



# THE BASILICA SCHOOL OF SAINT MARY

Founded 1869 - Alexandria, Virginia

## The Basilica School of Saint Mary Home and School Association Agenda and Committee Reports

Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 7:00 pm

St. James Library Media Center

*\*Pre-submitted Committee Reports are in blue.*

### HSA MISSION

The mission of the Association is to provide a structure where parents partner with the administration and faculty to support the spiritual and academic excellence of the School's children. The Association supports the School through four core activities:

- School community development
- Fundraising to support the school
- Assist with the facilitation ministry outreach to the school community
- Providing parents of students with knowledge about school functions and activities

### AGENDA

- I. Call to Order – Stephanie Dolan, HSA Vice President at 7:01 PM
- II. Opening Prayer and Pastor's Report - Father Hathaway
- III. Principal's Report – Mr. Robert Loia, Principal

#### UPDATE

1. Events and Celebrations
  - a. Oktoberfest
    - i. Great turnout, especially with newer families. A successful community celebration.
2. Month of the Rosary (October):
  - a. Prayed the Living Rosary as a school community twice.
3. 8th Grade Tailgate
  - a. It was a fun night, recommended to be done more often as it resonated well with the students, more so than previous dances.

4. All Saints Activities (November 1st):
  - a. Mass held at the Basilica with a student council induction ceremony following..
  - b. Little Saints Parade was successful and efficiently and safely managed.
  - c. Middle school students prayed the Rosary in the Cemetery on 11/7.
5. Field Trips and In-House Events
  - a. Pre-K Field Trip visited Butler's Orchard. Pre-K Letter Parade.
  - b. Kindergarten Mad Science Event (October 24th)
  - c. 4th Grade Field Trip to the Basilica Museum.
6. School Initiatives
  - a. Home School Association (HSA) "Dinners to Go" are going well and are well organized.
  - b. Virtues
    - i. Assembly for "Responsibility" and "Studiousness" (10/25 and 10/30).
    - ii. November's virtue is "Courteousness" with "Monday Manners" clips to encourage good manners at home and in school.
  - c. Parent-Teacher Conferences are Scheduled for November 11-13
    - i. shortened sessions for grades 5-8 with over 70 conferences planned.
    - ii. To be held in the gym for efficiency.
  - d. Final day of trimester is 11/26/24
7. Community Engagement
  - a. New Family Check-In
    - i. Held in St. Anthony Commons, well-attended with positive feedback.
  - b. Coffees with the Principal
    - i. Ongoing open forums, well-attended and a good opportunity to discuss classroom and school topics.
  - c. Faculty Social (October 30th)
    - i. Well received and appreciated by the faculty.
  - d. Bishop Ireton Students Service Program
    - i. High school students visit to support students and teachers. Activities include reading in classrooms or playing with students on the playground.
    - ii. Next visit is scheduled for November 18th and 19th.
  - e. Fall Clean Up Day
    - i. Small but very effective
    - ii. Painted 4-square courts and will organize tournaments
    - iii. Future consideration to help teachers with "pet projects"
  - f. Mother Cabrini Dinner
    - i. Postponed until Sunday, February 2nd

#### 8. Upcoming and Ongoing Projects

- a. Veterans Day (November 11th) and "H is for Honor" Assembly (November 12th)
  - i. The 3rd annual assembly to honor all branches of the military and service members in the community.
- b. 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
  - i. Bishop will kick off the yearlong 230th anniversary celebration on December 8th at the 1 pm Mass.
  - ii. Display of Catholic education history in VA and the school's history to be set up in the library corridor.
  - iii. Basilica Parish Board Game (Monopoly-based); "230th Edition," is set to be released next fall in celebration of the 230th anniversary.

#### IV. Treasurer's Report – Joe Young, HSA Treasurer

##### **UPDATE**

1. Currently operating at a \$24K deficit on a cash basis.
2. Accrual basis remaining flat due to early expenses associated with the Christmas tree fundraiser and gala.
3. Slightly behind last year's standing currently.
4. Gala Expenses incurred earlier in the Profit & Loss statement this year due to the gala's earlier date.

#### V. Teacher's Report - Mrs. Luechtefeld

##### **UPDATE**

1. Teacher Appreciation and Morale
  - a. A special thank you for the teacher appreciation celebration on 10/30, which allowed teachers to relax, socialize, and connect with new faculty members, boosting morale.
  - b. HSA provided muffins for teachers on All Saints Day as a token of appreciation.
2. Upcoming Events
  - a. Christmas Program scheduled for 12/12 at 6:30 PM, celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe for grades K-3. Practice is integrated into the schedule, with singing tied to religion time.
  - b. Walk for the Homeless is planned for next week.
  - c. Teachers are preparing for upcoming conferences.
3. Gala/Auction Highlight
  - a. Mrs. Luechtefeld hosted a "Karaoke and Milkshakes" experience for 4th graders, which was a big hit.

