

# Home & School Association Meeting Minutes

## February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Present:** Cindy Bacskai, Lauren Beckmann, Sara Coffou, Susan Joy, Lisa Lesjak, Yvonne Luzney, Pam Mattox, Karen Hunt, Dennis Reilly, Wendy Scherwenka, Joan Schramka, Wendy Wallace, Kathy Wyatt

**Guests:** Jennie Fox

**Excused:** Amy Hietpas

### I. Reflection

### II. Emerald Auction Chair Report– Jennie Fox

- The Auction was able to obtain a corporate sponsor; Baird Corporation which will be featured on the Emerald Auction banner being displayed in front of the school.
- Northwestern Mutual is again sponsoring the IML units and costs.
- Underwriting is at a total of \$28,000 right now – a combination of corporate and individual underwriting is exceeding goal.
- The Hayes family is underwriting the photo booth and photographer that will be featured at the Auction. People can pay \$20 for a photo taken at the Auction that can be paid for on the IML.
- The acquisition committee has obtained over \$70,000 worth of donations/items so far. There have been so many great donations that they have had to shift many items out of the live auction.
- Invitations have been printed and are ready to go. They are going out a little later this year. Lisa provides the mailing list of last year's attendees. Jennie needs to obtain this from her. We need to tap into the outside community to try to bring others to the Auction besides the school families. One thought was opening up the invitations for those that attend Trivia Night.
- Lauren mentioned that set up is on Ash Wednesday (March 9<sup>th</sup>) this year and the celebration atmosphere that usually takes place needs to be toned down because of the day.
- The online catalog will be coming out at the end of the month and we will need to increase awareness of where it is on the website since catalogs are only going out to those that requested it in advance. Lisa will create an e-mail blast and send it out when it goes online.
- Beer is being donated by K4 parents and there will be a Happy Hour featured this year with incentive raffles and drink specials to try to draw people to the Auction earlier.

### III. President's Report – Sara Coffou

- **Raffle Update:** Sara presented the new colossal raffle approach to this year's Fair Chairs and Co-Chairs and they were comfortable with the new approach. Elizabeth Cleveland recommended going to the Parish Council to present the idea, gain buy-in and involvement. The goal would be to make a minimum of \$20,000 in revenue with proceeds being split 50/50 between the parish and the school. Sara and Pam are creating a rough draft of the timeline which includes starting to market the raffle at the end of March. A good marketing idea would be to e-mail the Alumni with information on the raffle.
- **Event Planning for 2011-2012:** Next month we will be reviewing and evaluating all Home & School events. Lately Sara has been having trouble getting feedback forms filled out so VP's please try to get that information even if it means calling the chairs up and filling out the form by phone.
- **8<sup>th</sup> grade fundraising 2011-2012:** Angie Turner has been working to put together guidelines for 8<sup>th</sup> grade fundraising for following years to follow. They will be trying to recruit chairs around April. Part of the guidelines include a formal schedule to follow based on what they have done in the past. Four (4) fundraisers are being put forward, which include the Boo Bash, Dance and Spaghetti Dinner and another fundraiser of their choice. Dennis said the 3 major fundraisers contribute 75% of the income. Others thought that they should have more of a choice and be able to pick 2 fundraisers. There was some discussion back and forth on freedom to choose. Lauren thought it would be a good idea to provide some structure by setting goals but she felt strongly that this should be a student lead decision on what they ultimately do in terms of fundraising activities. This is community building and should be part of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade experience. A meeting will be held early this spring to get parents together that would like to be involved to start planning.

- **Middle School Dance:** Pam gave a report out from Debbie Schwartz who said the dance was well attended by our own school but not so much from the other Catholic grade schools. They felt that they need to have the dance closer to the beginning of the school year to get a better turnout as in February they are competing with the sporting events for attendance. Otherwise the DJ was great and played “clean” versions of popular songs and only cost \$200. They were able to collect \$685 in proceeds from admissions and concessions.

#### IV. **Principal’s Report – Lauren Beckmann**

- The Iowa Test of Basic Skills will be administered the week of Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. This is a high stakes test for the school and serves as a school report card. In past years there have been many absences during the test time and it is an administrative inconvenience for teachers to have to sit with the students to make the test up. She would like to communicate the need to not make any Doctor/Dentist appointments that will take kids out of school during that week. She asked the board what their thoughts were on how to convey the seriousness of the tests and the need for all students to attend school for everyday of the test. Everyone thought a letter to the parents in these grades would be appropriate.
- This year’s Book Fair was controversial among the teachers and staff. The Scholastic Book Fair was seen as very commercial, consumer driven and didn’t promote good literature. Having the book fair as a school event seemed like an endorsement of these values and it is the schools responsibility to promote high quality literature. The faculty was split because they didn’t want to have outright censorship but also, didn’t also to endorse the low quality reading materials that were being offered as a fundraiser. Others thought that it is the parents’ decision to help make these choices for the children. What would it take to have an old style book fair that has materials the faculty could pick as good quality literature? There was a lot of discussion about possibly asking Boswell Books to hold a book fair where they could suggest and select the books with input from parents and the faculty. Margaret DeMichelle has worked with Boseell before and has contacts with the owner. Sara will discuss the Boswell Book Fair opportunity for next year with Margaret.

