



# The Beehive

August/September 2007

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## 2007/08 PT BOARD:

### Principal

Joanne Yates

### Pastor

Rev. Dominic Trace

### President

Brian Frank

### Vice President

Kathy d'Alelio

### Treasurer

Jorge Franchi

### Secretary

Vacant

### Members-at-Large:

Deb Caffi, Jodi Lingen, Lisa Phillips

### Faculty Representative:

Ann Rosapep

### Immed. Past Pres.

Cecily Miner

## WELCOME BACK!

Saint Ambrose Families,

Welcome back returning families and welcome aboard to our new families. I hope you all had a restful and rejuvenating vacation this summer so we can jump into the 2007-2008 School Year.

The PTO is getting organized for the year and we want to continue to build last year's momentum. Last year we conducted several great family oriented activities such as Family Science Night. We want to explore the possibility of doing more, perhaps a Movie Night or Family Fun Night. Last year we had an adult class on estate planning and one on organizing your home more efficiently. These classes were well attended and drew compliments from those who attended. If you have ideas you would like to recommend, please contact any PTO Board member.

Our annual Pledge Drive alleviates the need for monthly fundraisers and allows for more time to enjoy the social aspects of our school community. All of this money goes directly to the school; it is not shared with a third-party fundraising organization. We are requesting each family to pledge \$550 for the year. Please complete the Pledge Drive form, select your preferred method of payment, and return the form to the school by 28 September 2007.

The PTO is a volunteer organization that supports the school by helping to raise funds for the school and by helping with school/family oriented activities. Our volunteer form lists several opportunities for you to get involved in the success of our school by sharing your time and talents.

PTO Board meetings are always open to the PTO general membership, so please feel free to join us. Check the calendar for meeting dates and times. The agenda is posted on the school web site a week in advance. If you would like to bring a specific topic to the meeting, please call or email me. I ask for at least a week's notice to add your topic to the agenda. If you have any questions or if I can be of assistance, please give me a call or send me an email. My phone number is listed in the school directory. The email address is

[PTO@StAmbroseSchool.org](mailto:PTO@StAmbroseSchool.org).

God bless you and your families in the coming year.

*Brian Frank*

*PTO President*

## PTO STRATEGIC PLAN

The Saint Ambrose PTO has finalized the PTO Strategic Plan. The plan will continue to build on the momentum of the many fine initiatives that the PTO has undertaken to enhance and support the school as well as to provide recommendations to the principal and administrators in areas vital to the continued growth of the community.

The plan is a living document continuing to evolve each year. This plan was developed by the Board Executive Officers who have been assigned the collateral duty as the Strategic Planning Committee and assigned to one of the four councils identified in the *Council Updates* on page 4. Each month the council chairs will provide an update

in this newsletter as appropriate.

The PTO's mission closely follows the school's philosophies and teachings by fostering academic excellence, physical development, and Catholic morals and values. Additionally, the PTO coordinates a number of programs enhancing the quality

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*A word in  
season, how  
good it is!"  
Prov. 15:23*

## THE "BUZZ"

Dear Parents,

The spiritual theme this year is focused on kindness, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. This virtue is very powerful, for if practiced by all, not only will make the world a happier place but is the perfect fulfillment of God's greatest law: "Love your neighbor as yourself." The teachers and staff will be integrating this theme throughout their teaching. Bulletin boards and posters in the classrooms and hallways will be visual reflections of kindness. I would like to recommend a book, *The Hidden Power of Kindness* (the author is Reverend Lawrence G. Lovasik, Sophia Press, ISBN – 1-928832-00-8). The faculty and staff will be using this book as a source of reflection and guidance. It would be wonderful to have many members of our faith community read the book and join us in the spiritual journey.

I want to offer a very special thank you to Will Houston. Will graduated from Saint Ambrose Catholic School two years ago and is a sophomore at Bishop O'Connell High School. He has completed a major renovation of the Meditation Garden, including improving the path and planting flowers. Will chose this project to earn his Eagle Scout badge. It entailed many weekends and evenings of hard work. Please take a few minutes to visit the garden, and see how beautiful it looks. Thank you, also, to Mr. Houston and the scouts who assisted Will on the project.

I am looking forward to a blessed year dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Model of true kindness, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Mirror of Her Divine Son.

God bless,

*Joanne Yates*

## TEACHER'S CORNER FROM MRS. ROSAPEP

The St. Ambrose Faculty and Staff has been hard at work this past week getting both our classrooms as well as our hearts and minds ready for this new school year. On Thursday, August 23rd, we were all blessed to be able to attend an excellent faculty retreat here at our Parish Family Center. Our spirits were nourished by Mass with additional follow-up homilies given by Fr. Tom Ferguson. Calling himself a "pathological optimist," he helped us focus on how

to measure our own spiritual growth through the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. One of those fruits, Kindness, is the centerpiece of our school's spiritual theme for this year: Building St. Ambrose through Kindness. Specifically, all of us will be focusing on the many ways our St. Ambrose Community can show kindness to one another through words and actions. We will be on the constant watch for spontaneous acts of kindness within our student community.

