



# THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

## Parent Association Meeting January 6th 2023

### Welcome

- Adrian - Welcome to all parents - thank you for coming!
- Drawing for the Spring break trip to St. John - the winner is **Emma Diaz**

### Event/School Updates

- **Gala** - Tickets available at \$175 each. We are still looking for **ads** for our ad journal and **donations** for the silent auction. There will be lots of great prizes, including \$5,000 off tuition, but we need more. Please follow the link for more information about solicit local businesses for ad and donations: [Sollicitation Information](#)
- Monday Jan 16 - School closed for MLK day.
  - Becky - in honor of MLK we have made January a month of kindness; the teachers will be mentioning this in class. A little placard with description of day of service and ideas of acts of kindness will go home with students.
- Primary/Toddler Winter Fest (Valentine's theme) - Sat Feb 4th at 10 AM. It will be inside this year; we need volunteers for this event. There will be crafts, music, dancing, snacks.
- Humdingers Event Feb 10th - this date **no longer works**. New date after February break TBD. This event is for 1st-8th graders but siblings are welcome.
- Next week we will have program information levels - please see the WW for details. Open houses are coming over the next two months, as are classroom observations.
- PA for 2023 - 2024. Sign up now to be part of the team! We need a new president! We are opening up the role of Room Parent to new families as well as old. Host family chair should spread the word about the RP role to new families.
  - This is Adrian's last year - he wants to do a good handover - he's loved being PA president, it's been "brilliant." Anne Marie - "you will be so sorely missed!"
- Next PA Meeting is Tuesday February 7th 09:15 From now on we will be alternating PA meetings between the first Tuesday and First Friday of each month.

### Tuition - Laura

- The increase (represented on a pie graph and data sheet, please see WW) was necessary to support our staff, our facilities, and rising costs. The 2023-2024 tuition includes PA fee, parent fee and tech fee, which were previously separate, additional costs.

- There have been multiple tuition increases over the past several years, but our goal is to keep tuition manageable while compensating teachers between 4%-10% more and our benefits have increased.
- Sibling discount was discontinued in 2021 but families that had already been at the school were grandfathered in. The board asked about reinstating the sibling discount, it does look like that will be an option for all families.
- Mr. Goulding - thanks for providing clarification on the raise - why has fundraising gone down? Laura - 2021 school year was a good fundraising year for us because we had the covid challenge. Last year Laura was also pleased with - this year our goal is \$400,000.
- The annual report hasn't been out since 2018/2019 school year - that will come back this year.
- Parent asked about numbers for the current school year - Laura is hesitant to share numbers that have not been gone over by our auditor.
- Eunice - we are a nonprofit so our financials are public record. Per our audited financials - 4.4 million, this year is 4.6 - we have more students but we also need to hire more staff and the insurance doubled this year. "The cost of tuition and the cost of education for your child are two different things."
- Our mortgage rate is high, we are hoping to get that down next year.
- Laura - tuition covers 80% of our costs. We hire specialized teachers as opposed to having teachers teach our specials. Our annual fund covers costs such as security, specials teachers, the water filtration system, etc. We are looking at other sources of revenue, like after school enrichment and renting out the building.
- Vicken Astourian - what is enrollment? 2023-2024 is 250, which is about our max. We used to have a PM toddler class but space is limited.
- This year we have 18 8th graders, last year there were 11. Our "feeder" programs are important. 20 of our 28 toddlers are available for our primary program. Currently we have 176-179 families; we have 109 students who are siblings.
- Laura, speaking of the competition - we are aware of what they are doing, but we are more concerned with what our school is doing. We are in contact with other independent schools. Closest competition is difficult because there is only once other school in NJ similar to ours - Princeton Montessori. SRD is the nearest school but they have a HS. Some other "Montessori" schools are not accredited - we take our accreditation very seriously - all of our teachers are certified. Most other Montessori schools are on their way to accreditation or going their own way.
- Marla - how big is the compensation gap and what increases can we expect over the next few years? Laura - our compensation is low and we missed out on a lot of excellent teachers because what we offered was too low. We will not get the best teachers unless we can offer teachers better pay and better benefits. Industry standard is 3-6% raise/year.
- Parent - what if no one signs up for next year because of the tuition increase? Eunice - we can try to be more flexible with our class options (i.e. full day toddler program).
- Reserve funds - it's more than \$5-600,000. We invest with Merrill Lynch and are waiting on our policy for this year.
- Anastasia - how are we advertising the full day toddler program? Also, summer camp?

- Deb - don't underestimate your demographic; there are lots of people in more working class towns that are looking for options besides Catholic schools. Diana - we need local parents to post in parent groups.
- Eunice - we have talked about summer camp/school but there are a lot of issues to consider. Advertising has not been what it was since pre-covid as we cut staffing during those years. Next year we will work on that; we already have lots of interests in the full day toddler program. We have lots of interest but we do not have the space for that many additional classes. Summer - we do rent our facility but our faculty will not be teaching.
- Crissy - Henry got waitlisted and that created a buzz. We do not have a formal waitlist.
- We do have relationships with other primary montessori schools in the area and they do recommend us.
- Anne Marie - concerning the process of bringing in revenue outside of tuition - where are we at? Eunice - we do have revenue from summer programs and renting the auditorium and the gym. The question is, are we charging an appropriate price - we are looking at that. We can also rent out the kitchen. What about renting the Project room for birthday parties, etc.?
- Laura - just like we work with children to get needs met, we also work with families to get needs met.

#### **Following the Village School Online**

- Facebook & Instagram
- Web Page and Calendar

#### **Other Updates**

- Support the school with Amazon Smile
  - Eunice - AmazonSmile does bring in a fair amount of money for our school so please use it!
- Wednesday Walk starts up again on 1/11