



C.A.R.E. News

Newsletter – March 19, 2008
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Our Lady of Grace Catholic School *preparations continue*

Mr. Mike Johnson, principal of Our Lady of Grace Catholic School, continues his efforts to prepare Our Lady of Grace to open this coming fall. This week he once again answers questions posted on the C.A.R.E. News web site.

Q: I understand that the **Education Commission** consists of two members from each of the four parishes. Is that correct? Who are the individuals on this commission and can you tell us more about their role (e.g., Is this a policy making board? Is this board accountable for the budget?)

A: Committee members will be made known once the Education Commission has completed their formation work and begins working on their particular responsibilities (which include committees). This will probably happen in April.

Q: Who will decide **school mascot & colors**?

A: The naming committee has met and has enlisted the help of all classroom teachers to generate a recommendation from each class for our school mascot and colors. The committee discussed the importance of selecting a mascot that becomes not only a symbol of our school but a tool to use in educating our students. There will be a meeting after Easter to begin to narrow the suggestions.

Q: When you are deciding the **school calendar**, can you please keep our schedule as close as possible to Northwest's schedule? It really helps for us working parents because the YMCA only has "School Out Days" based on Northwest schedule.

A: I totally understand your concern. We have been looking at the schedules of the four school districts we serve. Being a parent of four with a two worker household I can assure you I understand your concern and it will be taken into consideration. Thanks!

Q: Regarding **Latch-key**, you said that we will not be hiring a third party contract. Will our in-house latch key program be eligible for pre-tax funds for these programs? Some of us have already set aside these funds. Also, who will be responsible to keep the children safe?

A: Because our Latch-Key program will be set up as its own entity, pre-tax dollars can be used to pay these expenses. There will be a professional staff working with our students during the latch-key hours. They will coordinate homework, physical activities and other enrichment activities for those students attending the program. We want to make sure that we provide our parents an affordable high quality program which is representative of our commitment of each child's physical, artistic, social, spiritual and academic development.

Q: We currently have a **big buddy program** that is really great in helping the younger students get to know the older students at school. Kindergarten pairs with 6th grade, 1st grade pairs with 8th grade and 2nd grade pairs with 7th grade. Is there a possibility of continuing this program at Our Lady of Grace?

A: Big brother/sister programs are a win/win. They are great for the older students and very life giving for the younger students. I would want to continue this type of program as I believe it to be formative for all involved. I am sure the older students were trained in how to be good "mentors" and we would want to do the same. Having some of these traditions continued at OLG is very important to me.

Q: Will **foreign language** classes be offered - voluntary or mandatory - and which language(s)?

A: Regarding foreign language we are currently investigating our options. My preference is to have foreign language a part of our curriculum K-12. While challenging, it is possible to make that happen. Which languages will be studied is also still on the table. My guess is that this process will take another week or so to flush out.

Q: Will we be able to continue the **Amerigo Vespucci geography program**? This program begins in the 4th grade and knowledge builds through the 8th grade year. My two high school age children see this program as very beneficial. They use this knowledge frequently.

A: Thanks for the feedback on the Amerigo Vespucci geography program. If our graduates speak to the value of the program it seems one we should continue. We will have to make decisions regarding the various offerings for our students. With so many options I can assure you that we will need to lean on parents for some leadership in certain areas of our programming.

Q: Will we have a **Cantor program** at Our Lady of Grace? In this program, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students audition and are trained to sing and lead as cantors, the psalm responses at the school Masses, and as song leaders, the leaders of the communion songs. This program may continue in our parish, but it would also enhance the school Masses.

A: The cantor program sounds great! I am a firm believer in giving our students opportunities to excel and for many of them this type of program would be a huge piece of their educational journey. We are going to have a lot of great programs (I knew this just by reviewing the web pages of the schools involved) so we are going to need to engage in a discernment process that allows us to make sure that we don't stretch ourselves too thin. What we do we need to make sure we continue to do really well.

Q: Will Chuck Lauderbach who currently offers **band** at the parish schools be invited to continue at OLG?

A: Mr. Lauderbach came to one of our teacher nights. He is very interested in continuing to work with us. We will be making every effort to have this happen.

Q: I received the information about football, cheerleading and girls basketball. Are you planning to have **boys' basketball**?

A: There will be boys' basketball but the since the season doesn't start until November the sign-up won't be until school starts.

Q: I have a question regarding the recent athletics information sent home.....my son will be entering the 3rd grade and has an interest in signing up for **football**. When do the registration forms, payment, etc. need to be turned in for him to be eligible to play in the 08/09 school year?

A: Registration for football needs to be in as soon as possible in order for the athletic committee to formulate the number of teams, uniforms and equipment needed.

Mr. Johnson will continue to keep parents & parishioners updated using the C.A.R.E. News web site (www.carenews.org) and the C.A.R.E. News email.

To have the C.A.R.E. newsletter emailed to you automatically as they are issued, go to www.CareNews.org. While you are there, you can also ask questions or leave comments and feedback for Mr. Johnson and the Steering Committee.