

PTO Meeting
September 14, 2009
7:00pm
Blessed Sacrament School Library

Present at the meeting: Jay Farrar, Luis Moncada, Ann Bremner, Ellen Hannah, Myleen Lankford, Nels Randolph Benson, Kelly Brinley, Madeline Holbrook, Raelynn Remy, Jennifer Dougherty, Kimberly Soutuyo, Eileen Joransen, Mary Gately, Jan Turkevich, Michelle and Chris Byrom, Michael Planey, Dave Fenimore, Rosy Lowenkron, Min Zhao, Jennifer Lungren, Laurie Regelbrugge, Maddy Mitchell, Selome Meysha Tesema, Melissa Wojciak, Valarie Warburton, Valerie Garcia, and Joe Ferrara

Welcome by Joe Ferrara

Opening Prayer by Valerie Garcia

Principals Report – Presented by Valerie Garcia

- The PTO meeting next month will be held in the Holy Trinity Room of the Parish Center due to the book fair being held in the library
- Thanks for all who came to the 60th Anniversary Picnic held on Sunday, September 13. We had about 300 people in attendance. A special thanks to the Knights of Columbus who did all the cooking. We would love feedback on how you think the event went. There is hope of making this an annual back to school event.
- There will be no school on Monday, September 21 because of teacher training. The teachers will be going to a curriculum mapping training which is a classroom lessons sharing system being installed in the Diocese. There will, however, be school in the ECC.
- Raylene Sok will be leaving sometime in October to have her baby. We wish her the very best. Mrs. Elizabeth Kuhn has been training under Raylene to take over her position.
- Back to School night for the Middle School held on September 3 was very successful. It was the first time that students were invited to attend as well. The goal was to share information with both parents and students at the same time to avoid any miscommunication.
- Back to School night for grades K-5 will be held on Thursday, September 17 at 7:00pm in the Gym
- Back to School night for the ECC will be held on Thursday, September 24 at 7:00pm in the gym

ECC Report – Presented by Kelly Brinley

- The first full day of classes was held on September 14 with no crying.
- Because there is no school for the grade school on Monday, September 21, 5 day classes will be dismissing early at 11:45am.
- Back to School night is on Thursday, September 24
- The garden outside that was planted by the pre-k children last year is doing extremely well. It raised 6 pumpkins and lots of green beans and flowers. The garden was planted to celebrate earth day in April.

Update on Fall Festival- Presented by Kim Soutuyo

- The Fall Festival will take place on Saturday, October 24
- All is going well and have most chairs except for fundraising and children's games (Jennifer Lungren filled the fundraising chair position during the meeting).
- Need to pay 6 hours of security to Alexandria Police Department (Jay Farrar generously stepped up during the meeting and offered to pay for the security)
- Volunteers will be solicited during the Back to School nights
- Nancy Conway is the volunteer coordinator for the fall festival
- The newsletter will also highlight the need for volunteers
- Wrist Bands will be sold during masses but there will not be as many booths set up after the masses due to strain on volunteer pool
- Ana Beck will send volunteer form out to room parents as well
- Wrist Bands purchased for the Fall Festival last year will be honored so long as you still have them in your possession.

Update on Auction – Presented by Joe Ferrara for Michelle Payne

- The auction will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2010 and the theme is "A Night at the Oscars"
- Donation letters will be sent out this week to previous donors
- There will be a second wave of letters being sent out to new donors by the end of the month
- We still need an acquisitions chair for the auction. This is an incredibly important position and needs to be filled as soon as possible
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Update on Alumni – Presented by Stephanie Hurd

- 60th Anniversary picnic held on Sunday had about 300 people in attendance
- Mary Costello, former BSS teacher, was hired to put all alumni info into a database
- BSS press went out to current BSS families and alumni families

- We are on facebook and there are currently 3 groups that have been created
- The goal is for another BSS press to go out in January which will highlight the auction and the endowment
- Send any ideas for the BSS press to Valerie Garcia

Broad Focus Areas – Presented by Joe Ferrara

1. Playground

- Currently, we have \$23-24K in the bank for the playground
- Learning Structures, the company that did the planning day, gave us the visual pictures of the playground
- This draft is based on the kids ideas and it was felt that they did a great job putting their ideas into practice
- The theme of the playground is “Our Mighty Frog”
- Lots of benches, a zip line, a wooden ark which includes a climbing wall, a cargo net, a little enclosed area that can be seen through by adults, a rainbow musical wall and an outdoor stage
- We will continue to look at ground covering and will talk to Father Cregan to get his input and blessings
- We will need to get the committees together and Michael Planey will also become more involved in the playground process
- Lots of volunteers stepped forward on planning night and we will be calling on them once we are ready to start forming the committees

2. Fundraising Strategies

- We need to take time to look at fundraising over the past several years and what has worked and what has not worked
- PTO's primary job besides communication between the teachers and the parents is fundraising
- We don't want to have volunteer fatigue which is why we need to be smarter about how we use our volunteers so we get the most “bang for our buck”
- Small group discussions have been going on recently to look at various areas of fundraising keeping in mind the current economic picture
- We have already done some cutbacks in recent years to reduce the amounts of volunteers needed and the hope is to continue this trend

3. PTO Succession Planning

- Need to send out descriptions of various board positions sooner rather than later to find new people to take over board positions that have been held by many for at least 2 years!

Open Discussion

- A point was brought up about the fact that holes form very easily in the knees of the gym uniform sweatpants. A suggestion was made to buy navy blue patches from Walmart and sew on the inside of the sweatpants to help in the event a hole does form. This problem will be looked into sooner rather than later
- A question was asked if we had to have BSS on the pants and the shorts. Mrs. Garcia said that yes that did need to happen to be sure that the correct pants were being bought. This is a particular problem in the middle school
- Another parent asked if Mrs Garcia would consider adding the girls khaki skort to the summer uniform. She said she would look into it and consider it but it may be a longer process.
- Mrs. Regelbrugge made a point that 8th graders in the past have felt that our uniforms are pretty "cool" in comparison to other schools
- Joe Ferrara will look into a system to bring in comments from parents. A suggestion was made to look at a survey system which can be filled out on line.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm by Joe Ferrara. Next meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2009 in the Holy Trinity Room of the Parish Center