



## ***A Message from the Ave Maria Academy Advisory Council***

September 2020

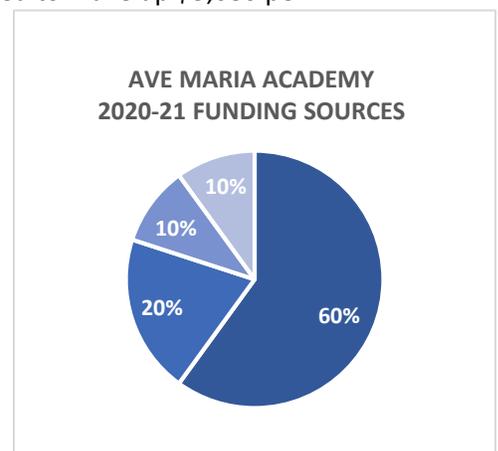
Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are writing this letter to you as the newly formed, Ave Maria Academy (AMA), prepares to begin what would have already been an historic school year with the launch of a new school. It is now an unprecedented start to a school year with a global pandemic upon us as well. The preparations have been made with the highest level of care to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We are so grateful to our principal, staff, and faculty for working tirelessly to provide our children with the opportunity to safely return to the classroom.

It was only this past February, when we were all informed about the decision to merge our four school communities into one new school. An Implementation Committee was formed with members representing all four schools. The first meeting of the committee was held in early March. Little did the committee know, is that it would be the last “in-person” meeting it would ever have again. Just like our children did to complete the school year, the Implementation Committee members had to familiarize themselves with how to meet via Zoom or Google Meet for their weekly meetings. The Implementation Committee completed its work and the AMA Advisory Council has been formed. The purpose of the council, working in collaboration with the AMA administration, parish, and regional leadership, is to achieve a successful school year for its students and our community. In this role the Advisory Council is responsible for assisting with the coordination of AMA’s: fundraising, communication, and admissions efforts.

As is the case with every Catholic or private educational institution, fundraising is a necessity. As we begin this new school year, we would like to make you aware of our fundraising goal for the year that help to keep both tuition costs lower and to meet our financial obligations. In creating the budget for the 2020-21 academic year, the per pupil cost at AMA is nearly \$10,000. However, the Catholic tuition for one child to attend AMA this year is \$4,320 – meaning that we needed to make up \$5,680 per student in order just to meet our overall expenses for the current school year.

The gap between tuition income and academy expenses is bridged in part by funding from: Tuition (**60%**); Parish Subsidy (**20%**); Fundraising (**10%**); and Other Donations (**10%**). For years Catholic schools, relied on the parish to make a sizeable yearly contribution to help offset school expenses. That practice has been forever changed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and inability to gather for Mass which is where parishes would receive their weekly offertory. The ability for Catholic schools to exist on their own and to become more financially independent of parishes and the diocese has never been more apparent.



AMA has made the necessary decision to focus its collective fundraising efforts for the 2020-21 academic year to meet the **\$300,000** fundraising goal. We know that our families are sacrificing to send their children to AMA. It is never easy to ask people for money in a typical school year. However, it is critical that our community achieve its fundraising goal for the year.

We know that we will need to be creative in our approach to fundraising this year due to the COVID-19 restrictions. We will look to have opportunities to gather safely as a community in support of AMA. However, the success of our fundraising initiatives for the year will rely mostly on supporting AMA from afar. As we write this letter, AMA’s enrollment is at 583 students. These students are supported by 403 families. Just imagine if each of our families was able to make a monthly contribution of \$75.00 to AMA. We know that is not necessarily realistic for each family, but we encourage you to consider this opportunity and go to [www.avemariapgh.org/give](http://www.avemariapgh.org/give) .

# of Families	Monthly Contribution	Total Raised
403	\$75.00 x 10 months	\$302,500
<i>*Approximate cost for family of 4 to eat at Olive Garden 1 x per month</i>		

In addition to online monthly giving we are moving forward with, but not limited to, the following fundraising activities to assist AMA in reaching its goal:

- Corporate Partners
- Spirit Wear Sale
- Fall Flower Sale
- Virtual Turkey Trot 5k
- Easter Candy Sale
- \$5,000 Raffle
- Golf Outing
- Spring Gala

AMA cannot make a mandatory fundraising goal for each family. Instead we must rely on the strength of our community to voluntarily support this fundraising program of online giving and various events/activities throughout the school year. These fundraising efforts have been successful over the years at the previous four schools. It is our hope that this tradition continues at AMA! It is important to mention that our expenses will undoubtedly increase each year, so the success of our fundraising efforts is even more critical with each passing year. We ask that you give every consideration to supporting these efforts for the health of AMA. One final point – the regional parishes hold their own fundraising events and activities and invites the participation of AMA families; though AMA does not realize any direct financial support from any of these parish fundraisers, we encourage those of you who can to consider supporting them.

We know that there is a special bond between parents and teachers in a Catholic school. It is this bond of shared sacrifice that enables the children to benefit from the gift of a Catholic education. It is largely because of the sacrifice of our teachers whose salaries are far less than their public-school counterparts that we can keep tuition costs down – at about one-third the cost of a public-school education. Those of us who are committed to Catholic schools are deeply indebted to each of you – our fellow parent/guardians – who also sacrifice to give your children this precious gift. Our combined sacrifices serve to make Catholic education the most economical form of private education in our country.

We trust that this background information helps to explain how vital our fundraising efforts are for, not just only this academic year, but for the future of Ave Maria Academy. We hope that each family will do its best to support the fundraising activities and special events that have been scheduled during the coming academic year, beginning with our first event – the Fall Flower Sale.

Sincerely,

***Ave Maria Academy Advisory Council***

President – Jonathan Smith

Vice President – Matthew Stoessel

Secretary – Sean Murray

Academics – Kara Droney

Fund Raising – Breanna McKibben

Athletics – Stephanie Massaro

Marketing/Recruitment – Molly Jesso

Faith/Religious Education – Susie Mox