



PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Welcoming Families. Building Community.

Parents Association Executive Committee Meeting

December 14, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Denise Prince, Parents Association President, called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

In Attendance

Denise Prince, Jalene Spain Thomas, Chris Bolger, Karolina Canning, Laura Schifter, Betsy Fenzel, Julia Ghafouri, Maria Lisette Romero, Johanna Howe, Margaret Pearson, Blair Staunton, Paula Hopkins, Jessica Taylor White, Diana Allen, Claire Farver

Approval of November Minutes

Julia Ghafouri moved to approve the November minutes. Laura Schifter seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

President's Report

- The administration has been apprised of the PA dues increase (to \$75) for the 2023-24 school year
- Gifts For Good raised over \$13k, Grate Patrol and Horizons each raised \$1k
- The Development office is moving back into the Day School building, into the previous space overlooking the courtyard.
- Upcoming events: Wells Collective Parent Workshop on 1/26, Family Day at ZavaZone on 1/29, Speaker Anya Kamentz on 2/2, and Ian Urbina P'18 on 2/17.

Head of School Report

Jalene shared images from recent holiday events for faculty and staff, the faculty emeriti luncheon was very successful and will be repeated annually. There will be a 2022 printed holiday card, sent to the day school community. The inspiration images for the card are from the 2002 Christmas pageant.

Jalene shared a draft 2023-24 Major Dates Calendar with the PA leadership.

Questions, Feedback and Suggestions from PA leaders:

- Parent Teacher Conferences, and any other non-instructional day when students are not in school should be on the major dates calendar so that parents can have more time to arrange for care for those who are not contracted with Extended Day. A: YES, this suggestion will be shared.
- Can the administration consider the scheduling of major events so that working parents are better able to plan and attend? For example, having multiple major events within the same week can prevent many working parents from being able to attend.
- Chapel - hosting two separate Lower School chapel services weekly (k-2 and 3-5) makes participation more challenging for families with multiple children. The combined k-5 chapel services allow for parents to be able to attend with more of the children, in particular for working parents who may be unable to take the time twice weekly to attend.

Faculty/Staff Holiday Gifts Discussion

- The PA usually gives \$500 to Horizons and \$500 to St. Etienne in Haiti on behalf of the faculty and staff. That is considered the PA gift to faculty and staff over the holidays.
- There is a sense that this is a bit stale - and that the PA should explore another gift option that is a tangible item for the faculty and staff.
- There are 120 faculty and staff members (without including extended day staff).
- What item could we give that would be universally liked and able to be sourced with a shorter lead time?
- Johanna Howe, VP for Logowear volunteered that there is the capacity for increased logowear revenue to offset the cost of an unbudgeted gift.

Decision: The PA will make the donations to Horizons and St. Etienne and also give a gift to faculty and staff. We will give a \$10 Black Coffee gift card, Wolfhound water bottle (at no additional expense to the PA budget, as they are a donation from Claire Farver from a previous event), and a handwritten card. The gifts will be presented on January 6th, at the faculty staff holiday party. A date to write the cards will be determined later.

Communications Strategy Update

Karolina Canning, Director of Communications and Marketing presented an overview of St. Patrick's revamped communications strategy. The new direction had been informed by parent feedback, industry best practices, and careful consideration of our community's needs.

- *HoundsTruth*, the weekly bulletin, has been streamlined to be mobile friendly and pared down to the most essential content.
 - The focus of *HoundsTruth* is "need to know" information about upcoming events and school matters.

- This change means that *HoundsTruth* is no longer truncated in Gmail, which is a huge win.
- The Week-At-A-Glance section with weekly events and athletic contests has been incredibly well received.
- The open rate is now consistently high, with the leadership letters garnering the highest click through rate.
- Feedback has been incredibly positive to this new format.
- *HoundBytes*, a new bi-weekly publication, was launched on November 16th and will continue to be published every other Wednesday.
 - *HoundBytes* will contain a variety of articles and stories about recent events and activities at St. Patrick's.
 - *HoundBytes* will also be shared with our wider community - alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, and other friends of the school.
- *Just in From Jalene*, a new publication that will come directly from Jalene twice a trimester will launch in January.
 - The purpose of this new format is to introduce the community fully to Jalene, and share her thoughts, updates, and strategic initiatives, and to give more visibility to her voice for those in the community who are not in school or attending events frequently.
- The website has now been fully SEO/PPC optimized, to drive more traffic to St. Patrick's channels. For example, when you google "best private middle school" our content has been optimized to better position us in searches.
- Their advertising strategy is proving successful. Ad buys led to our largest admissions open house on record, in November.
- The Communications team has worked with Robin Everhart-Terry and Eby Okonkwo to digitize extended day and after school activity offerings.
- We are moving to a one magazine per year model, with the annual report (now impact report) published along with graduation content in the fall.

Treasurer's Report

- Margaret shared updated financial statements through Nov 30th
- we have \$58k in revenue
- Family fun day and logowear sales were successful, though Family Fun Day fell short of projected revenue by ~\$1k. Though we missed that target, we are not in a deficit, with net after expenses, \$31k from all fall events.

VP for Sustainability Report

Laura Schifter gave an update on February's Speaker Series.

- On February 2 at 6pm: Anya Kamentz, author of *The Stolen Year: How Covid Changed Children's Lives*, will lead a discussion and Q&A on children's experiences through the pandemic and how to move forward.
- On February 17 at 8:30pm: Ian Urbina P'18, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author of *The Outlaw Ocean: Journeys Across the Last Untamed Frontier*, will lead a discussion and Q&A about the intersection of sustainability and equity and his book.

Closing and Announcements

Denise shared that a new PK parent, Claire Qureshi, proposed a plan to have the parents decorate school for each season. With funds from the Family Fun Day budget, Claire and other parent volunteers decorated campus for fall with festive seasonal items. It was very well received and she proposes that this become an annual activity that kindergarten parents participate in each year. Claire is willing to lead efforts in the upcoming year and then the framework for the committee could live with the kindergarten room parents.

Denise Prince adjourned the meeting at 9:30am

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Taylor White

Recording Secretary