

# **St. Robert Home & School Association**

## **Minutes for January 20, 2010**

**Present:** Lauren Beckmann, Sara Coffou , Amy Hietpas, Susan Joy, Lisa Lesjak, Yvonne Luzney, Dennis Reilly, Joan Schramka, Wendy Scherwenka, Wendy Wallace, Kathy Wyatt, Sally Zale

**Excused:** Pam Mattox, Karen Hunt

**Guests:** Mary Becker, Mary Beth Keane, Claudia Mitchell, Joe O'Neill, Carol Walsh

### **I. Reflection**

### **II. President's Report – Sally Zale**

Sally asked if it was possible to get Family Matters out on the website by Thursday afternoon as it has in the past. Lauren said she will make an effort to get it out by Thursday afternoon.

Emerald Auction Chairs for 2011: The push needs to be started now for next year's auction chairs. Sally will put something in Family Matters mentioning the need for chairs. In addition, we should also try to recruit people that we think might be interested. Sometimes a personal invitation is all that is needed. This year's chairs used a team approach that they found to work very well. The current chairs said they would be a resource for next year's chairs.

### **III. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann**

- Lauren recently had a chance to chair an accreditation team at another school. It was a wonderful learning experience and she found the entire process to be a very clinical standardized process. From this experience she said that our success is entirely in our hands and our school will need to be well prepared. This year is our self study year and next year we will go through the accreditation process.
- Lauren mentioned that Jean Brill is currently in the hospital and asked that we keep her in our prayers.
- A number of new families started before and after the holidays. Some of the families have had questions about the host family process. Some feedback was that the host family only contacted them once and then they never heard from them again. It was suggested that it would be nice for the host families to have checklist of suggested times/events throughout the year that they could make contact with the new family. Amy Hietpas will spearhead getting the checklist together. Some possible suggestions for this year would be for the host family to invite their new family to the Pancake Breakfast, or invite them to sit at their table for the Emerald Auction. Another suggestion is to organize a table of new families for the Emerald Auction and/or solicit Table Captains to host new families as well.
- The faculty leadership team on health has organized a counselor debriefing after the Milton Creagh presentation. In light of the Milton Creagh presentation the middle school teachers have also discussed the subject of

Middle School servers at the Emerald Auction. Every year the students come back to school with stories about parents that they had seen drinking too much at the Auction. They question if this is the proper message we are sending after having the lecture by Milton Creagh. The members of the board understood the paradox but did not have a solution for replacing the middle school servers. It was mentioned that the improper behavior is only exhibited by 1 or 2 auction goers. Sally will mention something in Family Matters before the Auction about drinking responsibly and remembering that young people are watching.

- Laurin Dodge has requested that the Talent Show be held every other year. This should be considered when planning next year's calendar.
- The parish council would like to do a monthly *Pack the Mass* challenge around different themes each month from February through May. At this time there is hospitality every Sunday after the 8:30am Mass organized by Mary Linn. The thought was to spread the "*Pack the Mass*" out to other Mass times and ending with hospitality. Mary Linn said she would be willing to help out but more help is needed with organizing the after Mass hospitalities. It was suggested that the hospitality duties be divided up between different committees with the Home & School Coffee Reception committee possibly taking one of the months. Sally will try to pull together the chairs of the service committees together to help figure out what committees will take what months and what themes will be promoted. One idea was to promote the Middle School Showcase "Honk" during one of the hospitalities.
- Lauren passed around a list of the library book acquisitions from the H&S discretionary funds grant for approx. \$2,500. Vicky Bennett was able to purchase several non-fiction books which will be a nice enhancement to the curriculum.
- Lauren is currently actively engaged in the Parish and School budgeting process for 2011.

#### IV. Other Reports

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak:** Lisa has been participating in the 2011 budgeting process for both the parish and the school. Serious discussions have been taking place around faculty pay and the fact that there has been a freeze for over a year and what will it take to get the salary back on track to the 80% parity with the public schools.

