

## May 2014

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever does." As I sat reflecting on how to write my last Steeple Run newsletter, the idea of change came to mind. Thinking about the past six years at Steeple Run, I can honestly say that together; students, parents and staff have brought about some wonderful changes in Steeple Run.

First, the physical appearance of our school has changed, especially in the last year! Construction on our new multi-purpose room and office space is well under way and scheduled to be completed by September of 2014! This new construction will provide flexible learning spaces for all learners. It will allow for all day kindergarten, a change we are welcoming in the 2014/15 school year. Our new office space will provide direct line of sight to the front entrance and added security. In addition to our current project, thanks goes also to Home and School and District 203, as our beautiful new playground was dedicated last year, bringing a splash of color, joy and fun to the children of Steeple Run. A new marquis was also supported by Home and School and is an important communication tool for our parents.

Our student population has changed over the past six years, and will continue to change in the coming years. We welcomed the addition of Beebe School students. After many welcoming events such as Family Tours, Family Picnics, and pen pals, our former Beebe students are now Steeple Runners at heart. Dual Language opened in our school to assist our native Spanish speakers in their learning. Next year we will begin to see students joining us from Arbor Trails, a new subdivision across Chicago Avenue. We look forward to meeting our new families and helping them to be part of our wonderful school community.

Curriculum and programming have changed with a new literacy and math curriculum centered on Common Core Standards. Our teaching staff is strong and they welcomed the changes and have embraced CCS and the rigor of learning that will prepare students for college and careers. Family Reading and Math nights, supported by our SFCP involved parents in learning about the new curriculum and standards. Clubs were started to enhance the curriculum including Chess Club, Math Club, Study Stars, Math Stars, Spark, and Student Council to give students a voice in our school. As well we implemented Title One Jump Start Program last year and created a Title 1 Morning Math Support Program. To address students' social emotional needs, Steeple Run became a Nurtured Heart School, making expectations clear for students and recognizing the strengths of our students and bringing out their inner wealth. Second Step, a research based program was implemented to explicitly teach social emotional skills and competencies. Home and School helped to fund the purchase of Second Step kits for classrooms. There are changes coming in how we use assistants, moving assistants closer to the actual learning taking place in the classroom and allowing all students to receive enrichment or remediation just in time as shown by their learning progress and needs. It will be exciting to see how this change benefits all students.

All of these occurred as we maintained a balance of activities and experiences that help to build a strong cohesive learning community. Our track was built and dedicated to a past much loved PE teacher and we enjoyed many Turkey Trots on that track. Birthday books purchased by Home and School allowed me to get to know each student in a more personal way. Two All School Books brought our community together as we read and enjoyed the books about Humphrey and Tia Lola! Tia Lola taught our students about Spanish language and culture that is a an important part of our school. Home and School bought every teacher and child a spirit wear t shirt and we proudly wear them to this day. Family Picnics brought many families out to meet and greet one another. Cultural Fairs and World Performances brought our beautifully diverse school together as we celebrated our talents and skills from our own backgrounds. I could go on and on about our welcoming community events. There are many!

The Naperville Education Foundation has provided over \$30,000 for grants written by our staff members. These grant were initiated by staff and parents and brought us I Pads, Coaching for Nurtured Heart, classroom books, a Parent library, Parent Education Program for ELLs, materials for social emotional learning, and a variety of other innovative programs and materials that have benefitted our students. NEF support has enriched our school in many ways.

Change and innovation have been prevalent at Steeple Run School as we have collaborated to create a school environment that supports students and their families. Together we have brought about these changes and we can be proud of all we have accomplished! I can't wait to hear more about the future of Steeple Run as we are lead into a new beginning for our school. Thank you for a great six years and the privilege of leading change and working with the most wonderful students and families in all of Naperville! It has been a great six years and I will be forever grateful to end my career in such a positive way at Steeple Run.

Fondly,

Karen Currier

Principal