

# St Thomas Aquinas Grade School General PTO Meeting

## February, 2010-Minutes

### Opening Prayer For Committee Meeting

Dear Lord,

We gather as we gather this evening for our committee meeting help us to stop and recognize one another and all the wonderful gifts we have among us. We are so thankful to share these gifts with one another and the STAGS community. You have blessed the community with such wonderful Moms and Dads who do so much to ensure their children have a wonderful school. Please be with us this evening as we share our ideas with one another and continue to bless is in all we do. We ask this in your name, Amen.

### Committee Meetings:

In Attendance: Marissa Bell, Kelly Fitzmaurice, Chi Sidner-Funk, Caren Bailey, Marlene Flickenger, Judy McCarville, Elsa Robinson, Mary Haggerty

### Scrip: Elsa Robinson-Co Chair

- Will send out information on EScrip debit cards, credit cards and Safeway cards % of sales on your cards goes to school, does not count towards \$150 obligation.
- sales have slowed down across board (weekend mass, school sales)
- scrip committee purchased software that will allow families to view their balance as well as place orders online. will ask to link added to school website.
- survey results good

### Uniform: Caren Bailey- Chair

- Sales once a month working fine
- New families shopping during off-times
- Committee working fine without actual committee.

### Authors Week: Judy McCarville-Co Chair

- This year was a huge success, received wonderful feedback
- Dr. McDermott advised authors week needs to coincide with book fair next year.
- incorporation of illustrator was very successful would like to continue to provide in future author's weeks

### **Honey Baked Ham: Marlene Flickenger- Chair**

- Christmas profit done considerably from years prior.
- will need to find new chairs for this committee for 2010-2011 school year.

## **General Meeting**

### **OPENING Prayer**

Lord Jesus as we are beginning our Lenten journey, fill us with the spirit of hope and joyful expectation. You have shared your life with us and, if we allow it to happen, we can never be alone. The future you have in store for us is beyond all human expectation.

May this meeting of ours reflect the promise we share, and may we strive to keep our school a place of hope. We ask all this in your name, Amen.

### **Scholastic Reading Counts Program-Mrs. Pierski**

- explanation of program
- O.

### **Kinder, 1st & 2nd Grade Musical Performances-Amy Burns**

- Kinder, 1st & 2nd – Whole World in His Hands
- 2nd- Arky Arky Song
- Kinder, 1st & 2nd-Father Abraham
- Kinder- Here I Am
- Kinder, 1st & 2nd -Praise Him
- 1st- Rejoice in The Lord
- Kinder, 1st & 2nd- Oh How I Love Jesus
- Kinder, 1st & 2nd-Love One Another

### **President Report: Marisa Bell**

- Reminder that CTO Scholarship Applicants, strongly encouraged to submit online before deadline, financial need is only available money to award in 2010-2011 school year.

**Principal Report: Dr. McDermott**

- Will discuss decisions made regarding school build out at our next PTO meeting 4/27 Construction to begin 5/31/10.

**Teachers Report: Marisa Bell**

**Preschool Report:**

- The Seraphim are undergoing their spring assessments. This assessment is used to see how much they have learned in the past few months. This is not the Gesell Tool that has been used in previous years. More info will be sent out to parents regarding that screening. (if needed)
- We decorated Valentine cards and prayers this past month. They were hand delivered to the patients at the Palm Valley Rehab Center. We hope that their day was brightened by these colorful cards.
- Officer Pora took time out of his busy schedule this past month. He drove his DPS car to school for the kids to explore. This exciting event concluded our theme on community helpers.
- That would be all. We are doing great!! Kelly and Marcy

**Kinder Report:**

**First Grade Report:**

**Second Grade Report:**

- Second grade has celebrated their First Reconciliation Sacrament and are trying really hard to make the right choices. We have received a lot of our Flat Stanley's back from family members or close friends and will be posting them on our wall to see what kind of adventures he went on. Flat Stanley was our second literature study we completed this year and we are now working on our third literature study The Chocolate Touch.

**Third Grade Report:**

- The STA 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have been invited to join the 2010 Great American Mail Race among Catholic schools. We received our first letter a week or so ago from a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader named Ethan. Ethan lives in Overland Park, Kansas and attends Ascension School. In today's mail, we received a letter from a young man named Leo who attends Our Lady of Grace Catholic School located in Noblesville, Indiana.

