

St James PTA Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2015
7:00 PM in the School Cafeteria

Jeanne O'Connor called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer: Christian Buckman

Introductions: Jeanne O'Connor

Jeanne welcomed everyone to our first Open PTA Meeting for the 2015-2016 school year. Since we had some new parents at the meeting, we went around the room for everyone to introduce themselves and state their role, and what grade(s) their child(ren) is in.

Principal's Report: Mrs. Giordano

- New Fundraising Idea – Mrs. Giordano met with the PTA President and Vice Presidents to discuss the particulars, and is pleased to move forward with the idea. There is great energy surrounding the event, and she is excited to see it materialize. Rob Lowe will further explain the fundraiser in the Vice President's Report.
- School Security – The school has received state funds for the school year 2015-16 to purchase items related to school security. Mrs. Giordano would like to purchase some security cameras for the entryways into the school. In addition, a TV monitor will need to be purchased for viewing the cameras. She would also like to purchase some 3M paper to place on the windows for reinforcement in order to further secure from break-ins. Finally, there is a need to upgrade from the current walkie-talkies, which allow for easy communication between Mrs. Giordano, Mrs. Golden, Office staff, and RBC staff.
- Technology – New Surface tablets were purchased for use in the classrooms from last year's PTA funds. A new Technology teacher was hired this year, who is highly qualified and has been introducing some great concepts and projects with the students.
- Dress Down Days – This year, we are coordinating our charitable giving with the guidelines that Pope Francis has laid out on a global level. This will give the students a better understanding of charity work and various causes, not just here in our local community, but across our country and internationally as well. Mrs. Giordano will be coordinating with Tina Catapano and Lisa Goga on Care Steps in order to choose the causes for the \$2 Dress Down Days. The next Dress Down Day will be Wednesday, October 14 for Mary's Place, which assists those suffering with breast cancer.
- Red Ribbon Week – It will take place the week of October 26-30, 2015. Mrs. Giordano and Mrs. Golden coordinated the Drug and Alcohol Awareness curriculum. There will be an assembly with a Police sniffing dog and his handler. Students can wear a red shirt backwards on the free Dress Down Day on Tuesday, October 27 to show that they are "turning their back on drugs".
- AdvancED provided their report on the state of the school, which is available on the school website. They will not be coming to do a school visit in November. However, the Diocese will be coming to look into their recommendations.

- School Website – Mrs. Giordano would like to make some updates, so she will work with Maria Rimmele on some new ideas.
- The school year has been going very well so far. Mrs. Giordano feels that the PTA and parent volunteers have a “make it work” attitude, and thus, the school spirit has been revitalized.

President’s Report: Jeanne O’Connor

- Jeanne encouraged the parents in attendance to volunteer and get involved, and to feel free to raise questions in the meeting discussion.
- New Preschool Liaison – Jeanne introduced Jackie Hines as the volunteer liaison to the preschool. The reason for this position is that in the past, there had been some disconnect between the K-8 portion of the school and the preschool, and there was really no reason for it. In bringing Mrs. Hines in as the liaison, we hope to provide more information about our goals as a school, as well as inclusion in more school events going forward.
- Fee-Exempt Positions – These are all full-year commitments and are needed for the safety of the students. We are almost fully-staffed, but still have 1-2 more slots available for the lunchroom and playground. Each volunteer must sign in at the security kiosk, which keeps track of attendance.
- Visitor Sign-In – We have been having an internet issue that knocks it offline, but Mrs. Giordano is confident that we are close to a solution.
- Fall Fundraiser – The deadline was extended to today, October 7. There was no Committee Chair to volunteer this year, so Jeanne has handled the fundraiser with help from the Executive Board. The orders and money are still being processed, so we will have a better sense of the school profit next month.
- Upcoming Events:

Trunk-or-Treat will take place on Saturday, October 24, 2015 from 7:30-9:00pm in the school parking lot. The Events Chairs will report further later in the meeting.

Breakfast With Santa will take place on Saturday, December 5, 2015 from 9:00-11:30am in the school cafeteria. Lauren Gallagher volunteered to chair the event, and has asked for a co-chair.

Grandparent’s Tea will take place on Sunday, December 6, 2015 from 12:00-2:00pm in the school cafeteria. Jackie Hines volunteered to chair the event.

Secret Santa Shop will take place December 5-9, 2015 (no shop on 12/8 since school is closed). The Secret Santa Shop is open during Breakfast With Santa and Grandparent’s Tea, as well as during the school week. We are need of a volunteer to chair this event.

We would like to add more social events for adults in order for foster school spirit and comradery, and to provide a fun social outlet for our community.

Jeanne reassured volunteers that there will be a PTA Officer sponsor for each event, and the PTA will provide support and anything that is needed to run the event. However, we need volunteers to do the legwork in order to have these events. All events are listed on the school calendar.

