

St. Robert Home & School Association

Minutes for April 21, 2010

Present: Lauren Beckmann, Sara Coffou, Amy Hietpas, Susan Joy, Yvonne Luzney, Dennis Reilly, Wendy Scherwenka, Wendy Wallace, Sally Zale, Pam Mattox, Karen Hunt, Joan Schramka, Lisa Lesjak

Guests: Matt Hietpas, Bill Brousseau, Kim Likness, Maggie Kowalski, Amy Mueller, Sharlene Byrne, Molly Gallagher, Margaret DeMichele

Excused: Kathy Wyatt

I. Reflection

II. President's Report – Sally Zale

- **Volunteer Forms and Event Planning for 10-11:** Sally sent the Volunteer and Event description forms via email last week. Please provide feedback to her as soon as possible. These forms will get put together and sent out to all school families in the Thursday home folders and she would like to distribute them the last week of April. Lisa will take care of mailing the forms and information to new families.
- **Annual Parent Meeting – Staff Recognition:** The Annual Parent Meeting usually held in May will not take place this year. Instead, they will be publishing a written report early this fall that will include the same information that was traditionally reported at the Annual Meeting. In addition, there will be a Fall Parent Forum to further review the report information sometime in September. The Staff Recognition will take place after the All School Mass for the 8th grade class in June.
- **Other issues**
 - Sally has received comments regarding Edline from several parents. It doesn't seem to be used consistently by teachers as some teachers are using it and some are not. In addition, there is a lot of dated information that remains on the pages. Lauren mentioned that the teachers find it cumbersome and complex. Many agreed that parents feel the same way. Lauren said they will be giving Edline one more year before they decide to give it up. They are currently working to standardize the pages to give it a more uniform look. They are also striving to have some consistency across all the grades and classes. By the end of the year they should have it all figured out. Parents are urged to sign up for the communication via e-mail from Edline to alert them to any updates made to the classroom pages for their child. Lauren would like any suggestions for improving how Edline is used, sent to her via e-mail.
 - There is some interest in adding a competitive Chess League. The Chess League would meet once a week after school and would involve off site competitions with other schools/clubs. This could be an enrichment opportunity and will need parent volunteers.

- The parish will not be holding the Annual Plant Sale this year. Sally will talk to Kathy Wyatt to find out if the parish council wants to hand it off to the Home & School Association to run this year. We will need to decide along with Kathy if we should take this on.
- In 2011 Earth Day falls on Good Friday and Green Week would be during Holy Week. As a result, we need to rethink what to do in terms of having a Green Week. Lauren mentioned tying in the theme of Earth Day/Green Week during the Lenten season. The theme of conservation and being good stewards towards the earth could work well during lent. More thought needs to be put around this idea, but it would be agreed that with the success and enthusiasm around Earth Day and Green Week this year it would be a disappointment not to recognize it in 2011.

III. Other Reports

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak:**
 - Recruitment: Lisa passed around her spreadsheet on current enrollment numbers for the 2010-2011 school year for everyone to review. She mentioned that she created a new category called “In the Hopper” which captures the potential commitments that she is currently working on. The good news is that in the next four days there are tours scheduled every day which equals potentially 6 additional kids. Another emphasis is to retain the current families enrolled in the school. She said we should all keep our ears open for anybody that may not be happy with the school and get back to Lisa so she can address any concerns.
 - Development: She is currently heavily involved in the year end push for the Annual Fund. Just when she thinks that nothing more will come in she gets surprised with an unplanned gift. For example, Lisa just recently received a gift from the class of 1937. The current school family participation percentage is at 43%. The total thus far is at \$135,860 compared to \$139,700 at the same time last year, which is not too far off. Lisa has a plan in place to try to get to the goal (\$200K) and she will be working hard to get there.

- **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt:** No report this month. Kathy was not present.

