

St. Alphonsus School News

Fall Term 2024



**Fall Fun
for Every-**

From The Principal

As the winter deepens and the darkness creeps further into "day" time, I am finding it increasingly difficult to pull myself out from under the covers. Nice flannel sheets...a big duvet...it's all too cozy. In our house, the pets like to sneak up on the bed in the wee hours when we have no resolve to fight them off, a habit which only compounds my problem. It's like having furry, radiant heat logs snuggled in beside you. When the alarm finally rings, I just want to pull the blankets up a bit further, just for a few extra minutes.

As tempting as it is to hit the snooze button or simply lie in bed listening to music, I know that the longer I procrastinate, the more harried my morning will become. I find it very stressful to be late, so there is some motivation to heed the alarm. As well, if I lie there for too long, I become almost immune to the sound of the radio. Suddenly I am dreaming about the news piece or song being broadcast. Besides, as I remind myself often, I enjoy what I do and I love the people I work with: the students, the parents and the staff. There are many blessings that await as the day unfolds, starting with a warm cup of tea.

It's interesting to me that all this alarm angst is happening just as preparations for Advent are beginning. Many of the readings from the early part of this season speak of wakefulness. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus tells his disciples, "Stay awake, watch; for you do not know the hour when the time will come." This is echoed in the letters of Paul: "Brother and Sisters, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake up from sleep. Salvation is near..."

God's call to us can be like an alarm clock, telling us it is time to get up and follow him. It is tempting at times to hit the snooze button, as it may feel like we are not ready to commit to what is being asked of us. We may not be ready to give up our warm beds, our cozy life, and move into the light of day. Then, I think we run the risk of sleeping through, not hearing the call at all and missing our opportunity to live the life that we are meant for. It may not always be as comfortable, but we can't live our life under the covers.

As we enter into this Advent, I want to use this time to listen for the alarm that God sends to me. Hopefully, I can throw off the covers and seize the day, both literally and figuratively. As well, I hope that this season provides you with an opportunity to reflect on the blessings that you and your family have, and the ways in which you may be called to wakefulness.

Have a blessed Advent!

Peace,

Christine McInnis



School Plan 2024-25

One of the tasks of the school administration is to develop a plan in consultation with the various members of the community, including staff, students and parents. Many of the initiatives pursued by schools require a long-term approach for implementation. As a result, most school plans encompass more than one school year. This practice has been the case in our school; these goals will continue forward into subsequent school years.

Goal 1-Numeracy Education

Numeracy Education: To deepen students' understanding of numerical concepts.

- This was a priority area last year. Although some progress was made, we wanted to consolidate the gains made and further the work in this area.
- We have a good understanding of the areas of strength as well as challenge in our students understanding math concepts at all grade levels.
- Teachers will meet in grade bands to share challenges and strengths in numeracy instruction, as well as to increase consistency in curriculum implementation across the grade levels.
- Teachers will attend professional development in this area, both on MTS PD Day and during the year as opportunities arise.
- Teachers will implement best practice in numeracy education, as determined through research.

Goal 2- Strategic Priorities

- Strategic Priorities: To address the priorities outlined in the school's strategic plan.
- Staff will regularly review the school's strategic plan to evaluate progress towards its goals.
- Sub-committees, with members of the staff and the board, will be struck to advance priority areas selected as foci for this year.

Ongoing Priorities

The Staff will continue to work on our most recent priority areas including **Supporting Student Mental Health, Technology, Sustainability** and **Indigenous Education**.

Although these are not officially on our plan, we want to capitalize on the gains made in these areas and use this momentum to continue work in these areas.



Looking Back

September

September started with a fun **Meet the Teacher/Terry Fox Family Walk** event on the 12th. Families got a chance to talk to staff and then joined in a walk through the community in honour of Terry Fox and the Marathon of Hope. As well, there was pizza and drinks aplenty!



At our first school mass on September 25th our grade four students received their **Bibles** as part of the liturgy. Congratulations, friends! I wish you well on your journey to learn more about our faith.



From September 23rd to 27th we marked the fourth annual National Week for Truth and Reconciliation. All classes spent time learning about indigenous history, especially residential schools. This year's theme is the sacred teaching of Humility, represented by the wolf.