Vice-President's Report: Dana Franznick and Robert Lowe

- Preschool Social/Meet-and-Greet – will take place on Monday, October 19, 2015 at 9:00am in the RBC Meeting Room. This will be a way for preschool parents to get to know one another, and to allow them to ask any questions they may have. The preschool teachers are still working on finding Parent Representatives from each of the classes in order to communicate school events as well as teacher needs. Dana requested \$200 for hospitality purchases, which was approved by Laurie Williams and Jeanne O'Connor.
- Red Ribbon Week – the PTA will purchase pencils for the students to take away as a reminder of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Dana has requested \$100 for this purchase, which was approved by Liz Coscia and Maria Rimmele.
- Ice Skating Party – will take place on Wednesday, January 20, 2016, which is a half day at school. Tina Catapano volunteered to chair the event. The date will need to be booked with a venue. Tina would like to reach out to Middletown Ice World to find out their rates and availability, as we are not strictly tied to the Red Bank Armory.
- Spring Fundraiser - Rob Lowe presented his idea of a major fundraiser with a tentative date of Saturday, February 20. We would rent out the Two River Theater and have a performance by the Broadway Dolls, a troupe of Broadway actors who have appeared in major Broadway shows. It would be an adults-only social, and would be open to others in the community in addition to Saint James families. All proceeds would go towards a St. James Advancement Project. Rob is still negotiating, but his plan would be to have a cocktail hour, followed by two 40-minute sets. The theater holds 359 people, so it can accommodate a large crowd. Rob plans to have a Broadway Playbill printed up with sponsors in order to help defer some of the cost. St. James alumni will be invited to attend as well as those currently part of the St. James community. We encourage everyone to start reaching out to family and friends to network and encourage the event. The excitement will be contagious!

Treasurer's Report: Jeanne O'Connor (for Lisa Noonan)

The gross amount raised thus far with fundraisers is \$15,468.50 (includes Kid Stuff books, Fall Fundraiser, and the Used Uniform Sale). This balance will be off-set by expenses for each fundraiser and with other upcoming events.

Recording Secretary's Report: Laurie Williams

Attendance of Executive Officers:

Jeanne O'Connor – present
Dana Franznick – present
Robert Lowe - present
Lisa Noonan – not present
Laurie Williams - present
Fay Eigenrauch - present

September 10, 2015 Executive Meeting Minutes approved by Fay Eigenrauch and Rob Lowe.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: Fay Eigenrauch

Congratulations to Tiffany Havard (present at meeting) on the September arrival of her baby girl!

Delicious Orchards will be donating apple cider donuts for Trunk-or-Treat, so Fay will be sending them a thank you, as well as to any other businesses who donate to our events.

Marketing/Legislative Affairs: Liz Coscia

Liz has been posting regular reminders and updates to the St. James Facebook page as another way of getting information out to parents.

Liz also has a local business directory and will be tracking donations for our events so we do not continue to make requests to the same individuals or businesses. Fay will work with Liz to ensure that all donors receive thank you letters. We request that anyone chairing an event please update both Liz and Fay on the vendors they receive donations from so they can be recognized and thanked.

Hospitality: Ann Mazza

New Family Social – took place on Friday, September 25 from 7-9pm in the RBC Meeting Room. T was a very nice event for the families who attended. We would have liked for attendance to be higher, so we will continue to think of new ways to promote it for next year. Kim Vowteras had the wonderful idea to have the students write an invitation to their parents to give it a more personal touch.

Technology: Maria Rimmele

Kid Stuff Books – 229 books were sold for a total of \$5,725 raised, the highest amount so far. Some unpurchased books still have not been returned, so Maria will continue to try to track them down.

Directory – The directory will be available online this year, and it is almost ready. Maria is still working on merging the two email databases, but once that is complete, families will receive an email notifying them that the directory is up. From there, they can go in and edit their information as needed, or opt out of listing their information all together. There will also be an app available as well as a PDF file that can be downloaded and printed. Maria will be able to link the directory to the St. James webpage. Volunteer sign-ups will also be facilitated through the new directory.

Spirituality: Christian Buckman

Advent Wreath Sale – Advent begins on November 29, 2015, so Christian plans to have the information available for ordering advent wreaths sent out after Halloween. She will be ordering the wreaths through Good Shephard.

Mother's Retreat – will be held on Saturday, March 19, 2016.

Royals: Jeanne O'Connor (for Ken Keyes and Craig Seba)

The 1st Royals Feast (meeting) of the year will be Monday, October 12, 2015 at 7:30pm at Brothers Pizza in Red Bank.

The Royals will be providing security at Trunk-or-Treat. The PTA will purchase safety vests for this purpose, so \$200 was approved by Maria Rimmele and Ann Mazza.

The Royals will also be helping with cleanup for the Breakfast With Santa and Grandparent's Tea.

Polar Plunge is managed by the Royals, and it is one of the top school fundraisers. It will take place on Sunday, January 10, 2016. They will be meeting after Trunk-or-Treat to begin organizing for it, as well as Basketball Blowout, which will be Friday, January 8, 2016.

