

St. Leo the Great Parent-Teacher Organization's Executive Board Meeting

October 14, 2009

Meeting Purpose:

Event review, Event status and planning, General Business

Board Members Present:

Larry McGrail, Jennifer Conroy, Mary Knapp, Teresa Ketron, Suzanne Dowd, David DiPippa, Cynthia Washington, Deborah Ball, Melissa Baker

Guests:

Kathy Johnson, Becky Woodward, Evan Bolster, Katie Blanchard, Pam Morrison, Nancy Wiegand, Coleen MacKay, William Schouviller, Cathleen Gormley, Virginia Cronin, Doug Fehrer, Jean Johnson

Minutes:

Welcome, Opening Prayer. Larry McGrail called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm and welcomed all present. He led the group in an Opening Prayer.

September Minutes. Larry asked for questions, comments, concerns and/or modifications.

--Mr. DiPippa commented that he should have clarified his comments on Page 2 re: How parents can propose a program for consideration by the PTO, by adding that parents can also send an e-mail to him directly to request a PTO agenda item.

--Motion to approved minutes was passed and minutes approved. Mr. Hedderson will post minutes on St. Leo the Great School's web page.

Treasurer's Report. Tabled until Kim arrives.

Volunteer Committee Report. Nancy Wiegand said the committee had met several times and wants to survey volunteers following an event to get feedback on the event for future planning and coordination. (Draft Survey submitted) She suggested sending the survey to all parents to help identify all the volunteer needs in the school community because she thinks more time is volunteered than gets recorded.

-- Cathleen Gormley thought we should also ask if parents are not able to volunteer, then why not?

--Coleen MacKay is working with Mr. Hedderson on the software that was used at the beginning of last year.

-- Larry asked if Coleen had considered the PTO software and Coleen said she had not yet taken that step.

-- Kathy Johnson offered data for testing purposes.

Fundraising Committee Report. Regarding suggested fundraisers for the first half of this year Suzanne Dowd made the following comments:

--Chick-Fil-A. Raised \$298.00 last year. We are not able to work with the new Circle location this year. Consider selling the Cow Calendars which have Free Food coupons.

-- Mr. DiPippa was concerned it might conflict with the 8th Grade Advent Calendars.

-- Mrs. Washington asked about coupon expiration dates. (A - Monthly coupons)

*Yes vote for Cow Calendars.

Restaurant fundraising event is planned for the same November dates as last year, but adding Veteran's day (includes Parent-Teacher conference days).

-- Larry doesn't want to flood families with PTO papers.

--Teresa Ketron wondered how much is too much and suggested we might ask through a volunteer survey.

--Larry suggested we can communicate through a flyer explaining that if families are choosing to eat out anyway, by going to a restaurant fundraising event, they are also helping out the school.

*Yes vote for November fundraising event.

--Table Easter Cheesecake fundraising event.

--Fuddruckers. St. Leo's event was their best fundraising event last year.

*Yes vote for Dec. 18.

--We need to talk to the teachers about the Food for Thought and Way to Go certificate programs.

-- Fuddcility tours. Mr. Schouviller can coordinate for a possible Scout event.

-- Brian Gormley can coordinate for possible sport team parties.

-- Five Below.

*Yes vote for Nov. 27 through Dec. 3.

-- Let's Dish. Table.

-- Fairfax Ice Arena/McDonalds. Table.

Innisbrook Fundraiser. Marian Hartzell is working with the Company to resolve complaints from parents about on-line access. Mr. DiPippa recommended we stay with the Company (despite complaints) until we see a downturn in revenues.

PTO Directory/Paying for Periodicals/Field Day Shirts.

PTO Directory--Kathy talked about a few lessons learned, such as omitting the husband on the parent/guardian line. She proposed parents/families have to Opt Out instead of Opt In. Printing came in \$100.00 under budget because she used a smaller font which required fewer pages. She will submit an invoice to Kim.

Paying for Periodicals--Kathy asked what do we do as a school to maintain our budget? Do we worry about costs? For example, on magazine subscriptions requested by teachers in different grades?

--Larry replied that our budget is flush. He thought the PTO might be able to purchase an extra set of books, but learned that the cost would be prohibitive.

-- Comment: We used to have a line item in the PTO budget for teacher funds.

-- Mr. DiPippa responded that there are lots of things teachers need and if we open it up, where does it stop? He's reluctant to start the process for all teachers/classes. He reminded the PTO that the budget will be down \$10,000 if the golf tournament is moved to the Fall of 2010.

-- Larry proposed doing research to decide what to cover for each grade and when to do it.

-- Kathy recommended school-wide coordination, for example, Room Parents could combine needs and take advantage of quantities of scale.

Field Day Shirts-- Mr. DiPippa mentioned that Carolyn Muller and Kim Notarianni have volunteered to coordinate a school purchase of Field Day shirts, specifying different colors for each grade.

-- Becky Woodward asked why we can't factor in activities up front for class dues? Dues can fluctuate each year. She brought up an idea used by her children's previous school, the "Angel Fund" for families that don't have unlimited discretionary funds.