On September 27th our grade seven and eight classes went to the Forks and St. Boniface cathedral for our annual **Junior High Retreat Day**. It was a perfect day for prayer, games and team-building.



October

The **Dress Up and Dance** on October 19th was a ton of fun. Our committee has a report later in the newsletter.



Our **Student Led Conferences** took place on October 22nd and 24th. As always, these conferences provided an opportunity to celebrate student learning and to set goals for the school year. Feedback from the students, parents and teachers was positive. We came out of the conferences feeling a sense of direction and purpose.

November

On Friday, November 8th the students participated in a **Remembrance Day Prayer Service**. It was a great opportunity to remember the people who have sacrificed so that we might live in peace and freedom. It was a beautiful service with prayer, scripture and song. This year we had a guest speaker from the Canadian Armed Forces, Major Mike Holt. The students seemed to sense that it was a time of deep reverence and respect. Thank you to the parents who were able to join us. A special thanks you to Alex McDonald and Ian McCombe, who played the bagpipes for our ceremony. What a special touch!



On November 9th, the school hosted a **Volleyball Tournament**. There were eight teams in competition, both boys and girls. The day went very well and all the athletes and coaches were thankful for the opportunity to enjoy some time on our courts.



Our school's **Annual General Meeting** took place on Wednesday, November 20th. It was an opportunity for the board and the administration to discuss our plans with the parent community. I have included the School Plan Summary and a Financial Report from the board in this newsletter for parents who were unable to attend the meeting.

On Friday, November 29th our **first term report cards** went home. Parents had an opportunity to review them with their children. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

Looking Forward

December

Advent assemblies will take place each week during Advent. Our next assembly will be on December 4th at 8:45 AM. Family members are always welcome to attend.

We will be having our annual **Christmas Gift Drive** on Friday, December 6th, where we gather presents brought in by the students for local missions. An information letter with details about the project has been sent home with your child. Parents are welcome to join us for the gift wrapping and to indulge in a little hot chocolate.

Our **Christmas Concert** will be on Thursday, December 19th at 7 PM. Please mark your calendars and join us for either the afternoon dress rehearsal (1 PM) or the evening performance. You won't be disappointed!

The **last day of school** before Christmas is on Friday, December 20th. It's an 11:25 AM dismissal that day. As well, it will be a Red/Green colour day for students in anticipation of the big day.

Open House

Please mark your calendars for our school Open House on Sunday, January 26th. If you have friends or family that are interested in seeing the school and perhaps having their children attend here, this is an excellent opportunity for them to check it out.

From the Music Room

♪ Do Re Mi Fa So Happy to Share Music News! ♪

Music Term 1 2024-2025

Hello everyone, Miss Millet here! I'm delighted to be back for another year of fun in the music classroom at St. Als! I can't believe we're wrapping up Term 1 already, so here is a quick recap of life in the music room:

September:

During the start of the new school year, we made sure in every class to establish that music is for everyone in our community, both familiar and new. In the spirit of reconciliation, all classes explored the various kinds of singing, instrumentation, and dance throughout Turtle Island. Throughout the month we also reviewed musical fundamentals such as beat, rhythm, tempo, and reading the music staff to set our foundation for the rest of the year.

October:

October was an exciting month for our Grade 3-6s, as we were introduced to several new instruments! Grade 3s learned how to listen to each other during Orff instrument ensembles, Grade 4s learned how to be responsible with their recorders, Grade 5 jammed on ukulele, and Grade 6 picked up guitar once again! I thank our younger grades for singing "Pass the Pumpkin" and "Pumpkin, Pumpkin" nice and loud throughout this month while bearing with my spooky, croaky voice!

November:

Peace was again a reoccurring theme of November, and we worked on developing a beautiful singing voice with songs like "Peace Before Us, Peace Behind Us", and "Peace is Flowing like a River". A big thank you to Mr. McCombe and Alex from Grade 5 for playing the bagpipes for our Remembrance Day assembly! Right after Remembrance Day, we started our Christmas concert preparations.