Don't be surprised if you see your children beginning to s p o r t



"Kindness Kudos" stickers! Teachers will all be on the lookout for kindness in action, and spontaneously awarding stickers. Its one small way we hope to support and grow kindness among all of us in our St. Ambrose Family.

## PTO STRATEGIC PLAN (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

of the community. These informative and enjoyable programs often provide useful information for our families, but also give us the chance to interact with other Saint Ambrose families and have some fun!

Just as importantly, many of the PTO services work to provide financial support in ways that sup-

plement our children's education with additional materials and supplies necessary for the best educational experience for our students. Among other things, the strategic plan seeks to demonstrate a defined planning process for purposes of management reviews by oversight agencies or by foundations considering grant

approvals in support of the school's mission. Obtaining these grants can make a critical difference to our school but most importantly to our children.

Please feel free to contact any board member if you have any questions or join us at any Board Meeting

## SPOTLIGHT ON MRS. DEAN BY LISA PHILLIPS

Mrs. Dean has been a valued member of the St. Ambrose Teaching Faculty for 3 years. She left behind a lucrative career as an accountant to become a teacher at St. Ambrose in 2004. This career move has enabled her to be closer to her two children, Emily (7<sup>th</sup> grade) and Ben (4<sup>th</sup> grade), and gives her more free time to spend with her family in the summer. Mrs. Dean is an avid New York football Giants fan, and she loves to spar with the Redskins fans in her classroom. Last year she ran in her 3<sup>rd</sup> marathon, finishing in 41<sup>st</sup> position among the women in her age group. Bravo!! This year will be her second year teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and she has lots in store for her lucky 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. I interviewed her on Friday, August 24, the last official day of summer vacation. Excerpts are provided below, but please take a minute to read the whole interview on the PTO bulletin board in the school foyer.

**Question: Tell me a little more about your background.**

**Mrs. Dean:** I grew up in New Jersey and I have also lived in California and Panama City, Florida before settling in Virginia. I worked full time and put myself through college, going to classes at night. I graduated from George Mason with a degree in accounting. After several years and after the arrival of Emily and Ben in our family, I began to feel that accounting was not what I was meant to do. I began to feel like I just didn't want to go to work when I woke up in the mornings, and I realized that I needed to make a change. I had been very involved here at St. Ambrose with volunteering in Emily's classroom, running the gala and other school activities, and I really loved it. So I quit my job and God was looking out for me because a position opened in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I jumped at the chance and enjoyed those two years teaching 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When a position opened up in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, it was a great fit for me for a variety of reasons. I truly love what I do now. Every day is something new, something differ-

ent, something challenging. The kids teach me so much; I learn something from my students every day.

**Question: Have you always been a runner?**

**Mrs. Dean:** I have been a runner off and on for my whole adult life. The Marine Corps Marathon is such a great course, very forgiving and not too hilly. One of my co-workers was a runner, and she and I trained together and ran the Marine Corp Marathon together in 2000. I just loved it and I was completely hooked. It is easy get caught up in the patriotism; people are lined up for the whole 26 miles cheering you on. It is a huge adrenaline rush. The whole military presence and patriotism themes make it such a positive experience. I ran again in 2002 and again in 2006.

**Question: Do you think you will run another marathon?**

**Mrs. Dean:** I don't know. I said that I wouldn't do another one after this last one, but I really do love doing it. I have qualified for the Boston Marathon twice, and I would really love to run it some day. The training is such a huge commitment. I also love bike riding. In 2002, I participated in the Remembrance Ride, which was sponsored by INOVA Hospital as a memorial tribute to the people who were lost in the attacks on September 11, 2001. There were about 400 of us, and we rode our bikes from the site of the twin towers in Manhattan to the Pentagon over 4 days. On September 11, 2002, we stopped at the exact time that the first tower fell one year earlier, and had a moment of silence. You could hear a pin drop, and there was not a dry eye in the place. It was phenomenal...amazing...one of those moments you never forget. It was one of the most memorable things I have ever done, and I was so fortunate to be able to participate in it.

