



C.A.R.E. News

Newsletter – June 11, 2008

www.CareNews.org

Our Lady of Grace Catholic School *this week's Q&A's*

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. Once again, Mr. Johnson also takes time to answer questions you have posted on the C.A.R.E. News web site.

Q: I have been excited to read questions and answers weekly provided in CARE News. I believe this year to be just the beginning of a wonderful journey the students, parents, and teachers of OLG. I have seen the posting regarding the teacher list but noticed a music teacher had not been listed. Who will be the music instructor?

A: We have posted the Music teacher position as open since our internal candidates are either moving on or staying with OLG but in another capacity.

Q: I am very happy with the teacher list you provided, but I noticed there was no one assigned to the foreign language lab that was mentioned in previous CARE News. How will that area be staffed?

A: We will be working with foreign language through our activity period in grades 5-8. The investment in the on-line foreign language learning system is one that is substantial. The company we have been in conversation with (Power-Glide) is in the process of making their programs more user friendly and engaging. We are going to wait until we see the new product before making the decision to subscribe.

Q: Have any plans been made for a pre-school-opening Open House that will allow interested parishioners to see and "bond" a little with this new school and meet teachers, etc.?

A: Yes, we are planning on an open house. It most likely will be the Sunday prior to the beginning of school but if the building is ready earlier, we will hold it as soon as possible. There are gatherings planned throughout the summer with the first one happening on June 22 at Assumption. We will hold an ice-cream social beginning at 12:30 with our students in grades K-2. From 2:00-3:30 our students in grades 3-5 will be present and from 3:30-5:00 our students in grades 6-8 will be in attendance. Families with children spreading the times are welcome to come when it is convenient for your schedule.

Q: Has there been any more news on busing?

A: One or two weeks before school begins each of the districts providing busing to OLG will send home a busing card which will inform you of your busing eligibility (this is their timeline, not ours). If you are eligible, the busing card will give details regarding stop locations and times. Mt. Healthy has confirmed that anyone living in their district will get busing to OLG. While Cincinnati Public cannot guarantee busing to all residents, they do feel confident saying that if you received busing from CPS last year to Little Flower, you will receive busing to OLG. People living within Northwest's District can go to <http://www.nwlsd.org/docs/stann1mile.pdf> to see a listing of street names that are too close to OLG to receive services. Parents of students determined to be outliers by CPS or Northwest (they don't live in proximity to a bus route) will receive transportation reimbursement from the district. All families living in the North College Hill School District are eligible for reimbursement as NCH does not provide busing.

Given this transition year and the concerns regarding busing, OLG will stay in close communication with each district to identify as early as possible any busing concerns. We will call you should we become aware of anything.

Q: How is OLG going to evaluate the performance of teachers to improve the quality of education our students are receiving? Will Mr. Johnson be sitting in classrooms evaluating teachers? Will parents be allowed to evaluate teachers as they do coaches for sports teams? Will test results such as Terra Nova's and H.S. Admittance test be used? What system will be in place to resolve questions about teaching methods, grading policies, other problems that arise?

A: Great questions, thanks for asking. We must have a clear process for ensuring teachers professional development while also having a process for summative evaluations. Being in the classroom observing our teachers and our students is the best way to come to understand individual (as well as programmatic) strengths and weaknesses. So yes, I will be in the classrooms doing brief observations throughout the year and also engaging the faculty in a summative process (pre-observation interview, observation, post-observation interview, completion of the evaluation paperwork). Parents will not be in an evaluative role - we want to foster a relationship of collaboration between our teachers and parents. We hope that there is open communication and that issues are being communicated with an eye towards assisting each child in achieving their potential. The results of the Terra Nova's and H.S. Admittance tests will not be used to evaluate our teachers; however, the process by which we implement the programmatic elements to prepare for and administer these "high stakes" tests will be one element considered in the Summative evaluation (process, not product, will be considered).

Regarding consistency on issues of teaching methods, grading policies, etc. we will have some of these issues addressed through school wide policies. Others we will leave up to teacher discretion. In the end teaching is an art, not a science. Forcing teachers' hands on methodology has not proven helpful. Ensuring teachers are up on the latest educational research and that this research is informing their craft is important. This will happen through in services, faculty meetings, teachers coaching one another, and continued reflective practice.

Q: I have run the chess club for the last two years at Little Flower and I would like to know who to contact to schedule it for the upcoming year at Our Lady of Grace. There is no real overhead, I just need to organize some volunteers, schedule some open space in a classroom, library etc. and recruit players. Thank you for all the hard work you are doing. Our family was on the fence about the school but decided we would commit after meeting you, seeing the impressive list of teachers, and appreciating your calm demeanor in handling a very tough situation. We also talked with attendees of Summit who could not stop praising you high enough. Good luck and God Bless.

A: We have a committee of teachers who are assisting us in developing our cocurricular program elements. Parishioners or parents wanting to be engaged in cocurriculars should plan on contacting me in mid-July. Thanks for the willingness to help out and make the OLG experience one that is well rounded and engaging for all our students.

Q: The newsletters are a wonderful idea. Lately, however, there have been questions posted that are rather negative - complaints about teachers and discipline issues, questioning the credentials of teachers etc. We need to be able to move forward, and these negative questions are hindering us.