- i. Consider showcasing teacher talents in similar auction experiences. Videos and photos from these events could be used to create a promo video for the upcoming gala.
  - ii. Suggestion: Teachers could collaborate in groups for these events to share ideas and workload.
- b. Teacher for a Day planned for next week, allowing students to experience roles in Music, PE, Art, and as the Principal.

## VI. Committee Updates

### a. New Family Committee - Amy Jones

#### UPDATE

1. Open House Preparations
  - a. First open house scheduled for November 21st.
  - b. Registration numbers are higher compared to last year.
  - c. A sample tour will be conducted on the 19th with 18 tour guides; aiming to have 20 guides for the event.
  - d. The Hospitality Committee will handle food and flowers for the event.
  - e. Tour guides will include 8th-grade honor society students.
2. New Family Integration
  - a. Mentor families are being utilized in different ways by new families.
  - b. A coffee event, hosted by the committee at Miesha's with donated coffee, took place two weeks into the school year, which was well-received.
  - c. Positive feedback from committee volunteers, who are enjoying their roles in welcoming new families to the community.

### b. Fall Service Clean-Up Status - Sarah Donovan

#### UPDATE

1. Smaller event (approx. 20 adults and older children in attendance)
  - a. About half the size of Spring 2024, but about the same size as Fall 2023
2. Significant organizational improvements in storage areas and multiple other projects completed.
3. Lessons Learned:
  - a. Prepare for smaller attendance in fall and larger in spring and adjust project priorities accordingly.
    - i. To drive additional attendance, consider advertising Fall Day of Service as an opportunity for 8th grade confirmation hours.
  - b. Have necessary supplies on hand; additional time required for preparations.

- i. Event co-chairs to work with Mr. Loia on a detailed list of needed supplies and assignments. (SBD note: In the past, Jorge did a 10/10 job of providing supplies.)
- c. Plan for spray paint for plaza work; wind, time and manpower limited map-painting.
- d. Appoint captains for major tasks for enhanced leadership and ownership.
  - i. Consider offering 1.5 x hours for captains.
- e. Need to find the right weekend when sports won't be a barrier to attendance. (SBD note: very difficult for the fall)

**c. Christmas Tree Sales - Roy Shannon/Seamus Curly**

**UPDATE**

1. Christmas Tree and St. Nick chairs are coordinating for overlap of both events.
2. Planning on track, cost-effective sourcing for food and beverages underway.
3. Logistics:
  - a. Tree sales scheduled for Sunday, December 1; parking lot confirmed.
  - b. Trees are expected to arrive 24-48 hours before the sale starts.
  - c. Deposit for trees sent, awaiting clearance.
  - d. Sales period to 12/1-12/8 or until sold out.

**d. Saint Nicholas Festival - Dru Regan/Jaime Cheng**

**UPDATE**

1. Sign up genius links have been sent to both parent volunteers and 8th grade volunteers
2. Photographer, Bounce House and Santa contracts are completed
4. Events will take place in the gym for pictures and on the back black top for bounce house and outdoor activities.
5. Food Truck has been ordered for French Toast DMV - from Del Ray. Pre-order link in progress
6. Save the Date / Announcement - on track

**e. Youth Apostolate Update, including overview CYO Fall and Winter Sports - Marian Staron**

**UPDATE**

1. F3: Faith, Fun, and Friends (Co-Coordinator: Will Buckland) – about 30 middle schoolers at the last meeting.

2. Blaze (Leaders: Sherri Jones, Christine Gunderson, Becky Lilly, Andrea Liptak, Sarah Martinez, Trista Roehl) – 15 registered in 7th grade; 17 registered in 8th grade – largest numbers in 6 years.
3. St. Dominic Savio Group (Leaders: Sue Lutz, Beth Milito, Kelly Cates) – over 35 middle schoolers; spent time assembling food and writing letters to veterans at last meeting.
4. CYO (Athletic Director: Jamie Atala) –
  - a. CYO mass was held on Sunday and had a great turnout for fellowship and donuts;
  - b. Cross Country, Track, and Tennis are completed with winners/standings highlighted in the messenger (Track 10/24, XC 11/7, Tennis 11/14);
  - c. Basketball has 27 teams with 284 registered athletes ready to start practice next week. Thanks to Ms. Grimes, Mrs. Touchet, and Mr. Loia for helping with scheduling.
  - d. As suggested by HSA we will implement a coach's corner on the CYO website as a resource center for coaches. A timeline will be in December.
5. JCDA (Lead: Averil Carroll, Kathy Doherty, Mercedes Schlapp) – meetings continue once a month with great service to the community; next meeting will include making thanksgiving meal packages. Thanks to the school for allowing collections on the grounds.
6. American Heritage Girls (Lead: Teresa McMorris, Katie Myers) – troop has done a great job with its fundraising project and their most recent service project.
7. Trail Life (Lead: Malcolm McKay) – group continues to have meetings focused on the different tenants of Trail Life mission and the Catholic faith.
8. KoC Soccer Challenge – We had over 9 participants this year, which was higher than the last few years, but still lower than our pre-Covid participation

### **SUPPORT/ASK**

1. F3: No cleaning of gym and/or cafeteria during activity – cleaning out trash or other such activities are distracting when a high schooler is trying to give a talk to the young people.
2. CYO: Training or training material on the scoreboard. Games start 12/7 and we need to put a binder together for other diocesan teams that use our gym.
3. Trail Life: Malcolm will be stepping away from his role in December; looking for a dedicated male or multiple males to take on the lead.
4. KoC Soccer Challenge: any support or ideas in ways to get more kids involved next year.