The school welcomed 3 new students in January. From December there are currently 2 new first graders, 1 new K5 student and 1 new K4 student. The information about the Open House at the end of January will be published in Family Matters. The *Ask Us Why* signs have all been distributed and placed in yards across the communities. Volunteers are needed to help out as tour guides, greeters and with set-up and clean-up for the Open House. Current parents should plan to attend the open house. Registration has started and Lisa is feeling positive about the goal of obtaining enough new students to justify having two K4 classes next year. For the Annual Fund, Lisa has received pledges in December totaling \$60K. So far this year, \$117,285 has been pledged and \$96,000 has been received. This is slightly under what it was last year, but, Lisa is not discouraged and everything seems to be on track toward our goal of \$200K. Gifts have ranged from \$10 to \$5,650 and she is grateful for every gift of every size. There is typically a quiet time

now leading up to the Emerald Auction, then after the Auction, donations typically pick up again in April.

- **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt:** The parish is not as financially bad off as what was expected and they didn't have to dip into the capital reserves last month. Deb Scheid and the parish council need help in marketing the Parish. The goal is to get more people to come to Mass. They are currently working with the Marketing Committee's Karen Parr to come up with a cohesive brand image between the Parish and the School. The overall feeling is that people have felt disconnected from the Parish community and they need to get people involved to feel more of a connection. Lauren Beckmann has mentioned that it might be a good idea to hire a consulting firm (ISPD) to help develop ideas for building the parish from the ground up. This is not something that can be done on our own and we could benefit from some outside help to develop and execute a plan for rebuilding the parish community.

Kathy will be adding a thank you to Family Matters in the next issue and informing school families that the Scrip program has raised nearly \$4000 and has had participation of approximately 125 families, in just 3 1/2 months. Kathy continues to try to get the word out about Scrip and will have a table at the Open House at during the Pancake Breakfast.

- **School Advisory Board – Karen Hunt:** (Karen was not able to attend this month's Advisory Board meeting but she submitted an update via e-mail below)

Budget process is underway. It is a delicate balancing act of meeting expectations, needs and goals for both parents and staff. Mrs. Beckmann was not present due to accreditation commitments so major discussion was postponed.

**Policy:** Tuition refund policy was read for the second time and approved. It reads as follows:

#### STUDENT WITHDRAWAL AND TUITION REFUND POLICY

Because the schools investment in staffing and instructional resources is determined by enrollment commitments, families who withdraw their child(ren) from St Robert school after registration will be held to the following financial obligations:

New and current students, who withdraw their registration before July 1, will be not responsible for tuition for the upcoming school year. Students withdrawing after July 1, but prior to the first day of school will be released from their tuition commitment beyond the first quarter. Students withdrawing before November 1<sup>st</sup> will be released from their tuition commitment beyond first semester. Students withdrawing after November 1<sup>st</sup> will be responsible for tuition for the full school year. Fees paid at the time of registration will not be reimbursed. Request for refund and/or release from tuition agreement must be accompanied by a dated, written notification of intent to leave school.

Draft documents for Standard 5 of the accreditation process will be submitted by February's meeting.

*Education & Formation:* In order to improve the lunch program, the school is using the surplus money from paid school lunches (which by law must be spent on improvements to the lunch program) to purchase a child-size food bar and a different freezer. The food bar will allow smaller children to see and choose what they want to eat. The freezer will enable the school to store, and therefore, serve, more frozen

foods, instead of canned. All grade levels are currently below the mandated minutes for the Visual Arts and we are trying to develop ways to rectify this.

*Marketing & Recruitment:* St. Robert needs to do a better job of marketing our school to our own upper elementary students before they enter the middle school grades to ensure that we retain more of them.

It was suggested that a thank you video email be produced and disseminated to those that contributed to the Annual Fund. Our kids, saying thank you.

Beer, if pursued, will be marketed through parish and not through the school.

- **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly:** Dennis distributed the January Balance Sheet and Income Statement and highlighted some of the activity this month. Bills are starting to come in for the Emerald Auction and payments are being made. The Alterra Coffee sale seems to be on track with about ½ of the money raised so far and one more sale pending in the spring. Dennis also went through the discretionary funds summary and noted that a check had been sent to pay for our portion of the Milton Creagh presentation for \$750. Lauren mentioned that she needed a check for the Peace Learning Center Project for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and will send an e-mail to Dennis with the information. Open projects still show the Library Book Additions being open however; there was some question whether we have received the invoice. Lauren will get back to Dennis with that information as well.
- **Volunteers – Susan Joy:** Susan is currently working with 3 new families to assign them to volunteer opportunities with the Emerald Auction, Grandparents Reception and possibly the Pancake Breakfast. Susan is working with Dennis to review the buyout fees for this year. There are currently 12 families that are going to paying the volunteer buyout fee. Billing for this will be done through the school office. If fees are not paid then report cards/grades will be withheld. Susan has checked all the names and has submitted the names to Karen Raap.

