

St Mary School HSA Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2022

HSA Board Attendees:

Allison Carballo & Ann Russell, HSA Presidents

Janine Simon, HSA Treasurer

Kristy Pylypshyn, HSA Secretary

Jillion Elliott, HSA K-8 Room Parent Coordinator

Tricia Nelson van Brakel, HSA President Emeritus

Welcome

Rachel opened the meeting with a prayer.

Rachel also shared several school updates including the exciting news that Jody Lampasso, first grade teacher, welcomed a new granddaughter to the family.

The Veterans Day Assembly will be held on Thursday 11/10 at 9am in the Hall. Ten Veterans are expected to attend as special guests.

St Mary will be using Sign Up Genius to schedule parent teacher conferences this year. The Sign Up Genius links will be emailed to parents this afternoon from their teachers. Middle School parents will receive an email from Rachel with links to conference sign ups for multiple teachers. Report cards will be sent home with K-8 students on November 14th. Preschool parents will receive the report cards for their students at conferences.

November 23rd will be the school Thanksgiving Mass. More details to come.

Rachel thanked Amy Dowding and Jeannette Campo for leading the Student Government. Grades 5-8 elect two representatives for their respective grade. The entire middle school votes for President, Vice President, and Secretary. There were many students who expressed interest in running for Student Government. Rachel, Amy, and Jeanette are considering various strategies to keep the students involved in school activities if they are not elected to a position.

Emma Weinheimer is leading the First Friday Singers this year. The choir will sing at the December First Friday Mass and possibly the Thanksgiving Mass.

Senior Luncheons will be returning on November 9th. Thank you to Andrea Wolf and Marcy Miller for leading.

Updates From Amy Dowding

Please label all clothing pieces that can be removed such as fleeces, sweaters, sweatshirts.

Uniform Swap was a success. There are very few pieces remaining.

A reminder that Lands End will accept returns of items with the school logo. If you are unsure what size your child may need, you can purchase two sizes and return what does not fit.

Students must bring reusable water bottles, labeled with their name, to school each day. St Mary School cannot continue to provide water bottles to students who do not have a reusable bottle. In addition to the environmental impact of one time use water bottles, it has also been very costly to purchase them. There are currently two water bottle filling stations available to students. An additional filling station will be installed soon near the 5th grade classroom, for a total of three in the building.

Preschool priority registration for siblings ends soon. Please ensure you have registered your children.

Amy receives numerous emails each day and while she is happy to help whenever possible, she urges parents to please check the weekly newsletter first. The majority of questions she receives are answered in the newsletter. She will also be creating a helpful “Who to Call/Ask” informational sheet that will be distributed to families. This “Who to Call/Ask” sheet in conjunction with parents checking the newsletter for answers will allow families to get the information they need more promptly.

St Mary School sometimes seeks information from families in the form of a survey. If a survey is emailed to you, please respond promptly. Survey Monkey will not allow you to answer the same survey from the same email twice, so if you are unsure if you completed a particular survey, try to do it again.

There continues to be problems with cars passing at morning drop off. For the safety of students, staff, and other vehicles we ask that you do not pass cars. Once your car is along the sidewalk, you can let your student(s) out of the car. If they are younger or need assistance, have them exit at the main office door where Officer Bill and Rachel can assist them. Preschool pick up has also been dangerous at times. Preschool parents should be cautious of other families with young ones in the parking lot. Parents of K-8 students are reminded to arrive no earlier than 2pm for pick up. Again, we ask for everyone’s patience at drop off and pick up in order to ensure it is a safe process.

Signs will be posted in the back and on the side of the school asking the public to refrain from walking through the parking lot during school hours. The front parking lot is used for the parish so it will continue to be open for public use.

St Mary Fund

Amy reminded attendees that Giving Tuesday is quickly approaching. It is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Emails regarding the St Mary Fund and Giving Tuesday will be going out to parents soon.

St Mary School decided years ago not to fundraise through methods such as car washes, wrapping paper sales, etc and instead focus on philanthropic giving. With St Mary’s approach, 100% of donations go directly to running the school. Tuition alone does not cover all of the

expenses for each student and is approximately \$1600 less than the actual cost per student. The St Mary Fund helps to close this gap.

Rather than set a dollar amount as the goal to be raised each year on Giving Tuesday, Amy has found a participation goal from current families to be very effective. Teachers and staff have had a steady 100% participation over the years. The highest participation rate among current families was in the 70 percent range. Families can expect to receive several emails throughout the day on Giving Tuesday reflecting the progress toward the goal. While the school does not accept donations from students, they are very much involved in the excitement of the day and with thank yous. Alumni are welcome to donate. Donations are currently accepted by check, online payment, and pledges. Amy is looking into a Venmo-like option which would be especially popular among young alumni. Gifts can also be given anonymously.

The money raised for the St Mary Fund goes first to budget line items. After that, money is used for program enhancements and classroom needs. Next, funds are used for teacher appreciation awards at the end of the school year. Finally, if the principal desires, she can reserve a portion for a rainy day fund. This reserve was particularly helpful during the pandemic. In addition to the St Mary Fund, proceeds from the Gala help to supplement funds and meet classroom needs.

Amy encourages individuals to check on employer matching of donations. Some businesses do not allow matching gifts on religious donations. If this is a concern, Amy stated that there are many items that the money can go to that does not involve religious items or needs.

Halloween Debrief

Allison began by thanking the 3rd grade families for donating snacks and drinks to the teachers lounge for the month of November. She also thanked Andrea Wolf and Sheila Gray for running a successful Book Fair.

Finally, she thanked Jillian for leading Trunk or Treat. Jillian thanked Amy for her help with the event and thanked the room parents who went above and beyond. Trunk or Treat and the class parties require a lot of planning. She appreciated all those who helped in planning, donating candy, or participating. There were a total of 38 trunks decorated and the judges were from various community groups including the fire department, police department, and the parish.

As a reminder, Treats for Troops candy donations will be accepted until November 14th. We are asking only SMS families to donate to this cause as HSA will need to pay the shipping cost for the donated candy.

Upcoming Events

Farah Fehring was not present but Allison reported on her behalf. Lunch will be provided for the teachers during parent teacher conferences. Students will be helping to decorate bags for Meals on Wheels again this year.

Amy stated that a Sign Up Genius will go out for volunteers interested in leveling books for the Learning Resource Room. The job requires volunteers to download an app on their phone and simply scan each book to determine the reading level.

St Mary School will have a Theater Week beginning March 6th. SMS parent Mara Fleming will lead this event. Mara has experience running this program at other schools. The title of the play will be "The Pied Pipers of the Wild West." The songs in the show will be structured but the spoken lines will be "improv-like." Mara will need many volunteers to help. She will lead a crew week for 6-8th graders the week of February 27th, which will consist of making costumes, scenery, and other preparations. All students who are interested in performing will be given a part. There will not be try-outs. The final performance will be on March 10th. There will be one performance during the school day for the students, teachers, and staff to watch. Parents will be invited to a performance that evening.

The next HSA Meeting will be held on December 2, 2022.