

Dear Parents,

A fundamental mission of the Blessed Sacrament Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is to coordinate volunteer activity for the School. Volunteers are the backbone of the PTO and they are what make Blessed Sacrament such a special place. In general, there are two types of volunteer activity: 1) fundraising work, and 2) non-fundraising work. An example of the former is working on the spring Auction. An example of the latter is serving as a CYO basketball coach.

Based on its recent studies of volunteer activity at Blessed Sacrament, the PTO Board envisions a system in which we streamline fundraising work so that there is less of it to do, and so that what remains is more efficient. If we can do that right, we believe that it will be possible to: 1) eliminate several fundraisers so that we can focus our efforts on our biggest and most lucrative fundraiser, the spring Auction, 2) actually raise more money through an annual fundraising campaign (that would replace the eliminated fundraisers), 3) reduce the stress and pressure that our fundraiser volunteers feel to meet certain revenue targets, and 4) free up more time for parents to volunteer for vital, non-fundraising activities that are the core of the Blessed Sacrament community and which give parents an opportunity to work in direct contact with their children in an educational setting.

The PTO started this work in 2007 when we streamlined fundraising activities by downscaling the Fall Festival and eliminating the Palm Sunday bake sale. These changes have had no adverse impact on our ability to meet our annual revenue contribution to the School budget. This past year the PTO has again examined our fundraising activities. The objective was to continue to improve PTO fundraising while maintaining the excellence that has made Blessed Sacrament a “Blue Ribbon” school. In addition to reviewing our own fundraising practice, we have interviewed PTO officers from other schools to learn about new approaches.

Based on this recent work, the PTO is considering an annual Blue Ribbon Fundraising Pledge Drive. Here’s how it would work:

- 1) Each family would annually make a tax-deductible donation to the school (at a suggested level of \$350, but people could give more, or less).
- 2) The pledge could be paid in a lump sum or on a monthly basis.
- 3) The goal would be 100% participation.
- 4) Given this new approach, the Fall Festival, the Innisbrook gift wrap sales, and the Car Raffle would all be eliminated as PTO fundraisers.
- 5) The Auction would be retained as our largest fundraiser and social event and would grow to its full potential.

What would be the advantages of such an approach?

- 1) The amount of money that parents donate to PTO fundraising efforts would not increase. Today, many families spend on average about \$350 at all of our existing fundraisers. But rather than being approached for money multiple times during the school year, parents would only be approached two times: once for the annual pledge campaign, and once for the Auction. And your pledge contribution would be tax-deductible.
- 2) Our fundraising would be far more efficient because: a) we would only have one major fundraiser, and b) the pledge campaign would be a no-overhead fundraising approach that would yield 100% of its proceeds to the school.
- 3) We would also eliminate the punitive payment now required of families that do not contribute the requisite volunteer hours. Writing a check to the school would no longer be framed as a negative, punitive experience, but rather a positive contribution to the annual Blue Ribbon fundraising campaign.
- 4) Finally, we would streamline overall volunteer hours from the current level of 20 hours to 15 hours. Moreover, rather than specifying a certain number of these hours that must be devoted to fundraising, we would leave it up to parents to choose how best to allocate their scarce volunteer hours.

Attached to this letter, you will find:

- A simple table that shows you a “Before and After” perspective so you can quickly compare the current volunteer/fundraising system with the proposed new approach.
- Four simple “pie charts” that give you a full picture of the school’s finances as well as PTO finances.

Please review this information carefully. Among other things, you will note that tuition alone is not sufficient to fund operations at Blessed Sacrament. It takes everyone working together - parents, the PTO, and generous support from the church – to make the school successful.

In a few weeks, the PTO will send out a survey asking you to help direct them as they make these decisions. It will come via e-mail, and will be simple for each family to quickly complete. Please take some time now to review this information so that when the survey arrives you can be well informed as you answer the questions.

If you have any questions or need clarification about what you have read here please contact Joe Ferrara, PTO President, at joseph.a.ferrara@gmail.com. Thank you for your time as we help to make Blessed Sacrament a better place for “Creating an Educated Community to Serve Christ and One Another”.

Blessed Sacrament Volunteer Work and Fundraising

Comparing the Current System with a Proposed New System

	Current System ¹	New System
<i>Passive fundraising</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>No. of active fundraisers</i>	5	1
<i>Auction</i>	Yes	Yes, expanded
<i>Festival</i>	Yes	No
<i>Gift Wrap sales</i>	Yes	No
<i>Car Raffle</i>	Yes	No
<i>Golf Tournament</i>	Yes	Maybe
<i>Punitive payment required for non-service</i>	Yes (\$200/\$100) ²	No
<i>Required hours for Festival and Auction</i>	Yes, 4 hours	No
<i>Annual tax-deductible fundraising pledge (suggested \$350)³</i>	No	Yes
<i>Total required volunteer hours</i>	20 hours	15 hours

¹ How to read the chart: The “Current System” column shows what exists today; the “Proposed System” column shows what would exist if we adopted a new approach to volunteer work and fundraising. So, for example, under the current system, the Auction exists as a fundraiser; under the new system it would continue to exist and be expanded. Under the current system, the Festival exists as a fundraiser; under the new system it would be eliminated.

² Current policy requires \$200 punitive payment for non-service (\$100 for a single-parent household).

³ \$350 would be the suggested minimum pledge but families would give according to their wishes and ability. Some might give more than \$350 while others give less.