

**PTO Meeting
November 3, 2008
7:00pm
Blessed Sacrament School Library**

Present at the meeting: Mary Gately, Valarie Warburton, Scott Hurd, Nels Benson, Kimberly Soutuyo, Nancy McBride, Jennifer Dougherty, Dave Fenimore, Ellen Hannah, Michael Haas, Jean Hersey, Melissa Wojciak, Eileen Molino, Michelle Bower, Jackson Stephens, Maddy Mitchell, Myleen Lankford, Valerie Garcia, and Joe Ferrara

Meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by PTO President Joe Ferrara with an opening prayer and a review of the agenda.

Principals Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia

- Thank you to Betsy Loehmann for all the work that went into the walk for Carpenter's Shelter
- The Blue Ribbon Week planning is going well. Please see the web site for the all the information about blue ribbon week which is November 17 – November 21
 - The Bishop will be coming to celebrate mass on Thursday, November 20 at 8:30am. This will be followed by a formal assembly in the gym. There will be many people invited to attend including former teachers, VIPs and others.
- The 8th graders will be confirmed on Wednesday, November 19th
- Report cards went home on October 31. Conferences will be held
- The new secretary, Raelene Sok, has been transitioning into her position. Thank you for welcoming her.
- Our Spanish Teacher, Bridget Laroche has just learned that her husband is being transferred. An ad has been placed and several interviews have already been held. It is a full time position with benefits. The new teacher will need to start in December. The candidate must have strong English skills as well as Spanish.
- A survey was sent out by the Diocese asking each family to rank their child's school

ECC Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia (for Kelly Brinley)

- Thanks to all the parents who helped on mulch day. It was finished in record time thanks to all those who were so generous with their time.
- Pumpkin patch day was so much fun on Halloween, October 31

CYO Report – Presented by Joe Ferrara for Cathy Purcell

- CYO tennis is coming to a close
- CYO basketball practices have started and games will start in December

Letter to the Parish – Presented by Joe Ferrara

- Thought it would be nice to include a letter in the church's annual report thanking them for their generosity to the school – particularly in light of the fact that we received the Blue Ribbon Award
- The annual report goes to the entire church community and gives a brief snapshot of money brought into the church as well as money spent
- Joe presented the letter to those present at this meeting and the letter was applauded and approved by everyone present

Fall Festival – presented by Kim Soutuyo

- They are still looking for more volunteers and vendors as well as sponsors for the rides
- A new attraction this year will be the Velcro ride for children 8 and up. An extra parent will be there to insure that the age rule is followed

Playground Update – Presented by Joe Ferrara

- The three key components of this project we are focused on are: upgrading the playground equipment, upgrading the field and what to do about the retention pond
- \$20,000 was set aside last year to begin working on this project
- A meeting was held with Father Cregan and he was very supportive of the project and just wants us to insure that we are in contact with the Diocese regarding the project
- Met with John Amarantides from the Diocese of Arlington and went through a walk of the playground so he could see the situation. He agreed that something needed to be done. He also suggest that we make sure to talk to the City of Alexandria regarding the retention pond as well as zoning and the environmental office to insure that we are following all green space regulations when designing the playground
- The next step is to set a date for the planning day with the playground company Learning Structures. As mentioned earlier, this planning day will allow the company to meet with the students during the day and get their ideas and then meet with the parents and community at night and get their ideas. Then, they will take all information and present us with a design plan for the playground.

- Early estimates on what it will cost to renovate all three areas are as follows
 - Retention Pond - \$75,000 - \$100,000
 - Soccer Field - \$18,000 just to regrade and then \$85,000 for Astroturf
 - Playground Equipment - \$40,000 - \$50,000
- We know that we can not do all at once but we want to do something to show progress
- A vision statement will also be created to let the community know that they is an overall large plan for the outside area but it needs to be split up because of budgetary issues.
- There will also be an active search for other sources of revenue for the project
- Committees will also be established so that parents can get involved in different parts of the project
- Another part of the design consideration will be possibly looking into moving some parking spaces to give us more playground space
- We will also need to secure other bids besides the bid we will eventually get from Learning Structures
- Father Cregan was very supportive of our plan when he mentioned it to the church finance council

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm by Joe Ferrara