

'Coastal Roots' preparation at Our Lady of Mercy School

BY MARI BUZBEE

Our Lady of Mercy School is currently a participant in the Louisiana State University Coastal Roots program. The Coastal Roots Nursery Program enables students to become well informed about issues of coastal stewardship, as well as actively participate in coastal and wetland restoration projects.

The program goals and objectives are stated as follows: "The overall goal of the Coastal Roots Seeding Nursery Program is to assist students in developing an attitude of stewardship toward our natural resources and to provide them a constructive active learning situation in which they can explore strategies for sustaining our coastal ecosystem."

The culminating activity for this extended project takes place in the fall of the eighth grade year, when students travel to plant the seedlings cultivated in the school's nursery. During science classes, students are educated about the ecological restoration needs of their assigned site.

The students' work begins in the spring preceding the eighth grade year in order to produce

strong and healthy plants for their restoration planting trip in the fall.

The work plan involves seed preparation, planting, germination of seeds, and maintenance of the seedlings and the nursery.

The Our Lady of Mercy Class of 2010 began its preliminary work with this project in late March, by planting the seeds into the cells where they will grow until they are planted at Fontainebleau State Park in the fall of 2009.

Fontainebleau State Park, located in St. Tammany Parish, lost approximately 90 percent of its trees due to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Our Lady of Mercy students recently planted bald cypress and long-leaf pine seeds in efforts to help replenish those species at Fontainebleau State Park.

The Coastal Roots Program began in 2001 as an education outreach project for the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. In 2006, the Coastal Roots Program was transitioned into the LSU Department of Educational Theory, Policy, & Practice and the LSU Center for Plant, Environmental, and Soil Sciences.



Our Lady of Mercy seventh grade students Billy Reeves, Branden Coniglio, and Nic Cordaro plant seeds for bald cypress and long-leaf pines in the cells where they will grow until the restoration planting trip in the fall of 2009.

Westdale becomes Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

BY CHERYL SINGER

Westdale Heights Academic Magnet is a public elementary school that has developed programs to address the needs of the whole child. We are rated as a state four-star school and continue to show growth each year.

We were chosen last fall as one of 320 schools nationwide to



the greater Baton Rouge area that have been honored in the last 25 years. Children and parents participated in the "Body Walk."

Next year a 50th year celebration will be held at the school and we're calling all alumni of Westdale Elementary to come back and be a part of this celebration.

Sts. Leo-Seten celebrates 50 years

BY MITZI DUHON

Sts. Leo-Seton Catholic School located in Lafayette, La., is celebrating 50 years of family tradition.

The Grey Nuns of the Cross opened the doors of the school on Aug. 31, 1959.

The 2009-2010 school year will be focused on celebrating the past, present and future.

year-long celebration, the school is actively pursuing funds to construct a new junior high building as it prepares for the next 50 years of providing quality Catholic education in the Acadiana area. The year will conclude with a May 1, 2010 Golden Gala and Live/Silent Auction. For more information call