

Holy Cross PTA Meeting Minutes September 11, 2019

Attendees: L. Bannon, T. Clark, R. DiFusco, S. DiFusco, K. Eberline, M. Emmons, S. Herron, T. Heyer, J. Johnston, C. Kosty, T. Krupka, N. Mullen, M. O'Leary, B. Purtell, M. Reed, A. Renna, M. Rodman, K. Searing, K. Shetsky

Opening Prayer – Martha O'Leary

Introductions – Went around the room, parents introduced themselves and told the names and grades of their children.

Approval of May 2019 minutes – 1st B. Purtell, 2nd C. Kosty

Approval of June 2019 minutes – Never distributed. K. Eberline will send to M. O'Leary to e-mail school-wide. We will seek approval at next meeting.

Principal's Report - It's been a very busy summer. There are a lot of new faces at the school, and we're very excited about that. We have several new hires. Linda Cadaret is now the Pre-K teacher. Her assistants are Lisa Carguello and Christin Schaefer; both were the assistants last year. We have 30 students in Pre-K; three or four sets of twins! Heather Cleary and Mary Sommers left, Jeanne Hudson is now the kindergarten teacher, and Kathy Brown is the assistant. Jeanne comes with 30 years' experience. She's a reading specialist, and everyone has said wonderful things about her. Our new 5th grade teacher is Wendee White. She has a number of years' experience. She's a native of Canada, and spent 10 years teaching in Catholic schools in the United Kingdom. She relocated to Syracuse in order for her husband to head up the Ph.D. program at LeMoyne College. The kids seem to love her. Our new music teacher is Miss Zippi. Everyone loves her! People from the Liverpool School District (her former employer) have said that she is phenomenal. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge. She is a professional pianist and plays locally. She will switch her half day to Friday when there is a mass so that she can accompany the kids. She will be sending letters home about choir for 4th – 6th grades. Third grade will no longer be able to join choir, but that could always change. Choir will now practice during school time; the last half hour of the day. We are hoping that this will produce greater participation, as mornings before school were difficult for a lot of people.

We have new playground equipment! We were very fortunate to get a great deal on the new piece. They are super expensive! The piece that we purchased was on sale for about \$18,000 (that's 40-50% off!). The final figure was approximately \$24,000. We hired the playground company to professionally install the equipment. This ensured that it was done correctly and is safe for the children. It was worth the money, especially after seeing everything that goes into the installation process.

A huge thank you to the few people that helped unload the playground equipment when it was delivered. The pieces were huge and very heavy! This includes Damon Bennett, Eric Lanious, and Mark Shetsky.

Also, a thank you to those that helped distribute and spread the mulch. This includes the Eberline family, as well as Julia's grandfathers and uncle; the Moltion family, the Purtell family, the DiFusco family, the Reed family, Damon Bennett, Amy and Mia Renna, Amanda and Skylar Brown, my son and 12-year-old granddaughter. Apologies if anyone was not named. The pile of mulch was 75 cubic yards and absolutely huge!

The start of school has been great. The buses have had some glitches, but this is out of our hands. We are hoping that everything will be worked out by the end of week.

Father Kurgan's Report – Not present tonight

Treasurer's Report – As of September 11th, we have \$81,400 in the bank. Expenses have been \$10,675. This includes supplies for teachers (\$3,500) and items related to the playground (\$6,500). Regarding the playground upgrades, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the expenses went into last year's budget, $\frac{1}{4}$ are in this year's statement. We have no income to report yet.

2019/2020 Budget Proposal – Do not have yet; will have at next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Back to School Picnic – It went really well, Lisa Bannon did an amazing job! Everyone seemed to have a great time. The event ran really smoothly, and the kids had a lot of fun. It was well-attended. Thank you to everyone that helped out. It was a wonderful welcome for new families.

