

St Peter's Parents Association Meeting
September 19, 2014
parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org

The Library was filled with parents and members of our school community. Below are the highlights. Please note that the next PA meeting will take place at 8:30am on **Friday, October 24th** in the Library. Our aim in these PA meetings is to pack as much helpful information as possible in one hour without running over the 9:30am mark. All parents are welcome!

I. Welcome and Introductions:

- A. PA Officers- Upper School VP's: Gage Johnston (mgagej@usa.net) and Nancy Klinghoffer (nklinghoffer@comcast.net)
Lower School VP: Liz Blum (elisabeth_hutson@yahoo.com)
ECD VP: Jenna McNeill (jenna.mcneill@me.com)

B. Tiffany Kelly, tkelly@st-peters-school.org:

1. Family Fun Day: Saturday 9/20 from 11-2 pm. Building on the two "Family Fun Days" from last year, Tiffany invited all families to join her and Head of School Shawn Kelly on the Wiggins Lawn for good food, music, and fun. This event was very well attended and a great success.
2. SPS Bookclub : This year's SPS book club selections will be alternating every month between fiction and non-fiction. The first selection of the year is The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho. Tiffany and school psychologist Dr. Karen Edelstein will lead the discussions again this year in the school's lobby. All families and any interested friends are invited to attend either the morning or evening sessions:

Wednesday, Oct 22nd at 7 pm

Thursday, Oct 21st at 8:30 am

3. SPS Story Time: Story Time offers children 0-3 years old and their parents/caregivers a fun opportunity to connect with each other and the school. Story time lasts for 30 minutes, and generally follows a topical theme. Younger siblings, friends, and neighbors are all welcome to attend! If you would like to volunteer to facilitate a storytime session, please contact Tiffany or Meghan Thorell in the Development Department (mthorell@st-peters-school.org).

II. Volunteer Needs:

- A. PA Secretary – If you are able to spare 2 hours per month, the PA would be very grateful to have you as PA Secretary. The commitment involves 1 hour to attend a meeting, and 1 hour to type minutes between the Friday meeting and the following Tuesday. If you are interested, please email: parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org
- B. Class Parents – Thank you to all who volunteered! Class Parents are being finalized per grade and a list will appear in the next weekly bulletin.
- C. All SPS parents, please note that the role of class parent involves the following:

- Identify yourself as class parent to the teacher and the families in your class. This is especially important for the families in your class who may be new to the school this year.
- Try to attend monthly PA meetings whenever possible, 8.30am in the library. Meetings for the 2014-2015 school year are now searchable on the SPS website: <http://st-peters-school.org/parents/calendar/>. We look forward to your input!
- Serve as liaison when needed between the parents in your class and the Parents' Association (e.g., sending short email updates to share pertinent information with the other parents in your class.)
- Organize monetary collections to cover gifts for your class' teachers, assistant teachers (if any), and staff. Many class parents find it helpful to ask the parents in their class for a small sum of money up front each Fall to cover the entire year as opposed to continuing to ask at various times throughout the year (for holiday teacher gifts, end of the year teacher gifts, to fund class projects as needed, etc). Keep in mind that these gifts are optional and are up to the discretion and imagination of the parent body in your class.
- Organize class projects for school events (e.g., Spring Auction class project) with the participation of the children in coordination with the teacher.
- Organize and coordinate, with the permission of the teacher, any other class events that may be requested (e.g., end of year class breakfast).

- D. Holiday Sale and Spring Auction: These are two of the biggest volunteer-driven events for the school this year. Sign up sheets will be available in the lobby prior to both events. For details on Holiday Sale and Spring Auction, see below.

III. Upcoming Parents Association Projects:

- a. Used Uniform Swap – Come browse the items and fill any holes in your child's school uniform. The used uniform swap will take place sometime before Oct 31st before the students change over into winter uniforms. Please email Sharon Loughran or Kate Donato if interested in donating items or helping set up- sharonl@temple.edu or katedonato@msn.com
- b. Holiday Sale – December 5th and 6th. SPS is the ideal place to purchase your holiday wreaths, greens, and trees this year. New SPS spirit items will also be available as holiday gifts (wine glasses, totes, etc.). Approximately 30-40 volunteers are needed to help run this year's Holiday Sale, which includes Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 6th. Look for the sign-up sheet and detailed schedule of events to appear in the lobby in mid-November. Please email parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org or see Karin Morse or Meghan Thorell in the Development Office if you have questions about this festive event.
- c. Teacher Faculty Appreciation – Diana Urbanchuk, Chair – Diana@urbanchuk.com
 - a. The PA added this initiative last year to show faculty and staff our deep gratitude. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and we want to build on that success this year. Thank you to Diana Urbanchuk for spearheading these efforts this year and for starting the first day of school off right with a small gesture of thanks for our faculty. This year's events will involve a faculty luncheon (date TBA) as well as other reminders of our ongoing appreciation throughout the year. For the faculty appreciation luncheon, interested families are invited to bring in a food item (appetizer/entrée/side dish/dessert/beverage) to support the event this year. (Date TBA)
- d. Spring Auction – Auction, end of March 2015, TBA