A: Thanks for your comments. We are working on our new web page which will still have a vehicle for parents posting questions. These questions will not necessarily be answered publicly but multiple versions of the same questions will let us know some communication on the issue would be helpful. I have appreciated parents who have taken a "no problems without solutions" approach and offered their constructive ideas for improvement.

and from OLG admin ...

Information Updates

We will be mailing a packet to everyone enrolled at OLG in the near future that will contain your copy of the TMS contract (if you have one) and information regarding the Latch Key program including pricing and registration information. There will also be other information regarding hours of operation, contact information for the summer and any other information tidbits that we can find. There will also be another mailing later in the summer as we finalize the bus issues as well as drop-off and pick-up information and other items that have to be worked out because it involves other entities besides OLG that we do not have control over. Continue to monitor the CARE News and the OLG website when it goes on-line. Also keep your eye on information in your parish bulletin for updates and appeals for assistance in preparing OLG for the coming school year.

TMS & TUITION

Many are asking about TMS contracts and billing for tuition. Most of the contracts for TMS have been sent and most of you should be receiving your welcome letters soon if you have not already. These contracts are still coming in and we urge you to send yours in as soon as possible or if you have changed your mind about attending OLG, please let us know since we have people anxiously waiting for a spot to open. Remember; there are no late fees for May or June payments. If you have not received your bill yet and you want to make a payment, bring or send it to OLG at 2940 W. Galbraith Rd, 45239. If you do it in this manner, make the check payable to OLG, not TMS and we will put it in their system as paid at school. Do not send TMS a check without a bill.

Some of you have made your May payment to OLG after you submitted your TMS contract and you might receive a bill that does not indicate this payment as being made. Do not worry, we will post this payment at OLG and the system will adjust it on your next statement or you can view it on line. If it does not show corrected by your second statement then contact us at OLG 931-3070 and we will help track it through the system.

We want to ask for your patience in this start up since it was done so quickly and late in the year.

Q: My question is about servers for the parish. In the past, when there was a funeral, kids would be asked to serve and would be taken out of school for this. Since the kids will be at a different location than their own parish, will they still be taken out for funerals and such?

A: For the past two years at St. Margaret Mary Parish, adult volunteers have been serving funeral liturgies, while inviting the school-age servers to help during the summer months or other non-school days. St. Ann, Little Flower and Assumption plan to do the same thing beginning this coming school year.

Q: My husband has been a coach at Assumption for basketball. He would like to continue to be a coach. Who should he contact to get his name out there?

A: For right now, anyone interested in coaching should contact someone listed on their current booster board to let them know you are interested. The 4 booster organizations are working together and the new contact information will be released when they have finalized their new board.

Continued on next page ... Dress Code & Uniform Fittings

Dress Code & Uniform Fittings – an update ...

On 6/5/08 Mr. Bruce Carroll, owner of Schoolbelles, and I had a great conversation regarding Schoolbelles and OLG. Mr. Carroll is committed to ensuring our satisfaction with his product and directly addressed our concerns.

1. Anyone who went to St. Margaret Mary for a fitting and placed an order is going to receive a REFUND for shipping charges paid.
2. The OLG plaid will be stocked at BOTH the Blue Ash and Crookshank locations. If the item that you need is not in stock, it will be shipped to your home FREE OF CHARGE.
3. Mr. Carroll has agreed to offer OLG a 3% COMMISSION on all items purchased at Schoolbelles by parents of OLG. While the certificates (which we will sell in the future) offer a 5% kick-back to the school, this 3% will prove profitable as it is being applied to ALL OLG PURCHASES AT SCHOOLBELLES.

So, you can go to either Blue Ash or Crookshank and purchase uniform items. Anything not in stock will be shipped to your home for free. All purchases at Schoolbelles will result in a 3% commission sent back to OLG.

PLACING ORDERS BY JULY 4 provides us the opportunity to have all items by the first day of school.

Mr. Carroll has assured us that he is going to keep an eye on OLG and our workings with Schoolbelles. He is personally committed to ensuring our satisfaction with both the product and the service Schoolbelles provides.

Q: With regard to the jumpers for next year, I would like to know if approval can be granted for Fox's to carry OLG jumpers and skirts.

A: We have been in communication with Schoolbelles and they have been responsive to our concerns. We will stick with Schoolbelles for this year and evaluate their service as we consider suppliers for next year.

Q: Many of us now have skirts and jumpers that we will not be able to use next year. Will there be a collection of these previous schools' uniforms that could be donated to the needy?'

A: Yes. Schoolbelles actually facilitates the collection of uniforms and then sends them to schools in developing countries. We'll get more details on this soon.

Q: Can we purchase any color of shirts and shorts as long as they are solid colors and they can wear them for gym class?

A: Correct. Spirit wear is fine. If not spirit wear, plain (no writing on them) solid color shorts and shirts are to be worn.

Q: Will we have an opportunity to purchase spiritwear before school begins, in order to follow the dress code policy for Gym Class?

A: You will have the opportunity to purchase spirit wear before school begins. However, you do not need spirit wear to follow the dress code for gym class. Solid shirt and shorts will do the trick.

Mr. Johnson will continue to keep parents & parishioners updated throughout the summer 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.

NOTE: If you missed any of the C.A.R.E. News weekly Q&A emails, you can always access them at <http://www.carenews.org/QandA.htm>