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*Possibilities and Proposals for the Future of Cardinal Newman*

In a world that often feels confined and predictable, it's easy to forget that possibilities are all around us, waiting to be discovered. Confining this mentality to Cardinal Newman High School, it is the very workers and heads of the school who came up with the new classrooms, SLC, and soon-to-be-finished Chapel. The new classrooms offered many new classes and even upgraded some, (most notably engineering in my opinion). The classrooms are new and unique learning spaces for interactive classes and collaborative areas for group projects and discussions. The new SLC holds a free area where students can study, perform, and present their work. In addition, different cultures are represented as it is constantly being decorated with ethnic symbols and images. The SLC is designed as a hub for student life offering rooms for collaborative studying through a multitude of booths and desks. In addition, councilors are conveniently always present next to a well-stocked school library. What makes the library special is how it invites students to access a wide variety of engaging books which fosters a love of reading and supports developing reading and literacy skills. With the addition of the chapel, students are provided with opportunities for spiritual development and growth in their faith. It offers a dedicated space for corporate worship, prayer, and reflection, which can help students stay grounded. As great as these new buildings are or going to be, what matters most is how they are used. How can the staff at Cardinal Newman fully utilize the new buildings to further benefit

the students now and in the future? In the following essay, this relevant topic will be answered along with potential event proposals to further improve student life.

Starting with the new classrooms, a legitimate idea would be the addition of more fairs. Taking inspiration from Mr. Geoffrions History Fair, students would be assigned a big project, with deadlines throughout the year until the entire project is due. After, their work would be displayed for everyone to see either in the SLC or gym. Also taking inspiration from the fair, awards would be given out recognizing the student's hard work. This simple yet impactful idea can instill a deep sense of pride and achievement in students, boosting their confidence and motivation to tackle future challenges, given the nature of how big this project would be.

One proposal that I am a heavy advocate of is the implementation of outside speakers giving presentations either in classrooms or in the SLC. One community I am familiar with is the Kaiser Santa Rosa Pediatric Teen Advisory Council, where we spread awareness about the issues of nutrition and physical health and serve as a voice for teens within the Department of Pediatrics. The council provides teen involvement in patient care decisions to ensure that teens receive high-quality, comprehensive care. Under the physical health subcommittee of TAC, we work directly with Kaiser physicians and administrators to better the teen healthcare experience.

Through this program, I have gained considerable knowledge regarding these topics, more recently the dangers of fentanyl, an extremely potent synthetic opioid, in the high school community. Many teens today are unknowingly ingesting fentanyl, as it is often laced into any form of drug they may purchase. This lack of awareness increases the risk of accidental overdose and even death. With a fentanyl awareness and prevention program for CN, high school students can be educated to understand the dangers of fentanyl through two main steps. The first part

being fentanyl education workshops to engage students in interactive workshops led by healthcare professionals or councils such as the Teen Advisory Council. This program would cover topics such as: what is fentanyl and how is it different, the statistics of the amount of overdoses among teens, and ways it is being disguised. The next part would be naloxone training so students could learn how to recognize the signs of a fentanyl overdose and give naloxone. This part, if possible, would provide free naloxone kits and training to students. During these sessions, the presenters will emphasize the importance of having naloxone readily available and knowing how to use it. With fentanyl being responsible for one in five youth deaths in California, it almost feels necessary to have public coverage of the ongoing crisis.

On another note, there are several possibilities for the upcoming chapel. The most obvious possibility is to have mass and host regular worship services and prayer sessions. Having mass at the gym could never foster the same spiritual mindset as having mass in the chapel. If the area is too small, there could be chairs set up outside the chapel with speakers connecting to the Father. Another possible event each year is the baptism of high school students who want to join the Catholic faith. While there is a small percentage of those who are not catholic at CN, a program inviting other high schoolers to participate in the sacrament of baptism could take place at the chapel. The preparation program would start with informational sessions for interested students and their families. These sessions would cover the theological significance of baptism emphasizing that baptism is a personal choice.

Next, the students interested would be assigned a mentor, possibly from the Christian outreach club. The mentor will meet regularly with the student to offer a series of baptism

preparation classes. These classes will help ensure students have a thorough understanding of the significance of their decision. Once they are ready, their baptism will occur at the chapel.

The new classroom, Student Life Center, and chapel spaces on campus offer a wealth of opportunities to make the high school experience better for students. In the classrooms, implementing a large-scale project fair would promote a deep sense of achievement in students as they tackle vigorous year-long assignments. Additionally, inviting outside speakers and experts, such as the TAC, to present in classrooms and the SLC could provide valuable educational and awareness-building experiences for students. Finally, in the chapel, regular worship services and the option for student baptisms could nurture the spiritual development and faith formation of the school community. With these programs at the new campus spaces, the school can create a truly educational experience that supports the academic, social, physical, and spiritual growth of its students, both during their time on campus and beyond.