

THE FULL CURL



Monroe Catholic Schools

Announcements

- **The annual Texas Hold Em Fundraiser will take place on Friday night, April 26th at the Elks.** Stay tuned for more info from our athletics director, Abe Siddall.

Kudos

- A big thank you to Abe Siddall for his leadership and effort running the Aurora Conference Regional Tournament. Abe and all of his amazing volunteers did a wonderful job. I can't imagine what it would be like to take over as AD in a year when we had to host regional basketball. Well done, sir.
- A big thanks to Katie Villafranca for all the work she does to put on the Jr. retreat which will be held this coming weekend.



Dear Parents:

Since taking over as Director of Schools and President of the Monroe Foundation, I have been overwhelmed by the love and support shown by so many. I am often asked how I enjoy the new job and my standard response is that I love it. There have been bumps in the road and the learning curve has been steep. But the job is about people, and nobody has better people than us – our students, teachers, administration, staff, and of course parents – make everyday a blessing.

While I love my job, there have been many sleepless nights. These nights often center on one challenge: How to impact teacher salaries at a level that would truly make a difference. Over the last year there became talk of a new high school to replace the current, aging structure. I made it clear to my staff, there would be no building built until I found a solution allowing me to better solve the problem of teacher salaries. I have come up with a plan and want to share it with you. While I do not think this plan will all together solve the problem, I do think it will help immensely.

In 2016 Monroe Catholic, under the remarkable guidance of

School Needs

- We could use about 1 million Alaska Airline miles to help with a variety of travel needs at the school. The miles would help with HIPOW packages, but also help possibly provide an opportunity for our students to travel for school related items, such as faith based Jesuit Retreats.
- PTO would love to have more folks who are interested joining their organization. Info on how to join is in this week's column if you are interested.
- Mrs. Wallace is always looking for quality substitute teachers. Please notify her if you are interested.
- **We could still use a parent and an alum willing to go on video and speak to their experience here at the school.** This would be a huge help to us in our social media campaign. If you are interested, please let me know and I will help facilitate it happening!

Nancy Hanson, started the Spring Fundraiser. The purpose was singular: To raise enough money to help pay the operations expenses and help us keep the doors to the school open. The fundraiser was highly successful and raised in excess of \$200K to support the schools. I am happy to report we are currently in a better financial position than we have been in during my time at Monroe. We do not need to raise money to pay the fuel or electric bill this April.

It is my intention to do a different Spring Fundraiser of equal importance. My goal is to raise funding to support an immediate, impactful raise in salary for our teachers. I have educated myself on our teacher salaries and compared them to those of the public schools. Before we go further, our teachers have many advantages as educators here at Monroe. Our teachers work with smaller class sizes and with parents who are generally very involved in their child's education and supportive. However, the gap between our teacher's salaries and the public schools ranges from 22% and 43% less. I must fix this. We must fix this.

I know this is an issue that was tackled by my predecessors. I remember sitting in Mrs. Hanson's office about 15 years ago and asking her if I could go to a donor and ask for a few million dollars to help build us a second gym — imagine the audacity of myself 15 years ago. I remember her answer was very clear: We cannot build a new gym before we do something to take care of teacher salaries. Shortly thereafter I remember her organizing meetings for donors and attending those meetings as she worked to improve the base salaries of our teachers. I remember being impressed by her commitment and passion to helping make the life of others, better. Her impact on me in this regard has never left me. Now it is my turn to make a difference.

At Monroe, we utilize the Five Pillars of Jesuit Education as the foundation from which we educate our students. These Pillars — Open to Growth, Intellectually Competent, Loving, Religious and Committed to Doing Justice — are at the forefront of all we do. We cannot talk of being loving or committed to doing justice and having teachers who make 22%-43% less than public school teachers. I refuse to be the director of a school where we have a teacher who has been here for 40 years, and is paid the same as a public school teacher who has been with the borough for five years. Now is the time for change.

MCHS Sports Trivia

TRIVIA QUESTION:

There is No trivia question for this edition.

RULES

To win the trivia contest, you must give me the answer IN PERSON. Emails, texts and phone calls will not suffice! Remember, only one guess per household. The first person to correctly answer the trivia question will win an MCHS T-shirt.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

No question last week.

SMALL PRINT

The spouse of the Director of Athletics, parents and STAFF who work directly inside CSF are not eligible for participation in The Full Curl trivia competition for 24 hours after the emailing of The Full Curl.

There are numerous victories involved in taking care of our teachers. By increasing our salaries, we can continue to retain our best teachers. Compensating our teachers appropriately can only make our teachers happier and everyone is better at what they do when they feel appreciated for the job they do. Every year we have teachers who retire or move. Raising salaries will help us attract the best teachers. I also think it is important to note, during a time when we constantly hear of school closures or budget cuts, we are moving in a different direction. We are giving raises. The impact of this on enrollment is not lost on me. As parents, would you prefer to send your child to a school where they are struggling to survive, or one in which they are clearly moving in the direction of thriving? However, the most important victory is the one noted in the previous paragraph: It's the right thing to do.

As pointed out by my Finance Committee, any raise this year must be funded moving forward. I am not interested in resorting back to the days when we needed a Spring Fundraiser to pay bills. I know I must be fiscally responsible. I believe in the direction of our school; I believe in our teachers and our staff, and I most certainly believe in you. I also believe in the power of faith and prayer. It is my hope all of these will lead to an increase in enrollment, which will long term help make my decision sustainable. An increase of 20 students will more than cover this expense. It is possible, we may need to continue the focus of our Spring Fundraiser on salaries for the next couple years, to bridge the gap and make these raises sustainable.

We have amazing teachers here at Monroe and I am committed to taking care of them. It is my hope you will join me in helping spread the word. I know our parents already bear the burden of tuition, so it is my sincere hope we will be able to get our greater community at large, along with our alum and the parents of our alum, to play an integral role in this effort.

I will finish by expressing my commitment to this cause. First, I will not take a raise this year. Second, my wife and I will commit \$1000 each of the next three years to the efforts of raising money to support teacher salaries.

With Grace, Faith and Passion,

Frank Ostanik
Director of Schools
CSF