

EMERSON WALDORF SCHOOL PARENT ORGANIZATION

Minutes

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

Attendees: Shannon Wiley, Kelley Wiley, Will Hicks, Therisa Pienaar, Stacey Qandil, Laura Guinan, Joanne Andruscavage, Tara Furze, Candace Berry-Arnold, Barbara Holloway, Robin Verhoeven, [one more person – po board rep, name?]

Minutes from last month: Laura moved to strike the Heads report submitted through email by Merideth Tomlinson. Report was intended for February meeting. Kelley Wiley motioned to approve minutes, Shannon Wiley & Will Hicks second.

Treasurer Report: Received check in the amount of \$443.84 from the Barnes & Noble fundraiser. No expense reported for the month with available funds of \$7166.17. The High School has an outstanding amount of \$392 for furniture. Since the PA system was donated to the high school, \$800 remains available. Question arose regarding expenses with nursery purchases. Items have been purchased, but the receipts have not been submitted. Discussion arose regarding the purchase of Renewal magazines for new family program – looking at possibility of providing a copy for all families of the school. The purchase will need to take place now to have available for the fall. Corey Alicks is looking into cost of Renewal for all families.

Heads: In January, Heads assisted with the Faculty's successfully-attended Waldorf Education Day. Heads will co-sponsor with the Center for Anthroposophy on several talks. The first talk is Friday, March 13 presented by Michael Howard, entitled "The Art of Social and Ecological Sustainability". Second is Friday, April 24, "Eurythmy and Graduation" by Cezary Ciaglo. On Friday, May 1 Douglas Gerwin will return to talk about "Waldorf Education – And Who Shall Teach the Teachers?"

Heads is still closely involved with the Social Inclusion process that was made possible by the PO. Many successes are already evident this year. The 9th – 11th grade students who make up the SAC (student action group), have been meeting and training all year, and since January have been regularly coming down the hill to hang out with their "buddy classes" participating in handwork, games, main lesson or playground time. This month they have begun presenting skits to the children with scenes in which childhood "just joking" crossed the line into teasing, bullying or exclusion; with a faculty-supported conversation after the skits. Plans to organize a study group for parents based on articles recommended by Kim John Payne, our social inclusion consultant, is in the works.

Hearts: On Monday, January 26 Hearts had a meeting with 10 members in attendance. Candace Berry-Arnold, PO volunteer coordinator talked with group about building a strong volunteer base. Discussion evolved into dividing hearts into different subgroups so that it might both attract more volunteers and increase its ability to serve the community. Currently Hearts is working on a special project for Valentines' Day.

Board Report: A Board meeting is being held this Saturday, February 7 at 8am. The first 15 minutes is open mike for issues, concerns, or positive comments from the community. The long-range planning committee is meeting and gathering info needed to inform this process. The Woodland Shop task force has compiled information relative to the future of the shop for the Board to review at this week's meeting.

Hands: Eighth grade student, Bradley Viles, has chosen to transform the muddy area outside the 1st, 3rd and 4th grade classrooms for his class project. He met with Landscape Architect from Carolina North and received feedback on ideas to eliminate the mud pit. Bradley will look to Ian Ostrowski (EWS Facilities Maintenance Assistant) and Dads within the community to assist in completing his project. Today Barbara Holloway and Ian Ostrowski toured the campus with Gray Byrd from Niche Gardens. He provided many suggestions for the different plots around the school. He also provided education on why plants were not growing and suggestions for native plants that would be a better fit. A discount was offered for plants purchased at Niche Gardens. Work has started

on repainting the EWS sign at Millhouse Road and New Jericho Road. This is an inexpensive, temporary fix until a decision is made on a new sign. There is funding in the marketing budget for the expense.

College Report: Currently, the College is reviewing candidates for the Practical Arts, Eurythmy and 1st grade positions. Evaluations, with an outside appraiser, have commenced for newly employed teachers as well as for the high school and lower schoolteachers up for review. The College continues to create, evaluate and implement protocol and procedures. This is a busy, busy time.

Development committee: Only 35% of the school constituency has contributed to the annual fund this year. The school is in need of a grassroots effort. It is imperative for the school's financial future and opportunity to be awarded grants that there is 100% participation. Laura Guinan commented on last year's successful venture of class representatives reminding and encouraging families to donate to the annual fund. Andruscavage communicated the recognized expectation of families in private schools to gift to the annual fund, as well as volunteer for school programs and activities. The AWSNA site – illustrates a sizable gap between the cost to educate and the cost of tuition. The school has to either raise tuition or obtain funds from the annual fund. Discussion emerged around how to educate the school community about the expectation for donating to the annual fund and volunteering at the school – the conscious conversations and promotional materials were initial suggestions. Please email Justine Way if you have ideas to raise the annual fund participation rate to 100%.

