

Sunday, January 21, 2018

Villa Joseph Marie Alumnae Association Meeting Notes

Attending

VJMAA Leadership Team

Sharon Citak Bell '86
Nicole DiEnna '02
Renée Kitchenman McGovern '02
Sara Couch '04
Nicole Prunetti '07

VJM Staff

Tom Kardish
Lauren Gaughan Carr '00
Melissa Morley Amour '90
Jennifer Drayer-McDonald
Mary Beth Davis Walinskas '96

Alumnae Attendees

Florence Mulholland Mullen '59
Kathleen Breslin '63
Joanne Raczynski '70
Laura Wescoat Shelley '78
Mary Jo Marino-Hertzog '79
Christine Heys Armetta '84
Laureen Hayes '86
Melissa Tatar Pickersgill '90
Alice Sheerin Braun '90
Arianne Brown '99
Andrea Bradbury Sorial '04
Brittany King '07
Jeannine Bradbury '07
Rachel McGovern '07
Lindsey King '10
Courtney Shaw '12
Audrey Callahan '13
Lauren McGovern '14
Lauren Amour '17

Opening Remarks | 12 to 12:10 p.m.

- Welcome: Melissa Morley Amour '90
- Opening Prayer: Lauren Gaughan Carr '00
- President's Address: Tom Kardish
 - This meeting is one of the most important meetings of his tenure.
 - Villa is living up to the mission established by Mother Maria Kaupas—enrollment is at an all-time high, facilities are expanding, students are participating in enriching academic and service activities, graduates are being accepted to distinguished institutions of higher learning, applicants are scoring high on tests.
 - We are the legacy of the Sisters of St. Casimir. They have entrusted the school into our hands.

- The Alumnae Association will help continue that legacy. It will also serve as a conduit to the Board of Directors—the overall leadership of the school.

General Discussion | 12:10 to 12:30 p.m.

- General introduction: Nicole Prunetti '07
- Leadership Team members in attendance introduce themselves (name, Villa class year, job, favorite Villa memory): Renee Kitchenman McGovern '02, Sara Couch '04, Nicole DiEnna '02, Sharon Citak Bell '86, Nicole Prunetti '07
- Organizational structure introduction: Nicole Prunetti '07
 - Alumnae can get involved in numerous capacities, based on interests and availability.
 - Bylaws are in development.
 - The overarching organizational mission statement will encompass two key areas—Alumnae engagement with one another, to support and encourage bonds, and Alumnae involvement with the school and students.
 - What will the organization look like? A general membership base, executive officers to run the organization, and an advisory council to liaise with the Board of Directors.
 - Within the organization there will be committees that steer events and initiatives. Two proposed committees are social and professional development.
- Pause for questions
 - Jeannine Bradbury '07: *Where does the organization currently stand?*
Nicole Prunetti '07: The Leadership Team has been working with the Office of Alumnae to flesh out the leadership structures and populate the committees by reaching out to Alumnae who have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the Association and with Villa to bring them into the fold. Through its committees, the Association can work on independent activities but also help promote and support school-run Alumnae activities.
 - Andrea Bradbury Sorial '04: *Who are the officers of the organization?*
Sara Couch '04: There are currently no officers, but they will be elected in due course, following approval of bylaws.
- Committee introduction: Renee Kitchenman McGovern '02, Nicole DiEnna '02, Sara Couch '04
 - Renee Kitchenman McGovern '02 briefly discusses two activities currently on the agenda of the social committee—a Beef & Beer in April, and a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the first state soccer championship in the fall of 2018.
 - Nicole DiEnna '02 stresses the importance of the involvement of all generations of Villa Alumnae, as experiences vary widely from era to era.

- Sara Couch '04 briefly describes how the professional development committee can impact both Alumnae and current students. She also mentions the Alumnae app in development.
- Sara Couch '04 explains brainstorming activities for each committee and asks for Alumnae to identify which committee they would prefer to join.
- Committees break off. General meeting adjourns.

Committee Discussion | 12:30 to 1:15 p.m.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Leader: Sara Couch '04

Members:

Laura Wescoat Shelley '78
 Mary Jo Marino-Hertzog '79
 Melissa Morley Amour '90
 Lauren Gaughan Carr '00
 Andrea Bradbury Sorial '04
 Jeannine Bradbury '07
 Brittany King '07
 Nicole Prunetti '07
 Audrey Callahan '13
 Lauren Amour '17

- Group spent five minutes brainstorming silently, listing ideas on Post-It Notes.
- Everyone in attendance introduced themselves, gave their graduating year, and their favorite Villa memory.
- Individual ideas were then shared in the group.
 - Brittany King '07: Topic-specific networking nights (i.e., healthcare)
 - Mary Jo Marino-Hertzog '79: Career Night for Alumnae
 - Audrey Callahan '13: Grad school networking assistance; personal finance 101
 - Laura Wescoat Shelley '78: Ensure non-professional careers are represented, too
 - Andrea Bradbury Sorial '04: Include WAHMs and SAHMs
 - Lauren Amour '17: Keep in mind different personalities (i.e., extrovert vs. introvert)
 - Sara Couch '04: Networking 101
 - Nicole Prunetti '07: Networking prep
 - Brittany King '07: Mentor-mentee relationships; understanding your leadership style

