

St. Theresa School in South Tahoe closed

By Kathryn Reed

St. Theresa School has shuttered its doors.

The Catholic K-8 school in South Lake Tahoe that opened in 1960 will not be offering classes in the 2014-15 school year. Also being displaced are preschoolers.

While the rumor of the school's closure has been ongoing for years, it is finally a reality. Principal Anne Filce told *Lake Tahoe News* she was too busy to comment.

The enrollment has been dropping for years, with just more than 50 students this last school year. St. Theresa opened 54 years ago with 120 students. It operated for nine years before closing. Then it reopened in August 1994 with 121 students.

"We are prepared. We can handle it," Lake Tahoe Unified School District Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News* of the influx of students. "If we have to make another class, we can, though schools are fairly full."

It remains to be seen where the St. Theresa students will go. Some families live in Nevada, so Douglas County School District is an option. The nearest Catholic school is in El Dorado Hills.

LTUSD is preparing for an additional 35 students for next school year, which starts Aug. 25. This includes St. T kids and others. This is the second year in a row that LTUSD enrollment is projected to increase.

Tarwater said the bulk of the St. Theresa kids are in grades K-5.

Many of the parochial students have had interaction with LTUSD students either through music, assemblies or outside activities. Most go on to attend South Tahoe High School.

The biggest change will be for the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders who will be at one school of about 800 students. But even for the elementary age, if they transfer into Lake Tahoe Unified, most of those K-5 schools are at about 300 students each.

LTUSD has class size reduction in grades K-3, which means a maximum of 22 kids per teacher. To go over that amount means losing state funding. That is why it's possible depending on where the students land and in what grade more teachers will be needed.

What will become of the St. Theresa's School remains to be seen.