GAPP Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 21, 2013

Attendance: All Families represented

Fundraising:

Frau Timmermann shared the balance amount to date, which has been used to calculate the per student cost.

Christmas tree lights need to be dropped off at Express Recycling by Friday, January 25th so that they can issue GAPP a check. Discussion was held about applying the funds from this to further offset the overall trip costs. Frau Timmermann shared that she would like to apply the amount towards the GAPP T-shirt purchase rather than ask families for funds for this expense.

Mrs. Faivre received approval to proceed with a Schwan’s fundraiser. She will get 21 catalogs for distribution. The truck will park at Daly Drug on Saturday, March 9th with an alternate date of Saturday, March 16th. A portion of the proceeds, depending on sales amount, will be donated to GAPP.

Participant List:

Frau Timmermann distributed the participant list and asked for updates and/or corrections. She will re-distribute at the last pre-departure meeting.

Itinerary:

Frau Timmermann passed out the itinerary (blue handout) and shared a powerpoint giving a few more details about the items on the trip.

Trip Costs:

Frau Timmermann handed out a green sheet with the breakdown of the 2013 trip. Due to changes in airline policies, no 25% teacher reduction or a free student ticker were issued. All other costs have also gone up since 2011, thus contributing to the increase of $400 compared to the 2011 trip. Finance reviewed all numbers and ways to reduce the costs were discussed, e.g. removing the trip to Regensburg and the new one to the BMW factory. This would have a minimal per student savings of $44 so these outings were kept in the itinerary. The other unknown factor in the calculation is the exchange rate. To be conservative, Frau Timmermann calculated using $1.50 = €1. As of the meeting date the exchange rate is $1.37 = €1 and it has been on the rise. Frau Timmermann hopes that it does not increase any more.

Handling Money

Each student will need a debit card connected to a checking account. A debit card connected only to a savings account will not work in the ATMs in Germany. This has to do with the communication between the banking systems. Families should get a checking account with the debit card set up at their earliest convenience and not leave it to the last minute. It takes approximately two weeks to process everything and get the card. On-line banking should also be set up for parents to monitor their child’s spending while in Germany. Frau Timmermann further explained that the debit cards are easy to use in Germany. All ATM’s have an English language option. Students type in the Euro amount desired and it is deducted from the checking account in dollars given the exchange rate. The usual daily withdrawal limit is set at $250. Families have the option of changing this. Some banks do charge a foreign currency transaction fee. Families should check this with their banks. Before leaving for Germany, students should memorize their pin number and practice using the account. Also, the bank and the credit card company (if one is going to be used) need to know that the card is being used in Germany and the length of time. The use of the card may be blocked by the bank/credit card company if they do not get this information. They do this for fraud protection.

 Additionally, Frau Timmermann strongly advised against the use of credit cards as a means of getting cash, since this is then considered a cash advance and is treated as a loan by the credit card agency. Credit card use is still not as prevalent in Europe as it is in the U.S. Students can use them at tourist sites, e.g. Neuschwanstein and in bigger department stores. Frau Timmermann also strongly advised against any pre-paid Visa or American Express cards. These charge higher fees and cannot be used as easily. Previous students have not been able to access any cash from these preloaded cards and had very limited acceptability in larger stores.

***Spending Money:***

Spending habits vary individually. Typically, the girls spend more than the boys. Frau Timmermann recommends about $100 per week for additional food purchases (ice cream, bakery etc), other events and gifts and souvenirs. Frau Timmermann advised that gift purchases be held to a minimal and not to buy for every relative. Checked luggage is limited to one piece at 23 kg or 50 lbs. Items can be sent home, but this can be costly and they are subject to duty.

***Cash***

Because the group is going directly to the families, Frau Timmermann does not see the need to exchange money ahead of time. There was no sentiment contrary to this. If families wish to have Euros in cash, then to save on fees, we need to pool the money and order it. It takes about two weeks. It was decided not to order any Euros in cash prior to departure.

Other Business

GAPP T-Shirts

Frau Timmermann will work with her students and Mrs. Kollock to get a GAPP T-shirt. The cost will be about $10 per student.

Royal Event

Frau Timmermann passed out the Royal Event sign-up sheet. Help is needed preparing the Schaumtorte and mixers are needed as well. Dates are Saturday, May 18th (prep day) and Sunday, May 19th

GAPP Pre-Departure Mass:

Traditionally, a pre-departure mass is held at AHS. However, with the departure on Sunday this year, that creates some difficulties. Two options were presented:

1. Find a retired priest to hold the mass at AHS at 11 a.m. on Sunday, June 16th
2. Attend a local parish as a group for their Sunday mass and ask for a special prayer or blessing for the travelers.

It was decided that the group should attend St. Peter and Paul’s 10 a.m. mass on Sunday, June 16th. Frau Timmermann will speak with Father Altman about this.

Next and Final Pre-Departure Meeting: Monday, April 22nd 6 p.m Room 214

Agenda Items: Behavior Standards and Contract and other Paperwork