- Andrea Bradbury Sorial '04: Alumnae vendor sale (like Parents' Guild Christmas Meeting); social media sites just for Alumnae
 - Sara Couch '04: LinkedIn groups
- Jeannine Bradbury '07: Join professional chapters
- Open Discussion
 - Brittany King '07 and Laura Wescoat Shelley '78 suggested an internship posting board
 - Brittany King '07 suggested an Alumnae scholarship and volunteer opportunities for Alumnae
 - Audrey Callahan '13 suggested broader college information sessions to include Alumnae from all different eras
 - Nicole Prunetti '07 suggested pro bono professional work (legal aid, tax prep) as a volunteer opportunity
 - Laura Wescoat Shelley '78 suggested providing a "big sister" to a Villa student who has lost her mom
 - Lauren Gaughan Carr '00 suggested having Alumnae provide professional development to Villa staff
 - Brittany King '07 suggested providing resume help
 - Laura Wescoat Shelley '78 suggested hosting more frequent shadow days
 - Brittany King '07 suggested having Alumnae speak in classes
- Closing Remarks: Sara Couch '04
 - Summation of ideas, which fall into five general areas—social media/communications, industry-centered activities, job readiness/mentoring, college/grad school prep, WAHM/SAHM outreach
 - Villa's Career Day was identified as a logical next step for participation.
 - Next meeting will be announced.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Leader: Renee Kitchenman McGovern '02

Members:

Florence Mulholland Mullen '59

Kathleen Breslin '63

Joanne Raczynski '70

Christine Heys Armetta '84

Sharon Citak Bell '86

Laureen Hayes '86
Alice Sheerin Braun '90
Melissa Tatar Pickersgill '90
Mary Beth Davis Walinskas '96
Arianne Brown '99
Nicole DiEnna '02
Rachel McGovern '07
Lindsey King '10
Courtney Shaw '12
Lauren McGovern '14
Jennifer Drayer-McDonald

- Everyone in attendance introduced themselves, gave their graduating year, and their favorite Villa memory.
- Topics of Interest Discussed
 - Inclusion: How do we make Alumnae of all generations feel welcome/engage them in reconnecting with Villa?
 - Testimonials from Alumnae in Profiler, on social media, via email, Alumna app
 - Create a "Share your memories" section on social media
 - Create individual class pages via private FB page for classes to reconnect
 - Create an Alumnae competition with incentive (i.e. Alumnae Challenge at picnic)
 - Host an event just for Alumnae similar to 85th Anniversary Picnic
 - Alumnae Athletics
 - Host Alumnae night at athletic games
 - Organize Alumnae vs. Students game
 - Beef & Beer
 - Where should proceeds go?
 - Angel Fund
 - MMK Scholarship
 - Create our own fund/scholarship
 - Connect with current students in order to transition into Alumnae Association
 - College Mingle, Mentor Program, Take a Jem to Work Week, etc.
 - Allow for remote contact between Alumna and student for those not able to attend events at Villa
 - Emails
 - Zoom calls

- Legacy Students
 - Legacy Pin given in Freshman year, pinned by Villa relative at opening Mass
 - Diploma at Graduation handed to legacy by her Villa relative
- Host/Sponsor an event for current students
 - Dance, formal, etc.
- Mimic St. Joe's Red Letter Day (Nicole DiEnna '02)
 - An Alumna hand-delivers acceptance letter to random incoming student along with mascot, President, Principal, post it on Instagram
- Other Points
 - Focus on connecting with Alumnae vs. fundraising (emails/events asking for money are not well received)
 - Alumnae Association should have a presence at all Alumnae events (Bingo, Reunion, Quizzo, etc.)
 - Not everything Social Committee does needs to be an event. Can be creating an email exchange, engaging Alumnae to connect on social media, etc.
- Additional Brainstorming Ideas Collected on Post-It Notes (tracked by Nicole DiEnna '02)
 - Alumnae to sponsor breakfast, cookies, snacks for students (finals)
 - Highlight Athletics through the years (pictures, videos, traditions)
 - More small group meetings with students and Alumnae
 - Ticket deals for group purchases at events
 - Connect with current students at school events where money isn't needed. Just build relationships
 - Support the Angel Fund with event monies
 - Beef & Beer with reasonable prices for younger Alumnae (the picnic too)
 - Invite Alumnae to the sports banquets
 - Alumnae at Open House or prospective student events
 - Winery events
 - Field Day for alums
 - Hold reunions at holidays when people are likely home
 - Individual class reunions
 - Maria Hall sleepovers
 - More "out of area" networking nights
 - Memory spotlight in the "Profiler"

- Alumnae prom
- Have an event to bridge the gap with current students
- Alumnae-only (no kids or husbands) events
- Smaller graduation year reunions
- Baby bibs for new moms
- Alumnae to join mission trips/volunteer events
- College events with Alumnae where we share about our schools
- Have a representative at every school event
- Sponsor an award at graduation
- Celebrate major sports/organizational anniversaries
- Surprise a group of admitted students at their house with acceptance letters (use on social media, include students)
- Raise funds to support students with a financial need
- Legacy scholarships sponsored by Alumnae
- Food truck fundraiser
- Alumnae-only FB page, Instagram
- Alumnae trip to Chicago
- Sleepover class reunion
- Mini-THON participation
- Mother-daughter event
- Bus trips to NYC for a show, raffles on bus, box lunch, pretzels on the way home
- Alumnae Chicks with Sticks