

Volunteer Common Link Meeting

September 16, 2009

Drinkward Center Conference Room

Attending: Kathy Layendecker, Anne Marie Fitzgerald, Tom Wheelock, Phillip Craig, David Lowell, Lynn Mawe, Susie Gundle, Shanda Bhasker, Susan Phillips, Diane Polsker, Jan Massaro, Megan Bingham, Janet Duffie, Kate Lieber, Kim Jensen, Teri Beatty, Melanie Clark, Kim Bissell, Madeleine Menashe, Alicia Morissette, Sarah Grewe, Eileen Pilkington, Wil Ilcisin, Courteneay du Browa, Pat Trunzo, Nancy Keates, Kristin Bradley, Betsy Leonard, Carey Killian

Jan Massaro

Welcome, this year is an evolution and I welcome your input.

The Role, Goals and Charge of VCL as taken from the OES Handbook:

The Volunteers' Common Link is the all-OES volunteer coordinating committee. Its purpose is to oversee the volunteer program at OES and to act as the communication link for community-wide interests and activities in cooperation with the Parent Association Links (PALs), School Administration, and the OES Board of Trustees.

Goals:

- Support the Mission of OES.
- Enhance communication and interaction among parents, faculty, administration and students.
- Plan and implement activities and events that promote a sense of community for the entire School.
- Promote volunteerism and increase parent participation.
- Support fundraising at OES.

Charges:

Some charges I want to highlight:

- Foster a sense of teamwork and common purpose between staff and volunteers.
- Support and promote PAL activities in each division.
- Support and promote all school and divisional parent education events.

Please see OES Handbook, page 12 for more VCL information.

We will be working hard to get minutes posted within a week and a half from the meeting date. Please look at them each month and let Megan know of any changes she needs to make. We will be posting the minutes this year and want them to be accurate.

Communications are multi-directional. Make sure that it is flowing in all directions. When you are communicating, be thoughtful, respectful, caring, confidential, and keep your emotions in check. Think about your audience – think about what they might know or not know (particularly new families but also not so new families who might be new to a grade or division). Are they aware of what “Pioneer Day” is for example? Reach out in different ways. Listen carefully to what people are saying, soak up info and funnel it to where it needs to go. Direct families to the right person for the issue at hand. Try to follow up the loop – did they get action? If not, try to help complete the loop. Evaluate the effectiveness of your communication. Communication should be timely, accurate and clear (including what will and can be shared). Try not to under or overwhelm your audience with communication.

Quotes from the Board Communication Committee packet:

“Be respectful of competing stakeholders whose interests may be as legitimate as your own.”

“Respect the interests of stakeholders by accepting that stating your own opinion does not necessarily mean that your point of view will hold sway.”

“...resist the tendency to disseminate uninformed conjectures that could be rumors.”

Recognize and help others recognize “that there are good reasons why not all information is shared...and that confidentiality also protects your (their) privacy.”

Think of ourselves as a working group that shares; Jan welcomes your comments and ideas.

Kathy Layendecker

Looking forward to working with everyone. It’s a great opportunity for me to extend my eyes and ears around the campus- let me know if you sense an isolated thing or if it’s a trend. Share with me this information if you feel it’s something I should know. What would you like to hear from me? I want to cover things that you are interested in knowing.

Faculty Week: Was the week prior to students coming back. How can we get more out of this, get faculty to feel ready to go? Community building including staff, visioning work, kicked off the idea of the 21st century. What are we doing well, how do we evolve over time? It was universally embraced and conversations were rich. How do we keep this going? We also want to get community feedback as well. Met within departments, divisions, inter-grade, etc. Want to make sure how our education builds as a students move through the grades at OES. We are looking ahead as well. One of the most important things I wanted to tell the faculty was defining the roles. Felt there was confusion in the past.

Tom Wheelock, Academic Dean: Help to pull the school together and find continuity between grades and divisions, want consistency. How we hire, compensate, and process our staff. Day to day he will work very closely with the division heads. Division heads will also work with the Head but Tom will be the first step. Technology will report to Tom and Support Services (counseling & department chairs)

Jon Von Behren: Director of Facilities, Transportation & Safety

Lynn Mawe: Fundraising, alumni relations etc.

David Lowell: Dir of Admissions & Communications. In the process of hiring a new Communications Director since it is such a big job.

