

St. Robert Home & School Association

Minutes for November 18, 2009

Present: Lauren Beckmann, Amy Hietpas, Karen Hunt, Susan Joy, Lisa Lesjak, Yvonne Luzney, Dennis Reilly, Wendy Scherwenka, Joan Schramka, Kathy Wyatt, Sally Zale

Excused: Pam Mattox, Sara Coffou

Guests: Donna Stelter, Molly Gallagher, Margaret DeMichele, Sharlene Byrne

I. Reflection

II. President's Report – Sally Zale

- **Pancake Breakfast-Donna Stelter (chair):** This year the Pancake Breakfast will be held again in conjunction with the St. Robert Open House during Catholic Schools week on Sunday, January, 31st. Everything is confirmed with Henneberry Pancakes Inc, the caterer, for the date and time. Donna explained that this year she was thinking of increasing the price per plate to \$6 or \$7, because the price has been \$5 per plate for several years with expenses increasing and revenue decreasing over the past few years. Last year the revenue was only \$372. Wendy Wallace said she remembered a discussion on the subject of increasing the \$ per plate was discussed last year and the board concluded that the Pancake Breakfast was more of a community building, social event than a fundraiser. The group consensus agreed that the price per plate should remain at \$5 for this year. Donna mentioned the addition of 2 new co-chairs, Todd & Lisa Lewein to assist them this year. Current publicity includes advertising in Milwaukee Moms, Shorewood Now and North Shore Church Bulletins, etc.
- **Tech Crew:** VP's remember to turn in tech crew forms to Kent Maly for every event under your responsibility.
- **Approving H&S Minutes by e-mail:** Please make sure that everyone looks over the minutes and suggest changes or at least acknowledge them via e-mail back to Sally so she knows that all suggested revisions are in and the minutes can be finalized.
- **Emerald Auction Chair Report: Sharlene Byrne, Molly Gallagher, Margaret DeMichele:** The chairs are making some significant changes this year. They are going to be setting up the dinner and after dinner dancing in the gym instead of Reilly Hall where the dinner has always been served and prepared. One of their goals is to try to increase attendance at the auction and with the new elevator taking up more room in Reilly Hall it would be too tight to fit all the tables necessary. In addition, It will be easier to have the dinner in the gym because, Pandles will not be catering this year and caterers set up their own kitchen where ever the dinner is located. They are currently getting bids from 3 caterers and are expected to make the decision in the next few weeks. Expenses

for dinner will be approx \$8K higher this year since Pandls underwrote part of the dinner. Reilly Hall will be used for the silent auction items and the bar. Another change will be the auction bidding process. A device from IML will be used to input bids. The IML device is about the size of a large cell phone, which can be used by individual guests to interact remotely, privately, and silently at auction events. Molly Gallagher mentioned that these devices were used at the last fundraiser/auction for the Betty Brinn Children's Museum with great success. There are several advantages to using this device.

- Credit/Debit card is needed for participating in the auction because this will be entered into the device. There is a \$350 deposit required on all the devices and will be charge to the credit card if the device is not turned in by the end of the night.
- Bidding times will be extended through the dinner because the bids will automatically be entered into the database. They will not have to close the bidding early to enter the data for checkout.
- A third party will be handling the checkout process, so as a third party they will be able to mediate disputes.
- Will allow to make contributions to the Annual Fund
- No disputes on the written auction bids because of min bids or raises not being followed. Everyone will be given an auction device and action book and stickers will be available for each auction item. Bidders will be able to stick the stickers in their books to keep track of what they have bid on via the device.

The cost of renting the devices for the evening will be approximately \$8K. They are currently looking for a sponsor (corporate) to possibly underwrite the cost of the devices.

All sub-committee auction chairs are in place as well as the entire acquisition team is in place. Joe O'Neil is in charge of the Raffle this year. They currently have a partner in mind and will be scaling back the push factor with the school. The prize will most likely be a cash prize.

III. Principal's Report – Lauren Beckmann

The School Advisory board is currently working on the budgeting process for next year. The process usually starts with the enrollment projections, and salary projections. This year they were challenged with a \$15K deficit that needed to be reduced because enrollment this year was lower than was projected. Enrollment this year is currently at 315 vs. the projected enrollment used in the budgeting process last year of 330. Next year they predict that there will be enrollment challenges as well. One challenge will be to try to build up the current K4 class to 2 classes. Middle School will also be a focus to concentrate on retention. We need to sell the middle school to our own population. The future of the school lies in enrollment. Another challenge will be to try to come back to the 80% parity with the public schools for teacher compensation.

Four students in the 8th grade qualified and were accepted to the online replacement courses. This is high level and engaging. One student will be starting in the 3rd quarter this year and 3 will start in the 4th quarter. Planning for the Peace Learning Center project for the 5th grade class is going on now. They tried this program for the first time when this year's 6th grade class went through the program when they were in 5th grade.