Liturgical Choir:

Our Grade 4-8 Choir continues to grow stronger with each practice and remains open for students to join and share their musical talents with the Lord and our community! Along with our awesome vocalists, I'm sure everyone can look towards seeing more and more instrumentalists slowly join our music ministry for our masses. We are truly blessed to have such willing and dedicated choir members!

Looking forward to December:

All students from K-6 have been working hard on their singing, choreography, and perfecting their instrumentation to prepare for our upcoming Christmas Concert on **Thursday, December 19** for all to enjoy! Our Grade 6 cast is working hard to memorize their lines with dramatic delivery and will be rehearsing after school to put on the best show possible! More information regarding costumes coming soon!

♪ Do re mi fa so long until next update! ♪

From the Art Room:

Grades 7 and 8 have a fresh, new classroom to explore the world of art, and I invite everyone to pop by in front of the Grade 3 classroom to take a look! There is an artist within each child, and through exploration of different design elements and mediums, I hope each student will be able to find something that resonates with them. Our Grade 7s have just finished their realism unit, where they learned how to draw various body parts and successfully redrew half of their face. They are now experimenting with oil pastels with a holiday twist! Our Grade 8 class worked with metal tooling, charcoal drawings, and have been introduced to the world of cross-stitch, where I am pleasantly surprised on how well they've picked up this tricky skill. Let's continue to encourage our young artists to express themselves through art!

Miss Millet



Physical Education Across the Grades

Kindergarten—Grade 2

This term the early years students were involved in activities to practice and develop some of the fourteen basic movement skills. In particular, we worked on galloping, running and skipping. As well, we learned to use different equipment and played a variety of cooperative and low organized games. We discussed and practiced the rules and routines we use to play safely and fairly in the gym.

Grades 3-5

During the first term the grade three to five students were involved in the following activities: various sport lead up games, fitness challenges and low organized games. The skills we have focused on developing this term include manipulation skills: passing throwing and catching. We have also worked on the movement skills of running and moving in the gym through our various games and activities. We have also worked on fair play concepts and what that looks like in the gym.

Grade 6-8

Students in grades six—eight were involved in the following activities: volleyball, fitness challenges and low organized games. We have focused on developing manipulation skills such as overhead and underhand passing and serving. Our fitness challenges have helped the students to identify some goals to work on during the year to improve their overall fitness.



From the Gym

The fall has been a very busy time in the gym. All the classes are settled into our routines and are enjoying being physically active.

The primary classes have been working on moving safely in the gym. We have been playing cooperative games and are developing a sense of fair play. We are learning to use a variety of equipment and have been concentrating on throwing and catching activities. Our elementary friends have been playing volleyball lead-up games, participating in fitness challenges and enjoying a variety of low organized games. Our older students have been playing volleyball, working to assess and improve their fitness level and participating in different games and activities.

Our annual Terry Fox Family Walk was held on Thursday, September 12th. It was a great day and everyone enjoyed the pizza after the walk was finished. Thank you to everyone who participated and a special thanks to those who donated to this worthy cause.

Volleyball season just finished up. We had four teams on the go (two boys teams and two girls teams) with more than 50 student athletes involved. Through the season the players participated in a number of tournaments (including three hosted at our school) and over 40 league games. Our developmental girls teams concluded their season with a tournament on November 15th, with the boys wrapping things up on Friday, November 16th. Both teams had a remarkable season. We had playoffs for our grade 7/8 teams during the week of November 18th – 23rd. Thank you to everyone who came out to cheer our teams on. Thank you to Mrs. McInnis, Mrs. Rayner, Mrs. Babiuk, Mrs. Seaman and Mrs. Toews for all of the time dedicated to coaching the teams. As well, thanks to Lito Lorenzana, Chris Lorenzana, Santi Galapon and Sebastian Pieczonka who refereed through the season. I am sure the athletes appreciate it; I know I do!

Our next inter-school sport is basketball. That's all for now. If you have any questions or concerns about the Physical Education program, please come by the gym or call me at the school. Take care and stay active!

Blake McInnis
Physical Education Teacher



Halloween Dress Up and Dance Event 2024

Saturday, October 19th marked the 26th Annual Halloween Dress Up and Dance Event at St. Alphonsus.