## V. Wrap –Up Events

- **Adopt a Family – Joan:** All items were delivered on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>. All the contributing families were very generous and fulfilled wish lists for 10 families. Some families had some unusually large wishes that were a bit of a strain on some of the contributing families. Maybe next year if the wishes are expensive, it would be nice if some families could be grouped together to contribute.
- **Magazine Drive –Joe O’Neill:** The last push for the magazine drive in December brought the total amount of sales from \$17,000 to \$21,000, this is compared to about 34-35K in sales from last year. Joe is optimistic and thinks that the final sales amount will be approx \$24-25K. This year Brewer Day was eliminated, however QSP is looking at working with the Brewers to add an educational element for the future. Joe is also thinking about promoting subscriptions by setting up a table under the awnings in spring after Mass.

## VI. Upcoming Events

- **Mother/Son Bowling (Jan.23<sup>rd</sup>) – Wendy S (Sally).** Merridith Frediani and Mary Poorman are currently organizing this event and it is on track. So far only 38 people were signed up this year vs. 80 people last year. Thoughts on why the participation is lower this year might be because it’s a Saturday event when there are many sporting events that could be conflicting. Maybe try a Sunday, next time. Also,

having the event in January might be too soon after the holidays? However this was the held at the same time last year. It was suggested that the event chairs ask for some feedback on why the participation was lower this year.

- **Pancake Breakfast (Jan. 3<sup>1st</sup>) – Amy** This event is moving along and is on track. The chairs mentioned that the number of volunteers is lower this year and they could use some more volunteers. This needs to be reviewed for next year.
- **Book Fair (Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>) – Mary Becker**

The teachers have received catalogs and requests to compile their wish lists. The students will be receiving their wish list forms next week. The volunteer schedule was sent out 2 weeks ago. A notice has been placed in Family Matters as well as the Church Bulletin. We will be doing a Thursday folder flier this week and another one on the 28th. The second one will be a joint flier with the Pancake Breakfast. The vendor will be setting up the fair on Monday January 25. Most of the students will be previewing the fair during their media time. That will take place all day on Wed., Jan. 27 and Friday, Jan. 29. A few classes need to go through with their regular teachers and that will be on Tuesday morning (Jan 26<sup>th</sup>). We have decided to only open for Sales on Sunday (from 9am to 1pm) because of safety concerns the school has with sales on the stage. The fair will be set up during the week on the stage and we will be moving to the gym floor for Sunday's event. After the event we will move it back to the stage. The vendor cannot return to take down the fair until Wed., Feb. 3 at 10am. Jeanette met with Kent Maly and Sally Zale and received a tour of the stage and instructions on how to operate the lights. Questions were asked about why we are using Usborne Books as a vendor this year instead of Scholastic. Usborne has many higher quality books and just books vs. Scholastic which also sells a lot of trinkets/gifts with their book fairs. Mary mentioned that because this is a new vendor they are not sure how sales and revenues will turn out and they are treating this year as a learning year and will take notes for improvements for next year. Pam Mattox received the Scholastic Book order form and wondered about a conflict with the timing of our own book fair with Usborne. Mary Becker mentioned that the school still has a \$1,200 credit from Scholastic. Mary will contact Scholastic to find out how to get the credit.
- **Catholic Schools Week (Jan 31<sup>st</sup> –Feb 5<sup>th</sup>) - Wendy W.** It was decided to order cake for Catholic School Week and not cookies because serving cake has been a long standing tradition. All the events are lined up for the week and ready to go.
- **Teacher Appreciation Luncheon (Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>)-Amy.** Claudia Mitchell has organized a beach/tropical themed Teacher Appreciation Lunch with food from COA provided by Marta Bianchini.
- **Battle of the Books:** This year's chair is Margaret Wittkowske and the dates have been planned as follows: Battle #1 will be 2/9/10, Battle #2 will be 2/16/10, Battle #3 will be 3/9/10, Battle #4 will be 3/23/10. The Stage Battle will be 4/16/10
- **Talent Show (Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>)-Wendy S.** Joe O'Neill and Laurin Dodge are organizing the event this year. Auditions will be occurring soon and final selections will be made for the show.
- **Perspective Family Coffee Reception (Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>)-Amy/Yvonne-**Everything is on track. All volunteers have been notified of what to bring and the date and time. Lisa will be sending invitations out for all prospective families.

