:

**Chi Sidener-Funk (President), Carol Ruiz (Vice President), Renee Puels (Secretary), and Elsa Robinson (Treasurer).**

Should you have any questions, please let one of us know or you can contact me directly at [cfunk@valleycrest.com](mailto:cfunk@valleycrest.com) or 602-763-4109.

Chi Sidener-Funk  
*PTO President*

## Congratulations STAGS Students!!

**Patriot's Pen Essay Contest Winners** – sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars

- 1st- Sara Scheller
- 2nd- Jacob Forstrom
- 3rd- Gwyn Tanner

All three wrote an essay about, "Are You Proud of Your Country?" and each received a certificate, plaque, and money for their efforts.

**Geography Bee Winners**

- Nick Whitehouse - School Champion
- John Marks - 8th
- Amy Duong - 7th
- Timothy Mendez II - 7th
- Jarek Dunn - 6th
- Reilah Minten - 6th
- Matthew Scheller - 5th
- Matthew Whitehouse—5th



This is Nick's second time as School Champion. We wish him luck as he prepares for his written exam later this month. Kudos to all our winners!

## Tax Credit Organizations

Contact Liz Hansen, School Advisory Board Member, at [liz.hansen@sfxphx.org](mailto:liz.hansen@sfxphx.org) or 602.212.4502 for more information.

### Arizona Private Education Scholarship Fund, Inc.

14550 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd.,  
#210  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
480.699.8911 Fax: 480.946.5224  
[www.apesf.org](http://www.apesf.org)

### AZ Scholarship Fund

P. O. Box 2576  
Mesa, AZ 5214  
480.497.4564 Fax: 480.497.4737  
[www.azscholarships.org](http://www.azscholarships.org)

### AZ School Choice Trust

P.O. Box 1616  
Glendale, AZ 85311  
623.414.3429 Fax: 623.243.6846  
[www.asct.org](http://www.asct.org)

### Catholic Education Arizona (CEA)

2025 North Third Street, #165  
Phoenix, AZ 85004-1425  
Phone: 602.218.6542  
[catholiceducationarizona.org](http://catholiceducationarizona.org)

### Educare Scholarship Fund

P.O. Box 8393  
Scottsdale, AZ 85252  
602.980.2680

### Giving Kids the Credit

17212 N. Scottsdale Rd, Apt. 2321  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
480.664.8617 Fax: 480.664.8618

### Institute for Better Education

5151 E. Broadway, Ste. 1600  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
520.512.5438 Fax: 520.512.5401  
[www.ibescholarships.org](http://www.ibescholarships.org)

### School Choice Arizona, Inc.

2241 E. Pecos Road, Ste. 38  
Chandler, AZ 85225  
480.722.7502 Fax: 480.820.0403  
[www.schoolchoicearizona.org](http://www.schoolchoicearizona.org)

### Tuition Organization for Private Schools (TOPS for Kids)

P.O. Box 41930  
Mesa, AZ 85274  
480.710.8943 Fax: 480.835.9615  
[www.topsforkids.com](http://www.topsforkids.com)

# Catholic Education

A R I Z O N A

TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

*Take the Credit....Invest in our School!*

There is still time to contribute until **April 15, 2012.**

Thank you to all the STAGS families who contributed to the CEA tax credit program in 2011. St. Thomas Aquinas School directly receives these funds to help all families with tuition assistance. Brochures are in the vestibule of the church and school office. Make sure you mark **STA - code 191. PAYMENT PLANS** are available so you can spread out your contribution throughout the year.

**THANK YOU!**

**Questions?** Matthew Scheller, 623.910.9025, [txb2god@msn.com](mailto:txb2god@msn.com)  
[www.catholiceducationarizona.org](http://www.catholiceducationarizona.org)