#### V. **Other Reports**

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak**
  - For recruitment Lisa passed around a chart that compared various statistics about the families that showed up for the Open House compared to last year. This was very similar to the attendance last year and she considered the open house a success. Registrations keep coming in and the enrollment process is working very well. Currently they are working on making sure all the paperwork is complete for all registrations.
  - She also passed around a copy of advertising that was purchase in Shorewood Today to promote St. Robert School. The Marketing Committee decided to purchase the advertisement because we are part of the community and felt that our presence was missing as all the public school had a presence in the magazine. They thought it was good use of the \$275 advertising cost and a good way to market ourselves.
  - The Annual Fund is \$12K ahead of where it was last year at this time! So far \$133,993 has been pledged and \$114,118 cash received. The next step for the development committee is a targeted push to previous Father Hank donors.
  - Scholarship funding at the Auction came up as a possible way to raise the \$16,500 of unfunded family need this year. The SAB is trying to find ways to come up with this money. Lisa mentioned the hope of getting to the annual fund goal and possibly surpassing in an effort to come up with the needed money.
- **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt:** Kathy said they would like someone from H&S to come to the parish council meeting to report on H&S activities and perhaps the raffle. As mentioned above Sara will be at the next Parish Council meeting. They are currently working on job descriptions for the parish staff as well as working on finding better ways to communicate with the parishioners and leadership. Another targeted area of improvement will with Time & Talent. Right now there is no real structure to it and the direction needs to come from the Parish Council. A parishioner, who is consultant from Price-Waterhouse, is working with the Parish to help bring transparency and simplicity to the parish finances.

- **School Advisory Board – Karen Hunt:**
  - One big expense coming up for the school and parish is the updating the schools fire alarm system. The parish and school will be splitting this expense.
  - Another issue of concern is the current budget deficit. The deficit was running at approx \$36K but is now up to \$49K.
  - They are currently drafting the Epi-Pen policy for the school. The policy has to be put into effect because of new regulations put forth by the State of Wisconsin. All teachers and staff are required to take a course in how to administer the epi-pen and must be certified. In addition all children who need an epi-pen will now be required to wear the epi-pen at all times at school.
  
- **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly:**

Dennis distributed the balance sheet for February. He noted that he will be pointing out the things that have changed from last month. No big changes on discretionary funds this month. On the Income Statement there is more revenue coming in now from the Auction, most of which is from underwriting. Incremental revenue has come in for the magazine drive, effortless fundraising and the uniform resale. In addition, the numbers are final for the pancake breakfast (net income: \$730) which has come close to what was budgeted. So far this month next income has increased by approx \$16K. Expenses for the Catholic Schools Week and the Teacher Appreciation Lunch have been under budget however they think that not all expenses are in yet.
  
- **Volunteers – Susan Joy:** She just obtained one more buy out fee this last month and has sent out invoices to parents that didn't show up for the Rummage Sale volunteer commitment and have not contacted her to find a replacement volunteer opportunity. She is getting close to taking care of everyone in terms of their volunteer obligations or the buyout payment.

## VI. Wrap-Up Events

- **Pancake Breakfast – Amy:** The event was well attended and they sold 500 tickets this year but are curious to know how many tickets were given away vs. purchased. The Stelters said they would chair the Pancake Breakfast next year but feel that we should raise the price and are proposing that we increase the price by a \$1 for a total cost of \$6. They had enough volunteers.
  
- **Book Fair – Pam:** The book fair made a total profit of \$1200.44 and earned a Scholastic credit of \$365. \$200 worth of books was purchased for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom and the library based on promotions offered by Scholastic. Vendor for this event continues to be an issue as Usborne last year didn't have a wide variety of books, especially for the older students and Scholastic has more of a commercial focus and less educational. The location of the book fair was not ideal because the books had to be moved 3 times from Reilly Hall to the gym stage to the gym floor. For next year they would like to consider possibly using the library as a selling venue and preview area. Volunteers were an issue as most people were not available on the weekdays during the day and were only available on the weekends. We will need to make sure we update the volunteer matrix to include the fact that we need some weekday daytime hours.
  
