

## EMERSON WALDORF SCHOOL PARENT ORGANIZATION

### *Minutes*

Wednesday, September 3, 2008

**Attendees:** Barbara Holloway, Charlie Viles, Will Hicks, Mary Deutsch, Susan Hart, Robin Verhoeven, Merideth Tomlinson, Cher Lacor, Tara Furze, Leigh Matthews, Emily West, Rachel Larsen, Therisa Pienaar, Justine Way, Leigh Sparacino, Kelley Wiley, Shannon Wiley, Joanne Andruscavage, Claire Viadro, Mary Lou Bethune, Laura Guinan, Stacey Qandil

**Treasurer Report (Therisa):** Account balance as of 9/03/08 is \$8,454.47 of which \$3,354.47 is available.

**Proposed Budget:** Heads expenses have increased to \$6000, specifically for the Kim Jon Payne workshop. \$6000 was approved for the budget and \$2000 is coming from restricted funds to be used for Anthroposophical Education. This money will be paid back by the end of the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The 2008-09 Budget will be voted on at next PO meeting, Wednesday, September 30, 2008.

**Board Report (Mary Lou Bethune):** Charlie Viles will be replaced as the PO representative in October @ the WEANC meeting. The two nominees for PO Representative to the Board are Mary Deutsch and Robin Verhoeven. The main message the board wanted to convey was their desire to move into oversight of legal and financial responsibilities rather than day-to-day management and planning that is now in the hands with the strong leadership in the administration. The Board is looking to improve procedures to provide information for oversight meetings. Objectives will be set at next meeting. They are also looking for alternative sources of income so tuition is not the majority of revenue. The Board looks for one formal vision and one exciting year: a rebuilding year.

**College Report (Shannon Wiley):** The College is working to bring the school together to have a shared and common vision. The College would like to extend a thank you to the parents and the community for their commitment and devotion. The College sees the parents as a part of retention, communication and observation. Their experiences and perspectives are different and the College welcomes parent response and feedback through improved communication between parents and College. The teachers are working to listen more and acknowledge what is being said. During work week teachers talked about becoming a "team" to reach an enrollment goal of 300 students. In order to be ready, we must work on retention and enrollment. A considerable amount of change to the infrastructure of the school is taking place in many areas: pedagogical, self-improvement, reviews, assessments, etc. The College is working on accreditation and is looking for support. Help is already appreciated. Please pass on all information and suggestions to Shannon Wiley.

**Administration Report (Joanne Andruscavage):** Expressed great appreciation of the professional staff in the office, as well as, the support of the parents and the PO. Newly hired Admissions Director comes from the Detroit Waldorf School. Right now the focus is on communication and the "decision making roadmap"- a flowchart of who to go to with specific problems, what steps should be taken, etc. Accreditation is a major focus as well with a task force created to work on the issue. This is critical to the school's future (particularly the high school); there are a lot of policies, procedures, legalities, compliance issues, and financial considerations to be worked through. A self-study will take place starting with a first visit by an accreditation team in November of 2009. Individuals from other independent schools in the region will form the group. The visiting group will discuss different aspects of the school from mission to account for funds. They will visit for four days and comb through everything in the school from fall zones under swing sets to if the well is working correctly and efficiently. There is an element of parental assistance through input and involvement in committees. The Administration has great hope that all the different parts will work together.

**Hearts (Laura Guinan):** Hearts has been very busy with the New Family program and it has been a wonderful experience to be part of the energy as this marvelous project unfolds. Hearts extends a huge thank you to Paige Chandler, Rhonda Lanning, Alyson Ramesh and everyone else involved in the New Family Welcome Program. Feedback has been great on the beautiful welcome baskets and play dates. The Back-to-school picnic was a great

success. Hearts continues to look for new members interested in contributing to the warmth of this community. Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month.