Phillip Craig: Phillip will serve this year as Head Chaplain and also as Director of Support Services. He will have PK-12 administrative oversight of the chaplaincy, the counseling program, the academic specialists and the health center (nurses). That gives all of support services a voice on the Administrative Team. On a more specific level, Jim Bunker will coordinate academic support in the Upper School, Liz Harlan-Ferlo will serve as Upper School Chaplain and Sopha Hang will serve as Upper School Counselor. In the Lower School, we will be hiring a Learning Specialist in the very near future. That person will coordinate academic support in the Lower School, just as Jennifer Cleveland will serve as Lower School Chaplain and Patti Beyer will serve as Lower School Counselor. The goal is to provide a stable structure to support each child as they come up through the divisions.

3 Division heads: Day to day and long term - where we want to go over time.

CFO – new hire will be deciding within the next few weeks.

Questions about roles?

What will the LS Learning Specialist do? Anne Marie Fitzgerald answering... position will grow as we see what is needed. Will work directly with students and faculty to help enrich kids and teachers, supporting kids at both ends of the spectrum. Help with flow from division to division.

Eileen Pilkenton. – Heard from several parents that they are very happy this is happening. Felt the difference between when we had a specialist and when we did not.

Tom Wheelock

Dept chairs in place: Religion, Math, Languages, Science (Interim),
Chairs to be named: English, History, Arts, Physical Education, Science

Division heads – Smaller groups need to meet throughout the year to discuss the transitions – how does it look. Look at both academics and cultural issues. Making sure there is smooth transitions between the divisions. Support services will also be a big part of this.

Tom will be having conversations with teachers and division heads about curriculum and flow. Significant planning will be occurring. He will be asking teachers what they do well and to look ahead and see what they might need to change. This school practices from “Good to Great” –

If you think there are places he should show up to talk about this to parents or whomever please let Tom know – he will come and speak. “What do we need to do to cover these issues before there are too many questions?”

Scott Hardister– away on middle school trip.

Jordan Elliot – away on upper school assignment.

Anne Marie Fitzgerald – Thanks to LS volunteers for making the Lower School picnic such a great event. It was a great community building event. The curriculum in the LS is currently “the “First Six Weeks”, building relationships, getting into the structure to have a good start. Kids and teachers are getting into their routines and getting ready for the more challenging days ahead. Recess Rodeo – find the different areas of the playground, try them out and learn rules. This year on Open Classroom Day, the specialist teachers were located in the Common Hall. They could meet with parents and talk about their curriculum and hand out information. (This used to happen at Back to School Nights (BTSN)). Parents and Specialist Teachers felt it worked out much better having them in the Common hall. New PE Teacher (Coach Stephanie) and Chaplain Jenny Cleveland in Lower School. We have BTS nights next week. There will be three nights, five sessions. Times and dates posted on website. 9/25 there will be a walk for fun and fitness.

Kim Jensen: Volunteer Update on behalf of Cindy Plummer

Remind everyone to volunteer. All parents need background checks to volunteer. Some can volunteer once they have had preliminary screening. Having sessions during LS BTSN’s all divisions will have specific hours which you can make appointments to be screened. Can’t do Service Learning driving until the entire process is done.

Lynn Mawe informed us that 150 parents have been processed (to date) – encourage everyone to do it in each division. On line sign ups are still going on. Host families need to be checked as well.

Last year’s volunteers on-line sign up carried over with this year’s sign ups – trying to get it fixed. It is not fixed as of 9/23/09

From Kathy Layendecker - Background checks are a confidential process. If for some reason someone is rejected the school does not find out why. There is an appeal process as well. In the database, it won’t indicate rejected – only yes they have gone through the screening or no they haven’t (won’t say reject)

Alicia Morissette – Thank you to Anne Marie Fitzgerald for staffing the bouncy houses by teachers at the Lower School Picnic. We had a big group of 6th graders who helped with the crafts. Room parents are trained and we have chairs for all events.

Open Forum from Grade Reps and others:

Carey Killian – Feels that there are times when we discuss interesting and important things (during VCL) that we then send out to the parents in our divisions, that then end up in a letter or Wednesday Express, etc. and I feel it’s too much. Alicia Morissette answers that we now have the LS Communications person (Janet Duffie) coming and putting together highlights that can be

shared with the grade reps/room parents/parents. Jan is also looking how we as grade reps can share.

Anne Marie Fitzgerald - VCL over the last 3 years has evolved and it's good to reevaluate how we decide what to send out, what may have already been covered, etc.

Jordan sent a link showing a video on how to go to the handbook. Very nice presentation via email instead of having to have a meeting to explain changes that had been made. We will be using more of our tech/media to inform parents and staff, etc. (From Kathy Layendecker)

Betsy Leonard – Science teachers in US did a presentation to parents on science research and it went very well, they did a great job and helped parents understand how/what will happen. We should have video taped this!