- Today our class completed their first set of 2010 GAMR letters. Miss Hubbard will be mailing them this evening. We will be sending return letters to every 3<sup>rd</sup> grader that sends a letter to us as well.
- Speaking of writing, Mrs. Pierski and Miss Hubbard are working with the children on a five-paragraph expository essay.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be starting their Confirmation and 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist preparation the first of March. Did you know that through God's grace we have supernatural powers? Namely, faith, hope, and love, Faith to believe in God, hope that God will keep his promises, and love for all mankind.
- Lastly, the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are studying Statistics and Probability in Math.

#### **Fourth Grade Report:**

- Greetings from 4<sup>th</sup> grade!
- We are always busy, especially this week. Tomorrow, Wednesday, we will be going on a field trip with Mrs. Burns to experience the Phoenix Symphony. Immediately following that we will venture over to the State Capitol where we will take a tour of our legislature in action. Learning about Arizona is a big, big part of Fourth Grade.
- In our religion class we are creating a version of the Stations of the Cross and will want to share them with our younger grades when they are completed. During Lent we will be reflecting on what Jesus endured for us. We will do this by creating a Jesus Tree. The Jesus Tree has scripture verses involved and reflection of the symbols of Lent.

#### **Fifth Grade Report:**

- On Wed March 3<sup>rd</sup> the entire class has a field trip at the Junior Achievement headquarters in Tempe. We will be taking part in their economic education program called JA BizTown. The students have been preparing for this experiential simulation for several weeks and have covered many real world topics like financial literacy, work readiness, economic fundamentals and business management.
- Some of the activities we have been practicing include preparing for an interview, calculating payroll taxes, making a deposit, identifying the best practices that make up some of the Fortune 500 Companies in our country. On Monday each student was hired for their employment position that they will be responsible for on the day of the field trip. Whether they are the CEO, CFO, Contractor, DJ, Sales Manager or Journalist, the class is very enthusiastic about taking part in this exciting day.

#### **Sixth Grade Report:**

- Junior high students have been busy learning all the rules to writing business letters including learning the correct postal abbreviations. Sixth graders have been "deep" in Roman history and early church history. In religion, we've been growing spiritually examining the spiritual works of mercy and have spent time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We are looking forward to our first field trip to the AZ Science Center in March to view the planetarium. Thank you PTO for our Young Author's visit.

## Seventh Grade Report:

- Science: 6<sup>th</sup> grades are studying plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes in depth. They now understand my car bumper-stickers!; 7<sup>th</sup> graders are studying simple animals – mollusks, roundworms, arthropods and echinoderms. They will dissect a squid, an earthworm, a large grasshopper and, in a later chapter, a frog. 8<sup>th</sup> graders are studying properties and behavior of waves – in water, in air (sound waves) and electromagnetic waves.
- Social Studies: 7<sup>th</sup> graders just finished an in-depth study of the Constitution including the articles and amendments, the rights, duties and responsibilities of citizens.
- Religion: 7<sup>th</sup> graders are reading Genesis that will include many of the early Bible stories they already know but are now put in context of history. We will skip the “begets and begats” ☺.

## Eighth Grade Report:

- The 8<sup>th</sup> grade has had a wonderful second quarter. 50% of this class was on one of the Honor Rolls. 36% were on either “Straight A” or “A” Honor Roll! The 8<sup>th</sup> grade is working on the Ten Commandments in Religion and the history of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Algebra students are working on properties of exponents and the Algebra Plus students are working on exponential, linear, and quadratic functions. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are anxious to hear about their high school choices! The acceptance letters are mailed either this Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> or next Friday, the 26<sup>th</sup>. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade math class is working on geometry now and will do a project on “tessalations” at the end of the current chapter. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade has just finished a chapter on rates, ratios, and proportions. The next chapter covers fractions, decimals, and percents