- **Father/Daughter Dance (Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>)-Wendy S.** Holly Ganther and Ellen Hayes are the chairs for the event this year. The DJ has been booked and everything is on track. This year, the party favor will not be t-shirts but possibly pink hats, probably the same pink hats that have been very popular as part of the spirit wear sales.
- **Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>)-Wendy W.** The Lenten project this year is to help stock St. Jude School in Uganda with much-needed children's books. This project will replace Operation Rice Bowl this year. St. Robert is currently helping to build St. Jude Primary School in Uganda, where Fr. Augustine went to school as a child. The project will involve parishioners / school families purchasing and sending children's story books and educational books to Uganda. On Ash Wednesday, during the rice meal there will be table with a bowl for donation of money and suggested books to send to Uganda.
- **Emerald Auction-Pam** (Pam sent a report from Margaret, Molly, & Sharlene which is included below)
  - Invitations are in the works. We are hoping to have artwork to the printer (Fox Company is donating all printing costs again this year) by Friday 1/22
  - Acquisitions are in full steam, we are doing well, great team working with Margaret. New items, extremely generous donors. We need more from the St. Robert community at large. School families tend to be the last ones to donate, but we are looking for a little something from everyone.
  - Dinner – the caterer has been chosen – Chef Jacks. We are excited to use them and they have been great to work with so far and are also donating (2) catered dinners for 10 people. We used to only get (1) dinner from Pandls.
  - Band is set – 5 Card Stud, same as last year.
  - We are moving ahead with IML, but that will become more intensive the closer we get to the event.
  - Molly has started working with Display, Canopies, and the Set Up/Tech crew and that seems to be moving along nicely and we may even see some savings with our Canopies bill in switching around the MPR & Gym.
  - The Raffle...It has hit a snag – the state lost our permit application, or something like that and we are still waiting for the # so it can be printed on the tickets and we can roll it out. Joe should be putting out a flyer this week. Joe is still on board, he's good with volunteers as of right now so we are not concerned. In many ways it will just condense the ticket selling process which feels pretty drawn out at times. We have a good partner "A.B.C.D. After Breast Cancer Diagnosis – support organization. We felt it was a good partner seeing what has happened in our St. Robert Community this year.
  - We are really pushing Table Captains this year, and we need help from everyone to fill the tables.
  - Auction art project is in the works and Margaret & Martha (and other volunteers) will begin working with the kids the first week in February.
  - 2011 Auction Chairs – there is no one lined up (that we know of) and there really needs to be a push by the H&S board to find next year's crew. This is a great set-up with 3 chairs and it spreads the work load around to a manageable level for everyone.
  - **Middle School Showcase-Wendy W.** Joe O'Neill, Claudia Mitchell and Mary Beth Keane are the chairs for this year's Middle School Showcase and were presenting an update for this meeting. The Middle School Showcase for this year will be **HONK!**, which is a musical and based on the story of the Ugly Duckling. The show was selected because it has a large amount of cast

members with major roles, it's very expandable, rich in parts and has something for everyone that is interested in participating. One issue that has not been resolved is the securing of a stage director and music director. The current music directors are on board for this year's production but have asked for an increase. For the past 2 years they have not had an increase in pay and have not worked with a contract. It was agreed that there is enormous benefit in hiring professionals and it shows in the high quality productions that the Middle School Showcase has been able to produce. At the moment the Middle School Showcase budget is not large enough to cover the increase that is requested by the directors and a number of suggestions were discussed to try to raise the funds. The suggestions were as follows:

- Reallocate existing funds in the budget to cover these expenses
- Have a number of fundraisers to obtain the money.
- Initiate a participation fee for the play
- Consider raising the entrance fee.

After several discussions on each these points, it was determined that a \$25 fee as an enrichment program would be the best way to approach the increased expenses. The \$25 fee is very reasonable considering the professional directors and the hours of instruction and rehearsal to put on this high quality production. In addition, it was determined that the fee would be waived for those that could not afford it, but want to participate. A motion for the \$25 enrichment fee for the Middle School Showcase to offset the professional fees was put forward and approved by the H&S board. The fee will be included with the sign up for the Middle School Showcase and include a pizza party.

**Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 6:30-9:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Yvonne Luzney  
Secretary