



## Nashville Catholic Business Women's League

P.O. Box 50994 | Nashville, TN 37205

### Minutes of the Meeting

July 19, 2023

Coco's Italian Market & Restaurant - Event Center, Nashville, TN

#### Welcome & Call to Order:

Following social hour, at approximately 6:00 p.m., President Claudia Weber welcomed all to the meeting. Claudia apologized to attendees for any lack of user friendliness they may have recently experienced on the NCBWL website and assured that the site, particularly the on-line RSVP process, will be fixed.

Claudia extended a special welcome to the evening's guests. She acknowledged the keynote speaker, Shana Druffner, inaugural principal of Saint Michael Academy and the presence of the principal's two guests whom Ms. Druffner briefly introduced as key new members of Saint Michael's staff: Jo Lind Weaver, Director of Development, and Joanna Gray, Capital Campaign Manager. Claudia also invited members to introduce accompanying guests.

Member Courtney Conklin introduced her two guests: Alice Rolli, friend and current candidate for Nashville mayor, and Janet Wardlaw. Member Sandra MacSweeney introduced Kim Breese, who recently had been referred to Sandra by member Tricia Casa Santa. Kim is a healing touch practitioner and has been on multiple Catholic pilgrimages. Debbie Lassiter introduced her daughter, Lauren Hilbers. Bonnie Parrish was pointed out as a recent joiner, initially welcomed at last month's meeting; there were no first-time members this evening.

After grace and blessings from Father John Sims Baker, the buffet dinner service commenced.

#### Attendance:

30 Members

2 Religious

9 Guests

**41** Total Attendees

5 Reservations made without attendance

#### Reflection:

Underscoring *a life that drives us to live hope*, Sister Mary Peter Muehlenkamp shined a thoughtful spotlight on Saint Bakhita (c. 1869-1947) of the Darfur region, in present day Sudan, Africa. Though a slave for many years, Bakhita's spirit was always free. As Sister relayed, at age nine the young girl was kidnapped by slave traders, sold into slavery, and given the name "Bakhita" [ironically] meaning "fortunate" in Arabic. Bakhita was resold several times, ultimately to an Italian consul in Sudan and taken to Italy around age sixteen.

Bakhita discovered and was drawn to the Catholic faith through her introduction to the Canossian Sisters. She was baptized and confirmed in 1890, taking the name Josephine while also keeping Bakhita. She experienced the call to be a religious and entered the Canossian order. She recognized that God and the Blessed Mother had been protecting her over the years. As her life became one of hope, she would thank those who kidnapped her. She realized she would not have come to be a Christian and a Sister without her prior kidnapping and

slavery experiences. Saint Josephine Bakhita's profound sense of hope that overcame her experiences of grave suffering arrived when she encountered Christianity. It was love from God that gave her life purpose and hope. She had words of great hope, *"I am definitely loved and whatever happens to me – I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good."* Saint Bakhita's hope in God fueled every part of her, and she spread that hope to all.

Sister Mary Peter noted that Saint Bakhita inspires us toward: Act of Hope and Act of Faith. Saint Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of human trafficking and modern slavery. She has become a powerful intercessor for those battling addiction or other trials and needing healing. Her feast day is February 8. Saint Bakhita was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 1, 2000, following beatification in 1992.

### **Program:**

Claudia expressed the League's honor to be introducing its members and guests to this month's distinguished, faith-filled guest speaker, Shana Druffner. Ms. Druffner is inaugural Principal of Saint Michael Academy, currently under construction in Nolensville. Saint Michael Academy will open August of 2024, initially for Pre-K through Grade 3 students, and will be the only co-educational K-12 Catholic School in Tennessee when fully operational. Ms. Druffner, who assumed her new position on July 1, brings inspiring vision, Catholic service and leadership, and passion, along with valuable experience from her prior roles as award-winning principal, practicing attorney, Catholic educator, chairperson of large nonprofit, and successful entrepreneur.

