

## Volunteer Common Link Meeting

November 11, 2009

Drinkward Center Conference Room

### Attendance:

Cindy Plummer, Megan Bingham, Jan Massaro, Madeleine Menashe, Carey Killian, Pat Trunzo, Kristin Bradley, Alicia Morissette, Michele Ackerman, Kim Jensen Melanie Clark, Nancy Keates, Sarah Grewe, Taizoon Doctor, Diane Polscer, Willemijn Ilcisin, Susan Phillips, Susan Gundle, Lynn Mawe, Jon von Behren, Anne Marie FitzGerald, Tom Wheelock, Betsy Leonard, Chris Riser, John Nakamura, Eileen Pilkenton, Janet Duffie, Courteneay du Browa, Kate Lieber, Shanda Bhasker, Kathy Layendecker, Scott Hardister, Jordan Elliott, David Lowell

### Kathy Layendecker

Please remind parents about the listening sessions next week – please sign up and encourage others to do so. There are smaller sessions during the day and larger mixed sessions in the evenings. Update on the progress of finding a Director of Marketing and Communications. We received over 200 resumes, narrowed them down to 15, then down to 4. They will be visiting campus next week and after thanksgiving break. Hoping to have the position filled by January.

It is budget season—we are developing the 2010-11 operating expense budget. . We are asking budget managers, including PAL treasurers, to build their budgets starting from \$0, and to consider “What funds we need to do it well?” We also asked, what the purpose of PAL is and how do we best employ the funds to serve that purpose.

### Jon von Behren

H1N1 – we are not going to be a vaccination center because there isn’t enough vaccine at this time. It is a fluid and changing situation. The state gets weekly allotments, then they give it to the counties, and the counties then decide who the priorities are. They have suspended the clinics for now and it is very likely that when there is more available they will reschedule. We can’t send out specific information until we know from the county. It is very last minute, we find out day to day what the county is planning.

We haven’t been hugely effected by H1N1 at OES. Normally about 15 students are out with illness at this time of year, early in the year we had as many as 30 students out, but we are back down to more normal numbers currently.. We seem to be fairing better than the rest of the schools in the area.

Dorm students: We are trying to find them vaccines. They are not in the high priority group. OES has a plan in place in case there are cases in the dorms.

### David Lowell

We are in the middle of admission season. Things are off to an exciting start. We have gone on many school visits, locally, nationally and internationally. We are also in the midst of student visits in the Upper School. We have been getting the word out on OPB and are working on getting awareness out into the community. Most people come to us through word of mouth, thank you to those of you who have spread the good word about OES. We have postcards that you can take and share with potential new families. There are more available in the division offices and Admissions Office. The Upper School OPEN HOUSE is November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Scott Hardister added: Jordan invited Middle School parents to come in the evening to hear about the Upper School. They are finding that many Middle School parents don't really know very much about Upper School.

Question: How are the numbers for the potential freshmen for next year's class? (This year's class was relatively small.) There were fewer applicants last year due to many reasons. There were financial issues (this was a national phenomenon) and there were less 8<sup>th</sup> graders coming up from the Middle School. Based on early interest this year it looks like we will have more applicants. January/February we will have tours almost every Wednesday.

#### Jordan Elliott

Here are some of the main themes in Upper School:

Academics – Comments were sent out to all the Upper School students at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

College applications are an all-consuming for the seniors.

Juniors – They are working on their literary research projects. They doing research, conducting interviews, doing site visits, etc. The author of *Stubborn Twig*, Lauren Kessler, met with the juniors to speak about her book. The author of *Counting Coup*, Larry Colton, will visit each section of English 11 as well. Science Research is starting to gear up as well.

Arts – It is tech week for the Upper School musical. All performances are SOLD out.

Sports – Boys soccer won last night to go on to playoffs, girls are playing tonight. Basketball tryouts are currently under way.

105 parents came to the first Upper School PAL meetings; this is the highest participation since Jordan has been head.

Chapel – in an effort to increase student involvement throughout the US, the chaplains have been increasing the presence of students in the organization and presentation of the chapel program.

Winterim fun is beginning. The committee has been putting together the sign ups for this year. Nick DePreter (Lower School 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher) is heading a trip to Uganda, a "Freedom Road of Alabama" trip will be tracing the civil rights movement, and "The Arts in Portland" group will go around and look at art in the city. There will be yoga workshops, aerial movement workshops, to name a few opportunities locally. One of the student's parents is coming from China to teach a form of traditional painting to students as well.

#### Scott Hardister

We just ended the first quarter. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will get full comments sent home and 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be having conferences.

8<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents have been visiting the Upper School. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade musical will be in March. They will be performing "High School Musical" with two casts. This is always a massive endeavor.

7<sup>th</sup> grade has been deciding on their service projects. They have decided to be the "Keepers of the OES Forests" This area of the campus needs attention and they will be working on it throughout the year.

The whole Middle School will visit the China exhibit at the Art Museum in December.

Athletics – Soccer: The girls lost in the finals and boys lost in double-overtime in the semi finals. 70-75% participated in MS athletics this fall which included 2 volleyball teams, 4 soccer teams and a huge cross country team.

PAL – We had a great meeting last week with Angela Hancock. The topic was the current technology in the Middle School, where we are and where we want to go with the technology as well as the importance of ethics and how to define it.

#### Anne Marie FitzGerald

Things are going very smoothly – conferences just wrapped up last week. We had a return visit from the Power of One Organization which did an anti-bullying presentation which included a piece for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders on cyber-bullying. Parent Partnership have been going on over the last few weeks where we talked about all school themes – chaplain, counseling, revised citizenship document. We also met with Kindergarten parents to discuss the Primary/1<sup>st</sup> grade development process.

