

St Peter's School
Parent Association Meeting
April 24, 2015

1. Welcome!!
2. Congratulations to our Amazing Auction Co-Chairs and Development Department!!!
 - a. We raised \$128,000
 - b. Representing an 81% increase from previous years!!

The auction was a reflection of our community: good will, good spirit, and great support for our most important resource; our children. Thank you so much to all who came out for a great night to support our school.

The final total of the 50/50 raffle was \$9,695. Congratulations to the Bozzelli Family who won half of the pot: \$4,847.50!

Thank you to our Alumni Raffle Sponsors offering to match the raffle up to \$2,000: Rowland Ricketts'54, Sally Ann Sells Bensusan'71, and Nick Volpe'00

The funds raised will be directed toward the following initiatives: Refurbishing the Alumni Theater (details and timeline to follow soon); upgrading the school's network server; the KG Brooks Faculty Professional Development Endowment; ongoing programming such as field trips, innovation, science, math, art, music, and all the programming that makes St. Peter's the choice for our children.

Many have asked about the outstanding invitations, program book, and signage. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Diane Schaffer, Rogue Invitation Designs and fellow St. Peter's School Parent. We would also like to recognize Liz Blum and Belinda McLeod, who lent their designing expertise in transforming the space into an elegant setting.

St. Peter's School is exceedingly grateful to Catherine Signorello and Nadine Biles, who worked tirelessly and their combined efforts produced not only a monetarily successful event, but also one that brought our community even closer together.

3. Parents Association 2015-2017

- a. Nominations for New Officers
- b. Email nominations or questions to parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org

Amy and Kate have reached the end of their terms, which is a 2-year commitment for chairs.

Time commitment for chairs largely involves setting up other offices, class parents, and other positions in beginning of year but after that, the position is mostly reactive

During Amy and Kate's term, they strove to make more of a connection between parents and the faculty and facilitate communication

1 year positions are available: i.e. VP (VPs can remain for more than a year), faculty appreciation chair, class parents, etc.

Okay to nominate self or others, can nominate in partners

Think of who may be emerging leaders from younger grades

4. Shawn Kelly, Headmaster – skelly@st-peters-school.org

- a. Strategic Plan Recommendations and Next Steps
Strategic plan work has been going on for three years and is now moving on to implementation of goals and recommendations. This year committees were formed for this purpose. The committees were formed because we wanted to engage the community to help understand why we're doing this.

Committees include endowment, financial aid, curriculum, traditions, communications, learning support (not just for kids who need extra help but kids who excel), compensation. We are also forming a working faculty committee to integrate new strategies and initiatives. The faculty who will be implementing the strategic plan in their classes need to be engaged.

Some recommendations are easy to implement and achieve. For example, compensation (look at comparison and competitive schools). An example within this category is amending the retirement plan. Previously, staff/faculty were required to be employed for one year before vested in retirement. The committee saw that it was very little money to allow for retirement upon hiring. The same applies to short term disability. The school has now changed this requirement.

Some are more difficult to work through and implement, for example, traditions, curriculum, program, etc. For example, hiring a full-time math specialist for lower school was recommended, but there's a full time cost for that. And SPS has now reached an agreement to purchase building from church, which adds a \$100,000 debt service the school had not carried before. This will affect everything. We'd like to grow our endowment from its current \$2 million, but we also want to be conservative with our debt service. All factors need to be considered in relation to each other.

All reports now coming to Mr. Kelly and once compiled will be posted on the website so the entire community can see recommendations, committee members, etc. Once every few weeks this information will be updated with progress towards meeting the specific goals. The parents association's responsibility is to act as checks and balances.

Additional Items

SPS hired Will Nord for 50% time in admissions to get out there and talk about who we are to a larger and more broad community. He is a current Montessori teacher joining us as a professional development expert. Additionally, he has also started division 1 soccer teams and he will be addressing how the school can bring competitive athletics

into lower school, which can be done via individual sports that can be performed across grades (i.e. squash, tennis, fencing, track, etc.). This is important because there are things you can do with kids, conversations you can have about leadership and success while they are participating in competitive sports. It helps them to figure out who they are. Will will be visiting schools like ours and surveying our kids to see what they are interested in. This will be a slow process. Nothing will be taken away. Next year's PE schedule will be the same. There is some flexibility afterschool. Teachers being hired will have ability to coach. We will slowly develop a culture of sports here. Because of our size need to be more creative with how to develop this program. All are encouraged to meet and speak with Will when he starts. He will come to a fall parents association meeting. And yes, Mr. B is staying!

A survey about transportation was recently emailed. SPS is considering leasing some vans for transportation. This program will start small, but there is a current need and for incoming parents. This will not be a money maker but just a fee to cover expenses.

b. Questions and Answers

Parent question: What is Mr. Wolf's impact? Engagement with past parents and doing further outreach. The goals are financial and re-engagement with alumni. He will work to get back in touch with those who have fallen off of the radar or feel St. Peter's is not in touch with them.

