

**Home & School Association Meeting  
December 20, 2011**

**Present:**

Wendy Wallace, Kathy Wyatt, Zular Rodriguez, Dennis Reilly, Merridith Frediani, Lauren Beckmann, Lisa Lesjak, Jessica Carlson, Michelle Frazier, Jane Boland and Barbara Henderson

**Guest:**

Laura Nickolich

**Excused:**

Karen Hunt, Susan Joy, Joan Schramka, Mary Poorman, and Yvonne Lunzey

**I. Reflection -- Wendy Wallace**

Wendy opened the meeting with a beautiful Advent prayer.

**II. President's Report – Wendy Wallace**

Wendy passed out the Annual Operating Guidelines and asked all Home and School Board members to review them. There was one revision that was approved.

The Board will be presenting flowers to the music teachers at the Christmas Concert tomorrow. Yvonne will purchase the flowers.

We had a discussion of Christmas bonuses, including whether bonuses should be cash or Scrip cards. It was decided that cash was preferred for bonuses.

Wendy reported that there was an Emerald Auction kick-off meeting in early December. At the meeting it was decided that we will go with the same IML that we used last year. Some people are still voicing concern about the new auction location at the Italian Community Center. For example, there is some sadness from parents that Middle Schoolers will not be serving at the auction. It was agreed, however, that this is a tradition that we will have to say goodbye to. We might need help with check-out from alumni, though. Wendy assures us however, that most of our auction traditions will follow us to our new location. If Board members hear further concerns from auction attendees, please have them share their feedback with Wendy. However, the message needs to be

clear that this move was a requirement and we had no choice but to move the location of the Auction.

Jane Boland reported that we have \$850 of underwriting so far. Lisa wants the auction invitations to go out sooner than they did last year. She thinks that some people may be excited to learn of the new venue. It was agreed that the invitations will be sent out four weeks before the auction (by February 11<sup>th</sup>).

At the Auction meeting Victor Torres mentioned that we will be doing the scholarship fund again as our special “ask” during the dinner. We discussed that in the future, we could consider different specific needs to fund in this way, like technology improvements, but according to Lisa and Lauren, right now scholarship funds remains our greatest need. Although there has been a successful appeal for scholarship funds at the last two Auctions, the scholarship fund is not part of Home & School. It is a separate fund, similar to the annual fund. There are several different and segregated scholarship funds that have been set up over the years and they are at Baird. Every May we receive an estimate of the interest on the funds so we can pre-plan what we can give in scholarships each year. The scholarship appeal at the Auction has been funding a need beyond what the restricted scholarship funds at Baird have been able to provide. The scholarship process is a third-party process that goes through PSAS, which makes the decisions regarding scholarship recipients. Lauren explained that we closely follow the PSAS’s recommendation, although once in a while we will deviate from the recommendation if a family has a special need. A concern came up last year when our need exceeded the dollar amount available in grants. Elizabeth Cleveland has suggested a few people to help make the determination of how to distribute the scholarship money. It is important that we have people helping make these decisions who are unfamiliar with the families at St. Robert School. Lisa reported that another suggested change regarding scholarship funds is to consolidate all of the money into one fund. Not everyone is in favor of this because it may diminish the donor’s legacy.

### III. Principal’s Report – Lauren Beckmann

Lauren reported that the School Advisory Board is currently dealing with next year’s budget. The SAB spent a lot of time discussing health insurance, as they were told that there would possibly be a fifteen percent increase in health insurance. That increase, on top of what we are spending this year, would bring the school’s total cost of health insurance to \$300,000 a year.

Assuming a gift of \$137,000 from Home and School, after tuition is accounted for, there will be a shortfall next year of just over \$10,000 that needs

to be overcome. This will be a major challenge. A member of the SAB has recently gone to an information session at the Archdiocese to learn more about health insurance options.

Lauren said that the SAB is looking at several tuition formulas, including a five percent tuition increase for next year. The SAB is currently studying other area parishes to see what they are doing to determine if we are on the right track. Some people think we should eliminate the sibling discount, as this would save a lot of money (over \$18,000 a year). There are mixed feelings on non-parishioner tuition. St. Monica's and Holy Family are moving toward the same price for parishioners and non-parishioners. Lauren feels that it would be risky to raise non-parishioner tuition and that this would be moving in the wrong direction. The SAB is continuing to look at merit-based salaries. According to Lauren, Shorewood School District adopted a new salary scale in 2010, which is making it more likely that we may never catch Shorewood on pay. We continue to look for ways to pay our teachers and staff fairly and justly in a way that makes sense monetarily.