## **DECISION/ACTION**

1. RL will speak with Craig Webb, Facilities Manager at the next scheduling meeting to ensure cleaning does not take place during scheduled events.
2. FIS to email basketball coordinators to see if someone can help pull a laminated one-pager together on how to use the scoreboard.
3. G. Touchet will reach out to Kevin to put together a one-pager for using the PA/AV system.
  - a. RL will contact A. Mathis about obtaining the user manual for this and PA/AV.
4. Trail Life - will advertise the position in The Messenger and FIS will review if there has been previous interest in taking this position on.

### **f. Annual Fund - Anne Mathis UPDATE**

1. Currently 62% of the way to the fundraising goal of \$200,000.
  - a. \$124,000 raised YTD
  - b. 160 total donors have contributed, resulting in a 28% participation rate.
  - c. Comparison to last year at this time:
    - i. \$28,000 raised and 70 donors.
  - d. The average gift amount has increased from \$230 to \$275.
  - e. 21 grandparents have donated a total of \$7,000.
2. Mid-month we will send reminder postcards to families who have not yet donated.
  - a. The Student Council is preparing thank-you cards for donors.
3. Aim to meet the goal by the end of the calendar year to avoid overlapping with the gala.
4. Efforts will continue through the fiscal year; any donations beyond the goal are additional support.
  - a. Post-New Year: Increase outreach to the parish community to raise awareness about the annual fund among parish members and prospective parents.

### **g. FIS - Erica Dempsey/Anne Heishman UPDATE**

1. Committee members and event chairs are reminded to track volunteer hours accurately and report them to FIS, as the current check-in system may not capture all hours.
  - a. Exploring options for an improved school check-in kiosk.

- b. Issue noted with sign-up (via SignUpGenius) where volunteers occasionally do not show up.
2. Working on external fundraising with 3 different focused positions to see if anyone is interested in taking those.
  - a. Dinner position has been fulfilled by Kara Fiala

**h. Room Parent - Ashley McMurry**

**UPDATE:**

1. All room parent letters were sent. There were a handful of classes that did not get their letters out until mid-October. That was in large part because it was difficult for them to schedule time to coordinate with their teachers on the grade-level to get the information they needed from the teachers for the letters. There were also a couple of delays when teachers did not approve draft letters.
2. Rocio (the assistant coordinator) is actively collecting contributions from each class for the school-wide gift fund.
3. The next item on our agenda is Our Lady of Guadalupe.

**SUPPORT:**

1. Informational ½ page FAQ to be distributed to homeroom teachers at the beginning of each year will create a greater understanding of the room parent program and what will be required of teachers to ensure timely distribution of room parent welcome letters and other significant information.
2. Need an outline of events for Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration day to ensure proper support is provided.

**DECISION/ACTION:**

1. Approval to create FAQ sheet. RL will review.
2. Our Lady of Guadalupe - RL will have a planned outline by the end of week of 11/11.

**i. External fundraising - Muffy Day**

**UPDATE**

1. Stephanie Dolan is meeting with some candidates for the external fundraising role this week and hopes to have someone in place for the dinners ASAP, and ultimately spirit wear and school supplies shortly after.
2. **November Dinner Update:** Delia's is unavailable, and Anne Mathis has canceled the November dinner.
3. December Dinner: Scheduled with Lebanese Taverna.
4. Considering Chalkboard on Rt 1 as a possible BBQ venue for future events.



**j. Father-Daughter Dance - Kerstin Magnuson-Anderson**

**UPDATE**

1. DJ is secured and communication with the food vendor has begun.
2. Currently brainstorming a theme and would like to coordinate this with the Gala Committee, as well as overlap of decor to minimize funds.

**k. Family Wellness - Erin Bell**

**UPDATE**

1. Reached out to previous committee members and people mentioned to me as interested to see how many people I have or if I need to recruit for more volunteers.
2. Checked on one speaker option and was provided a resource for schools

**l. Trivia Night - Eva Domotorffy**

**UPDATE**

1. Date is set for Saturday, February 1, 2025
2. Location - TBD (Lyceum or Stephen's Hall)

**DECISION**

1. Location will be Christ Child Hall (holds 90) but also checking with Kara LaGrassa for Lyceum.

VII. New Business - no new business

VIII. Next HSA Meeting: December 5, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

IX. Adjournment – Stephanie Dolan, HSA Vice President at 8:15 PM