

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome each of you and your families to St. Philip Lutheran School. Since this may be your first time at St. Philip Lutheran School, we think that it is important to explain what the SPLS PTO is all about.

It is important to note that you are automatically a member of the SPLS PTO. In fact, all parents and guardians of children attending SPLS, as well as each member of the professional staff, are members of the Parent Teacher Organization, and are encouraged to participate in its activities.

The active members of the committee consist of both parents and teachers who volunteer their time to enhance the educational experience of every child in our school. We are an independent organization, and we do not belong to any state or national affiliation, or support any political platforms. Because we are a PTO, we keep all of the funds that we raise for our school rather than sending money for state and/or national dues or fees.

The SPLS PTO's mission is to promote open communication and understanding between parents and staff of the St. Philip Lutheran School. Our dedication is to enhance and maximize the education of every child while aiding them in achieving their highest potential.

To meet this extremely important goal, the organization actively fundraises through various ongoing and event-specific programs and activities. These funds enable us to offer many varied programs and projects. But as you can imagine, in order to meet all of the goals that we have, we need active participation.

This is where you come in... We truly understand how daunting volunteering can be.

Questions such as "How much time are we talking about here?" "Will I be required to take on event or committee responsibilities?" Or something as simple as, "What exactly is required of me?" are all very normal.

We are here to assure you that we will never force anyone to dedicate more time than they are willing, or to be coerced into any undertaking that they are not comfortable with. Any time any individual is willing to offer is valuable. To give you an example of how important the committee feels your valuable participation is, we have gone out of our way to prevent the need of dues, such as the majority of other PTA and PTO groups require. We also understand that in today's world it is increasing more difficult to be able to find time to give, even such as one to two hours once a month.

We are about men and women working together toward a common goal. That goal simply stated is creating a better school and a better educational experience for our children. We strive to create an atmosphere where both teachers and administrators can do their best work, and so can our children. There's so much more that can be accomplished, and we need all the moms, dad, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends who care about children and education. We are welcoming and friendly. We are your neighbors, and we share many of the same concerns you do.

But that's not the only reason to become active. There have been more than 500 independent studies about parent involvement. The results are startling. When parents get involved in their children's education, grades go up, test scores go up, children become more likely to pass and to attend better schools after high school, they have fewer discipline problems, and they're less likely to use drugs and alcohol.

Volunteering doesn't mean a huge time commitment. Whatever your time schedule and interests, we need you. We have tasks that can be performed in the evenings, during the day, or ones that don't even involve coming to school at all.

Won't you please join us? We would like to invite you to our first PTO meeting on Wednesday, September 18, from 6:30 to 7:30. We all have families and schedules, so we would like to keep our meetings no longer than an hour. We also have children and are not always able to have someone watch them, so childcare will be provided. We will meet in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade room, and will have the children in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade room.

Thank you for your time!

The SPLS PTO Group