- **Technology Committee Computer Lab Replacement Report– Matt Hietpas**
 Matt Hietpas, Chair of the Technology Committee, gave a report on progress of the committee on the long term plans and costs for a new computer lab. The reason for needing the additional funding is outlined below:
 - The current computers in the lab are over 5 years old and beyond their useful life. There is an immediate need to replace these computers as Bill Brousseau has run out of spare parts to keep the computers running.
 - There is a need for an overall hardware plan for the school. Last year the Archdiocese has set forth a directive that technology should be used as a tool and not taught as a subject. In order to adhere to the 21st Century Literacy Initiative, more money will be needed to establish and maintain technology in the classrooms and Technology Lab.
 - Currently, the Technology Lab is booked all the time. As time goes on, the need for resources in the lab will get more and more stressed. In order to relieve the stress, adding a mobile lab is a logical solution since there is no additional room in the building to add another technology lab.

Currently, Bill Brousau is able to support the equipment and help desk voluntarily however, at some point, they may need to hire someone for technical and hardware support because the job will become too time consuming.

Matt passed out the 3 year hardware acquisition plan outlining the 3 options the Technology Committee is considering for computer hardware platforms. The options include an all Apple Lab, all PC lab (Dell) and an Apple Lab/Dell elsewhere combination. The total cost over 3 years is estimated at approx. \$105K to \$107K. The cost differences of the 3 options was only 2%, so the cost decision on whether to go with Apple or PC was not a big enough difference to rule either platform out. The basic 3 year plan is outlined below:

Year 1:

- Replace existing computers in the computer lab. (26 student computers and 4 supporting laptops which can be checked out by the teachers)
- Add 2 Smartboards and 2 computers to support the Smartboards. Two document cameras, one LCD projector and 3 Web Cameras.

Maximum est. cost: \$49.5K

Year 2:

- Adding 4 additional Smartboards, computers, document cameras and web cameras to support the 3rd grade and Middle School Social Studies and Math.

Maximum est. cost: \$27.5K

Year 3:

- Adding a Mobile Lab. This would consist of a wheeled cart with approx 20 laptops.

Maximum est. cost: \$30K

Dennis asked about leasing. Bill said the committee looked at it a few years ago that and it wasn't cost effective at the time. The computers depreciate very quickly and there is no value in the end. One advantage however is to avoid the large upfront cost.

Sally asked what Lumen Christi's technology budget is? Matt did not know since they didn't ask.

The decision on what platform will be purchased has not been made. At this point the committee wants to know if the Home & School Association would be able to support the plan with the estimated costs before they move forward with the final decision. The committee has done due diligence by researching the options and by gathering information by visiting other schools. They visited Lumen Christi's Apple Lab and were very impressed with how they have integrated and supported this platform in the school. Lumen Christi has 2 mobile carts and the students are responsible for taking care of them. The teachers work with the kids on how to be responsible with the machines and it has worked very well.

There was quite a bit of discussion about the pros and cons of the Apple vs. the PC. Dennis said that H&S needs to decide if we will fund the plan and let the Technology Committee and teachers make the decision on what computers to purchase. All agreed that this was the purpose of this presentation. Dennis said the current status of the Home and School finances, with approx \$91K in reserves, could support this 3 year plan and the Technology Committee can go ahead with purchasing the hardware per the plan when they are ready and a decision has been made. Currently, H&S budgets \$9K for technology. Going forward more money should be budgeted annually

in the technology budget to support new hardware and supporting software beyond the 3 year plan. The new computers should not cost anything for the first 3 years. However, after 3 years more money will be needed for maintenance and replacement of computers. This subject will need to be addressed and an amount will need to be determined for future budgets. A good estimate will probably be \$20 to \$25K per year. Additional money will be needed for teacher development depending on the platform they choose. Lauren said teacher training will be funded some other way.

