



The U.S. Department of Education Honors Saint Mary School

By Anna O'Rourke, Principal of Saint Mary School

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total; of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

As I sat in the Blue Ribbon awards ceremony the week of November 15th, this quote by Robert Kennedy, resonated inside me. It was quoted by the Assistant Secretary of Education for the U.S., Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana. These words should inspire all of us to do a small part in our children's lives, which will in turn build upon each other to create greatness and change for their future. Truly, Saint Mary School Assistant Principal Mrs. Elizabeth Manno and I were in awe of not only the company of fellow Blue Ribbon Awarded school staff, but the many talented educators whose words transmitted hope, faith, purpose, commitment, and deliberateness. Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education for the U.S. praised the work we do; however, he reminded us that there is so much remaining work to do. In moving forward, he shared his commitment along with the President and U.S. Department of Education that will allow all the children in the United States the chance to learn. Make no mistake, education is where it all begins. Not only are educators and parents watching the academic world, but so are businesses and government in order to keep working towards those small changes that in total will change history. A representative from GlaxoSmithKline, a pharmaceutical company, asked us to please continue to teach and inspire our youth in math and science so that companies like theirs can advance in curing diseases and help people with the quality of life not only in the U.S., but globally.

Sarah Brown Wessling, a mother of three young children from Johnston, Iowa spoke to us about her passion - teaching. Fearful and struggling after her first year of teaching high school English, she literally crawled under her desk the last day of school and thought that she would never return. This year, she was named the National Teacher of the Year! Her story shows that by replacing fearful thinking with creativity, purpose, deliberateness and collective enthusiasm, you can change your life while giving so much to others whose lives you touch.

I am so proud of the entire Saint Mary School community - teachers, students, staff, parents, and parish staff, for their creativity, purpose, deliberateness, and collective enthusiasm! Blended with our faith and passion we have accomplished much. Now we must continue what we have started and set forth new goals of excellence so that our children can have the hope and skills to improve their lives and the lives of others - "or acts to improve the lot of others... he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope..." Robert Kennedy

May our faith continue to provide ripples of hope, especially for our children, that will last a lifetime!