First Day of School – K. Shetsky asked for feedback on the lobby setup; a new parent had mentioned to her that it went much smoother compared to their last school. Joanne Markert has said that she would love for PTA forms to be sent home on the first day of school. It would save on postage and less confusion; forms could be returned on the following Monday. M. Rodman said that forms are better to come home in the summer; parents have a chance to go through them, fill out the paperwork, write checks, etc. Everyone agreed. K. Searing suggested distributing forms electronically; parents could only print the ones that they need. Some families received duplicate PTA packets. C. Kosty explained that, this year, everyone got one packet per child. This was not the best way to do it; we ran out of envelopes and postage was expensive. M. Rodman suggested PayPal to pay for PTA items. That could be a problem; not all money is addressed to Holy Cross PTA, confusion as to which group or sport to allocate the payments. B. Purtell said that we cannot use PayPal; businesses are not allowed to use it, issues with purchasing counterfeit items could shut everything down. J. Johnston suggested making piles of forms for each group and parents take what they need. The problem is that not every parent walks into the lobby. A. Renna suggested a “Backpack Drop-off” day. M. O’Leary said they used to have a “Bring Your Backpack In” day, and it was PTA-sponsored. Teachers can collect all community items and school supplies that kids have to bring in, then kids can enjoy ice cream, etc. PTA had decided not to do it in the past because it took the “stuffing” out of the first day of school. It could be done the same day as Pre-K and kindergarten orientation. It lets parents and kids see their classroom. T. Heyer said her old school did it, and it was a big success and kids loved it. A list of school supplies should go home in the final report card so everyone is prepared for the next school year.

Pizza Days - SignUpGenius has been set up for parents to volunteer for Pizza Days. The link is on the website:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c084eaba623a1ff2-pizza1>

Martha needs to send the link out to parents so that they’re aware of it. We had six volunteers at the first Pizza Day, which is great. A few of those people plan to come every Monday. Last year, we also discussed the possibility of having church parishioners come in and volunteer. We will have to revisit that if we need more people to help.

NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming Events:

- **Parents’ Night Out (9/18)** – A. Renna sent out an e-vite. The event is a good chance to meet other parents and get out for the night. The Craftsman Inn has donated a private room for our use. We will also have access to the outdoor patio, which will be nice if the weather cooperates. Appetizers will be served, and guests may also order drinks and/or dinner.
- **Coffee Day (9/20)** – S. Herron will coordinate. K. Eberline, A. Renna, C. Wells will help man the table. Parent can grab coffee and snacks after dropping child off to school.
- **Curriculum Night (9/24)** – It’s a chance to come in and hear from the teachers (parents only, it is encouraged to leave children at home). The event starts in the gym; there are brief introductions, then two back-to-back 25 minute sessions. This allows parents to go to multiple classrooms if they have more than one student at the school.
- **Special Person Day (10/4)** - Forms were distributed to students and need to be returned to school. There is a school mass at 9:15 am that the special guests are invited to attend. Then, every grade does an activity in their classroom. Finally, all students and guests sit together and have snack in the gym or cafeteria.
- **Halloween Howl (10/25)** – B. Purtell is on track for the event. There might be a DJ, or music might be played through an iPad. Glow sticks have been donated. We might skip candy due to allergies and trash that accumulates in the gym. We’re hoping to have volunteers like last year so parents are able to enjoy themselves. B. Purtell suggested starting at 6:00 pm to accommodate working parents. It shouldn’t be a problem since clean-up has been minimal without candy in the gym and there have been less games. Also, it’s a Friday night, so no school the next day. The costume contest will

still be held at 6:30 pm. Everyone agreed on the time change. B. Purtell suggested having food upstairs and eliminating using the cafeteria entirely. Everyone agreed that this is safer and easier on everyone involved.

Room Parents – A. Renna held two meetings today for room parents. An outline will be e-mailed to everyone detailing what she spoke about; contact her with any questions. Christmas party dates and times can be decided on by teachers. In case of snow days and upcoming vacations, it might be best to do them on the same day as the teacher luncheon. Valentine’s Day parties will be held on the Thursday before spring break.