It was wonderful to see so many families in attendance, and to see so many great costumes! The response was amazing, and the event was sold out once again!

We are so grateful to all our volunteers who volunteered their time the night before, and throughout the evening during the social to make the event such a great evening for the St. Al's community. Additionally, we are thankful to all those families who donated prizes to the children's raffle and to those families who participated in the St. Al's Pumpkin Patch.

Thank you to Mr. & Mrs. McInnis, Mrs. Resendes and Mr. Lambert who always support our committee to ensure that everything runs smoothly!

Thank you to the Halloween Social Committee (Jenn Doer, Dan Pagani, Sophia Nemeth & Jared Ruffeski) for all your hard work and energy.

Finally, a big thanks to all who came out and supported this event to make it such a success!

The event raised around \$2500 and all proceeds will be utilized by PALS to support various projects & events throughout the year.

Thank you again to everyone involved, it was frightfully fun!!

Lindsay Ruffeski



French

Bonjour à tous!

Throughout the first term, each class has been actively participating in various language based activities & games such as, Lotto, Bazinga, Buzz, Q & A's, Brain Teasers, all which have been connected to curricular outcomes within our thematic units.

My goal in French is to help students develop their knowledge of French vocabulary, increase positive attitudes, & my main focus on enhancing communication skills. In turn, students will become better writers in French; 'if they can say it, then they can write it'.

I am thrilled by the overall participation and enthusiasm each class exhibits and look forward to starting a new and exciting next term!



—Mme Curwain—

1ier année- The grade one class is a lively group, eager to learn and participate during French lessons. Each class begins with our routine greeting, "Bonjour, comment ça va?", followed by chants of the days of the week, months of the year, and movement breaks that include counting from 1 to 10 in French. During our theme on colors, students read the book *Les feuilles* and enjoyed literacy games and activities like 4 Corners, Lotto and memory, which helped reinforce repetition and comprehension. Great start to the year!

2ieme année- In French class, the grade two students are attentive learners, carefully following explanations and using visual cues to aid their comprehension. Each class includes a mix of songs, games, and language-focused activities to support their language growth. During our unit on family, the class worked on recognizing and correctly naming different family members (la maman, le papa, la sœur, le frère, le bébé, la grand-mère, and le grand-père). Their family portraits are already beginning to reflect their grasp of the vocabulary learned in class. Students are currently practicing reading and identifying colors in French through our class read-aloud, "Pat le Chat; J'adore mes souliers blancs". They are also working on creating their own versions of the story. Well done, grade two!

3ieme année- The grade 3 class started the term by reviewing calendar vocabulary, including the days of the week, months of the year, and seasons. Students engaged in various literacy activities related to our weather theme to strengthen their vocabulary and comprehension. By the end of the unit, they were able to describe different types of weather in each season. Currently, the class is enjoying our book study, "Les Animaux du Zoo", where they are practicing at recognizing, identifying, and labeling different animals and their associated colors.

4ieme année- The grade 4 class is an enthusiastic group with a strong interest in learning French. They particularly enjoy participating in "Mini prof," where each student takes a turn leading the class through our calendar Q&A routine in French. Recently, they have been actively learning new vocabulary related to our unit *L'École*. They demonstrated their ability to name and identify objects by creating "Sac à Dos" mini posters, and further showcased their knowledge by independently writing descriptive sentences about where these items are located within a school setting. Fantastic start—keep up the great work!