The goal of the program is learning peaceful conflict resolution. This event will occur sometime in January around MLK day. This year the 5th grade teachers will receive some training to help facilitate the learning to go beyond the session and help the students use what they have learned during the rest of the year. Lauren's vision would be to have this program be a rite of passage for every 5th grade class before they go on to middle school. Last year H&S contributed \$500 to the program and Lauren would like H&S to consider funding the program this year as well. The cost is approx \$1000, the rest of the cost could be funded by a field trip fee.

Lauren and the faculty are looking for leads for an *AODA speaker*. One lead is a highly regarded national speaker and author Milton Creagh. Bay United is trying to organize several schools together to share the schedule and cost for bringing him in to speak at assemblies for about a week. He would come and speak to the middle school families about drugs and alcohol. His presentations are pretty raw and speak to the kids at their age level, not above them. The St. Robert faculty thinks that this discussion needs to take place in middle school before the students go on to High School and it is necessary and worthwhile at this time. Lauren has asked the H&S board to consider funding this program if the details are forthcoming in the next couple of weeks. **UPDATE:** In an e-mail request from Lauren sent on Nov. 23rd. She has asked the board to help fund the AODA speaker Milton Creagh to come to the Milwaukee area during the first week in February, 2010. The \$3500 daily fee for Milton Creagh would be split among the three schools he would visit in a day, plus be offset by some grant money. All of the booster sessions are included in the fee. The teachers learn along with the students and do not require a separate session. There was an e-mail motion to approve \$750 for the Milton Creagh presentation with funds coming out of the discretionary funds budget. The motion was approved by 2/3 vote via e-mail on Nov. 24th. Dennis Reilly had asked if they would allow us to videotape the presentation(s)? Perhaps they would not allow this or it would be extra, but a videotape would be a great tool for future middle school children and it's worth asking if such an option is possible.

IV. Other Reports

- **Marketing & Development – Lisa Lesjak**

The parish has negotiated a temporary change in the School Advancement Director's role and responsibilities. For the remainder of this fiscal year, Lisa will assume responsibility for some parish stewardship tasks. In exchange for her services, the parish will pay a portion of her salary. The Zale's hosted a very nice Annual Fund party Lauren's article in Family Matters regarding the party really captured the feeling that evening. The party resulted in approx. \$22K in pledges so far. This year Lisa will be reaching out to nontraditional donor groups through a stapled in reply envelope in the Blueprint Newsletter due to come out in the next month. There is a drawing for an incentive gift this year if a pledge is made before Thanksgiving. Pledges can come in any form and e-mailed pledges are fine. There has been a

flurry of activity in terms of interest in the school in the past few weeks, which have resulted in 1 K4 student and 1K5 student scheduled to start school in January. Other families are already starting to look at St. Robert for next year and she has been giving many tours lately. Friday, December 4th will be the 2nd annual St. Nick Party. In addition to the food, drinks and music there will be a blessing and dedication of the new elevator and lifts in Reilly Hall. This will be an intergenerational party for the entire parish and school community to celebrate the success of the initiatives from the Faith in Our Future Campaign as well as a generous bequest from the estate of Phyllis Morris. There will be activities for the children, as well as, tours of the new media resource center. Lisa is currently trying to recruit volunteers for all aspects of the party. There is no cost for attending the party, but the party expenses have not been completely underwritten so they will be accepting donations at the door.

▪ **Parish Council – Kathy Wyatt**

The parish council is working on trying to increase attendance at Mass. Some initiatives are possibly holding a Family Mass at 11am on Sunday's. They would be looking at finding a few families to volunteer to organize the mass in terms of ushering, readings and bearing the gifts. They are also looking into bringing back the Children's Liturgy of the Word; however they need to figure out the logistics in terms of who gets dismissed as well as finding the space. Volunteers with SEE training will also be needed. They could possibly have students in need of volunteer hours assist with the adult volunteers. Other ideas they are looking into, are possibly changing the hours of Mass and bringing back the nursery.

▪ **School Advisory Board – Karen Hunt**

The SAB is currently working on budget concerns for the school this year because the actual budget \$ are lower than what was projected due to decreased enrollment. Father Dennis is recommending that in the future the parish subsidy be tied to enrollment on a per student basis. For example, the parish will subsidize \$600 per child enrolled. Since the annual school budget is set on enrollment figures, when someone withdraws at the beginning of the school year, we reimburse the full tuition without penalty and the overhead still exists for the school. The SAB is looking into ideas to change the policy for withdrawal and possibly charging a certain amount when a family withdraws prior to the start of school. More discussion needs to take place on any policy changes going forward.

One of the committees is currently working on improvements to the current lunch program. They are looking for recommendations and thoughts from anyone that is interested in giving their input.

Another initiative that is being worked on is putting together a crisis plan for the Parish/School Campus. The plan will involve the Fire and Police Departments and will include outlining plans for lock downs and evacuations. The crisis plan would be very detailed such as including the type of provisions required in case of a lock down. The plan would also need to be practiced.