Shanda Bhasker - How to use pirategoodies.com/textbooks. How to get rid of and buy text books. Website is especially good in fall and spring, a great way to post books you need or want to sell. Kids find out in August what books they need so GOBS can't probably help with that.

Kathy Layendecker - Books are so expensive – many schools are moving away from textbooks. Trying to find ways of creating curriculum that doesn't always require them. Kindle – idea sounds good – instead of carrying all the books. Looking at the cost and how it's going at other schools that are doing it. Don't want to invest in something that may become obsolete.

Teri Beatty – Auction is April 17, 2010. The last time she chaired the auction was 12 years ago. It's an amazing fundraiser but we've lost some of the fun. Want to have some fun again. It will be at the MAC, 60's theme, flower power, peace☺. After party in the Founders Club – various areas set up. Hope we will sell out (the space available is limited). Put it on the calendar “Aardy's Party” new name – more fun!

Lynn Mawe – New to OES last spring. We are here to help the community access non-tuition dollars to help the school. We need to get to know the people in the community, to get funding (bigger donations). She's been doing this for 20 years. We have great parent participation; we want to get to know you all.

Working on having a volunteer working space, how to write grants, how to ask for gifts, space to work, accessible, fun place to move to the next level.

Question: What is our final parent participation rate for last year? Lynn: 80%.

Question: Are you running campaigns for specific projects? Lynn: We need to get things in place first, get people excited about how are running then move towards specific projects.

Question from Kate Lieber: How do we share this information with parents? Development will be sending out information soon.

Susie Gundle – 100% US faculty participation in the OES Fund. Oct is the fund month – 1869 appreciation dinner is 9/29 – recognize 1869 and above givers. 10/1 kick-off date for the OES fund. Anyone/everyone is invited to help with the OES Fund. Critical funding, necessary to run the

school the way we want to. Shanda Bhasker & Elizabeth Highet are the OES Fund Chairs; Jana Reddoch & Gary Rischitelli are the Parent Participation Committee Co-Chairs.

Shanda Bhasker – OES Fund is very important, tuition doesn't cover expense of education, important part of funding. We'd have to cut things if we didn't have this. It would be non-tax deductible if they had to raise the tuition. Year long campaign – the earlier they donate the better it is at cutting the costs (postage, etc.) Ambassadors – please share with others what it's about. DIRECTING GIFTS: you can do monthly withdrawals, specify where you want your money to go (there will be several choices) ASK, Financial Aid, Athletic, Unrestricted, etc. Mailing prior to phonaton – Can go on line right now to give for this year (or pledge). Kids can also give to the OES Plan. The Decade Club is current students up to 10-year alums.

Question: Can we put OES Fund giving on final bill for tuition in the summer? It's possible – they are discussing it. Worried they may not be able to give as much if you ask for it then.

Homecoming: October 2nd – please come, mark your calendar. Alumni are also around and have a dinner after. You will see lots of alums around during homecoming.

Wreath Sale: 10/1-10/23 – There will be on-line ordering, send the link to friends and family - anyone can order you don't have to be in OES community. Don't know yet what the proceeds will go towards.

Community Diversity Link: – Susan Phillips

CDL Kick Off Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 15, 8:00-9:30am, Drinkward Center Volunteer Conference Room. All parents, whether interested in helping out or just learning more about the work of CDL, are invited to attend this planning meeting. New perspectives, ideas and volunteer help are most welcome. Please feel free to contact Co-Chairs Susan Phillips (503 292-6609; susan@phillipsrumker.com) and Anne Nedrow (503 297-3593; nedrowa@ohsu.edu) with questions or suggestions.

CDL is considering this year "The Whole Century". How do we prepare our kids future? What are the aspects that we need to grow to help us with that? CDL! Goal is to help parents become prepared for the role they have. Global perspective – speakers, book discussions, picked 4 books to start.

Stubborn Twig by Lauren Kessler – she is coming 10/22 to talk with us. *Stubborn Twig* tells the true story of how racism affects the emotions and choices of three generations of a Japanese-American family living in Oregon. Lauren Kessler is a well-published author, national speaker and director of the graduate program in literary journalism at the University of Oregon.

Counting Coup: A True Story of Basketball and Honor on the Little Big Horn by Larry Colton (11/12) Author is coming. This is a great book for dad's to read as well.

The Soloist by Steve Lopez

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance by Barack Obama

Please encourage parents to come (you don't have to have read the books) – bring friends. We will be selling the books at book fair and on campus for the books that are coming up prior to book sale.

Jan Massaro - Adjourn