One of the Royals is a landscaper, and he would like to spruce up and better maintain the landscaping around the school. He can get the supplies donated. He would like approval to provide service hours for some middle schoolers to help with the landscape work.

Presentations by Committees:

Trunk-or-Treat: Molly Cimini and Lori Dougherty - The event is set for Saturday, October 24, 2015 from 7:30-9:00pm. They are planning for 30 decorated cars. The invitation went out via eblast. Car tickets will be \$15 per car and include 2 food/beverage wristbands. These cars will decorate their trunks and pass out candy. Walk-ins will be \$5 adult or child. Food/beverage wristbands will be \$7. Candy donations are being accepted in the school lobby. Gift certificates will be available as prizes for best trunks and best costumes. Middle school volunteers will be needed for service hours. The Committee requested \$300, which was approved by Liz Coscia and Dana Franznick.

Care Steps: Tina Catapano – The purpose of Care Steps is to promote community service. The first project they will be working on is getting ready for Operation Christmas Smile, where families can volunteer to take a shoebox, fill it with small gifts, and they are sent out to needy children all over the world who otherwise would not receive a Christmas gift. On Monday, October 19, they will be assembling the boxes and distributing them to the classrooms. They will also be made available to CCD classes that week. Last year, almost 200 boxes were sent. Care Steps will be volunteering at Lunch Break in November (available for grades 6 and up, per Lunch Break rules). Christmas Caroling will take place at a senior center on Saturday, December 19. They bring cookies and water and spend time with the seniors. They will be reaching out to the younger grades to make cards that they can bring along and pass out.

Box Tops/Labels For Education/Funding Factory: Tina Catapano – This will be Tina's last year in the school as her boys will be graduating, so she is looking to partner with someone this year who can take it over. Kim Vowteras has volunteered to help Tina coordinate. These projects are important as they provide free money to St. James. Box Tops and Labels For Education pay \$0.10 for each label, so the money quickly adds up. The classroom contests help get the students excited about collecting and turning them in. In order to make the pizza party prize for collecting more feasible for the smaller classes, we will figure out a way to best determine a collecting percentage. Funding Factory collects old cell phones, ink cartridges, etc. and issues cash for them.

Fall Ladies Night: Miss Kira Nelson – Shopping Party before the holidays, will be held Friday, November 20, 2015 at Beacon Hill Country Club. Tickets will be \$60 per person, and will include buffet, two drinks and some raffle tickets for baskets and/or a grand prize. All proceeds will go towards a St. James Advancement Project. Grade Parents are asked to contact their teachers to put together a theme basket (1 basket per grade) to be raffled off. Miss Nelson already has a number of vendors lined up, but can still accept more. She wants to make sure a variety of items are being sold. Family and friends outside of St. James are also welcome to attend.

Book Fair: Jeanne O'Connor (for Meghan Lupo) – The fair will be held from Monday, November 30, 2015-Sunday, December 6, 2015 (Grandparent's Tea). Meghan will be looking for volunteers to help throughout the week.

Open Discussion:

Donation Process/Coordination – Jeanne reiterated the importance of keeping a log of all businesses who donate to St. James events so we do not keep hitting up the same businesses. We will also need to coordinate with SJAA (Laura Shroba) on donations to their events as well, including the recent St. James Golf Outing.

Uniform Dress Code – Mrs. Giordano clarified some of the questions that have come up so far this year. For the time being, she is letting non-white gym sneakers go since that rule was not enforced last year, and people have already purchased their shoes for this year. However, going forward, all gym sneakers purchased MUST be mostly white. Socks have never changed; they have always been green or white socks for boys that cover the ankle. She will let beige socks go for now since Flynn and O'Hara was selling them with our uniforms. Girls may only wear green socks with their uniform. Tights may be green or navy with winter uniform. Mrs. Giordano will follow up with Flynn and O'Hara to further clarify our uniform code with them. The standard gym uniform is what is permitted for gym. If the student plays a St. James sport, they can wear their sport shirt, shorts or sweats. 8th Grade ONLY can wear RBC gym attire to gym. An eblast will be sent out to parents reminding them of the uniform code.

The next Executive PTA Meeting will be Wednesday, November 11, 2015 at 8:15am. The next Open PTA Meeting will be Wednesday, January 13, 2016.

PTA Meeting October 7, 2015 Attendance

JoAnn Giordano
Jeanne O'Connor
Dana Franznick
Robert Lowe
Laurie Williams
Fay Eigenrauch
Liz Coscia
Ann Mazza
Christian Buckman
Maria Rimmele
Kira Nelson
Tiffany Havard
Molly Cimini
Lori Dougherty
Kim Vowteras
Renee Quinones
Jennifer Hall
Sandy Hayes
Tina Catapano
Bridget Furnari
Lauren Gallagher
Brandy Stewart
Kristy Mayerhofer
Jackie Hines
Allison Welker