**Question: What do you think is the most important thing that your students will learn this year?**

**Mrs. Dean:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade is a big devel-

opment year. They travel a long distance from the beginning of the school year to the end. They learn to manage their time, how to study, how to be successful students. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they become more independent and take more responsibility for their own success. They grow emotionally, spiritually and developmentally. Life skills and academic skills...the whole package comes together in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Question: What did you do with your summer vacation this year?**

**Mrs. Dean:** I had a great summer. Ben, Emily, my husband and I took a 3 week driving trip. We drove 6000 miles, through 13 states, saw 5 national monuments and visited 4 national parks and 10 national forests. We saw Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, and had a great time. We saw all kinds of wildlife...bald eagles, prairie dogs...but no bears. We even rented an RV and camped out a few nights. It was great to have dedicated family time, and very memorable vacation for all.

**Question: What is great about St. Ambrose School?**

**Mrs. Dean:** A lot!! When I first looked at St. Ambrose for Emily, I thought the small size would be a negative. I have been proven wrong about that. We are really family here. It is so nice to know the names of all the students and parents. Everyone looks out for everyone else – kids, teachers and parents. We have a closeness that others envy. I also love our spiritual environment. We really practice our faith here at St. Ambrose. The teachers really live their lives and conduct themselves as examples. There is a sense of community that permeates this school, and I love it.

*Each month another teacher or group of teachers will be in the "Spotlight."*

### WELCOME!

Mary Warnock

Laura Straub

Catherine Park

David O'Connell

Cynthia Thomasson

Heather Villanasco

Sister Cecelia

## COUNCIL UPDATES

As stated in the PTO Strategic Plan article; this newsletter will be used as a key tool for communicating with the General Membership on current activities. Each of the At-Large members plus the Secretary chairs one of the four councils:

- Capital Improvements:  
Lisa Phillips
- Communications:  
Cecily Miner (interim)
- Community Support:  
Jodi Langan
- Student Activities & Enrichment:  
Debbie Caffi

At the monthly PTO Board Meeting, each chair will report activity within their council. Likewise, the council chair will report applicable information to their council members. Each council chair is expected to contact and work with their council members using their preferred method, either via phone, email, or face-to-face meetings.

It is hoped that this new process will facilitate greater interaction between the PTO Board and General Membership.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact any board member.

**Capital Improvements:** Comprised of the Technology Committee (TC), the St. Ambrose Development Committee (SADC), & the Grant Committee (GC), this council is celebrating successes. The \$8K Loyola Foundation Grant allowed for the purchase of two Promethean ACTIVBoards (in 6th & 8th grade rooms). The \$11K provided by the PTO from the 2007 Gala allowed for the purchase of science equipment to enhance the curriculum at all grade levels. The SADC is off and running, with a Golf Tournament planned for October 26 at Heritage Hunt Country Club, Consider a regular donation in the new SADC Special Appeal envelopes in your monthly mailing from the parish. The GC is awaiting news on a Target grant, and plans grant proposals for a Fine Arts Fair & Library & Computer Lab project, among others.

**Communications:** The Beehive and the web site continue to be key communication tools. The Beehive is taking on a slightly

new format. This year the newsletter will include updates from each of the four Councils Chairs as appropriate, a Teacher's Corner and a Volunteer of the Month. We will also spotlight a different teacher or group of teachers. With assistance from Mrs. Rosapep we hope to do a better job keeping the PTO Bulletin Board updated. Our new webmaster will continue the great job, done by Mr. Mattera, of maintaining web site.

**Community Support:** One of the main goals of the Community Support Council in the Strategic Plan is to increase participation and outreach in educational, gala, and other social opportunities within the Parish. This council will work with groups involving Teacher Aides, Homeroom Activities, Hospitality Outreach, Parent/Adult Education, CCD and Home Room Parent Coordination. We will also look to utilize the many God given gifts of time and talent within our Parish for activities such as reading in the classrooms and after school activities.

*If you have any thoughts or suggestions for any of the councils please feel free to email them to [PTO@stambroseschool.org](mailto:PTO@stambroseschool.org) (please include the council name in the subject line of your email) or feel free to contact the specific council chair directly.*

## PLEDGE DRIVE

The Annual St. Ambrose PTO Pledge Drive is in full swing! The PTO Board worked diligently last year to implement a Strategic Plan for the volunteer organization. The work supported through this plan relies heavily on the generous support by the families through the Pledge Drive.

We're all at St. Ambrose Catholic School because we share a commitment to Catholic education for our children and a belief in this school's value to them, now and for the rest of their lives. By helping the children grow spiritually and academically you are helping them grow

into strong Catholic leaders of this fine community which can only benefit everyone.

All of us have a budget that we have to work within. The PTO is no different. The PTO is asking you to make a big pledge—\$550 or more—to fund our operations this year. Because of the success of this yearly Pledge Drive, we have been able to replace traditional fundraisers requiring parents to sell things like cookie dough, Christmas greenery, and gift wrap to be successful.

As your family decides how much you can give, please re-



member, we are in this together! Think about the time and money you would have spent on fundraisers like those indicated above.

