

Our Lady of the Assumption School

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February 26, 2008



With Hands to Serve and Hearts to Love

Town Hall Meeting Recap

Last Thursday OLA School held a Town Hall meeting around the topic of school finances. At this meeting Linda Bloom shared with our parents her perspective on the benefits of an OLA education; I spoke about the future direction of the school; Father Brendan spoke about parish and school financial stewardship; Dan Cairns spoke about tuition, the budget, and long term financial plans, and Marty Holbus introduced our Annual Giving Program. These presentations were followed by a question and answer session.

As I have mentioned in past bulletins, the purpose of the meeting was to provide transparency to our finances and to make clear to everyone the financial picture at OLA. Many families were not able to attend the meeting so I will share some of the main points that were discussed.

There is good news and bad news with respect to the state of our school finances. The good news is we have a wonderful and amazing PTG and community that financially support our school. Because of them we are able to raise nearly \$200,000 each year if you include Scrip. These funds help us keep tuition from skyrocketing and ensure that we are able to have a program that meets the needs of our students. Secondly, we are blessed with an endowment of that also helps balance the budget and keep tuition down. The generous support of our community and foresight of the parish to establish an endowment has given our school a quality program and an economic advantage that many, many schools would envy.

The bad news is the cost of educating a child continues to rise and as a result tuition rates must increase. For the 2008-2009 school year, tuition will rise 9%. I point out in my letter to families in the enclosed registration packet the specific factors that necessitate this increase. This is a problem that is not unique to OLA. All Catholic schools in the area are burdened by the same financial challenges and our tuition continues to be below the average in the region.

As the costs to educate our children increase, I am working with the OLA Finance and Planning Committees to find ways to keep tuition within reach of all of our families and to take our program, facilities, capital, and technology to higher levels. The challenge is finding ways to increase our revenue without taxing our families. We are taking a very hard look at increasing revenues by implementing an *alumni relations program* that will establish a long-term relationship with OLA Alumni and will solicit their financial support. We are also looking into developing a *planned giving program* that will encourage alumni and parishioners to consider our school in their estate planning. We are exploring the idea of bringing a development director on board to oversee these and other responsibilities. We would like to find ways to significantly build up our endowment so our school will be able to lower tuition over time instead of raising it, and so monies raised by our PTG and our Annual Giving Program can be used to fund capital improvements, technology, and other school needs.

Fortunately, the OLA community has many talented people who have lent their gifts of time, treasure, and talent to help us with these long-term financial plans. We are working hard to make our vision for the school a reality. We welcome any suggestions or ideas that you may have to help our school become even more financially strong.

One place we all can help is by spreading the word about how wonderful our school and community are. Like most schools in the diocese and in the San Juan School District, we are facing declining enrollments. We need to reverse this trend. Full classrooms help to keep tuition costs down. Given the quality of our program here, every classroom should be filled. As Linda Bloom pointed out in her presentation, OLA has so much to offer our students. We prepare our students excellently in their Catholic faith and in academics. Over 93% of OLA students are accepted to a Catholic high school; all OLA Graduates state that they are well prepared for the rigors of Catholic high school, and the Catholic high schools tell us the same thing. This is a very special, faith filled community that genuinely cares for one another and the school. The total OLA experience shapes our children over their nine years here into Christians who understand and model Gospel values.

Marty Holbus closed the presentation by introducing our Annual Giving Program, formally called the Family Giving Program. The Annual Giving Program will begin next week and information will be sent in next Tuesday's bulletin so

this will be a brief summary. The purpose of the Annual Giving Program is to give families an opportunity to contribute the difference between what it costs to educate a child at OLA and what families actually pay. The difference for one child is \$933. For families with two children the difference is \$3,166, for three children \$5,459, and for four children the difference is \$9,962. To make up the total difference and to balance our budget, we will need the community to contribute as a whole at least \$49,000. If every family were to participate, we would need each one to donate \$276.37. Last year we met our goal with 125 families participating and sending in an average of \$388.26. Thank you! As we kick off this year's Annual Giving Program, please remember that donations are tax deductible.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the families that attended our Town Hall Meeting. Your input and concern were sincerely welcomed and appreciated. I would also like to thank our presenters for spending time preparing for their presentations and working with the CSAC to move the school forward in a healthy direction with its finances.

God bless,
Robert Loue

Due This Week:

- ❑ SCRIP orders are due by 8:00 a.m. on Friday, February 22.

What to wear this Friday: Friday is a regular uniform day.

This Week at OLA

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| Registration | Registration packets for the 2008-2009 school year are in your bulletin envelope today. Please fill out and return all forms and your \$255 registration fee by Thursday, March 6. |
| Field Trip | The third grade class will visit the Measurement Standards Department. |
| Report Cards | Report cards go home with your students this Friday, February 29. |
| Choir | The choir will perform at the 5:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, March 1. Sunday, March 9, is the Choristers Guild Children's Choral Festival. |
| Fish Fry | Remember that this Friday, February 29 is the Parish Fish Fry. Dinner starts at 6:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross start at 7:30 p.m. and this is all followed by an ice cream social. Please contact the parish office to make reservations. |

Next Week at OLA

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| Parent Meeting | Parents with children who will be receiving First Eucharist will meet on Thursday, March 6, at 7:00 p.m. |
| Minimum Day | Friday, March 7, is a minimum day. Students in grades 1-8 will attend school from 8:00 a.m. until noon. ALL kindergarteners will attend school from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. The second grade parents will provide lunch for the faculty. |

Bits and Pieces

YIPPY KI YAH!! OLA's 58th ANNUAL COUNTRY FAIR IS COMING OUR WAY!! Please see enclosed flyers.

PAL Track: If you are interested in helping to coach the track team, please attend a meeting with Mike Barnes on Wednesday, February 27, at 5:00 p.m. at Steve's Pizza. The track team is very large this year and we need parents to help manage the kids. No experience necessary.

Missoula Children's Theatre: We are looking forward to the arrival of the Missoula directors on March 10th for our 3:00 p.m. auditions. We will see you there!! Questions? lindawbloom@surewest.net

St. Francis Summer Camps: St. Francis High School is pleased to announce summer camp opportunities for girls entering 6th through 9th grade in the fall of 2008. Information and registration forms are available on the St. Francis website at http://www.stfrancis.org/academics/summer_session.html. Some of the camps are very popular and may fill up quickly. Early registration is recommended.

Kudos

Congratulations to the JV Comp boys basketball team. They finished second in the John Paul II tournament over the President's Day weekend. En route to the 2nd place finish, they defeated St. Ignatius, who had been undefeated all year. Kirk Langley was selected to the all tourney team. Great playing boys!!!

Congratulations to the JV Boys Rec Team (white). They finished second in the Holy Spirit tournament. Good job! Kudos to Beverly and Ashley Kyalwazi. They won their divisions in the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest and are now advancing to the Northern California Competition.

Notes from the Athletic Director

Little Dribbler game times have been changed this week due to First Eucharist pictures. The games are at St. Mel's. Game times are

8am - 3rd girls	12pm - 2nd boys
9am - 3rd boys	1pm - 2nd girls
10am - 1st girls	2pm - 4th boys
11am - 1st boys	

Congratulations to all of our teams for an outstanding season.

Sixth grade girls, if you are interested in signing up for flag football, please sign up by Friday, February 29. Practice times and game times TBD. Please contact Mr. Neri with any questions.