

Parish Childcare Network Vision

In the next few years and with God's help, we will be able to establish a parish childcare network that will attract a core of dependable youth with good character, as well as 2-3 committed adult supervisors, all of whom will establish the spirit and tone of the group. Youth who wish to participate in the network would need to be approved by the parish priest and would be required to provide childcare at either the fall or spring General Assemblies. A parental supervisory group would meet at least twice per year to evaluate the program, create and revise policies that establish high standards for youth protection, and plan for the improvement of the program. In a few years, we may establish a web-based database for parents to use to find, contact, and hire youth to provide care for younger children. In time, I hope the network will have grown numerically to the point that parishioners can hire a youth from the parish for their families' childcare needs more often than not. The parental oversight group may grow as large as six people. Unless and until the parental supervisory group decides otherwise, feedback on individual childcare providers will be given informally to the parish priest or to one of the adult supervisors.

Initially, youth and parent supervisors would be thankful for the opportunity for older youth to serve their parish family, for the positive and community-building relationships that will be developed between older and younger youth, and for the opportunity to provide small income to youth in middle and high school. If the network eventually begins to serve non-parishioners, participants will recognize this development as an opportunity for outreach and witness, through which others may become connected with the parish. An annual celebration to recognize and thank participants will be an important element in developing the network.

Parents who hire parish youth to provide childcare will be impressed with the character, responsibility, and dependability of the childcare providers. They will feel confident about leaving their children with these adolescents and thankful for the positive relationships and the informal reinforcement of the faith that their children may receive through those relationships. Parish clergy will appreciate the additional dimension of community and educational potential that these relationships represent.

In the near future, the network will have established a reputation of dependability and enthusiasm. In time, the surrounding community will start to notice the high quality of the childcare provided by this network.

I will attend the meetings of the parental supervisory group to offer my perspective or questions, and to communicate the relevant information to Fr. Panayiotis. The parental supervisory group will evaluate and develop the program, create and revise policies, and provide support as needed for the youth engaged in childcare. With the help and perspective of the parents, the parish priest will cast and develop the vision of the network and guide its direction.

“Mount Everest” goals:

- Open the network to serving families outside the parish.