

# SSO CONNECTIONS

NEWS & NOTICES FROM LCA'S VOLUNTEER NETWORK

October 28, 2010

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**Saints Service  
Organization**  
Lakewood Catholic Academy

## Saints Service Organization: Supporting Faith, Family, and Friends

The 2010-11 LCA school year began with a new energy – a buzz in the air about an organization that would connect LCA's active community in a fresh and focused way. The concept was presented to a large group of parents in May and the idea was nurtured throughout the summer by a steering committee. This committee took the best ideas from many sources to create a structure that would bring volunteerism for the many LCA activities and organizations together in one unified effort – and the Saints Service Organization (SSO) was born.

With great hope and optimism, a theme was presented to help guide the efforts in our first year: "Let us make our way together, Lord... With faith, with family, with friends."

Embracing this theme, a group of over 40 dedicated chairpersons and executive board members came together to do the work needed to continue our strong traditions, refresh certain ideas and introduce new, vibrant ways to work together.

The first SSO Volunteer Fair was held on September 16 to present the many volunteer opportunities available at LCA and invite all families to become involved. About 80 families attended the fair and many made volunteer commitments to one or more activities.

Trish Vargo, chairperson for the Volunteer Fair, received positive feedback from those who attended. "Some parents didn't know about the diversity of volunteer opportunities at LCA," Trish says. With an attractive,

visual display for each SSO event/activity, the first Volunteer Fair brought these opportunities to light for many.

To date, SSO membership is at 241 families, or 65% of all LCA families enrolled this year. Membership chairperson, Tracy Rehl, says that the volunteer request forms distributed to parents are helpful for planning the year's events. However, everyone is encouraged to get involved as events occur.

With a clear mission and common goals, the SSO has begun the work of building relationships that serve LCA and enhance the Catholic education we so value. We hope that all will join the SSO mission as we make our way together – with faith, family, with friends.

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Alayna Fantozzi's display featuring the opportunity to volunteer in the cafeteria



SSO Executive Board Members



Marie Morabeto

Leslie Andrews

Jenny Reali

Katie Trainor

# SSO Profiles: Meet the Executive Board

October 28, 2010

## Jenny Reali, President

Jenny accepted her role as the first SSO President after working over the summer on the Steering Committee that helped to develop the structure, goals and vision for the new organization.

Jenny and husband, Michael, are parents to four boys – Jacob, 9; Patrick, 7; Christopher, 6 and Anthony, 3. They have been active in the Lakewood community for many years.

Jenny's leadership roles in the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA include two years as chairperson for the Baby Bargain Bonanza and a great personal accomplishment as the originator of the hugely popular Lakewood summer tradition, Meet the Trucks. Her third year as planner for Meet the Trucks brought over 3,000 people to Lakewood Park for the event.

As an LCA parent, she quickly became involved in volunteer activities such as Night at the Races, which she co-chaired for two years, 2008 and 2009.

Jenny's vision for the SSO in this first year is "to create a very positive, excited and unified group of volunteers that will help make all our fundraisers and friend-raisers a huge success." She hopes to see 100% membership in the SSO as the organization gains recognition and continues to facilitate positive volunteer experiences at LCA.

## Leslie Andrews, Vice President

Leslie holds the position of SSO Vice President because she believes the programs and funding provided through SSO are an important part of LCA and the growth of the students. She is excited as the inaugural year of SSO gets underway.

Leslie and her husband, Brian, have been married for ten years and have two children. Celia is in grade four and Maggie is in grade two. Leslie currently works at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center as the Manager of Clinical Research. She also enjoys giving her time to LCA and has been in a variety of volunteer roles. Leslie has been a room parent, Bingo volunteer, and Co-chaired Night at the Races. She is very excited about the Reverse Raffle this year. It is a new event and Leslie feels it will be a great new social event for the LCA community.

Leslie's dedication and diligence will help set the foundation for our new volunteer organization. She, along with the rest of the Executive Board and the entire Saints Service Organization, are working to make SSO a vital, vibrant part of Lakewood Catholic Academy.

## Katie Trainor, Secretary

Katie enthusiastically accepted Jenny Reali's offer to be the SSO Secretary. She thought it would be a great opportunity to feel connected to the LCA community and enjoys the camaraderie that is developing within the SSO. Before becoming involved at LCA, Katie spent time in the communications and advertising field and volunteered at Rainbow Babies and Children on the Oncology unit.

Katie and her husband, Bill, have been married for nine years and have three children. Will is in grade four, Keegan grade one, and Cole is in Pre-K. She enjoys being involved in the community and feels that since LCA is such a huge part of her children's lives, she can't think of a better place to spend her time.

Katie is eager for the All Saints Auction. She appreciates the hard work and creativity that goes into planning the event, a fun and exciting evening. She loves being a part of the enthusiasm and sincere interest demonstrated by the members of the SSO. Katie also enjoys seeing new events being held at LCA and witnessing the transformation occurring within the LCA community.

## Marie Morabeto, Treasurer

Marie stepped up to take on the Treasurer position after seeing a need during the first SSO meeting in September. Already chairperson for the All-School Service Project, she felt her experience as treasurer for the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA and her organizational skills could benefit the SSO in a meaningful way.