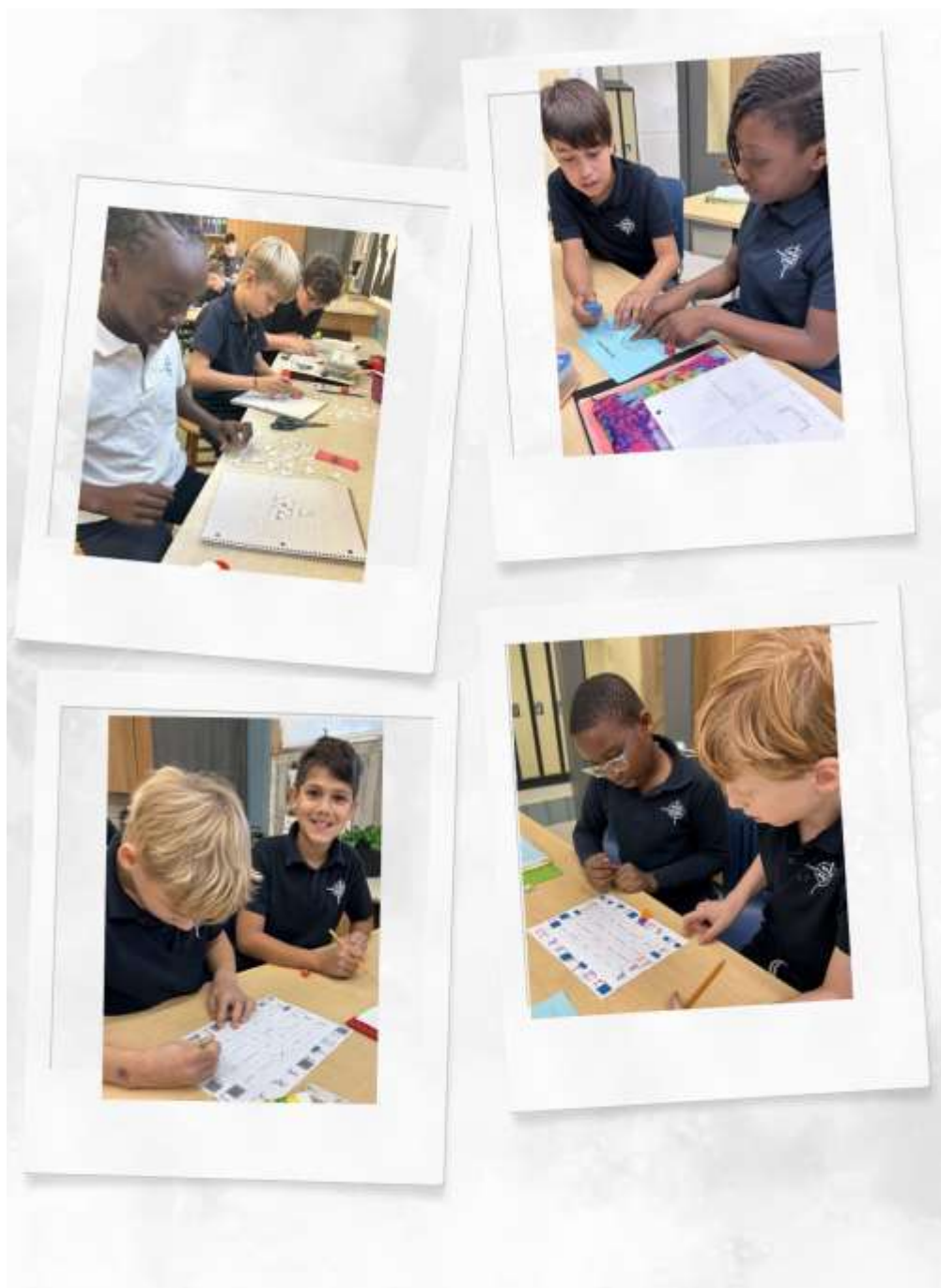
5ieme année- Throughout the first term, the grade 5 class has been practicing calendar skills, recognizing written numbers in French, and using the phrasing "Aujourd'hui, Hier était, Demain sera" to describe the date. We began the year by focusing on dictionary skills to enhance spelling, reading comprehension, and writing independence. The class has also concentrated on identifying and using French prepositions in their writing tasks. Currently, students are working at applying their understanding of prepositions and vocabulary related to *La Maison* to

create complete sentences describing their magazine art. Excellent work this term!

6ième année- In French, the grade 6 class begins each session with *Message du jour*, an essential part of balanced literacy that engages students in thematic study and reinforces correct French spelling, phrasing, and reading. Students demonstrated their understanding and use of phrases like “j’aime, j’adore, je n’aime pas, & je déteste” through their sentence structures connected to their jigsaw puzzle art. Currently, they are expanding their skills by incorporating these phrases into their *Jouer vs Faire* Prezi project.

