

Legislation Text

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Honoring, recognizing, and celebrating the 125th Anniversary of the Saint Laurentius School.

WHEREAS, Saint Laurentius, the First Polish Speaking Catholic Church and School in Philadelphia, was founded in 1890; and

WHEREAS, Growing from humble beginnings, having collected \$37.50 from 47 families, grew decades of tradition and positive community impact and successful Philadelphia citizens; and

WHEREAS, On January 29, 1882, the first meeting of organizers of Saint Laurentius Parish was held in Muellersken Hall on Third Street. These organizers petitioned the Archbishop of Philadelphia to send them a priest; and

WHEREAS, Rev. James F. Wood, Archbishop of Philadelphia was the founding priest of Saint Laurentius Parish. He and the first parishioners endured many obstacles, such as The Orange Men, as they erected their magnificent church at Berks and Memphis Streets in Fishtown; and

WHEREAS, Saint Laurentius School opened its doors in 1890 to immigrant children whose families wanted to educate them under the strong Catholic School educational model. They were also able to enjoy the freedom of using their native language while becoming successful Philadelphia citizens; and

WHEREAS, St. Laurentius School began as a Polish school for about fifty children in a local blacksmith shop. Father Malusecki, the pastor of St. Laurentius knew there was a need for a parochial school and invited four Felician Sisters from Detroit to take charge of the school. They meticulously taught in the basement of the church while the parish families built the school and not one single school day was missed.

WHEREAS, The current Saint Laurentius School was dedicated on October 29, 1899. The parish continued to flourish and created affiliations with groups that encouraged the physical, moral, and spiritual development of all children. Rev. Anthony Ziemba (or the beloved Fr. Tony) encouraged the community to make many major improvements to the school at the time of the church's centennial. Father Frank Gwiadza continued to build the school community and make improvements. Additional renovations have been made over the years including creating a creative space for the PreK; and

WHEREAS, A strong community of faith has been formed at Saint Laurentius School with priests helping parents, parents helping teachers, teachers helping children, and all helping one another in prayer, guidance, and charity; and

WHEREAS, Although the Saint Laurentius Church's future is in question due to the physical condition of its brownstone, Saint Laurentius School and the Catholic Community in Fishtown continues to find ways to reconnect and to rebuild. The school is a thriving bastion of urban education in the City of Philadelphia serving more than 220 children at full enrollment capacity, providing a quality academic education while proclaiming the Catholic faith and enforcing a strong value system; and

WHEREAS, Saint Laurentius has yearlong celebrations planned to commemorate this milestone, including fun nights like a Quizzo, School Spirit Day and they will work with families and community leaders to raise money for Feb 27th Designer Bag Bingo and the Saint LauRUNtius 5K on April 18th; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honor, recognize and celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Saint Laurentius School.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Saint Laurentius School as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.