## Carrt Program-Heather Porrell

- In January, I presented to grades pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup>, St. Thomas Aquinas in artwork and music. Grades pre-K -2<sup>nd</sup> compared the similarities and differences of the many statues and paintings of St. Thomas Aquinas that we find in and around our Parish and school campus. We talked about what the different symbols and attributes mean that artists give to our patron saint- including the sun that St. Thomas Aquinas wears on his chest (which inspired the sun that the students wear on their uniform shirts) symbolizing **Sacred Learning**.
- Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> learned more about the life of Thomas Aquinas, his family, and his great devotion to the Eucharist. His devotion to the Eucharist is expressed in 1)the hymn that he penned, **Panis Angelicus** (The Bread of Heaven); 2) in artwork as the gesture of holding his thumb and first finger together; and 3) in the volumes of Summa Theological (All Great Theology) which he spent years reasoning the truths of our Catholic faith- especially the presence of Christ in the Eucharist- (symbolized by the books that are often stacked around him).
- Also in January, I presented Rembrandt’s **Return of the Prodigal Son** to Second grade students as part of their preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We compared Christ’s parable of the Prodigal Son to Rembrandt’s painting and discussed the four steps of Reconciliation- Contrition, Confession, Absolution and Performing Penance. Students were given the task of

illustrating how they believe the Prodigal Son reformed his sinful ways and carried out his penance.

- Fourth Graders are studying the Mysteries of the Rosary this year and are creating four separate rosaries with each rosary representing five symbols unique to each of the Luminous, Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries. They now have completed a Luminous Mysteries rosary and a Joyful Mysteries rosary. In March the fourth graders will be making their Sorrowful Mysteries rosary and ending the year with a Glorious Mysteries rosary.
- This month, to coincide with the season of Lent, I am presenting to all grade levels artwork that depicts The Fall of Man (Original Sin) as represented by images of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. I am tailoring the presentations to suit the maturity of the students- younger grades will be presented clothed images of Adam & Eve while our middle school students will discuss four different representations that depict 1)Adam & Eve before the serpent's temptation, 2)Eating the apple- disobeying God, 3)Being expelled from Eden, and 4) a cubist painting of Adam & Eve (to give a contemporary artistic interpretation of Adam & Eve).
- The presentations focus on the passages from Genesis 2:4-25 (Creation of Adam & Eve), and Genesis 3:1-24 (The Fall of Man). We will discuss the difference between Original Sin and Actual Sin, consequence of sin (CCC 1472) and the ways that we move closer to God during the season of Lent through Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.
- For additional information regarding the Catholic Art Traditions (CARTT) program, and a synopsis of monthly presentations, please visit the St. Thomas Aquinas School website and click on the CARTT link.

### **Margy Eroh report**

- It is Scholarship Application Time
- A flyer has been sent home with your children with instructions on how to apply online.
- You can now fill out the application on-line and the school strongly encourages parents to use the on-line application.
- Round 1 Deadline is April 15<sup>th</sup>. Please be aware that only "Financial Need" is available. There will be no box for "Fund Availability". Even if you think, there is no way we will get funds based on financial need it is still encouraged to try. This is the only way funds will be dispersed. You will be required to submit your 2009 tax returns. You can still apply even if you file an extension.
- Lastly, if at all possible you can meet the April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, please do so. There is no guarantee how much money will be available after the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

### **Spanish class- Senora Mena**

- students are continuing to increase their Spanish vocabulary and to improve their communication skills in different areas:
- grades k, 1, & 2 are finishing up their clothing unit;

- grade 3 is completing their unit on months and seasons;
- grade 4 is in the process of drawing and labeling pictures of their favorite season which includes weather, special events, clothing, and sports of that season; They are also practicing for their oral presentations on these pictures.
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade is practicing their scripts for oral presentations using shopping terminology— they have also created catalogs that include clothing, footwear, jewelry, accessories, and miscellaneous items;
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade is in the process of oral presentations for emergency situations;
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade is increasing their verb usage from their text to express what activities they like and don't like to do; and
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade is expanding prior knowledge to expressing feelings and needs.
- Each grade is also testing orally on their assigned grade prayer.

### **Closing Prayer**

Thank you Lord, for allowing us to come together this evening. We thank you for all the parents and teachers gathered here tonight and for the exceptional talents of our children that were shared with us this evening. We ask for your blessing as we go forward in our Lenten journey. Help us to come to the Father by knowing you, loving you and serving you in each other. May our school be a place of wonder, learning and peace where the lessons of today prepare us for the challenges of tomorrow.

May your Mother, Mary, guide our footsteps as she guided yours.

This prayer we make in faith. Amen.