

St. Mark Parent Club General Meeting Minutes September 2016

The St. Mark Parent Club held its 2016-17 school year kickoff meeting on Tuesday, September 20th, 2016.

About 35 attendees learned about new Virtus Training volunteer requirements from Mrs. Linda Cap, St. Mark Church's Virtus Training coordinator. Parent Club fundraising initiatives and events, an update on Out-to-Lunch and Principal Cocita's report rounded out a full, but informative, agenda. Mrs. Patricia McGinty, a St. Mark's second grade teacher, represented the school faculty along with Mrs. Cocita.

Mrs. Cap informed parents that Bishop Lennon has revised the Diocese's child sexual abuse protection policy and ministry conduct standards. Those who are already Virtus trained will need to review these two new revised documents and submit signed acknowledgment forms to Mrs. Cap at the rectory office. The acknowledgement forms are at the end of each of the publications, which are entitled *The Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse - Revised June 2016* and **The Standards of Conduct for Ministry - Revised 2016**. Both documents are available online at www.dioceseofcleveland.org. Persons who will be Virtus trained for the first time will also be required to review these publications and submit signed acknowledgement forms.

BCI fingerprint checks, which may be obtained at the BMV in Warren Village for \$32, will now be required of volunteers every five years. New volunteers will have to be fingerprinted while volunteers who have previously been fingerprinted will have to get an updated fingerprint check if their last check is more than five years old. An orientation meeting on social media that must also be attended as part of the new Virtus compliance procedures will also be scheduled in the future.

If you are not Virtus trained but would like to receive the training here at St. Mark, or if you are trained but have questions on the new requirements, contact Mrs. Cap at the St. Mark rectory or send an email to her at lcap@stmarkcleveland.com

Parent Club President Kim Matile provided highlights from the Treasurer's Report. The Parent Club board has already approved funding for this school year including teacher classroom allowances, transportation for field trips, the emergency message alert system, Father/Daughter Dance and Mother/Son events, McKeon Group student support programs, Catholic Schools Week, recess Zumba, teacher appreciation gifts, WSMS (the school news channel) and Lego Club. Additional programs and projects will be considered throughout the school year.

Parent Club fundraising and events were reviewed in detail. Parents were reminded to send in Box Tops for Education labels. Cheryl Parker reminded participants that the Save Around Coupon Books have been sent home and the books have great cost-saving for area stores that can add up to big savings worth more than the \$25 cost of the book. Peggy McElfresh informed parents about Caritas sandwich making for the needy,

a fun monthly after school project with students to help those in need. Jen McNeely updated parents on the new Lion's Den Bookstore, which operates in the Social Hall, where students can buy St. Mark-branded items as well as generic school supplies such as filler paper, pencils, folders, etc.

Key fundraising and other Parent Club events include the following. Be sure to save these dates on your calendar:

- October 5, 2016 --- Muffins in the Morning from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. with a living rosary church event from 8:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m for those who can stay
- October 6, 2016 --- Dine to Donate at Angelo's Pizza (20% back to St. Mark Parent Club on all orders --- dining in, takeout or delivery)
- October 28, 2016 --- K-8 Halloween Party during school hours
- November 3-4, 2016 --- Family fun at Kalahari
- November 10, 2016 --- Dine to Donate at PJ McIntrye's from 4pm-9pm (20% of all orders going to Parent Club)
- November 11, 2016 --- Donuts at Dawn from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. with a Veteran's Day church ceremony to follow for those who can stay
- November 12, 2016 --- Barnes & Noble Book Fair with a percentage of purchases going to Parent Club
- January 20, 2017 -- Cleveland Monsters Game - \$15 tickets on sale from the Parents Club
- February 11, 2017 --- Night at the Races
- June 3, 2017 --- Run for the Arts

Parent Club will also be supporting activities during Catholic Schools Week (January 29 to February 4, 2017).

To stay in the information loop during the year, please be sure to register at no cost to be a Parent Club member so you can receive special notices during the school year. Monitor the school's web site (www.stmarkwestpark.com) for the "Blue Folder" for updates on special offerings, events and activities that impact your child/children. Also be sure to register with the mass notification system for urgent and/or emergency alerts from the school.

Misty Musson and Kim Matile provided an update on new developments with the Out to Lunch program. St. Mark parent and Chef Brian Okin will be a new vendor beginning in October who will be working to develop new menu items. Subway and pizza will continue on other days during October. It was discussed at the separate parent meeting earlier in September that Chef Okin is interested in expanding his services to provide Out to Lunch meals for the other two days pending feedback on October's experience. Parent questions at the two meetings covered a variety of topics including allergies and special dietary needs, the status of other vendors such as Subway and pizza, menu considerations, meal pricing, logistical operations with potential changes, and other topics. Feedback from parents and students on these Out to Lunch changes and experiences are encouraged for the next Parent Club meeting in October.

One of the many benefits of attending Parent Club meetings is to be first in line for the latest updates from the Principal's Report by Mrs. Cocita. At our September meeting, Mrs. Cocita advised that enrollment was at 423 students, increased by a few from last year and nudging closer to the maximum enrollment. She shared that lead testing was performed and everything came up fine from that initial test; however, the Diocese will be contracting with a company to conduct professional tests (date pending). Water will be shut off for anywhere from six to eight hours, she has been told.

Eighth graders will be shadowing at area high schools and Mr. Gonyeau, the school's technology instructor, will be leading a high school preparation test course later this year to help students strengthen their testing skills. Mrs. Cocita discussed the challenges of standardized testing including the state-required third grade reading guarantee test. Students will have, in one form or another, about seven opportunities for testing and student interventions will be provided for those in need, she said.

Mrs. Cocita shared the experience students and staff had during the September 11th Patriots Day service and Constitution Day. The Junior Great Books book study club will return this year with the support of the Parent Club. An Ohio Highway Patrol lieutenant will bring the "5 Minutes for Life - Start Talking" drug prevention program to the school on October 3rd. Looking forward, Mrs. Cocita shared that she is leading school efforts to pursue formal designation as a STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Math) school that will require meeting a number of criteria and standards to be evaluated by a certification board in Columbus.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 18, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in Classroom 4 with Special Guest: Detective Kevin Krolkosky of the McKeon Group who will have a conversation with **parents on "Keeping Kids Safe on Social Media."** Detective Krolkosky provided an initial presentation at the school-wide parent meeting earlier in September and will continue the conversation with tips on steps parents can take for keeping our children safe on social media.