Parent question: As we look forward to next year do you have a sense of teacher retention and the number of incoming new teachers? There may be three teachers leaving. The upper school English Teacher (Dooney) is definitely leaving to return to a boarding school Some not coming back for lifestyle reasons (moving, too long a commute, etc.).

Parent question: Did Kelly leave? Yes—her husband took job in MD. She would like to come back and a suitable replacement has not been found yet.

Parent comment: Regarding alumni outreach, James Lavino recently met with a St. Peter's alum who is an Executive VP at ABC. This is the kind of SPS graduate we should be trumpeting. She should be engaged with the school, not only for development, but also as an ambassador. There should be a network of resources of professional mentors, possible board members, etc.

Parent comment: The younger generation of students is not used to seeing alumni on campus. Alumni weekend will be nice way to have these conversations.

5. James Lavino – Chair of Strategic Plan Committee reviewing Traditions, jameslavino@comcast.net (Susan Moore and Mr. B)

a. Review of Traditions at St Peter's

This committee has seven members: past and current parents, alumni, and trustees. The committee has written a 13-page recommendation in which they established context for the traditions and defined and articulated the traditions. What were their original purposes? Are they still relevant to the current curriculum and mission? Research for the recommendation included talking to other schools and looking through SPS archives (it was found that we are gray and garnet because the school colors had originally been white and red but someone had found an aged uniform whose colors had changed...And the ECD Italian feast is Italian because it was the easiest cuisine to get parents to make!)

b. Recommendations of Strategic Plan Committee

Traditions should be driven by curriculum and needs of the student body. Why are we doing something be should be clear. Should be no separation between curriculum and traditions and traditions should offer opportunities for experiential learning.

Example: The number of students in the lower school used to be smaller. Now lower school declamation is too long. There is a recommendation to determine best how to shorten it.

Example: There is a need to address religion and church identity. Some religious traditions that remain that are no longer appropriate could be strengthened and redefined to still be beneficial to students, i.e. grace before lunch which promotes civility, sharing, our being fortunate, etc. But does it need to be called grace? The recommendation to rebrand grace, perhaps as a moment of reflection or a time to learn about different cultures and beliefs. Perhaps each classroom has multidenominational pamphlet Grace can still be relevant and of value, but it doesn't need the religiosity it previously had.

Question: How do we keep the legacy of research here? The recommendation has a preamble, which includes a global recommendation that there should be traditions ambassador. This should be a faculty member who has archival material and knows this history and purposes of the traditions. This ambassador would liaison with a communications committee and give faculty a concrete package of information about traditions. This would remedy the fact that faculty, staff, and students have stopped knowing and fully understanding the traditions (why are we still doing them?).

Shawn Kelly comment: Knowledge, programs, initiatives, traditions all need to be institutionalized. For example, there are schools that have greenhouses that have become storage facilities because one teacher started it and then left and because it was not an institutionalized program, no one kept it going. Traditions can be viewed the same way. We need to come up with codified way of remembering why we do things and where they came from.

The faculty needs to know about and understand all traditions and should be educating the students to add value to them. But, it is the kids who need to value them. An ambassador can help orient new teachers to the traditions but the students need to be the ones who love these traditions. So that they do, the adults need to pass on that knowledge, information, and understanding. Students need to believe traditions are an important part of what we do here.

Parent comment: All of this will be useless if we don't connect it to faculty who then connect it to students. New teachers may not be passing on knowledge of why we are doing things like May Day and declamation. How does it contribute to curriculum or personal development? This foundation needs to be set in the younger years.

Shawn Kelly comment: Kids like to ask why should I care? So how do we best engage them in our traditions? No matter what it is, you have to help them understand why they should care. What is the relatable factor? If traditions aren't maximized and integrated, then you're taking away from other curriculum. What is the lesson? It needs to be more than just fun because we don't have unlimited time. And this all points to our needing to make sure our students can be effective in the workplace in 20 years. So everything we do and teach needs to be integrated into the curriculum.

Traditions are where the moral life of school is. They are about the students becoming good people. We will not lose sight of this—even though it is hard to quantify the success of Morris dancing!

A special thank you to James, with an emphasis on his being able to write cogently and lucidly (his former teachers would be very proud!). James as chair honors the process, as he is an alumnus and current parent.

6. Questions, Comments, Suggestions?

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 5-9

This is an opportunity to show appreciation to our teachers without spending money. Please ask students to make things like cards, pictures, bookmarks, etc.

There are sheets of paper to fill out and write who you appreciate at why. These comments will appear anonymously on the TV board during the appreciation week. The notes that handed out on the first day of spring were incredibly successful and appreciated. (Mr. B.

received 411 notes!)

Wednesday, May 6 is the faculty breakfast. Liz Blum is organizing. No cooking donations required (but accepted!), but financial donations will cover cost of Cake & Beanstalk catering.

Diana leaving the position of faculty appreciation chair (if anyone is interested!).

Miscellaneous

There is an upcoming assembly about animal rescue and a supply drive. There will be a donation box in each division. Cans of dog or cat food or any supplies are greatly appreciated.

FINAL PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING, FRIDAY May 29th – 8:30 am in LIBRARY