### **Guest Speaker, Shana Druffner, (EdD candidate, JD, MS), Principal of Saint Michael Academy -**

Ms. Druffner shared her background leading to her hiring by the Diocese of Nashville, including highlights:

- Violinist
- Orchestra teacher for fourth and fifth graders at catholic school
- Principal for five years at Dallas, TX-based All Saints Catholic School, recognized as three-time Blue Ribbon School of Excellence under her leadership
- Wife and mother of four adult daughters
- Product of Catholic education, earning JD from Georgetown University Law Center and Masters in Educational Leadership from Creighton University, and pursuing Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration at St. Louis University

Ms. Druffner presented data on the trend of increasing numbers of adults who are unaffiliated with religion and do not believe in God, now representing three in ten individuals. Among 18-29 year-olds, the unaffiliated segment accounts for 38 percent. Moreover, as time has gone on, the trend of those who leave the Catholic church yet subsequently return to their faith, is changing: More of those who were baptized Catholic are now leaving the church at a young age and not coming back. They say their primary social influence is the phone screen. Ms. Druffner pointed out how research data supports that Catholic school attendance results in significantly higher probability of Catholic religion practice as adults. Hence, Catholic schools, like Saint Michael Academy, exist to "form saints and scholars for the greater glory of God." Ms. Druffner is an avid believer in Catholic education for children. Through catholic education, children come to know the truth, Christ himself, and they grow into the persons God intended them to be. Ms. Druffner emphasized that Saint Michael will be "authentically Catholic, academically rigorous."

Saint Michael Academy will have state of the art facilities, innovative learning spaces, a rigorous curriculum -- and the pursuit of "**truth, beauty and goodness**" that Catholic cathedrals (like Notre Dame noted by Ms. Druffner) and other Catholic worship and learning institutions universally reflect and inspire.

Ms. Druffner encouraged NCBWL members to pray for Saint Michael, spread the word related to the school's formation, and support the Academy's keen interest in community partnerships. Located on 166 acres in Nolensville, Saint Michael Academy is well on its construction journey. Ms. Druffner invited anyone to participate in one of the campus/construction tours that are given on Mondays.

**Business Meeting:**

After resounding applause for Ms. Druffner and her outstanding, passionate and uplifting presentation, Claudia opened the Business meeting segment around 7:05 p.m.

**President** – Claudia and small business owner Darcy Bomer highlighted the upcoming **Cute & Comfy Shoes event**: On Sunday, July 30 (during tax-free weekend) from 1 to 5:00 p.m, Darcy has arranged for the donation of 20% of League member shoe/apparel sales to the NCBWL organization. Address is: 4121 Hillsboro Pike, Suite 106, between Wendy’s and Subway, in Green Hills. Late sips and chats apply to Leaguers/friends.

Claudia also highlighted the **Magnificat** Catholic women ministry event scheduled for Saturday, August 19 from 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (post registration 8 to 9:00 a.m.), at Diocese of Nashville Catholic Pastoral Center, 2800 McGavock Pike, as noted in tables flyers encouraged for distribution at members’ parishes. Cost is \$43.00 if mailed check is postmarked by Aug 9. Contact for availability/reservations: Patty Bolger, 615-264-3129.

**Treasurer** - Claudia noted that Treasurer Karoline Mahoney is absent, traveling upon a recent loss in her family. Claudia mentioned NCBWL is committed to maintaining reserves in a separate savings account for previously-discussed Saint Michael Academy. Karoline had submitted the following income summary **as of June 30, 2023**:

Beginning Balance June 1, 2023		\$17,958.22
Revenue		
Dues	\$770.00	
Dinner Meeting	\$1,050.00	
Bank fee Reimbursement	\$15.35	
PayPal Giving Fund	\$3.00	
Total June Revenue		\$1,838.35
Net Operating Revenue		<u>\$19,796.57</u>
Expenses		
Coco’s June Dinner Meeting	\$1,000.00	
Contractor Wix Training	\$322.50	
Credit Card Fees	\$44.43	
Total June Expenses		<u>\$1,366.93</u>
Net Operating Income		<u>\$18,429.64</u>
Reserve/Designated Funds		
Father O’Bryan Fund	\$2,037.73	
Retired Sisters 2023	\$695.00	
Total in Reserve		\$2,732.73
<b><u>Total Operating Income</u></b>		<b><u>\$15,696.91</u></b>

**NOTE:** The St. Michael Scholarship Fund is in separate savings account. It is no longer in operating checking account.

