

# ST. SIMON'S SAYS Newsletter 2014



St. Simon's provides free after school care for low-income children and their families. We serve elementary grade students who qualify for assisted lunch, whose parents work, and who have no one at home to care for them after school. Saving these children from a latchkey existence and helping them get a good start with their education is a worthy goal for each of us.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Five years ago, the St. Simon's Board endorsed a "double-up" project with a commitment to double the number of needy students receiving our safe, supportive after-school care. At that time we had approximately 350 students enrolled at 9 DISD elementary schools. For the upcoming 2014-15 school year we will have approximately 675 students enrolled at 14 DISD elementary schools, and we have become the second largest provider of after-school care in DISD. The "double-up" goal is almost with-in our grasp, and with your continued support, I am confident we will reach it.

This year, the St. Simon's Board of Directors endorsed an exciting new strategic direction going forward with increased emphasis on providing more activities for academic and social achievement. To this end we have partnered with the Istation educational software company to provide remedial reading programs for students with deficiencies in reading skills. A pilot program was initiated this year at Rice Elementary and as many as 7 additional remedial reading programs are in our plans for the upcoming 2014-15 school year. In addition we have initiated a program we call "ordinary heros" conducted by our volunteers to expose our after-school students to values, morals, and characteristics of significant historical figures. Our goal going forward will be to expand both of these programs while maintaining coverage of 700+ students needing free after-school care.

And lastly I would like to call your attention to the article herein regarding the "At-A-Glance" report recently completed by DISD. The results of this study show that students enrolled in after-school care have scored higher on recent STAARS test results, and moreover students in St. Simon's After-School scored the highest. Everyone that has supported St. Simon's with your time, your money, and your prayers should feel very proud of these results. Thanks to all of you, and Thanks be to God. St Simon's is making a difference!

*Bob*

Bob McLendon  
President, St. Simon's After-School

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT GOOD SHEPHERD MEN'S GROUP

Each year, prior to the holiday's, the men of Good Shepherd (Episcopal Labor Force (ELF) meet every Monday night during the football season. The main activity of the ELF group is to make toys for the St. Simon's After-School program. The group has a full woodworking production line set up to make the toys, engage in fellowship with the rest of the men of the church and watch the game on the a big screen while making the toys. The toys are bagged up and include a candy cane. The children are always so excited to receive these gifts which are distributed during each school's holiday party.



Thank you Good Shepherd ELF's for your continued support!

## IN THE CLASSROOM



### Donate Online

[www.stsimonsafterschool.com](http://www.stsimonsafterschool.com)  
or with the enclosed  
donor card

*\*Receive future newsletters by email.  
Include your email address on your  
donor card, or sign up online.*



### St. Simon's Mission Statement

To support elementary school children and their families who are challenged by economic and family situations by providing

- a safe, familiar, nurturing place for children to be after school
- encouragement and assistance with academic and social development.
- a mid-afternoon nutritional snack
- support for the student's families

## ISTATION REMEDIAL READING - NEW PROGRAM



This year, St. Simon's tested a pilot program for students already in our after-school programs to help with remedial reading. The Istation software uses engaging animation and storytelling and inherently generates reading achievement metrics which will provide quantitative data regarding improvements in reading achievement levels. The program is designed to help all students reach their highest reading potential by increasing reading scores. With the success of this program, the St. Simon's Board of Trustees will be adding this program to several of our schools for the 2014-15 school year.



## DISD - AT A GLANCE REPORT

The Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD's) Department of Summer Learning and Extended-Day Services partnered with several organizations to provide a variety of after-school programming across the district's elementary and middle schools during the 2012-13 school year. At the elementary level, St. Simon's, at the time, operated at 13 campuses. The report includes four other DISD after-school programs.

After-school research has shown that student participation in these programs has a positive impact on both students' academic achievement and social skills. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine if elementary after-school programs differed on reading and math achievement, and attendance rate.

Some stats from the program include:

- St. Simon's, enrolls a slightly higher percentage of Black or African American students
- St. Simon's participants include 51.8 percent male and 46.1 percent female.
- For reading and math achievement - State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Reading and STAAR Mathematics, St. Simon's reading scores showed a gain from the previous year's performance in comparison to other groups along with higher mathematics gains than other students not in an after-school program.

The report states that the St. Simon's program seems to create more positive gains than the other after-school program reviewed in the survey. While other programs required homework completion, St. Simon's site leaders divided participants into small groups by grade and sent them to separate classrooms with an aide in comparison to large communal areas such as the cafeteria.

In addition, for those attending St. Simon's after-school programs, there was an associated higher rate of attending school overall. The results indicated that St. Simon's students may be producing higher academic gains than students in other types of programs or no program at all.

The survey reinforces that in addition to providing a safe and nurturing place after-school for these students, our efforts in assisting with help with their homework has increased performance with our students.

We are proud to be making a difference in the lives of the children we serve.



St. Simon's Thanks the Foundations, Partners, Parish Contributors, Volunteers and Individual Donors.

Support of our programs provides the critically needed funds to serve the underserved children in high-poverty neighborhoods so they can receive after-school care and academic assistance for the entire school year.

## BOARD MEMBERS /VOLUNTEERS

St. Simon's is looking to expand its Board of Trustees, If you would be interested in joining our Board or volunteering at a school, please email us for more information.

The commitment for both?

Approximately an hour each month. If you are interested in serving our community this way, contact us.



## IN MEMORY



St. Simon's Board of Trustee member, Dwight Otto passed away on April 17th. Dwight was a long-time volunteer at Foster Elementary. We will remember Dwight for his dedication and ongoing support of St. Simon's along with his love of the children.

## ST. SIMON'S TRUSTEES

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