- **Catholic Schools Week – Cindy :** The Love Drop Assembly went really well and the students were all interested in the family they were helping. The family had 3 children, 2 with severe Autism. They wanted to get a service dog and iPads with the money that was donated through the Love Drop. Our school was able to donate \$925 from the collections during Catholic Schools week. The chairs Holly and Jen didn't think they needed as many volunteers as they were assigned. Two (2) additional volunteers would be ideal. They also didn't think the hospitality was needed after Mass on that Friday as it wasn't well attended. Comments from the students were that it was the best Catholic Schools Week ever. Lisa commented that the atmosphere was fun and festive and there was a positive vibe. The kids seem to really love the teachers surprise as well.
  
- **Teacher Appreciation Luncheon – Amy:** Per Sara, Amy didn't have input yet from Molly. Lauren mentioned that there was great appreciation that they could all sit together and didn't have to rush back to class right away. It was nice to have the afternoon off. The time was good and the food was enjoyed by all.

- **Class Parties – Wendy S:** One last party needs to take place and that is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade party hosted by the O'Neil's. Right now the date looks to be out to the April timeframe due to the Emerald Auction and Spring Break. The question was whether they needed to have an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class party at this point since it is so close to graduation and all the festivities that go with that. Wendy will get feedback from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents.
- **Prospective Family Coffee Reception (Feb. 11) - Amy/Yvonne-Jeanette Corbett** said all the usual people were at this reception again and she didn't know if any prospective families showed up. She suggested that we don't do this coffee reception and also think about not doing the new family reception because of the low turn out for these events. The coffee receptions that are well attended are the Welcome Back Coffee and the Last Mass for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the end of the year.

## VII. Ongoing Committees/Events

- **Middle School Showcase – Cindy:** The Music Man will be the musical this year. The audition and practice schedules have already been posted and information has been communicated. Lauren had a concern about when the auditions were scheduled to occur. It was confirmed that the auditions will be happening during the Iowa Basics Testing. Lauren said that having the auditions during this time may be distracting. We will consider this when scheduling next year's activities, it is too late to move anything now.
- **Art for Youth Program-Cindy:** There are 5 presentations per year which come to approximately one per month. The current volunteers have been presenting pieces, doing follow on activities and it seems to be going very well. Cindy created a survey and sent it out to all the teachers to find out about the program. The feedback has been positive as a whole. Many of the classes are right on track to finish all five of their presentations. Some classes will be having some of these presentations bunched together. Some recommendations she received was to have a field trip to the Art Museum. Lauren and others mentioned that the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades have field trips to the Art Museum as part the Docent Program. Another suggestion was to maybe find some kid friendly art pieces for the kindergarteners since many times the art pieces and explanations are over their heads.
- **Spirit Wear-Amy:** Sally is organizing a spring spirit wear sale and wanted feedback for the timing of the sale. The thought was to have it after spring break.

## VIII. Upcoming Events

- **Talent/Variety Show (February 17th) – Cindy:** The event is progressing very well and there are 20 acts that have been selected to perform. The selection process was documented and decisions were made by a cumulative score and grade level, so all grade levels were represented. Lisa was part of the judging panel and thought it was a good selection process. The auditions took 6 hours. The show will be 1.5 hours. The acts that were not selected for the show will be able to perform during lunch periods. Lauren mentioned that this show is something that the kids love and it is something that is student driven and it is well worth keeping this type of event going.
- **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Fundraising (Feb. 27) – Spaghetti Dinner – Pam:** They are in good shape for the Pasta Dinner. The fliers are out and people are asking about it. Lisa will do an e-mail blast with the flier. "They will be serving wine for no extra charge but will encourage donations. The wine will be donated." Dennis said they should look at possibly having a pay at the door option as they have not had many reservations to date.
- **Rice Bowl (March 9th) – Cindy:** The chairs are in place for this event and everything is being organized.
- **Green Week (April 11th-15th) – Cindy:** The Muellers are on board again as chairs this year. They would like to do the Green Thumb challenge again which is an online program. They are also planning to have the school wide plant sale again at the St. Robert Fair. If the school garden

becomes a reality we will need to have some kind of tie in the School Garden as well. They will be at the March Home & School meeting to present their plans for Green Week.

- **Inside the World of Work-Cindy:** This year they are planning to have a “career day” with some limited choices for the younger grades. Next year they hope to have a bigger event that would include every grade and have a wider variety of speakers. After this event the chairs will create a list of recommendations for next year. Right now they think they could possibly use 20 volunteers.

**Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> 6:30-9:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Yvonne Luzney  
Secretary