- a. Catherine Signorello, Overall Chair, Auction – csignorello23@msn.com
Catherine gave an auction update and announced this year's theme: "Passport to Paris." There are three auction meetings scheduled for October 1, December 10 and February 25. All parents are encouraged to help support the Spring Auction by donating or soliciting new, unusual items or experiences, and of course, by attending! Catherine thanked the many volunteers who have already come forward.
-Funds raised from this year's auction will go toward: 1) updating the school's server, 2) 10% of net proceeds fund professional development opportunities for faculty, and 3) ongoing SPS initiatives.
-Auction items will be grouped by category as in years past. We are still looking for volunteers to run the Travel, Just for You, Sports, and Personal Experiences categories as well as the new Gift Card board and the Party Board. Catherine and Karin Morse in the Development Dept are ready to collect any interesting auction items or experiences that you can give or get. The earlier the better - we'd like all items in by December, please!
- b. Nadine Biles, Corporate Sponsor Chair, Auction – nadinebiles@gmail.com
Nadine announced that we have already raised \$5000 of corporate support for this year's auction! Nadine is excited to build on this momentum and encourages everyone to pick up sponsorship packages (available from her or from Karin Morse or Meghan Thorell in the Development Office) and to share them with eligible or interested vendors. Please feel free to email Nadine with any vendor/corporate leads that you may know of.
- e. "We are St Peter's" Pride Campaign –Kate and Amy outlined various opportunities to showcase what is truly special about SPS students this year. Current ideas include showcasing unique student experiences in or outside of school, students mentoring throughout the grades, and highlighting ongoing student life and community service initiatives. Watch for updates on the lobby kiosk screen and for more details to come.
- f. Frequently Asked Questions – Daisy Fried, Chair- daisyfried@gmail.com. This joint project between PA and Admissions Office came about last year to address some of the unforeseen questions that face SPS families as they join the school and as they continue to transition from one grade/division to the next. The goal of this ongoing project is to offer parents a verified and searchable document (both online at the SPS website parent tab and as a hard copy) to answer FAQ's. Daisy is continuing to compile and update the SPS data again this year and she encourages feedback from all parents about any questions they encounter.

IV. Shawn Kelly – Headmaster – skelly@st-peters-school.org, Remarks and Updates:

- a. School Culture: Shawn discussed SPS school culture and how we behave as a community. When he asked students last year during School Service to raise their hands if they were proud to be SPS students, just a few hands went up, which Shawn saw as a good barometer for improvement and further emphasis throughout the year on how students can be empowered to make their school great. Shawn underscored the importance of the responsibilities being given to the students this year in order for them to earn the right to feel proud of their efforts. Shawn established a goal for SPS this year to make a distinction between constant/rote praise vs. earned praise. Shawn added that part of the school culture initiative is having a faculty role modeling healthy interactions and standards amongst themselves and for all students.