Announcement will be made at the Development Committee Meeting on Tuesday that next year is the school's 25th Anniversary. The committee will be looking for volunteers to create a year of celebration with events and activities acknowledging this great achievement. This milestone places EWS among the more established schools in the nation. It is a very exciting achievement and will make a difference for the big picture of the school. Alice Armstrong has expressed interest in the team effort.

Administration Report : Pleased to announce 81% current eligible families have reenrolled for the 09/10 school year. Admissions have 24 applications, with five acceptances. Another campus tour opportunity is next Wednesday at 8am starting in the Eurythmy room. Whitney MacDonald walks the attendees through all the grades. Anyone may attend. Question was raised by Robin Verhoeven as to what brings families to EWS . Andruscavage stated they are in the process of creating a survey to use for outreach and long-range planning, as part of the accreditation process. Communication about the accreditation process and where the school is along the continuum will be shared through the Long Range Planning Committee. An article has already been published in the Emersonian. Through March there will be an opportunity to participate in faculty-led (College member) focus groups in the evenings. They will be requesting input from the parents on subjects as long-range planning, accreditation, facilities, finance (in process of creating a 5-year budget), community (how do people feel about the community at EWS), etc.

Volunteer coordinator report: Candace informed the PO members of her own volunteer efforts to be the contact person for coordinating the volunteering needs of the different committees within the school. She plans to create a more extensive volunteer list, assess needs from different groups within the school, attend all class meetings to inform parents of up coming events and volunteer needs, email thank you's to volunteers after an event and gather comments for improvements and processes that are currently working.

Scrip: No special news to report. Tara made an appeal to the community to continue to buy scrip to help the school. Reminded members there is someone by the lower school parking lot every morning and every Tuesday up at the Kindergarten selling scrip.

Announcements:

- The College Executive Committee (CEC) has policies in place, with the faculty, to improve communication to parents. To enhance relationships and school retention teachers are expected to provide at least one non-verbal (email/newsletter, etc.) communication per month to parents, including subject teachers. The policy was implemented two months ago. You may contact Mr. Wiley to express your experience with

your child's teacher. During casual discussion only parents of 6th grade students have heard from subject teachers, German and Spanish.

- DVD's of EWS have been sent out to every family at the school. Any requests to have one sent to friends, family, colleagues, etc. inquire in the school's main office.
- Heads group will move chapel hill gravel around in kindergarten from 12:40-2pm tomorrow
- A request has been made by Kelley Wiley, Administrative Specialist, and Mary Leonhardi, Admissions Director, for representatives from each class make a meal once a month for one faculty meeting. Small classes can join together. Approximately 30 employees. This effort can be coordinated through Candace Berry-Arnold, volunteer coordinator.
- Request – on behalf of Justine Way (Development Director), Robin Verhoeven asked if PO would be able to host Grandparent's Day, with a possible suggestion of providing juice and cookies for music concert. Candace Berry-Arnold will contact Justine Way for more information.
- Next month's PO "potluck" meeting. Bring food and your children! Childcare will be provided.

CLASS PULSE

Morning garden – n/a

Nursery – n/a

K- Amelia's class – eager to know 1st grade teacher

1 – n/a

2 – Learning place value, bean day – four pounds of beans were poured on the floor, the children put them in packs of 10 and in groups of 100 in 35 minutes, totaling 5016 beans

3 – Started new grammar block – writing a lot of sentences

4 – Fractions with quiche, writing structure (paragraphs)

5 – n/a

6 – Physics with Joyce Felder, working on play (costumes – toga), a lot of homework this year, children seem very focused and completely aware, studying mindfulness of sound (what do you really hear), darkness (what is dark)

7 – n/a

8/9 – Chemistry block – lighting fires of basic metals, observing how they burn/melt – lit sugar on fire today

9 – making alcohol and extracts in chemistry

10 – Physics block

11 – The class attended the inauguration in DC, was interviewed by FOX news in DC, as well as an article written in Chapel Hill local paper

12 – Senior projects underway, experiencing a collaborative arts class with Liz Levitt