

Good Shepherd Catholic School

Christian Values and Academic Excellence Produce Exemplary Citizens

by pamela hammonds

Garland, Texas is home to a few well-kept secrets. One is Good Shepherd Catholic School. Nestled in central Garland's downtown district across from Garland High School, Good Shepherd possesses a rich history of superior education centered on Catholic faith. Started by the Sisters of the Holy Ghost in 1954, the school remains in its original location and is proud to be a part of Garland's historic area.

Students at Good Shepherd Catholic School begin their education as young as three years of age in the preschool program and continue through eighth grade. "We continue to offer a traditional Catholic education for our students," said Gail Richardson-Bassett, principal. Graduating eighth graders typically enroll at area Catholic high schools such as Bishop Lynch High School, Ursuline Academy, Jesuit College Prep or John Paul II. "Our acceptance rate to all four high schools has been very high," she said. "And those students who choose public high schools go into the honors programs."

Good Shepherd remains one of the only Catholic schools in the Lakeside area with easy access from the surrounding Garland communities including Rowlett, Rockwall, Heath, Sachse and more. "Once you realize where we are," said Richardson-Bassett, "we're easy to get to and not hard to find."

Richardson-Bassett has worked at the school for the past 29 years, first as a teacher and then as an administrator. Last year she became the school's principal. "There is a unique sense that when you walk into this building, you'll be accepted here," she said. "This is a community of people united in faith who all get along together."

CHOOSING GOOD SHEPHERD AN EASY DECISION

When Brook and Maria Lohmann of Sachse, Texas, had children, the decision as to where they would attend school was already made. Maria and her siblings attended Good Shepherd. She insisted her children would one day follow in her footsteps. Her husband consented without question. "It's an excellent school," he said. "It feels like a large family. We like the fact that our children learn in



a Christian environment and start each school day with prayer. For them, religion isn't just one day a week. It's built into their education."

Years ago the Dunavin family of Sachse, Texas, enrolled daughters Bailey and Rylie in Good Shepherd's preschool program. The girls will start seventh and third grades, respectively, this fall. Their mother, Colleen Dunavin, attended Catholic schools as a child. "The moment I stepped inside to register Bailey," she said, "I got a sense of warmth and friendliness from everyone—the staff and faculty. I knew instantly that this was the right place for our

daughters. The level of education is excellent. The teachers love the children and want them to succeed. Our daughter only has two more years here, and we are very confident that she is well-prepared to attend one of the parochial high schools in the area."

Mark Gurera and his wife, Kristina, of Rockwall, Texas, attended Catholic schools as children and sought out the same for their two children. "Good Shepherd reminded us of our old schools," Gurera said. "It had that warm and inviting feeling of community. If parents are interested in their children's academics, then this is the school to consider. In a small school you're able to develop a better connection with the teachers and faculty members and the coaches, and quite a few fantastic teachers have been there for many years."



CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES A DAILY PRACTICE


Students are challenged in numerous areas—academics, sports, the arts, and more. In academics, students begin studying Spanish in kindergarten and by eighth grade can choose algebra or pre-algebra.

All grades take religious classes, participate in daily student-led prayer, and attend Mass once a week. “We live our faith through Catholic experiences,” said Richardson-Bassett, “such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Advent and Lent celebrations in addition to service programs.” Middle school students are required to perform 50 hours of service over two years, and eighth graders attend a three-day Retreat Camp at The Pines Catholic Camp.

Richardson-Bassett emphasized that “everything we do is focused around creating lifelong learners in preparation for service to God.”

Another component of Good Shepherd’s framework is its cultural diversity. “Our staff and students represent many cultures that enrich their understanding of tolerance and acceptance of others,” Richardson-Bassett said. “We really prepare our students to be globally responsible citizens. Because our students are exposed to a variety of cultures, once they get out in the world and interact with people in societies, they’re more accepting of others.”

Richardson-Bassett is also proud to note that the school’s faculty has three religious staff members: Sister Denise Thompson, first grade teacher and assistant principal; Sister Veronica Mitchell, school nurse; and Brother Robert Mosher, social studies and religion teacher. “We’re proud of all of our faculty and staff,” she said, “but to have three religious staff members is unique.”

For information about fall enrollment, upcoming tours and open house, view the Good Shepherd Web site or contact the school via phone or email. 

Good Shepherd Catholic School

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ACADEMICS

- + Strong curriculum to educate the whole child
- + Accelerated reader program
- + 2006 & 2007 Private School Interscholastic Association District Champions
- + Poetry Contest Winners
- + Geography Bee
- + Spelling Bee
- + Band
- + Choir
- + Speech and Drama
- + Duke Talent Identification Program
- + DECATS enrolled students (DeBusk Enrichment Center for Academically Talented Scholars)
- + Fifth Grade Environmental Camp at The Pines Catholic Camp (week long)

LEADERSHIP

- + Student Council
- + National Junior Honor Society
- + Boy Scouts
- + Girl Scouts
- + Yearly Service Projects

SPORTS

- + Volleyball (All 2007 Varsity Volleyball teams advanced to the playoffs)
- + Basketball
- + Track and Field
- + Football
- + Baseball and Softball
- + Swimming
- + Soccer

HONORS

- + 2006 Catholic School of the Year by Catholic Charities
- + Honor Roll Top 100 Schools in the Nation for the Earth’s Birthday Project for donations made toward conservation efforts.