Marie and husband, John, are parents to two LCA students – Emily, grade six and Olivia, grade four. She has been an active LCA volunteer, with roles as parent coordinator for past auction classroom projects and as "decorator" of many creative, seasonal bulletin boards seen throughout the school.

In the community, Marie has been a volunteer for Meals on Wheels and she and John have been a part of the Lakewood Pre-Cana Team for the past three years.

As chairperson for the upcoming All-School Service Project, she is excited to work with students and volunteers as they make a difference in Lakewood. "It is so important to instill in our children the need to help others and give back to the community," Marie says.

## “Tasty Tuesdays” are a Hit with Teachers



How do you show appreciation for the best teachers around? Feed them, of course! And no, it's not just "apples for the teachers" anymore! The SSO Teacher Appreciation Committee, headed by Jeni Matousek, plans a monthly breakfast or luncheon featuring delicious local fare – from gourmet sandwiches to comfort foods – to show a heartfelt thanks to the teachers who give their time, effort and love to help shape and educate our children.

The first Teacher Appreciation luncheon was served in the faculty lounge on Tuesday, September 14, featuring portabella mushroom and roasted chicken sandwiches on baked focaccia bread. Many teachers were pleasantly surprised by the attractive presentation of the food and many also expressed their thanks through handwritten thank-you notes in the days following the meal. In October, teachers enjoyed a luncheon with offerings from Aladdin's in Lakewood.

"The response from teachers was overwhelmingly positive and gracious," says Jeni. "The return on this investment is impossible to gauge."

Many volunteers were eager to become involved in this opportunity, allowing Jeni to fill the volunteer schedule through the next several months. The volunteer commitment varies, depending on whether the monthly meal is breakfast or lunch. For breakfast, the volunteer places the order with a vendor, picks up the food and delivers it to the faculty lounge – making sure to add his/her special touches to create a welcoming display for teachers. Providing breakfast requires less than one hour of time on a given Tuesday. Serving lunch is more time consuming, usually about three hours, because it is served over several afternoon lunch periods.

Jeni notes that this volunteer opportunity is made simple for parents because the faculty lounge is roomy and very conducive to food service. In addition, because the cost of food is included in this year's SSO budget, volunteers are not expected to solicit donations or fund the event themselves.

SSO is proud to support this new tradition of appreciation for our terrific teachers!

## MoonRock Bowling Scores Big!

MoonRock bowling was a night filled with glow-in-the-dark fun. Laser lights and disco lights created a party atmosphere for bowlers; even the bowling balls glow! Friday, September 25, forty junior high students gathered at Fairview Lanes for a night of MoonRock bowling.

Maria Pauer, chairperson for the event, reports that everybody had a great time. Students enjoyed the music and videos; the DJ was busy responding to their music requests. Many thanks to the volunteers who chaperoned and provided bakery and drinks for the group. What a great social outing to kick off a new school year!

### Lunchtime Gets a Lift

The new Cafeteria Volunteer program, coordinated by Alayna Fantozzi, lets parents be a part of their student's school day in an informal, non-classroom setting – while they're happily eating and interacting with friends!

In past school years, the “specials” teachers (art, Spanish, music, etc.) and the occasional parent volunteer took on the task of monitoring the lunch periods. Now, in an effort to give those teachers a well-deserved break at lunchtime, Alayna coordinates a working schedule of volunteers to fill the daily positions that are needed. Each shift requires less than two hours of time and the commitment is flexible. Volunteers can sign up for a regular position once per month, once per week or just as a substitute to be called when needed. Alayna keeps her operation well-organized, sending out monthly e-mail reminders to her volunteers.

The main responsibilities of this position are to assist students and to monitor lunchroom behavior. Volunteers routinely lend a hand opening juice boxes and ketchup packets; they also help students become self-sufficient by cleaning up after themselves and wiping down tables together.

The interaction with the students is very rewarding, says Alayna. “I love interacting with the kids,” she says. “There is one little girl who is fascinated by my shoes, so I make sure I wear interesting ones when I have cafeteria duty.”

Your involvement in this program will make a difference in a student's day and a teacher's day – not to mention adding a smile to your day! If you would like to volunteer in the cafeteria or have questions about this opportunity, contact Alayna at 440-333-4509 or [fantozzi4@cox.net](mailto:fantozzi4@cox.net).

### Grandparents' Day Connects Generations

This year's Grandparents' Day celebration brought nearly 300 grandparents to the LCA campus for morning mass and classroom visits with students.

SSO volunteers, led by chairperson Leslie Mitchell, planned and facilitated the event held on Friday, October 15. Returning grandparents commented that they have always enjoyed the day with their grandchildren and that it seems to be better organized each year. Leslie organized seven parent volunteers and over 20 student ambassadors, all who kept the morning running smoothly by welcoming guests, giving directions to classrooms and, most importantly, being the friendly face of LCA for so many supportive grandparents.

Leslie is already making plans to improve the event in the future. One idea she proposes for next year is to provide song sheets for guests to use during mass. SSO chairpeople are always thinking ahead!

### LCA Hosts Annual Run for Excellence

Chairperson Maureen Kantorak, along with a group of volunteers, organized one of the main fundraisers for SSO. Over 300 runners participated in the 5K and Michalko Mile Run for Excellence held August 29. This event is very important to the LCA community, and a committee for the 2011 Run is currently forming. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available the day of the race, as well.