Virtus Training - Anyone who interacts with the kids must be Virtus trained. Information can be found on the school’s website.

Afterschool Clubs - Club Coordinators must make sure to get their envelope out of the office and stamp checks. K. Shetsky sent out a reminder to all coordinators today. No Creation Club because of only two registrants. Art Club only has four students, but will be happening. Yoga Club has six kids so far.

School-Wide Communication - HEARD went out of business. Snow days will continue to be posted on Channel 9. E-mails and texts will go out, too. Some people aren’t getting the texts. If you don’t receive texts from the school, confirm with Joanne that she has the right phone number.

We will be working hard to update social media. This is on next month’s agenda to discuss.

Gym Shirts - Principal’s Advisory Committee said the uniform was too hodge-podge. We are trying to stick to the dress code a bit better this year. No more tie-dye or red/white gym shirts this year. However, we don’t want kids in polos for gym class. Can we purchase simple navy tees with Holy Cross School logo? Blends in and looks good with the rest of the dress code. A. Renna talked to John Groat from Holy Shirt for ideas and pricing. He worked on logos and sent options and tried to use as little color on the logo as possible (less money). M. Reed suggested the gym shirt option from Lands’ End. Less than \$15, plus the cost of the logo (or buy during a ‘free logo’ promotion). It would be easier to get all of our uniform items from one place. K. Searing questioned if we need the logo. Everyone agreed that it’s important to have. The branding helps promote the school and looks nice. It advertises the school. We will have to make a decision soon so everyone can order shirts for the year.

The dress code has gotten too lax. Kids looked sloppy at church with gym clothes on; it is better that gym is now on a different day than mass. Girls are wearing grey sweatpants with stripes or words on the side. Parents should review the uniform policy on the website. Kids enjoy getting dress down passes as rewards for dressing appropriately.

A. Renna is coordinating a spirit shop which is scheduled to take orders for a couple weeks in October. It is important to remember that the clothes are for outside of school, they are not part of the uniform! There will be about ten items, ranging from \$10 t-shirts to \$50+ fleeces. The clothing will be a way to promote Holy Cross School. Students and parents can wear them and represent the school.

T. Clark noted that the uniform closet is stocked! Joanne did a great job organizing it this summer. It looks great; tons of options for people. Check there before buying new.

Open Discussion

Directory – M. Rodman is working on the directory. It will be formatted into a booklet to distribute to those that ordered it. We should also have a pdf copy, but it shouldn’t be on the website without parents having a user name and password. In the future, we should look into strictly issuing the directory electronically. Printing paper copies is a dated concept, and most schools and companies are paperless nowadays. M. Rodman also noted that there was some other paperwork in her pile. All coordinators should check and make sure that they don’t have paperwork for other clubs and events.

Burn Run 2019 – B. Purtell explained that it is a well-attended 5k in our area. She would like to consider having a Holy Cross group to promote the school. Anyone that is interested should contact her. The run is scheduled for Sunday, November 3rd in East Syracuse. <https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/EastSyracuse/TheBurnRun>

Holy Cross Pastoral Council – K. Searing asked if there was an update regarding improving the relationship between the church and school. A. Renna noted that she attended a pastoral council meeting, but she’s not in the group. Kira Reed and Linda Cadaret

are both members. We will ask them to attend a future meeting to give an update. The feeling is that the church hosts many events for our youth, but they are not communicated to the school.

School Mass – A. Renna is organizing quarterly Saturday masses to promote the school within the church congregation. The first one is scheduled for October 19th. Ms. Zippi is checking her schedule and hopes to teach a song to the kids to sing at mass.

Principal's Advisory Committee – B. Purtell asked if there was a copy of the minutes to review. M. O'Leary has a list of members. They primarily discussed the school's mission statement and gym dress code She will have everything written up and will put online with the by-laws.

Motion to Adjourn – 1st K. Shetsky, 2nd by B. Purtell

Meeting Adjourned – 8:10 pm

Minutes Respectfully Submitted, K. Eberline