**Membership** - Ellen Wade reported that NCBWL’s membership is growing. Ellen mentioned that among this evening’s attendees is the Chief Marketing Officer for the Diocese of Nashville, Gia Raney.

**Communications** – Patricia Smith expressed thanks for website support and work by several team members including Kelley Colopietro and Cora Newcomb.

**Pearls of Wisdom** – Courtney Conklin spoke (also on behalf of her co-chair and best friend Lauren Barca who was absent) to provide a rousing update on the 2023 annual **Pearls of Wisdom event** that raises Catholic secondary school scholarship funds. This year’s fundraising goal is \$70,000. Annual average tuition at each of the three supported high schools is about \$20,000, plus Saint Michael annual tuition will be around \$9,500. The 2023 elevated formal/cocktail-attire gala is scheduled for Friday, October 6 (5:30 – 6:30 p.m. cocktails, live music, silent auction; 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. seated dinner, dancing, live auction) at the Richland Country Club in Forest Hills/Nashville. Just 20 tables with eight chairs each are available for men and women guests. Table reservations may now be made by contacting Courtney at [conklinrealestate@yahoo.com](mailto:conklinrealestate@yahoo.com) or at [ncbwlinfo@gmail.com](mailto:ncbwlinfo@gmail.com). Courtney shared gala sponsorship options:

- Individual ticket \$150 includes meal, valet parking, 2 drink tickets
- Pearl Sponsor \$800 4 tickets; name in program and on table
- Gold Sponsor \$1,500 8 tickets (full table); name in program, on table and screen
- Corporate Sponsor \$2,000 8 tickets; name in program, on table, screen; full page ad; 3 drink tickets

Courtney requested: items and experiences for auction donation, including creative ideas and contacts.

In addition to the discount shopping and fundraising opportunity (on Sunday the 30th) at Cute & Comfy shoes, there is another pre-“PoW” fund-raising event arranged by Courtney and Lauren: **Kendra Scott store sip and shop event**, on Wednesday, August 23 at 5:00 p.m. 20 percent of NCBWL member purchases at this jewelry boutique will be donated to support NCBWL Pearls of Wisdom. Location is Kendra Scott Hill Center, 4025 Hillsboro Circle #505, Green Hills. Reservations can be made by emailing: [ncbwlkendrascott.splashthat.com](mailto:ncbwlkendrascott.splashthat.com).

**Old Business** – Claudia encouraged members to:

- View minutes from June’s monthly meeting on NCBWL website within private Members’ portal
- Participate in pre-Pearls of Wisdom fundraising shopping opportunities on July 30 and August 23
- Complete brief BNA airport survey on proposed adoration chapel. Link is included in July NCBWL newsletter and here: <https://bit.ly/3JzncSe>

**New Business** - Claudia reminded the group of upcoming meeting forums and activities for note:

- Next Board meeting will be Friday, August 4 at Coco’s. The Board appreciates advance input on agenda topics, via email to Claudia. Claudia wants to hear from members on any suggestions for the League.
- August monthly dinner meeting will be held Wednesday, 8/16 at Coco’s. Guest speaker Tasha Kennard will talk about remarkable work accomplished at Thistle Farms. Products will be available for purchase.
- NCBWL advertisements are scheduled to continuing running in the Tennessee Register, and members are encouraged to bring guests to meetings and to share our fellowship.
- **Post meeting update:** Nashville Catholic Radio interviewed Claudia RE: NCBWL. The show broadcasts on:
  - Wed. Aug 23 at 11:39 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (at 100.5 FM)
  - Sat. Aug 26 at 10:00 a.m.
  - Sun. Aug 27 at 4:00 p.m.

**The “ASK”** – Patricia Smith reminded the group of the monthly dinner meeting RSVP deadline: midnight of the prior Sunday. Those who prefer mailing a check rather than using PayPal can send email reservation to [ncbwlinfo@gmail.com](mailto:ncbwlinfo@gmail.com) and mail check (NCBWL, PO Box 50994, Nashville, TN 37205) for **arrival by Sunday**.

#### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. Attendees recited the prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel. Further informal socializing and dessert self-service followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Cronin, Secretary