



Saint Mary School

RIDGEFIELD

HSA Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2024

HSA Board Attendees:

Ann Russell, HSA Co-President

Marcy Miller & Kristy Pylypshyn, HSA Co-Vice Presidents

Vera Melkonian, HSA Co-Treasurer

Meghan Newman, Room Parent Coordinator

Welcome and Updates from Rachel Ambrosio:

- Rachel opened the meeting with a prayer.

- Rachel provided a summary of the activities from Catholic Schools Week.
 - Congratulations to the 4th and 8th grades who were the class spirit winners. They will be rewarded with an extra gym day.
 - Monday we celebrated our nation by beginning the day in the gym with morning prayer, singing the national anthem, and listening to Fran Walton speak about fulfilling our civic duty as Catholics. Rachel thanked all the parents who attended.
 - Tuesday was community day. Each grade heard from a local non-profit organization and families were asked to donate items the organizations needed. Thank you to Jeanette Campo for organizing.
 - On Wednesday, we celebrated vocations with our priests and a special guest, Father Silva. Father Silva is a young priest at St. Rose.
 - Thursday was the pep rally and class spirit day followed by the Alumni vs. Middle School Basketball game in the evening.
 - The week concluded with First Friday Mass and celebrating our teachers and staff. A special lunch was provided to the teachers and staff today.
 - Rachel was very appreciative of the students who volunteered to speak at Masses last weekend. The students spoke very eloquently and represented the school well.

- An enrollment reminder went out last week, which resulted in many more families completing enrollment.

- The 8th Grade Capstone presentations to the Capstone Board will begin next week. Rachel thanked Jeanette Campo for her work with the students on this. A few of the 8th graders will present their projects at the March HSA Meeting.
- There will be open houses coming up for prospective SMS students.
- Our first ever Literacy Night will be on 2/28.
 - Jeanette Campo has designed this as an opportunity for parents to learn more about the literacy strategies and techniques used at SMS.
- Rachel excused herself to attend a meeting with the new Parish Music Director and Father Lomnitzer, where they will be discussing the music for First Friday Masses.

HSA Updates from Ann Russell:

- Ann thanked Tricia van Brakel and Janine Simon for a successful Father Daughter Dance. There were 187 participants at the event.
- The 8th Grade's Family Bingo Night was a great success and fun for all. It was suggested that this become an annual event led by the 8th grade classes.
- The Gala Committee is looking for sponsors and auction items.
- Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 6-10. Sam Maio reported that the theme has been decided and activities for the week will be a bit simpler than recent years, but no less special to the teachers and staff.
- Our annual Golf Event is in need of wine bottle donations for the wine pull. Bottles can be given to Andrea Wolf who is chairing the event. Families can also give authorization for the school to charge their FACTS account for \$25 (1 bottle) or \$50 (2 bottles). More to come on this.

Coffee & Conversation: Kids and Technology

- Upon conclusion of the regular meeting, we transitioned to our Coffee & Conversation series featuring guest speaker and technology expert Christopher Blackman.
- Laura Maher led the group in a prayer.
- Christopher Blackman presented "Risks of Social Media to Young Pre-teen Children: Understanding and Mitigating the Dangers."
 - Christopher prepared a handout that included statistics and information regarding exposure to inappropriate content, the 2024 cyberbullying report, privacy

concerns and financial extortion, addiction and screen time, social comparison and self-esteem.

- He also provided a list of some apps that parents can use to monitor and restrict their children's social media use. Finally, he provided some enhanced mitigation strategies.
- The handout Christopher prepared, which includes numerous reputable resources on the topic, will be available on the St Mary School website.

****The next HSA Meeting will be held March 1, 2024****