

Volunteers Common Link

12/11/09

Drinkward Center Conference Room

Attendance:

Megan Bingham, Jan Massaro, Kathy Layendecker, Jordan Elliott, Anne Marie FitzGerald, Debbie Rischitelli, Kim Jensen, Madeleine Menashe, Alicia Morissette, Carey Killian, Eileen Pilkenton, David Lowell, Diane Polsker, John Nakamura, Kim Bissell, Tom Berridge, Courteneay du Browa, Janet Duffie, Susan Phillips, Willemijn Ilcisin, Sarah Grewe, Kate Lieber, Melanie Clark, Pat Trunzo, Kristin Bradley, Michele Ackerman

Kathy Layendecker

On January 6th from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Ian Symmonds will present the broad themes that came out of the listening sessions, what they learned, what we do well and what we need to do better. They want feedback during this meeting to add to their information gathering process. If you don't hear what you think should be included in the themes that are presented you will have a chance to share your thoughts.

On January 28th (6:00-8:00 p.m.) they will return to present the Vision Statement.

Mission Statement – your purpose; stays the same over time.

Vision Statement – where you want to take the school over time, looking to the future. This changes over time.

There is a communication plan being put together to make sure we can get good attendance. Please give out the information to your grades, room parents, etc.

Question - Kim Jensen - Is there a way to get the information in these meetings out in another way to people who can't get to the meetings?

Kathy – Yes, we are hoping to have something on the website that will allow people to review the information and give feedback. [Editorial note: Kathy later emailed a correction indicating that the presentation would not be available on the website because it included sensitive material and the website is public.]

There is an ad hoc communications Board committee that is helping plan how this information is shared. Jan Massaro, David Lowell, Kathy Layendecker and several others serve on this committee.

We are ready to launch our new website which is designed with a more marketing focus to attract new families and students to OES while continuing to provide information to existing families. The new website is in its first phase and will undergo further revisions over time including a new calendar.

David Lowell

New Website Presentation

We have designed the website to be more marketing based instead of heavy text. We want your feedback eventually on where you want to go with the website. Today we want to hit all the key things you want to be able to see and navigate.

We worked with Ian Symmonds, the Administrative team, and others to get the website where we want it to be. In regards to the internal community we want to know what they need, where to find what they want to read for example: Wednesday Express, MS Messenger, logins, etc. so we can set up a tutorial to use the new website.

We are trying to keep an integrated marketing approach, simplifying the navigation, for a new or prospective family we want it easier to navigate. Lots of OES references. We are hoping to launch the new website on Monday (Dec. 16th). To distinguish us in the web world we are using bold marketing and messaging.

The campus tour has a virtual map, slide show, descriptor, and list of what is included. We have to be careful about too much detail on the mapping – there's a safety piece that we have to consider.

Our plan was to transform the "about OES" page from text dense to a short form, bulleted, quick splash, spark curiosity, etc. Tom Berridge has done all the detailed work to bring the website to life. Revolving profiles of graduates, who are the kids and where are they going when they move into the great wide world. New website will allow you to go through photo albums and download pictures, eventually the magazine will go on line.

Another marketing change includes the tabs on top of the screen. For instance, instead of landing on the Wednesday Express when you click on Lower School, it will take you to an information page about the Lower School. On the right will then be the familiar tabs for current families, Latest News, Wednesday Express, Calendars, etc.

At the top right there is another navigation piece that stays steady throughout the website. A new **Calendar** (coming in the spring) will be more customizable, with the ability to integrate with other calendars, **Alumni, Giving, Athletics, Arts & Music, School Store** and **Contacts**. Athletics management page and the school store are created in separate zones with a slightly different look. On the Athletics page there are now season schedules, scores and coach information.

Logging into OES is the same as before, it will take you to the parent portal.

Question: Where are the Lower School classroom pages? They are under Latest News, then right side Classroom Pages tab.

Comment from Willemijn Ilcisin - For 12th grade parents please make sure that in the college application section is accurate, that there are no glitches since we are in the middle of admissions.

Do athletics have maps to other schools? Yes – click on the schedule and find the correct game, click on more info and the location maps will come up.

Kate Lieber – Will we be able to download the calendars directly? Yes

Carey Killian – Suggested we have a launch plan for the common questions that aren't big enough to be directed to the website managers.

Question about Snow Closure or emergency event- It will be on front page under News

Eileen Pilkenton - Comments for Volunteers - You don't want it to be hard to find and I wouldn't know to go there. (Volunteer information is currently under "giving" tab at the top of page.) Information about volunteering is all under giving. There is also a link on the Wednesday Express and MS Messenger pages. It should be on a quick link instead of only being accessible through "giving". Kathy Layendecker - We are being protective of the front page, this is an important point to make sure people know where to go but we don't want to have too much direct information on the opening page of the website.

If any other questions or comments come up please let David Lowell or Tom Berridge know.

Anne Marie FitzGerald

Thank you to lower school parents who behind the scenes worked at the Giving Chapel, it went very smoothly. We helped 8 agencies this year as well as a Lego drive.

Would like to invite you to December 17th Beginning School holiday program.

Looking ahead, the technology department is reformatting the student progress reports going out in early February. The reports will be accessed by the parent portal instead of being mailed.

We are focusing on the lower school literacy programs. Many of the faculty and staff have been to conferences on literacy and writing strategies, a conference on K-8 literacy continuums. Those who attended gave a presentation to the rest of the faculty.