This Annual Pledge Drive is about helping us spend more time on the things that make a difference: our children, our families, our parish, and our community.

Thank you for your continued generosity, thank you for helping the children grow.

The Pledge Card can be found at:  
[www.stambrose.org/pto/index.html](http://www.stambrose.org/pto/index.html)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### AUGUST

**NO AM/PM EXTENDED DAY  
FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL!**

**MONDAY, AUG. 27TH:**  
First Day of School

**Kindergarten:**

**Group 1 ~ 8:15-9:45**

**Group 2 ~ 10-11:30**

Dismissal for Grds 1—8

**TUESDAY, AUG. 28TH:**

**Kindergarten:**

**Group 1 ~ 8:15-9:45**

**Group 2 ~ 10-11:30**

3pm Dismissal Grds 1—8

**WEDNESDAY, AUG. 29TH:**  
11:30am ~ Kindergarten Dismissal ~  
3:00pm Dismissal for  
Gdrs. 1-8

**THURSDAY, AUG. 30TH:**  
11:30am ~ Kindergarten Dismissal ~  
3:00pm Dismissal for  
Gdrs. 1-8

**FRIDAY, AUG. 31ST:**  
11:30am Dismissal all  
Students

### SEPTEMBER

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 3RD:**  
Labor Day Holiday ~  
No School

**Sept. 10th:**

7pm ~ PTO Board  
Meeting in the school  
library

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 11TH:**  
7-8:30pm ~ Back to  
School Night and PTO  
General Membership  
Meeting for 6-8th  
Grade Parents

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 13TH:**  
7—8pm ~ Band Student  
& Parent Information  
Night

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 18TH:**  
7-8:30pm ~ Back to  
School Night and PTO  
General Membership  
Meeting for K-5 Grade  
Parents

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 26TH:**  
7pm ~ High School In-  
formation Meeting for  
8th Gr. Parents

### Save the Date!

For the First Annual  
St. Ambrose Catholic School  
Golf Tournament  
Registration Coming Soon!

- Oct. 26th,
- 1:00pm
- The Heritage  
Hunt Golf  
Country Club



### September's Gala Special!!

The Outback Restaurant at the Twinbrook Shopping Center in Burke has agreed to cater the Gala. If you think it can't get any better, think again.

They are donating their services. For FREE!!

Please make an effort to frequent the restaurant as often as possible this school year, and make sure to ask for the manager, Keith Kirkland, and thank him for his support of St. Ambrose School. This month we have a coupon for a free Bloomin' Onion, so get in there and get yours as soon as you can.

### Volunteer Corner

Each month we will recognize outstanding volunteers for their previous months contributions to the school.

Please check the newsletter each month to find out what wonderful contributions parents are making every month...week...day!

### Chess Club



...sponsored by the Student Activities & Enrichment Council, starts back up on September 21st meeting on Fridays from 3:00—4:00pm so be on the look out for registration forms! Like last year, grades will alternate weeks for the different age groups ~ 2nd, 3rd and 4th will meet one Friday with 5th-8th the next Friday.

*Sally Foster*

Last year some of you said that you would like to be able purchase Sally Foster through the school so it is now available on-line for anyone interested. For every dollar spent on items the PTO will receive 50 cents. Family and friends can also order on-line. On-line orders are easy!

1. Browse the online store at [www.SallyFoster.com](http://www.SallyFoster.com)
2. Make your purchase selections.
3. Enter our School's Account # 507150 when prompted

**Orders of \$60  
or more ship  
free!**

St. Ambrose School 2008 Gala Update



# Big, Big, Big GALA NEWS

The Outback Steakhouse in the Twinbrooke Shopping Center at 9579 Braddock Road in Burke has agreed to cater the 2008 Gala. If you think it doesn't get any better, think again. The restaurant is donating their catering. For Free! FREE!!

**FROM YOUR 2008  
GALA COMMITTEE**

Throughout the school year, we are going to have a few designated "Outback Support" events to show our appreciation for their support of our school. During the month of September, we are asking you to take your family or your 'mates to the Outback Steakhouse in the Twinbrooke Shopping Center for dinner. Be sure to use the coupons for a free "Bloomin' Onion" that you should have received earlier this week, so the manager knows that the St. Ambrose community is patronizing the restaurant. **Ask for the manager, Keith Kirkland**, and let him know how much you appreciate his support of our school. The coupon has no expiration date, but try to use it in September, if possible. Our goal is to use 100% of the "Bloomin' Onion" coupons they gave us, so please return the coupon to the front office if you don't think you can use it. If you have used your coupon and would like another one, see Mrs. Park or Mrs. Fox in the front office, or contact Lisa Phillips at [Phillips.Lisa@verizon.net](mailto:Phillips.Lisa@verizon.net) or 703.204.2720