**Hands (Barbara Hollaway):**

Hands was thrilled with the turn out for back-to-school work day; it was a lot of fun, very heartwarming and appreciated by the faculty. The adopt-a-bed program is doing well – Mary Lou Bethune (high school), Gay Weaver (front sign area), Karla Boyce (1<sup>st</sup> grade area), Lisa Kruger (shell garden), and Penny Sparacino (kindergarten). Ms. Sparacino invites the community to join her on Sundays from 8am – 11am to help and learn. Hands is still looking for volunteers for the front bed and walkway at nursery and for several sections in the lower school. Hands will be working on beds (weeding and spreading mulch) at the Woodland shop this Friday morning, September 5 after drop off to 11am. There will be live music. Workdays will be weekly on Fridays from 12:30pm to 3pm until fall break, then will switch to Wednesdays. Hope this will help parents that are in between preschool and lower, middle and high school pick-ups. Suggestion for reminders to be sent out; how can volunteerism be rejuvenated? Suggestion was made for PO President and PO Vice-President to initial class meetings to promote PO and provide sign up sheets for Head, Hearts, and Hands. Kelley Wiley also has survey information related to parental vocation and hobby interests.

**Heads (Rachel Larsen & Merideth Tomlinson):** Heads is teaming up with Foundation Studies and the Center for Anthroposophy for a September lecture on Knowing Your Own Biography, presented by Dorothy LeBaron. There will possibly be two more speakers in the spring. Heads is very excited about having Kim Jon Payne partner with us the next 3 years. He is an expert speaker with extensive experience in child development. The school will work with him on social inclusion, particularly in the middle and high school. This is a retention issue, a hearts issue, a parent issue, a faculty issue, a College issue, etc. His three-year work with the school will include phone consultations; help create own policy, put a program in place. The basis of the program is for the students to work with the students – younger with older. It is a non-blaming, community approach. Payne will visit October 10 – 12, 2008. The faculty is willing to work over fall break. October 10<sup>th</sup> will be a public introduction of his work offered to parents and the community. All three years he will give one public lecture. There are opportunities for parents to be a part of committees, if interested contact Nancy Balasubramanian, coordinator.

**Scrip (Tara Furze):** Scrip dealines are the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Tara is looking for volunteers to work the table to educate the community about scrip, an individual to write on the black board and many people to spread the word. She is looking for suggestions to help expand the program even more. One suggestion was to let parents know what happens with the Script money.

**Announcements:**

- Suggestion made to meet in different room for the PO meetings; many felt it was too hard to hear people talking due to the acoustics in the eurythmy room. Decision was made to use Mr. Wiley's (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) classroom for next meeting on Wednesday, September 30.
- Question directed to Administrator, Joanne Andruscavage. Asked if email lists and website could be use to send out and post highlights and minutes as we move toward going paperless. Ms. Andruscavage responded with a, yes. A suggestion was requested to keep paper for at least one more year due to past findings that the colored short-snippet information in the highlights was a very positive addition and it had many good responses from people. A remark was made that people receive too many emails and don't read them.
- The Holiday Faire committee has formed and welcomes anyone to join the meetings every Wednesday. If interested, see Leigh Sparacino and/or Justine Way for more information.
- The Annual Fund will kick off soon with the 2008/2009 goals of \$100K and 100% participation. The results of last year's fund tipped over their goal of \$85,000.

- Benjamin Trueblood has accepted the new position on the faculty as the representative to the NC Center of Anthroposophy.
- Charlie Viles announced that the community shelter will have a roof and shingles put on in two weeks, with the floor following. The plan was to put a stone floor down; however, when it was mentioned that it would not be warm and too hard where items would break more easily, a suggestion was made to use wood. A decision was made to use the giant 18' pine that had to be cut down to put the shelter in as the floor. A sawmill close by was found that would cut the tree into boards for the floor. Time will be needed for drying; therefore floor will go in late fall. Question was raised if Chapel Hill gravel can be put down until wood floor is ready – answer was 'yes'. Additional comments were made regarding the need for furniture to make the space functional and were asked if it could be done before the Holiday Faire.

Respectfully submitted by Stacey Qandil and Laura Guinan