-- Virginia Cronin suggested that maybe we should set a budget and then work out activity funds to come within that budget.

-- Larry said we should contact Room Parents to ask what funding needs are and research those costs. We could look at ad hoc requests throughout the year.

-- In response to questions about field trip transportation charges, Mr. DiPippa said that the Diocese contracts with certain bus lines for liability reasons (among other things). Fees have gone up, but a charter bus is double the cost. Parents driving school children is a huge liability.

Family Fun Night. Evan Bolster said the Haunted House is all set. He came in under budget and will send an invoice to Kim. He said he can adjust the "scariness" factor depending upon the age of the kids.

-- Larry said they had used a safe word in the past. Also asked about crowd control and Even said they were prepared to do that.

-- Becky said that she got a great response from the call for volunteer help. She wanted to confirm which classrooms were available for games and at what time so that she could ensure that everything would be set up early. She said the 2-liter, zoo dip and lollipops were eliminated and that easy crafts for kids and a family relay race will be set up in the gym. Ring toss and cake walk, too. She said all information (including tickets) would go home with the kids on Oct. 22.

-- Larry suggested one spot for cash box at the gym which could be gotten from Kim.

Ice Cream Social. Cathleen said parents would like to have the 8th Grade luncheon at the International Country Club paid for in total through fundraising. The parents would like to co-host the Ice Cream Social with the PTO. It could have a beach theme since the 8th Grade still has a good supply of decorations. The cost is about \$1,000.00, and the event raises about \$3,500.00. The 8th Grade wants to keep monies from the media sales, and the PTO could keep monies from the ice cream sales. The 8th Grade will supply the labor.

- Larry said the PTO will give a tentative Yes, if a Chair can be found.
- Coleen offered to find a chair from among volunteer names.

Golf Tournament. Moved to the Fall of 2010 to alleviate competition with other schools. Larry, Mr. DiPippa and Tom McGovern will try to meet in the next week or two.

Spring Fun Run/Family Carnival. Pam Morrison has done research on a 5K v. 1 Mile fun run and has talked to Bill Ward. A 5K is more community driven and we would need an approved track, permits, etc. It would have to be in the Fall. We could do a 1 Mile Fun Run for families in the Spring.

-- Mr. DiPippa suggested that if we want a social event, then a 1M Fun Run early in the school year, perhaps combined with a Bar-B-Que would be a good option.

-- Comment—Maybe St. Leo's could be part of PVI's annual run to help increase numbers.

-- Becky commented that we need to do more to help new families joining the school community. Said the Old Friends/New Friends Coffee did not help much.

-- Mrs. Washington said we should look to involve the kids too, not just parents.

-- Suzanne suggested ambassador/host families.

-- Larry said that at the end of the school year we need to start the ball rolling to prepare for the next school year.

-- The 5K is off the table. Pam will check with Bill Turkel/PVI about their run, and follow up on the 1M Fun Run.

Casino Night. Sylvia not present. Tabled.

Cookie Exchange. Need Chair. Tabled for next meeting.

By-Laws Modification.

-- Coleen (for N. Wiegand) asked whether the By-Laws are meant to be exclusive or serve as guidelines? Larry answered more as guidelines.

-- Mr. DiPippa said he supports the idea of putting in place a system where we're not losing so many people each year.

-- Larry said he would like to codify procedures for new PTO members. He doesn't want to codify the Vice President to be the President in training.

-- Mr. DiPippa recommended certain positions be filled on even years and others on odd years, or, staggered terms.

-- Jennifer Conroy said she also favors staggered terms and thinks another person, other than the Vice President, could shadow the President to be ready to step in.

-- Suzanne commented that the roles are not yet well defined.

--Jennifer talked about a Book of Resolutions as being an option to consider for the PTO.

-- Larry said more discussion on this topic needs to take place.

Fee-based After-School Courses/Saturday Used Uniform Sale.

Fee-based After-School Courses--Jean Johnson talked about (her) negative reactions to prep courses for high schools that should not be necessary since/if our school curriculum prepares our students for high school. For example, the Math Mania program. Aren't all students being given strategies in class? She thinks an after-school program such as Math Mania sends the wrong message about the quality of our school's curriculum.

-- Mr. DiPippa responded by saying that when he came to St. Leo's two years ago he heard comments about St. Leo's not offering many after-school activities. Now we have chess, drama, art, Mad Science, Math Mania and 8th Grade Enrichment. All are enrichment programs meant to enhance skills. All are optional. The Parent makes the decision on what they want for their child. As with anything, practice helps. The more you do, the better you become. For example, the Math Mania program is offered for students who like math and want more. All the after-school programs are enrichment/skill based. None are mandatory. St. Leo's students do well on placement exams. The Diocesan exam for the 8th Grade is not for admission, but for placement.

-- Larry said he was following precedent and allowed all after-school activities to set up tables at the Open House.

-- Suzanne commented that her daughter participates in Math Mania and it helped her gain confidence and now she loves math.

Used Uniform Sale—Can we have a Saturday sale? We need to coordinate with Lesli Kraiger.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.