Leveled library in Beginning School is under way. Leslie Aaron (parent and employee of Concordia University) helped introduce us to a literacy expert at Concordia. We will attend her presentation on Thursday, December 10th. As well, we will work with literacy expert and author, Bonnie Campbell Hill, on aligning reading assessments across the grade levels and refining our literacy continuums.

Scott Hardister

6th Grade Highlights: They want to have a special Tuesday advisory "mini-social" together.

7th Grade: We have an international collaboration project; it's a group that is focused on sustainability. There are schools from Scotland, Australia, and Los Angeles. Students will apply to go to the project which will be in Los Angeles this year. Scotland will host next year.

8th Grade: They have proposed a Super Bowl party which we are trying to do. We will need parent support and volunteers to make it work. The 8th grade committees are going strong and coming up with all kinds of ideas (social and service). They will be applying for a grant for solar panels (sustainability).

Giving Tree – All the tags have been taken and lots of packages are under the tree. Other service spin-offs include a few 8th graders who started a Sneaker Drive and a children's book drive.

With some feedback from last spring, we are going to look at how and when we formally communicate with parents. We are trying to balance when there are comments vs. grading and conferences. We want to be consistent with what the other divisions do.

Middle School PAL may be restructured. Want feedback on what parents would like.

Jordan Elliott

Currently working on 2nd semester schedules. We recently had conferences and comments and have been really pleased with the feedback. We are up and running with our new "time back" policy. There are some implementation pieces we are working on. Our daily schedule is being reviewed and we are happy to have an outside consultant help us to rework how we use our time.

We will be having final exams before winter break. Current research supports having finals prior to the holiday break. This way the kids can truly have a break from studies. We have set aside 2 hours for each class exam and we want them to use the whole time. We've come to an agreement that the students stay for at least 90 minutes to help them take their time.

Literary Journalism projects for juniors were due this week. Many college applications are due January 1st. Winterim list will be posted this week.

There was a poetry collaboration with Pre-K and Upper School students last week. They wrote poems together there is a nice summary of each pair in the lobby of Upper School.

Advent Service and Afterglow tonight in Great Hall is a great view of our performing artists.

Professional Growth and Development – A teacher went to Learning and the Brain conference in Boston. We get updated on most current brain information. Biology teacher got to present at a large conference. Boarding parents went to a conference in Chicago and also a group went to the People of Color conference and we learned some great information.

Boys won State Soccer championship and basketball is off to a good start. Ski and snowboard teams are under way.

PAL reps – working on ways to help parents who don't (or cannot) come to the meetings.

"Get Schooled" – We are working on a project to have upper school teachers who will be teaching mini-classes to parents.

Alicia Morissette

PAL meeting this week featured the chaplains who came to talk about chapel and lower school services.

Parents in the lower school are very passionate about service learning. Lower school PAL donated \$300 to Estelle Berger for VOSE drive. Over \$1200 worth of books and gift cards were sold at the book fair for VOSE and the Transitional School.

Jan Massaro

How do you think the volunteer process is going? With the new parent portal we will be looking into making the volunteer hour logging system better. At the moment it will stay the same. Do you feel the volunteers are feeling connected/wanted/needed? Are we getting back to them whether we use them as volunteers or not – closing the loop?

Comment: There are some people being signed up multiple times and/or not showing up in the system. We are working with Brad Baugher to make sure it gets sorted out (Michele Ackerman).

Michele Ackerman (LS Volunteer Coord.), Kim Jensen (MS Volunteer Coord.) and Cindy Plummer (US Volunteer Coord.) please follow up with volunteers.

Regarding how we fill grade rep roles, chair positions, etc. Jan will go to PAL meetings in January and February to talk about the process and encourage parents to sign up.

Logging hours – do we have a place where we can see how many hours we currently have total (all hours in school)? Suggestion to have it somewhere updated to see.

Janet Duffie: We need to work on the communication of volunteer hours. Discussion included – having room parents keep track, have room parents remind with information about what they've reported and if it's accurate. Kim Bissell: Can we report the 485 hours that we know were filled for the book fair? Some people will diligently report and others never will.

More discussion: It should be set up as an interactive program. There needs to be more communication about reporting so it doesn't seem so overwhelming. Date doesn't matter but if you have employee-matching programs they need to know who you are.

Kathy Layendecker: We are centralizing how we are applying for grants and need more accurate reporting.

Susie Gundle: HAP website has a list of companies that do matching donations and/or volunteer hour matching.

Reminders to note: Bulk reporting of hours (doesn't have to be done for each individual event), finding link to give to parents with details. When new website is up let's remind them in Wednesday Express, Messenger, and other locations of these issues.

Jan Massaro: (In reference to filling volunteer roles.) The terms for grade reps are varied from 1 year on up. Think about what the term should be for room/grade reps. Should it vary by division? Please give me feedback on this, we will be talking about it in January and I would like some feedback prior to visiting the PAL meetings.

Susie Gundle

OES Fund information: 64% parent participation, \$436,700 current donations

We expect more donations before the end of the year.

Auction – There are several committee chair positions open. Please contact Teri Beatty if you are interested. Check out the Wednesday Express and Messenger for more details. Sponsorship, procurement and ad forms will go out in January. Could use more volunteers.