- b. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program: Shawn outlined the many ways that the SEL program is being embedded into the curriculum this year-- via scheduled class time, specific SEL homework exercises, and increased faculty resources. Dr. Karen Edelstein, Jess Cronin-Connelly, Jessica Kulick, and Kate Terrell will be teaching and supporting this ongoing program. They will be focusing on conflict resolution, resilience, and negotiation. Shawn also outlined the Academic Learning Program, which is in place to address student academic needs and is led by Karen O'Brien.
- c. Clubs: Clubs have been added this year to give students access to new and exciting fields not covered under standard academic or afterschool course curriculum. Clubs include: Robotics, Government, Cooking, etc. Complete lists of clubs and members are currently posted in the school lobby.
- d. Innovation Lab: The Innovation Lab is a school-wide initiative, under the leadership of new faculty member Dirk Parker. Dirk also teaches Science in 7th and 8th grades. Shawn discussed that the innovation lab will be more than just robots and a 3D printer; he emphasized that this will be a space where kids can tinker and build just as they would in a garage or shed. The lab should be completed within the next week or two.
- e. Facilities: Shawn gave an overview of the updated physical plant, including the new tidy, bright and organized Kindergarten space. Shawn stated that cleanliness and mental health have been proven to be positively correlated: kids tend to do better in a clean, tidy environment and actually test better when neatly dressed. These initiatives to clean up the campus also support the goal of inspiring greater respect within our school environment.
- f. Visiting Scholar: Morris Wolff, a distinguished lawyer and humanitarian, is our first St. Peter's Visiting Scholar. Morris will be leading SPS students in a mock trial program this year and will be reinforcing the concept of empowering our students as leaders. He will be exposing students to the concept of seeing themselves as advocates for the things they value. Morris will be leading students on trips to visit local federal judges, including the possibility of a trip to visit and observe the Supreme Court in DC.
- g. Advisors/Advisory System in Upper School: Shawn outlined the new model of using faculty advisors in place of homeroom teachers for Upper School. Shawn added that faculty advisors will help to keep track of their advisees across all classes and aid in their overall success at SPS. Shawn mentioned that emailing your child's advisor is the best way for Upper School parents to communicate general concerns, updates, or issues. For consistency, students assigned to their advisors in 5th grade will keep them throughout 6th grade, and students assigned to their advisors in 7th grade will remain with that advisor through the 8th grade.
- h. State of School Address: Shawn invited all parents and members of the SPS community to come and hear his State of School Address on Thursday, October 9th at 6:30pm.

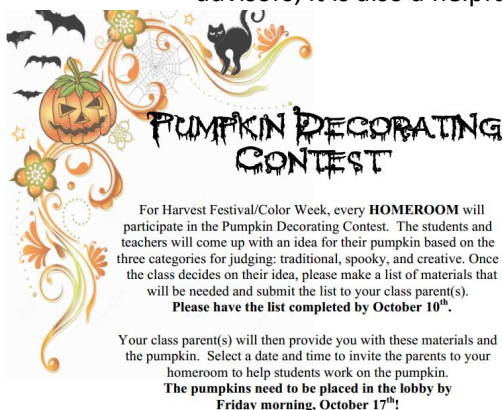
V. Color Week and Harvest Festival, October 14 – 17th, 2014:

- a. Harvest Festival Chair, Suzanne O'Brien: suzyob35@gmail.com
Thank you to Suzanne for coordinating fine food for this year's Harvest Festival!

- b. Karin Morse gave an overview of the exciting events that will make up “Color Week” (October 14-17). Color Week will culminate in the celebration of Color Day at 2:30pm on Friday, October 17th. To celebrate Color Day, Grades 1-8 will gather together to watch as Mr. B. announces the new members of the Garnet and Gray. First graders will walk into the ceremony wearing white shirts and will receive their new colored shirt during the ceremony as they are inaugurated into Garnet or Gray! New students in Lower and Upper school will also receive their color during the ceremony.
- c. Other color week spirit events will include:
Tuesday: Clash Day- students are encouraged to mix and match crazy clothing combinations!
Wednesday: Tshirts/Jeans Day: students can ditch their uniform and go casual in tshirts/jeans. Students will also be supporting and participating in SPS’s annual Pie Eating Contest on this day.
Thursday: Crazy Hat Day- students can augment their uniform with a zany hat.
Friday: LS/US Students will wear their Garnet and Gray sports uniforms to school. At 2:30pm, Bag Pipers will pipe the students around the block and will lead them back to the school campus to celebrate color day. The students will be singing and performing Morris Dances. The Color Day ceremony will be followed by the school-wide Tug of War. Harvest Festival will then begin and extend into the early evening. Harvest Festival will offer carnival games, festive food, and the ever-popular dunk tank!

Based on feedback from prior years, this year’s Harvest Festival will have an event staff running the games so that parents and students can fully enjoy attending the festival with their children.

Pumpkin Carving Contest: The contest will take place again this year, and will be judged during Harvest Festival. Class Parents will support the Pumpkin Carving Contest this year by helping each class decorate one pumpkin which will be on display in the lobby by Friday Oct 17. Attached is the overview given to homeroom teachers and US advisors; it is also a helpful update for parents and students:



Categories for judging:

- Traditional
- Spooky
- Creative

NEXT PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING Friday OCTOBER 24th 8:30 am in Library – Speakers include Matt Evans, Academic Dean and new Upper School Faculty. Our aim in these PA meetings is to pack as

much helpful information as possible in one hour without running over the 9:30am mark. Please email us (parentsassociation@st-peters-school.org) with any future agenda items. Thanks for reading.