The SAB is currently engaged in an internal assessment of the school in preparation for an accreditation visit in the fall. There are seven standards that the school must meet. The school must complete a self-study of the standards in a shared leadership model. The SAB will take responsibility for evaluating Standard 5 – Resources: Human, Financial, and Physical. The Board will also review the standards assessments completed by the faculty and help develop an action plan to address weaknesses.

▪ **Treasurer – Dennis Reilly**

Dennis distributed the balance sheet for 11/15/2009. He stated that this has been a quiet month for activities. He recently received \$350 that was still owed from last year's Emerald Auction and he mentioned that there is still one outstanding payment of \$1,700 left from one family that has left the school. He doesn't expect this bill to be paid. Other activities include receiving the bill for the Fall Social which has come in under budget and the Rummage Sale ads for \$47. So far he has collected \$1,250 from volunteer buyouts thanks to Susan's efforts. Dennis went over the page added to his report titled Discretionary Funds. This is a summary that details all the spending against the discretionary funds budget. At the request of several board members this page will be added as a separate line item report on the website every month. A motion was approved for funding the Peace Learning center project for \$500 and to build this expense as a line item in next year's budget.

▪ **Volunteers – Susan Joy**

Susan reported that 15 additional people received SEE training on November 14th. Currently there are approx. 60 families that are not certified. Several of the 8th grade fundraising volunteers are still not certified. Susan will have a conversation with Lauren to discuss which families still need the training. For the Battle of the Books event only 4 out of the 11 volunteers are not certified. In past years they have had approx 20 volunteers so there is a deficit. Sally will put something in Family Matters mentioning the need for SEE training and the need for more Battle of the Books volunteers that have the required training. The good news is that everyone in Joan's service committee is certified. Further discussion centered on how to get the word out that SEE training is now a requirement for any event where children are involved per the Archdiocese. One idea is adding the SEE training requirement in the convent that is signed before every school year to emphasize the importance and responsibility of getting this training.

V. Wrap –Up Events

▪ **New Family Coffee Reception – Amy/Yvonne:**

Attendance was low for this reception. Only about 4 to 5 new families showed up. It was suggested that the low turnout could have been attributed to the bad weather. One suggestion for next year might be to get the host families to bring the new families with them to Friday Mass. Lisa said she thought the reception was

worthwhile because she was able to talk to some parents that she hadn't really met yet.

- **Boo Bash – Sally for Pam:** This year's Boo Bash was a great success and everyone had a good time without any incidents. Lynn Frieseke thought they had raised approx \$3,000.

VI. Ongoing Committees/Events

- **Class Parties (Updates) – Wendy S.** The 3rd grade class party is planned for January 29th, hosted by the Coffou's. The 7th grade class party will take place either January 9th or February 6th. This still needs to be finalized.
- **Magazine Drive – Sally for Pam:** Joe would like to do an additional push for the magazine drive for the Christmas season. Is currently trying to figure out how to accomplish this.

VII. Upcoming Events

- **Trivia Night (Nov. 21st) – Wendy S.** Nineteen tables have been booked so far. The Trivia Night team would like to make the announcement at Trivia Night that they are looking for replacements and would like to recruit the new team so they can shadow the outgoing committee at the next Trivia Night this spring. The committee would also like Wendy to write something up for Family Matters and the church bulletin to promote the recruiting process. They will need 12 people or 6 couples to create the new committee. The chairs have also requested help with clean up after the event, so it would be nice to add some more volunteers for next year's committee to help with the cleanup activities.
- **Dramatic Reading (Dec.5th) – Wendy W.** Will be hosted at Boswell Books this year on Dec.5th from 10:30am to noon.
- **Breakfast w/Santa (Dec.12th) – Wendy S.** Lynn Frieseke has this all planned out and ready to go.
- **Adopt a Family – Joan:** Has not contacted Jennifer Fox (chair) yet. Will contact as soon as possible. This starts at the beginning of December and is typically included in a flyer that mentions Adopt a Family and the Sharing Tree during Advent.
- **Mother/Son Bowling (Jan.23rd) – Wendy S.** Merridith Freidiani and Mary Poorman are going to be holding a planning meeting soon to organize this event.
- **Pancake Breakfast (Jan. 31st) – Amy:** See President's Report for report from Donna Stelter (Chair)
- **Catholic Schools Week - Wendy W:** There was a teacher meeting today to address questions, concerns and guidelines for Catholic Schools Week. The teachers that there shouldn't be anything extravagant done this year as in past years. In past years they would have a cake and gift cards for each of the teachers. There is approximately \$600 in the budget for teacher appreciation. Maybe H&S could donate something for the teachers' lounge. Wendy would like some suggestions. Lisa said she would poll the teachers to find out what they would like to have in the teachers'

lounge. She also suggested bagels and coffee for a treat and not getting gift cards.

Next H&S Meeting – Wednesday, December 16th 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Yvonne Luzney
Secretary