Wendy inquired if next year there might be a way to increase H&S funding to the school. We will explore this further during the budget process for the 2012-2013 school year.

#### **IV. Other Reports**

##### **A. Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak**

Lisa reported that the School Open House is scheduled for Sunday January 29. Any family that refers another family to the Open House will get an out of uniform pass.

The Annual Fund has just surpassed the \$100,000 pledge mark. According to Lisa, this is slightly ahead of last year. Bill Schlise and Susan Callahan are on the Development Committee and have been very helpful in the annual fund effort.

Regarding enrollment, Lisa said that she has enrolled a new student to start after Christmas, and may have another one. She believes that we will have around 360 students enrolled next year.

##### **B. Treasurer – Merridith Frediani**

Merridith reported that to date our net loss is -\$21,660. Recent income includes the Alterra Coffee Sale at \$1,017; Breakfast with Santa at \$683; and the Magazine Drive at \$6,714.

We have now broken even on the Calendar Raffle -- 815 calendars have been sold to date.

Our investment income for the year is \$659.

We still need to collect a check from Oakcrest for Dining Out For Dollars.

### **C. Volunteers**

Laura Nickolich visited our meeting and suggested that we add lunch room volunteers to the volunteer lists. Laura has seen a real need for volunteers to assist the younger children (K4 through 1) at lunch. She is organizing volunteers in the lunch room on an informal basis right now. Laura will be willing to formally organize this effort next year, and it was agreed that she will be provided with designated volunteers. Laura will put something in Family Matters asking for volunteers to help her get through this year.

Lisa reported that five parents have not had SEE certification (Safe Environment Education) and are scheduled to work with children. According to Lauren, they cannot do the event without the required certification.

Susan Joy sent a bill to seven families for their volunteer buy-out that is over due.

### **D. Event Wrap-up, Upcoming (And On-going Events)**

Grade level parties will wrap up soon. Zular will get the dates for the remaining families after the new year. There will not be an Eighth grade party because of the Eighth Grade graduation reception.

The Dramatic Reading went very well -- Jennie Fox did an amazing job on this event once again.

The Scholastic book fair is off to a good start. Boswell books will be helping us on this. We need to consider whether we want to receive ten percent of the book fair sales or free books. There also will be a pre-fair ordering opportunity.

Zular reported that Breakfast with Santa went well and stayed within budget. The attendance was good. All of the scheduled volunteers showed up, and the same number of volunteers will be needed next year. Jessica said that the change to a buffet worked out very well for the children.

Ann Schueller told Zular that she loved working the Alterra coffee sale. Michelle thought that the sale might be more profitable if it was held earlier in time for Christmas gift-giving.

The Seventh Grade Service project was a big success. They raised \$528 to help send a veteran on a Honor Flight. Before the flight a representative from the Honor Flight network came in and talked to the class.

We need adult supervision for middle school servers who help with the Senior Dinner before Christmas. This year we had too many middle school volunteers and not enough parent supervisors. We will need to let the middle school service coordinators know that they need to solicit parents for this task.

The Adopt A Family project was a great success. Jennie Fox will gather the presents and donate them Thursday night

Jessica is tentatively planning the Mother Son Bowling for Sunday February 19. It may be held at UWM, as this is a close and inexpensive venue. It would cost only \$300 for whole thing. UWM also has a big room and we could bring our own food. Landmark Lanes is another good option. Betsy Wyatt is having someone from her office make the t-shirts.

Trivia night is in the planning stages and is going along well. The trivia team is hoping to bring in more families of younger students.

This year World of Work will be more of a career day. It will take place the week of January 26.

Catholic Schools week is looking good. The Pancake Breakfast is well organized. The teacher-staff appreciation lunch is scheduled for February 3. The Father Daughter Dance is scheduled for February 11.

#### **E. Effortless Fundraising – Jane Boland**

A \$146.90 gift card from Office Depot just arrived from Effortless Fundraising.

**IV. Next Meeting Wednesday January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 6:30pm-9:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Henderson, Home and School Board Co-Secretary  
January 10, 2012