

## **Nativity of Mary School Commission Meeting October 8, 2009**

Members Present: Therese Cassidy, Barb Castagna, Tim Forby, Sue Koplín, Lori Matlon, Katy McGrane, Dan Riley, and Corinne Thomson.

### 7:35 Opening of Meeting

- Prayer
- Approved May minutes
- Reminder of Picture Day, 10/23, for new committee members

### General Updates

- **Marathon Update and Feedback:** The marathon took place on a rainy Friday afternoon so the walking took place in the school hallways. The students started walking in PALS groups and ended in classroom groups. The students seemed to have fun and gave positive feedback. There were some parents present, but the weather and day/time were probably factors in the presence of more parents. Doing the marathon on the same day as the Metro marathon in Minneapolis was discussed. The date for this is normally on a Saturday in October. Nativity has done it on that day in the past, but each time the weather has been cold and has negatively impacted the event. Suggestions for next year:
  - Do a better job of explaining the “marathon” name and its history
  - Prioritize what the goals for the fundraiser are and proceed from there
  - Possibly make it service-orientated, using a public space to service (ie. A park, other suggestions from article in The Catholic Spirit that was circulated)
  - Possibly make it a Saturday project and then return to Nativity for lunch
  - Check with area Catholic schools and inquire of what they do. Commission members should information gather.
  - Katy talk with the Marathon chair person to start planning for next year. Therese is interested in helping with this planning.
- **Fall Festival:** There is a committee of people meeting every 2 weeks. It is planned for Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 mass to 10:30pm. There is a chicken dinner, games in classrooms, beer tent, Scott Sorenson’s band, pull tabs, and bingo.
- **Archdiocese updates:** JeanMarie Grassl and Lori Matlon attended the regional information meeting at St. Richard’s in September. It was a bilingual meeting with an opportunity to give one’s opinion. There was not a concrete plan given. The archdiocese has given a timeline through June 2010 in which a plan will then

be communicated. Barb then spoke about our deanery (Richfield, South Minneapolis, and Bloomington Catholic churches and schools) and their meetings. She has suggested that the deanery hire a development director to ensure a strong message of Catholic school opportunities in this area and to consolidate the deanery's efforts to market itself. It could then send a message of the greater responsibility to keep Catholic schools thriving.

- School Survey: There was a brief discussion of survey models, but no decision was made to pursue using one.
- After School Programs: Barb said some of the classes (i.e. Mad Science and fencing) are being held, but some have been canceled (i.e. Abrakadoodle and Chess). Overall, attendance is lower than last year.

#### Principal Updates

- Marketing update: Dan Woychick is meeting with Barb and members of the marketing committee to discuss various ways to market Nativity of Mary. Barb also mentioned the Channel 5 news piece that showed on Monday night. She wants to hear from anyone with other suggestions for news articles/stories. Sue mentioned the school safety patrol program as a news story in the near future.
- Pre-school update: Barb met with Lori Glynn at Our Lady of Peace Catholic school. They just started a preschool program. She had some suggestions/information to share:
  - At accredited schools the preschool program does not have to start out with an accreditation. This can be worked on after the opening of the program.
  - A small committee of parents from the school should work together to develop a marketing strategy and communication efforts about the new program.
  - Offer various opportunities for preschoolers: 2,3, and 5 days/week enrollments, contact with specialists from the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade school, a preschool in the morning and Hi-Five program in the afternoon model, after preschool care.

Next steps mentioned for Nativity are looking into the appropriate space for the program and looking into how school insurance is impacted.

#### Sub Committee updates

- PPC—The commission representative on this council does not have to be a parishioner. Therese Cassidy has volunteered to be this representative.
- Finance—Tony will be coming to a meeting in the near future. The parish offerings are \$31,000.00 behind for the year. This is 10-12% off the budgeted amounts thus far. For the school, the budget was set on having 311 students in

the building. We currently have 305 students. It was asked how much Nativity of Mary parish subsidizes the school budget. \$106,000.00 is the subsidy with \$17,000.00 coming from St. Edward's, \$15,000.00 coming from St. Bonaventure, and \$35,000.00 from individual donors (including last April's silent auction live auction item). All financial aid scholarship set aside at the school level is being used.

#### Open Discussion

- Dan talked about what he has been hearing about the Nativity of Our Lord Men's Club in St. Paul. They have a strong presence in that community and financially support the school there.
- A suggestion was made to have a Saturday planning session in the near future for the commission. A longer time period is desired to get together and plan. November 21<sup>st</sup> was suggested as a meeting date.
- There was a reminder for Nativity to continue to sell its product and accentuate the community component of the school.
- Sustainability grants were brought up to possibly pursue as Nativity continues its efforts to be "green". Therese will have an update at a future meeting about the lunch program and that committee's work.

9:10 Meeting adjourned