

St. Elizabeth Catholic School

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School Celebrates 50 Years of Service to the Community

Dallas, Texas, August 13, 2008 – In its 50 year history, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School has undergone an amazing transformation, from classes being held in portable buildings for 29 students in kindergarten and first grade to a thriving educational facility featuring state of the art technology serving over 300 Pre-K4 – eighth grade students. St. Elizabeth School will kick off the *next* 50 years with a new Mission/Philosophy Statement that takes the school back to its roots with the Oblate Missionaries of the Immaculate, who at the request of James F. Burnes, original Pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish, helped to establish the new parish school in September of 1958. Principal, Christina Clem, states “The school’s new Mission Statement better reflects the school’s Catholic Identity and purpose for existence to challenge our students to develop their fullest potential spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, personally, socially, physically and culturally: Our mission at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School is to serve God through our ministry of educational excellence and to develop the spiritual lives of our youth within the framework of the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church.”

This fall, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School will carry forth its new mission to serve God through their ministry of educational excellence with the launching of several innovative educational programs in an effort to bring fresh strategies, resources and ideas to the instructional program of the school. The school wide implementation of Higher Effective Teaching (formerly known as ITI: Integrated Thematic Instruction), will

help St. Elizabeth's educators to translate current brain research into practical strategies for the classroom as the faculty begins the three-five year process of being trained in the HET model of learning. Thanks to the generous grant from the Catholic Foundation, the school's two Technology Labs have been updated with new "Thin Client" technology. Middle School Science students will have an opportunity to integrate technology, science and math by the introduction of LEGO MINDSTORMS for Schools Robotics to their classroom activities with the addition of a new Robotics Lab. Eighth grade students will be piloting the "I CAN Learn" Algebra and Pre-Algebra program, a technology-based instructional program designed to meet the various learning needs of the students.

This year, through a partnership with the DISD, kindergarten students will participate in the "Listening Learning Literacy" Program. The goals of this program are to foster literacy development by increasing student learning of phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension and by creating and maintaining a strong connection between school and home. In this program, MP3 players, headphones and speakers will be used by the students in class as well as at home to reinforce instruction. Teachers will record daily lessons with the children and will send the children home with the MP3 player, a notebook which includes text and objective of the recorded lesson, and a manipulative associated with the lesson. The speakers will also go home with the students so their parents can be involved in the learning experience. Teachers will track student assessments three times during the school year and will complete an end of the year evaluation of this pilot program.

To enhance student literacy skills, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School recently completed its first summer reading enrichment program, offering the Literacy Camp to current and new students as well. Students, in multi-age groups, rotated through five different literacy stations: oral reading/fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, writing and also the Shurley Method grammar techniques used at the school. Plans are currently in development for an Arts and Science Camp to be offered in summer 2009.

Striving to emulate their patroness' dedication to community service and in keeping with this year's theme for Catholic Schools Week – "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service," the school will add a new component to its already established Community Service program. Each member of the entire student body will be responsible for completing a specified number of service hours according to each grade level beginning this school year. St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School will continue its already established school-wide service projects including fundraising activities to benefit the orphan children of the Yucatan, the people of West Dallas through the canned food collections for the Marrillac Center and the Pro-Life Movement with the Hike for Life in October. Beth Belcher, Director of Religious Education, states, "Last year two of our students did more than 400 hours of service representing St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School. Even though this is extraordinary, and most students do not complete this many hours, we are guiding St. Elizabeth students to see service as an extension of them selves, and as a way of life!"

Additionally, to better serve the families of the school community, Parent Education Nights for each grade level will be scheduled this fall. Parent Nights will consist of a potluck dinner and speakers on educational and theological topics as an endeavor to strengthen the partnership between home and school and to build community.

The Community of St. Elizabeth, past and present, will gather on November 8th to celebrate 50 years of excellence in Catholic Education. The school invites all alumni and friends of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic School to contact Elizabeth Belew, Development Director at (214) 331-5139 Ext. 24, or ebelew@stelizabethofh.org, to put their name on the contact list for the celebration.

About St. Elizabeth Catholic School – Founded in 1958, St. Elizabeth Catholic School is a highly respected parochial school in southwest Oak Cliff, offering a complete education program from PreK-4 through the eighth grade. The over 300 students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, represent the rich cultural diversity of our

community. Recognized as a National Exemplary School and cited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department as “a model school for Catholic education,” we continue to earn a reputation for academic excellence and sound discipline practices as well as for instilling strong Christian values in those we serve.

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