7ième année- This term, the grade 7 class focused on the introduction of regular “er” verbs and mastering their correct conjugation forms. Students demonstrated their understanding of “-er” conjugations by completing a Halloween-themed art activity. In our next unit on articles of clothing, the class will concentrate on reading, decoding, and comprehending the text *Habiller Dans le Noir*. They will work on sequencing the story in French, filling in missing vocabulary, and editing the text with proper “-er” verb conjugations. To conclude the unit, students will showcase their comprehension by creating their own version of the story. Bonne chance!

8ième année- The grade eight class has demonstrated progress in using vocabulary and phrases modeled by the teacher and following simple instructions in French. Students have successfully applied learned vocabulary in their writing and during peer interactions in our Q&A sessions. In our unit on “-er” verb conjugations, students engaged with a text through repeated reading to improve comprehension and fluency. They practiced sequencing the story, filling in missing information, and editing it for correct use of “-er” conjugations. Currently, students are showcasing their understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure by creating their own versions of the “Frankenstein” story to align with their artwork. A fantastic start to the year!



PALS

The St. Alphonsus Parent Association (PALS) has been off to a busy and exciting start this year! PALS works on events to support community development within our school. Our events are intended to build community, but also raise funds to help with projects around the school. This past year, PALS was able to cover the cost of the Kildonan Park Pool year end outing. PALS has also committed to paying for the NEW intercom system that was installed. As school parents, you are all automatically members of PALS. This year's executive team includes:

- **Diego Beltran** (Chair)
- **Stephanie Maldonado** (Co-Chair)
- **Lindsay Ruffeski** (Minutes Recorder)
- **Jennifer Doer** (Treasurer)

Events Recap

In June, we had the pleasure of hosting the year-end school BBQ, which was a great success with fantastic attendance! This fall, PALS organized the Wine Tasting and Halloween Social events, both of which were also very well attended. We hope you had a great time at these events!

These events would not have been possible without the incredible support of parent volunteers. Thank you all for your time and effort—it truly makes a difference!



Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Upcoming Activities

We are excited to continue with our **spring Glenlea plant sale**—a big thank you to Michelle Davison for leading this initiative!

We are also thrilled to support a new hot lunch program in partnership with Lobby Café and Deli. Lobby Café and Deli is a local business owned by Monica Czezowski. Lunches are available every Wednesday (orders due the previous Friday) through the Munch-a-Lunch platform. Additionally, we're hosting special restaurant lunches over the year. These lunches will occur about once a month on Tuesdays.

Through term two, PALS also holds several community building events in the gym. Watch for information about the open gym nights and movie night in the New Year. And, don't forget to mark your calendars for our end-of-year BBQ in June 2024!

You may have noticed an email from the office regarding volunteer position available to help out with some of these amazing community building events. If you are interested, please contact the office for more information.

If you're free in the evening on the second Tuesday each month and would like to connect with other parents, consider joining a PALS meeting! Attendees are automatically entered into a monthly \$100 tuition draw sponsored by the Board. This year, we're hosting a mix of in-person and virtual meetings, with the next sessions scheduled as follows:

- **December 10** (in-person potluck)
- **January 14**
- **February 11**
- **March 11**
- **April 8**
- **May 13**
- **June 10**