Lara Ingham the Lower School librarian is having sessions with parents for book recommendations.

Faculty – We are digging deep in our literacy continuum, getting details across grade levels, visiting each other's classrooms and observing literacy lessons. Using observations for some meaty conversations.

Grandparent and Special Person Day – November 24<sup>th</sup>, the kids look forward to this.

Thank you to Kristin Bradley and her assistants for a wonderful Spooktacular this year. It was the smoothest ever, kids enjoying themselves without getting into mischief.

Alicia Morissette – Thank you to Kate Lieber who built all of the games for Spooktacular. Next PAL meeting this Friday. We have Ian Symmonds and Tom Wheelock coming.

Cindy Plummer – All School Volunteer Coordinator (Michele Ackerman coordinator of Lower School, Kim Jensen coordinator for Middle School)

Not too late to sign up on line for volunteer opportunities. If you are chairing an event in a division we can pull a list of parents who have signed up to help. Please report volunteer hours! Get the word out to all parents. Companies will match volunteer hours and it helps with our grant work.

Dec 9 – Afterglow – we need volunteers to help serve cookies during this evening event (advent service). There will be an art show during this and the next day.

#### Jan Massaro

(Reporting for Jeanine Rood) Wreath Sales were about the same as last year. 12/2, 12/3 are the distribution days at SPARC.

Thank you to Cindy Plummer and Lynne Parker for your amazing hard work on a successful Homecoming.

Jan is creating an Ad Hoc committee to work on things we don't have time to brainstorm during VLC. It would be two to three meetings throughout the year. We have already generated some great ideas. Wants to evolve VCL and clarify the role of VCL – take the long list of goals and simplify them.

Community Building, outreach, welcoming new and not-so-new families. Think about ideas that will make this work better.

Her experience coming in mid-year – a family had a dinner party to introduce their family to other parents in the class. Gave information on Portland, doctors, etc. Reached out to them so that they felt welcome and had resources available.

Willemijn Ilcisin – There are buddy families in Lower School, do we have them in Upper School? If we had even “parent” buddies in Upper School that would be helpful. Need more opportunities to interact and feel a part of the community.

Melanie Clark – had a “family Friday” in LS a couple of years ago which was well enjoyed.

Cindy Plummer – have a buddy in 9<sup>th</sup> grade – also with teams (Lacrosse, etc.)

Beginning School – had Wednesday play dates at Aardvark Park this summer

MS has buddies for new families and does a few get-togethers during the summer.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF to new families– it really helps people feel welcome and connected.

Melanie contacted all the new 6<sup>th</sup> grade families at beginning of year and is going to do it again once conferences are over.

Sometimes with all the activities in the fall new families may become overwhelmed with information. In January it calms down and they may need support to feel connected once holidays etc. are over.

John Nakamura and Melanie Clark - Middle School – when the kids are having their social they are trying to have a parent event (trying to find more ways to involve dads). Doing something with their kids and other dads.

Susan Phillips - Remembering the moments of kindness when someone does reach out to you

Suggestion for Upper School – having an email sent from Jordan to the class introducing the new families that come in each year

Suggestion - Good idea to send out throughout the divisions who the new kids are and introduce them to the groups/grades

Grade Reps - Circling around to new families throughout the year – keeping them in the loop.

Suggestion - In directory or Parent Portal being able to see who is new on the class lists not just in the directory listings.

It is beneficial to have parent be buddy coordinator with Admissions – maybe let grade reps know who new families are, so more outreach could be provided

Encouraging attendance at and informing about the community events (i.e. St. Nick’s Chapel)

Suggestion - PAL reps in MS and US – can they have a list of what events, etc. that they should be reminding parents about. Sit down with your buddy and tell them about the specific events (socials, Spooktacular, St. Nick’s Chapel, etc.)

Taizoon Doctor - We have come up with a few ideas already from a treasurer’s meeting:

Homecoming – how do we get more parents to the event. If your kids don’t play soccer why would parents come? Dancing school is always a conflict for homecoming too.

Teachers – parents could have a workshop with a teacher to connect yourself with the teachers, school, etc.

Find an event at the Art Museum, musical, etc. that we could go together and meet after for social time.

Finding volunteering opportunities (food bank – do it together with other OES families)

Shanda Bhasker – Annual Fund Co-Chair

Doing well – phone-a-thon went well –had fun and got done early. Lot of people had given prior to that night. Half way to our goal, we are currently at \$377,537 and current participation rate is 60% (probably higher because we can't count unless we have a firm pledge). Beginning School is at 73%! Upper School is 66% (day school).

Lynn Mawe – The next mailings are going to Grandparents and Alums. Grandparents day should be well attended.

Susie Gundle – Alumni - We had the reunion weekend during homecoming – very successful, there was a Saturday lunch and tea. Upcoming events: pub event (college age – younger alums), basketball game over the holidays, encourage all faculty and staff to let us know in the development office if they are traveling so we can create an alum event.

Freshman care packages are being sent to the new Alums who are off at their first year of college.

FOESL – Diane Polscer – Next week is the BOOK FAIR Tuesday-7:30-4:00, Wednesday 7:30-7:00, and Thursday 7:30-4:00. If you are buying books for the holidays, please buy them at the book fair. Diane Morgan is coming Wednesday afternoon to sign her updated Thanksgiving book. Judy Nedry has a new book out as well and will be visiting the Book Fair to sign books.

Community Diversity Link – Reading Groups:

11/12 Counting Coup - the author is coming

12/10 – The Soloist