

# SAINT THOMAS ACADEMY

## MOTHERS' CLUB MEETING

Minutes for Tuesday, January 12, 2010

### Opening :

**Susie Housh** welcomed everyone. **Kathleen Lee** led the group in prayer.

**Susie** introduced presenters who had brief announcements: **Mary Waldvogel** displayed Gift Cards available for sale in the Cadet Maker, gave an auction update and encouraged people to educate themselves about the ramifications of Lake Drive closing. Mary informed the group of a petition available for signatures in the bookstore for those interested in keeping the street open. **Crystal Crocker** reminded everyone of the Mother/Son retreat on March 7<sup>th</sup>: 5:00 mass, 6:00 dinner, 7:00 – 9:00 program. **Vicky Sheaffer** encouraged all moms, grandmothers, guardians to save the date for the Moms Morning of Prayer at Visitation on March 25, 9:00 – 11:30. **Mary Sullivan-Rickey** gave a run down of the February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Fine Arts Variety Show. She made known that all are welcome to attend. Dr. Mich let the group know that nominations are open for the Board of Trustees. If anyone is interested, they could let him know. Susie thanked the Mothers' Club for their prayers and asked for continued prayers for Peggy Mansur's family, Janet Markee, John Kenny's family and Mary Pat FitzPatrick.

### Guest Speaker:

**Susie** introduced the guest speaker **Michael Mann**, award winning story teller, author, training consultant, speaker and advocate for the National Institute of Media and Family. Michael's topic was "why they behave that way".

Michael quoted Socrates "some things about adolescents have not changed" emphasizing that brains of adolescents develop at the same rate as they always have. They mature in two spurts, in the womb and in the childhood through teen years. Mann explained that the prefrontal cortex is the 'CEO' of the brain which understands consequences, long term planning and thinking ahead. In women the prefrontal cortex is 'wired' in the early twenties and in men the early to mid twenties. A brain that is not completely wired could show signs of risk taking,

disorganization and negativity. Mann joked that a curfew is a surrogate prefrontal cortex.

Mann stressed the importance of adolescents being connected to healthy adults. In the absence of a healthy adult role model, an adolescent primarily learns behaviors from peers and the media. When kids are asked the number one thing they want from their parents, the answer is “we want parents.” Kids do not want their parents to act as their friends.

Mann went on to describe the brain as a high powered racing machine. The male brain at puberty, filled with testosterone, is associated with competitiveness and aggression. Mann cited that American teen pregnancy is eight times higher than other countries. American teens are getting messages about sexuality from peers and the media. American parents are ‘in the dark’ about their kids’ activities.

Mann suggested guidance, love, and connection as solutions to parenting our teens. Specifically advising being consistent, setting limits, establishing trust, having consequences, and avoiding power struggles. Mann encourages parents to think about what we value as important and communicating that importance. He suggests if our teens do not listen to us, then we need to expose our teens to other adults who the kids will listen to. Teens are asking parents for “a divorce” and Mann urges it is vital that parents do not grant this wish. Mann understands that kids can not be protected from all the external influences of the world but simply suggests parents “be present” and take advantage of teachable moments.

Michael Mann answered a few questions. Susie Housh concluded the meeting.

*More information can be found at [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org)*

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Pat FitzPatrick  
Recording Secretary