- **School Advisory Board – Karen Hunt:** The 2010-2011 budget was rolled out to the teachers and there was an emotional response to the proposed raises for teachers. Some teachers were very upset with the proposal for no increase with those above the 80% parity and the bump up for those that are far below the 80%. The SAB did the best it could within the current compensation structure and the budget to try to bring more of the teachers closer to the 80%. As a result of the SAB is trying to find a way to increase the moral of the teachers. The School Advisory Board was looking for ways to improve moral and suggestions are coming back via an e-mail survey. Sara and Sally have been discussing a faculty yearend bonus to express H&S recognition for all their hard work.
- **Emerald Auction – Margaret, Sharlene and Molly:** There is a flyer coming out tomorrow with the final numbers. The auction raised a total of \$147K, which includes the \$20K for the scholarship fund and the money raised in the Raffle. The auction net income was \$117K vs. \$120K last year which was a great outcome considering the additional expenses this year and all the changes. The chairs have heard a lot of buzz that it was fresh and very successful and the evening flowed better than in past years. Very positive comments were made. Lisa and Lauren commented by saying that everyone felt the joy and the positive attitude displayed by the chairs.

Recommendations for next year:

- The chairs recommend that the Raffle take a break for at least a year and maybe rethink it. The Raffle raised \$10, 300 this year and with every year the amount raised decreases. Most of the money was raised that evening and the larger community doesn't really participate. The decision on whether to have the Raffle next year is a discussion that the board should have with Joe O'Neil.
- This year they had the added expense to display of \$600 to rent the table cloths. Next year they should look into buying table cloths and keeping them year after year and just washing them after the auction.
- Create a smaller version of the catalog so people can have a copy to walk around with. The current catalog is too big for carrying around at the Auction. Maybe something the size of the Blue Book would work better.
- Try to solicit sponsorship for different things with more defined levels of recognition. Possibly offer tables at different giving levels and package it together with something special. They have seen a decrease in advertising in the book with a shift of having more advertising at the auction site.
- Purchase new auction software. The current software has been adequate but it is cumbersome and reaching the end of its useful life. There needs to be a better tool for the volunteers who are in key roles in the auction to work together. Currently because of the limitations of the software they work in a very piecemeal way. Margaret has looked at different software. Margaret looked at two software

systems. One that she would highly recommend is called Greater Giving. It is more than single event software. Advantages include having up to 5 people that could simultaneously log in and working on the software at the same time. It can also be used for checkout and reading all the credit cards. This can all be set up through the web page to allow people to give with a credit card online. The annual fund could have a separate page. It could possibly be used for Scrip, or other fundraising events such as the Book Fair as well. The initial purchase price is \$2,595 and with an annual fee of \$795. Margaret will arrange for a presentation if we are interested. There are also options with the credit card processing, online software, services, support and training for additional cost. The website would be secure for credit card payments. There is also the ability to do Action reservations on the St. Roberts website as well as being able to get links to the sponsors on the website. This gives you the ability to have an online auction as well.

We should time the purchase of this new Software by June which could be a lure for new chairs. This year's chairs are very willing to help the new chairs next year. We should all look at the website for Greater Giving and check it out. Sally said we will discuss this at our May meeting and make a decision then.

- Lisa asked about the costs vs. benefits for using the IML units. Renting the IML units cost about \$9,000. They think they made about \$18K using it. In addition, the \$20K raised during the auction for the scholarship fund would never be raised without it. In the future there is some real opportunity to increase underwriting by allowing advertising on the IML units. . Recommend continue using IML. There were a few issues with training but that was because it was new and it should be easier next year. Checkout went more smoothly than ever before.

- **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly:** Dennis passed out the monthly balance sheet and income statement. Not much activity on the balance sheet this month. Most of the contributions to the School Operating Fund have been made. He received some more money in the Due from Parents line item for a total of \$5,533. Dennis did mention he wrote off the \$1,700 as uncollectible from last year's auction. Dennis is working on next year's budget and would like all the VP's to get back to him on any money they haven't spent yet, as well as any different expenses planned for next year. Dennis will assume last year's budget numbers are sufficient if he is not contacted. For the Income Statement this month the main activity of course, was the Auction. The Auction committee just reported on those numbers. The expenses were higher than last year for the most part, which was expected. Nothing has changed for the discretionary funds since last month. Lauren will check on the Art Supplies because she knows money has been spent. Dennis mentioned using Quick books for the credit card processing which would be less than what the Greater Giving would charge (which was presented by the Auction committee), however the Greater Giving format can be linked directly to the Auction Software, making reporting a lot easier and streamlined. Board Members agreed that it would be worth looking into both options to see which one would be the best solution.
- **Volunteers – Susan Joy:** There will be one last opportunity for those people that didn't fulfill their volunteer commitments to do so by participating in the CRAP initiative. This is an activity that will take place on June 14th & 15th and July 12th. This event includes cleaning, cataloging, organizing and restocking several rooms and storage areas in the building. We will need many volunteers for this big job.