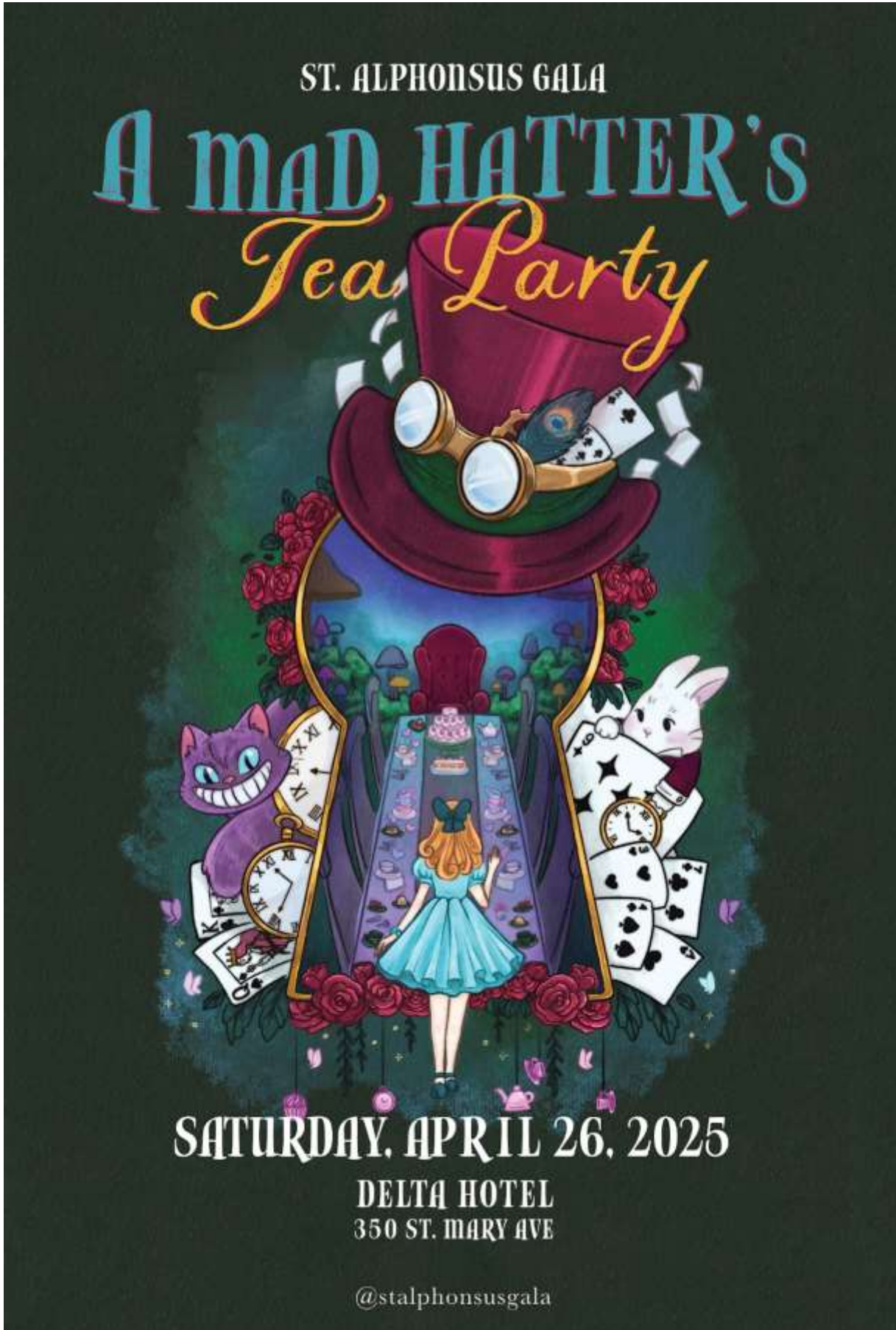
Meetings begin at 7 PM and typically last about an hour.

Finally, PALS wishes you and your family a joyful and blessed Christmas season, along with health and happiness in the New Year!



Members of our PALS helping with our Terry Fox event

Gala is on the Way!



SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025

DELTA HOTEL
350 ST. MARY AVE

@stalphonsusgala

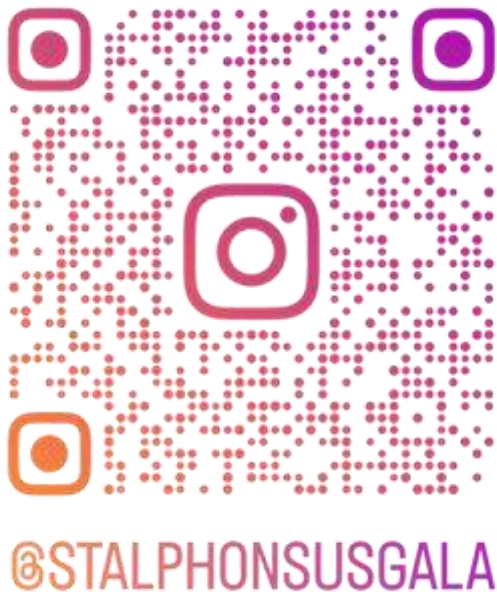
What is Gala?

