



**Ora Et Labora (OEL)
Welcomes You to
Sussex Christian School
2025-2026**

A Parent's Guide to OEL

OEL stands for *Ora Et Labora* - Latin for "Pray and Work."

It is Sussex Christian School's parent-led group that supports the school through service, prayer, and community. Partnering with families to serve our school and reflect Christ's love in action.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.
- Colossians 3:23

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A Note from the OEL President

Ora Et Labora (OEL) - Pray and Work

Hello and welcome to the SCS community.

If you're new to Sussex Christian School (SCS) or just learning about OEL, we are glad you are here. OEL is a group of parents who love this school and want to support it in any way we can; whether that's serving a hot lunch, organizing fundraisers, or simply showing up when help is needed.

OEL exists to come alongside the school and support the needs that go beyond the classroom. We step in with time, energy, and resources when something is needed that's outside the school's budget. But more than that, we're here to build community. We pray together. We work together. And we believe our kids benefit when they see us doing both.

We get it, life is full. But even small things like helping with hot lunch, running a game at Fall Festival, or sending in a treat for teachers make a real difference. There's a place for everyone, whatever your time or schedule looks like.

If you've ever thought, *"I'd love to help, but I don't know where to start,"* this is your start. We'd love to meet you. Come to a meeting, ask a question, or just say hi. We're glad you're here. This packet gives you a glimpse into what OEL is all about, from the heart behind it to the ways you can get involved.

With gratitude,

Annette Kuperus

OEL President

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What is OEL?

OEL stands for *Ora Et Labora*, Latin for “Pray and Work.” It’s the name of the parent-led group that supports Sussex Christian School through service, fundraising, and community-building.

Our role is to come alongside the school; to help provide resources that fall outside the school’s budget, meet practical needs, and create meaningful experiences for students, staff, and families. From hosting events to organizing hot lunches to stocking classroom libraries, OEL supports the day-to-day life of the school in practical, often unseen ways.

Every parent or caregiver at SCS is welcome to be part of OEL. There’s no membership, no sign-up list, and no pressure. Whether you join us for a single event or get involved all year long, your support matters.

Over the years, OEL has helped furnish classrooms, raise funds for future projects, care for families in need, and bring our school community closer together. We do it through prayer and practical service, and we do it together.

How OEL Serves the School

OEL supports Sussex Christian School in a variety of ways throughout the year - some are big events, others are small acts of service that happen quietly but consistently.

We Fundraise to Support Big Projects

Each year, OEL helps provide resources that fall outside the school’s regular budget:

- **Fall Festival** – Our annual community-wide event with food, games, a craft fair, and more.
- **Dinner & Live Auction** – A favorite evening of food and fellowship that raised over \$85,000 in 2023.
- **Walk-a-Thon** – A student-led event that funds classroom updates and special projects.
- **1:55 Christian Book Fair** – A faith-based book fair that supports classroom libraries and teacher wish lists.
- **TRIP Program** – A gift card system that helps families save on tuition and benefits the school.

We Help Create a Connected, Caring School Community

Beyond fundraising, OEL helps foster connection, encouragement, and shared experiences across the school:

- **CHOP (Christians Helping Other People)** – Our school-wide community service initiative
- **First-day-of-school photos** for every student
- **Teacher appreciation efforts** throughout the year
- Support for needs as they arise — big or small — through time, service, or resources

The Impact of OEL

Every event, fundraiser, and volunteer hour is about more than just dollars raised, it's about building something lasting.

When families come together to serve, our children see faith in action. They learn that generosity matters. That community matters. And that showing up, even in small ways, can make a big difference.

Here's a look at how OEL has helped support Sussex Christian School in recent years:

- **\$74,000+ raised** at our annual Dinner & Live Auction
- **\$14,000 raised** at the student-led Walk-a-Thon
- **\$6,000+ raised** through Gertrude Hawk chocolate sales
- **\$12,000 saved** by families through the TRIP tuition program
- **Classroom libraries and wish lists fulfilled** through the I:55 Christian Book Fair
- **Outdoor Learning Center expanded**, and Pre-K/Kindergarten classrooms furnished
- **Countless meals served, books shelved, and kids photographed** on their first day of school

But the greatest impact can't always be measured. It's the friendships built while serving lunch. The sense of belonging felt at Fall Festival. The joy on a child's face when they see their photo from the first day. These are the things that shape a school and a community.

Ways to Get Involved

There are so many ways to get involved with OEL and every bit of help makes a real impact. Whether you can give a few hours occasionally or want to serve more regularly, we'd love to help you find a spot that fits your schedule, gifts, and interest.

Serve at an Event

Jump in for a day and help make something special happen:

- Volunteer at the **Fall Festival** (run a game, help with food, set up or clean up)
- Join a team for the **Dinner & Live Auction** (auction prep, food prep, serving, etc.)
- Help with the **Walk-a-Thon** (stations, cheering, logistics)
- Assist during the **1:55 Christian Book Fair**

Support Ongoing Projects

Pitch in when and how you can throughout the year:

- Help serve **hot lunch** (we're always looking for extra hands)
- **Donate snacks or baked goods** for events or teacher appreciation
- Assist with **library time** for younger grades
- Use your creative, technical, or organizational skills - if you have a gift, we can use it!

Be Part of the Conversation

OEL meets monthly to plan, pray, and support the needs of the school and this is the best way to stay connected. If you want to know what's going on and how to be involved, this is where to start. Everyone is welcome. Keep an eye on the Home Announcements for dates and times of the meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be a member to participate in OEL?

No. If you're a parent, caregiver, or supporter of a student at Sussex Christian School, you're already welcome. There's no official sign-up or membership process. Just come as you are.

What if I don't have a lot of time?

Many parents help once or twice a year, and that still matters. Whether you give an hour at an event or help behind the scenes from home, we'll help you find something that fits your schedule.

I've never volunteered before. Will I know what to do?

Yes. You'll never be expected to figure things out on your own. There's always someone to guide you, and we truly believe there are no small roles. If you're willing, we'll walk with you.

What happens at OEL meetings?

Meetings are a chance to pray, plan, and hear what's going on in the life of the school. We talk through upcoming events, current needs, and ways to support staff and students. It's also where friendships grow and new ideas take shape.

I'm not sure where I'd fit. What should I do?

Reach out. We'd love to hear your ideas and help you get started. Sometimes it helps to show up for a meeting, hear what's going on, and see what feels like a good fit. You're welcome to listen and ask questions with no pressure.

Does volunteering with OEL impact my tuition?

Yes, in two important ways. First, families can earn up to 30 tuition credit hours each year through volunteer service. It's a practical way to bless the school and receive a tangible benefit for your own family. Second, OEL fundraising helps support the school's overall budget which helps keep tuition costs stable for all families. When you give your time to help with events like the Fall Festival or Auction, you're directly contributing to the financial health of the school.

So, whether you're baking cookies or running a booth, your time matters for your family and for the whole community.

Let's Connect

We're so glad you took the time to learn more about OEL. Whether you're ready to jump in or just starting to explore, there's a place for you here.

The easiest way to get involved is to come to a meeting, introduce yourself to one of the officers, or simply send us a message. We'd love to hear from you, answer any questions, and help you find a way to be part of the work God is doing at Sussex Christian School.

There's no pressure. Just people, serving together, with joy.

Contact Us

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Thank you for being part of this school family. We can't wait to serve alongside you.