- **Fundraising– Pam:** Barb Monnat is organizing two dining fundraisers in May for Bella's Fat Cat and Culvers. Pam thinks these would be good to have on a quarterly basis because they are relatively easy, raise funds in one day and are popular. This should be included in painless fundraising.

IV. Wrap –Up Events

- **Grandparents Reception (March 25th) – Wendy S.:** The Grandparents Reception went very well with over 150 people attending. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. Will look into changing the format for the reception next year by possibly setting up some smaller tables and spreading them out since there were such long lines at the food tables.
- **Battle of the Books – Wendy W.:** The last Invitational took place tonight and there were no major winners from St. Robert. Overall, the events went well and the children enjoyed it. Margaret Wittkowski was the chair this year and said it should be continued next year. St. Robert had the only co-ed team.

V. Ongoing Events

- **Green Week (April 19th-23rd) – Wendy W.:** Amy Mueller, Amy met with Teachers and they decided to have a Green Rally called the Green Thumb Challenge. The project they picked was to have the kids make their own pots out of newspaper. They made 600 pots with the kids. They followed an entire procedure. Instructions on how to make the pots. Each class will have approx 28 plants to plant in their pots and each class will have a different type of plant. They have purchased a booth at the fair and they plan on selling the plants. They are currently under budget with a budget of \$500 (\$200), well under. They are decomposable pots and you can take them home and plant them. Will take pictures and videos of the kids doing. Green in Action Grant of \$5K. They will submit something to try to get this grant and submit it by the end of April. The other activity was to give each student a mission to find a rock to symbolize themselves in the world. The students should choose the word and there will be an offering of the rocks at church. Look for a container and designate a place in school to display them. The teachers are talking to the kids about it. The faculty is doing a great job and very supportive. Lauren talked to the parish landscaper; Maybe use the money toward a landscaping project on the east side of the gym. Create a hard scape. Maybe put a green house on the property if we win the grant what about a greenhouse and creating the hard scape would be the first step. This could be a wonderful learning too. Education and formation committee was discussing getting a link with a sustainable gardener, growing power and having a green house would be a great part of them. UW Arboretum, they have training for teachers. Earth Partnership. Also mentioned an article in the Cue section to teach children through gardening. Amy created a great power point to teach kids about recycling at another level and showing the cycle and connecting it to the earth. Be aware of God's world and our place in it. It was really a pleasure to spend time with the kids and see how well they worked together and helped each other. This will continue for several more weeks until the fair. Will try to keep interest and she will create buzz and keep the momentum going. Earth Day is on

Good Friday and we haven't decided what will happen next year. Use the funds from the fair.

I. Upcoming Events

- **Dramatic Reading (April 24th) – Wendy W.** Jenny Fox is organizing this event at Boswell Books again. The format will be the same as last time.
- **Middle School Showcase (May 6th -8th) – Wendy W.:** This is really going well. The costumes and are great and it is on schedule. Sally asked what the response was to the \$25 fee that was charged this year. Wendy said that she hadn't heard anything about it and wasn't sure how it or if it was collected. Dennis said he hasn't received any checks yet for the fee. Wendy will check with the committee to see if they have collected anything.
- **Trivia Night (May 15th) – Wendy S.** The committee running this event is still trying to decide if they will quit or continue. Some people are willing to rotate out so they can take some new people in. The next Trivia Night will be May 15th and the flyer should be coming out soon. They should have a decision on what they will do after this last event of the year.

Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, May 19th 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Luzney
Secretary