- A) A fabulous event with fine dining, dancing and amazing prizes.
- B) A 30+ year tradition.
- C) A great way to support your child's school.

The answer is... ALL OF THE ABOVE!

Join us on
Saturday, April 26, 2025
for our
35th Annual Gala Dinner!

Follow Gala on Instagram and/or Facebook for the latest updates!



School Board News

As a board we are thrilled to see such a great start to the 24/25 school year! We are continuing to work on the priorities outlined in the Strategic Planning Report that we developed in the spring and early fall of 2023. Over the past year, we conducted a facility audit, outlined a marketing/communication strategy, developed a Graduate Profile and updated our Mission and Vision Statements. In the first term we have held 3 board meetings as well as our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 20th.

This year we said goodbye to one outgoing board members: Kelly Melchor. Kelly, we wish to thank you for your years of service on behalf of the Board and the entire school community! We are pleased to welcome Steven Ajibi to our Board of Directors.

Portfolios for the 2024-25 school year are as follows:

- Richard Avila, Chair
- Jean Dalman, Recording Secretary
- Ann Marie Verdejo, Finance
- Paul McDonald, Human Resources
- Brent Dixon, Public Relations
- Francoise Cassidy, MCSGS (Pensions and Benefits)
- Dan Garcea, Member at Large
- Steven Ajibi, Member at Large
- Father Greg Mulligan, Pastor
- Kim LeHeiget, Finance Office
- Christine McInnis, Principal

Parents and parishioners are welcome to attend the open portion of Board meetings, which are held monthly. Check the calendar on the school website for further details.

Richard Avila
Chair, St. Alphonsus School Board of Directors



School Board News Cont'd

Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2024

For 2023/2024 enrollment stayed stable from 2022/2023 levels.

Academic revenue increased to inflationary increases in government grants, tuition increases, and new one-time funding received for Shared Services.

Other revenue increased primarily due to higher interest income.

Expenses increased primarily due to higher staffing costs combined with increased spending on clinical services and shops supplies and student activities.

In 2023/2024 \$232,000 was spent on the new play structure, paving, a new intercom system and computers.

Summarized Financial Statements		
Balance Sheet	June 2024	June 2023
Current Assets	\$ 1,640,819	\$ 1,794,185
Capital Assets	881,129	768,957
Total Assets	\$ 2,521,948	\$ 2,563,142
Current Liabilities & Debt	\$ 421,804	\$ 446,835
Net Assets	2,100,144	2,116,307
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 2,521,948	\$ 2,563,142
Statement of Revenues & Expenditures		
Academic Revenue	\$ 2,092,731	\$ 1,961,155
Other Revenue	342,274	334,053
Expenses	(2,451,168)	(2,376,700)
(Deficiency) Excess of Revenues over Expenses	\$ (16,163)	\$ (81,492)

If you would like to see the complete financial statements please make a request at the office.

As always, a huge thank you again to all the individuals and groups that contribute to the success of our School!

If you have any questions please forward them to the office.

Sincerely yours,

Kim Le Heiget, CPA, CA
Finance Officer

Advent and Christmas at St Alphonsus Parish

Celebrate Advent & Christmas at St Alphonsus Church

**315 Munroe Avenue
Corner of Brazier
and Munroe**



Confession Opportunities this Advent

- Thursday December 5 at Blessed Sacrament 7 pm
- Wednesday December 11 at Holy Redeemer 7 pm
- Thursday December 12 at St Gerard 7 pm
- Friday December 13 at St Alphonsus 7 pm
- Thursday December 19 at St Joseph the Worker 7 pm

Christmas Masses 2024 at St Alphonsus

- December 24 Mass at 7 pm and 9 pm (Tuesday)
- December 25 Mass at 9 am and 11 am (Wednesday)
- December 31 Mass at 5 pm (Tuesday)
- January 1 Mass at 11 am (Wednesday)