

**MINUTES OF NICHOLS SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 28th, 2008**

ATTENDEES

S. Angelakos; C. Augustine; K. Andersen; M. Bacon; W. Bacon; A. Bellows; D. Briatico; S. Chevli; L. Copeland; J. Ennis; C. Fenn; T. Franz; G. Gibson; J. Greco; J. Greene; M. Grenda; M. Goldfarb; E. Gurney; J. Hamilton; J. Hettrick; G. Higgins; L. Hotung; K. Loree; A. Maritime; J. Munro; A. Newall; N. Oak; C. Pegado; B. Regan; D. Russell; L. Schoene; M. Speach; T. Tantillo; L. Vossler; L. Wright

REPORT OF DR. ARANYA MARITIME, HEAD OF THE UPPER SCHOOL

- End of Semester: 1st marking period just closed; grade reports to be mailed end of this week. Looking forward to seeing parents in school for parent/teacher conferences.
- Mock Presidential Election: To learn more about the process of the election, students were divided into electoral colleges by grade level (# of students per class determined # of electoral votes) and one faculty/staff college, voting on Election Day.
- Dress Code: After a good beginning of the school year, girls are getting lax with dress code; school addressing this over the last week or so trying hard to get the girls where they need to be on dress code; improvement has been noted. Any advice on how to find appropriate clothes is available from Dr. Maritime. It is an issue of fairness; girls can not come to school in t-shirts while the boys are in ties. It also does not send the right message to girls-that while a boy could walk right into a law office, the girls are not at an equivalent level. (A parent noted that a friend did not send her daughter to Nichols because the girls did not look appropriately dressed. Parent/Attorney warns that girls not used to dressing in professional attire risk embarrassment when they are told by their boss that they are not appropriately dressed for court/work situation.)

REPORT OF JOHN MUNRO, ASST HEADMASTER AND HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Mid-Trimester: Completed 1st round of mid-trimester advisor phone calls/emails to parents with quick snapshot of child's academic progress over the first half of trimester, reaching nearly 100% of the parents. Trimester ends 11/19. First formal progress reports mailing targeted for 11/24.
- MS Mock Election: Organized students through MS house system into 4 geographic regions to keep tabs of electoral college count.
- MS Houses: Last year MS was divided into four Harry Potter type "houses" of mixed grades; Please share your thoughts/ideas with John Munro. House system offers:
 - House Cup Competitions: Field day, community service efforts, broomball, Spirit Day, geography and spelling bees, GIT are all ways to earn points for each house. Ontario House leads:41 points, Erie:38, St. Lawrence:36, Niagara:34. Fun program.
 - Leadership opportunities: Two eighth grade prefects per house (1 boy/ 1 girl).
 - Informal peer mentoring: Houses share activities/goals, encourages older students to mix with younger ones and they work well together.
- Parent Book Club: 11/18 at 8:30 am in MS Library, discussion of Nation of Wimps, on the high cost of invasive parenting

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND NEW SERVICE REQUIREMENT

Report of Tom Franz, Community Service Leader

Through the years, Nichols has taken a progressively greater role in helping students find and execute their service to others in the community; new this year, it is a graduation requirement. Students are embracing the new requirement, some with incredible numbers of hours.

Community Service Day on October 17 (also Spirit Day):

- Fine weather, fun silly atmosphere of Toga Day, wonderful cooperation of the kids-success!
- Guest Speaker, Stephanie Malinenko, Director of WNY Service Learning Coalition, in a nice way to start the day, passed along important messages to the kids:
Right now, fastest growing group of people serving the community in the USA is teenagers. This day is all about them making a difference, they were about to fix something “today”.
- Students mobilized quickly, within 15 minutes were off campus en route to service sites.
- Served over 20 organizations making a great impression all over north Buffalo: Elmwood Ave. clean-up, West Side house assessment for abandonment/repair needs. Superb situation: 7 organizations needed work done specifically that day: assembled 1000 personal care kits at Compass House, cartons moved for a sale next day at Science Museum
- Student reactions: Realized if they hadn’t been there to help, agencies wouldn’t have accomplished their goals; surprised by immediate positive feedback from community.
- Photos can be seen on Nichols website and on the basement bulletin board.

Tracking Service Hours: Students submit completed community service forms (available in front office/on website) to Tom Franz. Tracking hours is a way to call attention to their contributions.

Upcoming Upper School Service Opportunities: On campus, assist 5th grade Halloween Party;

Off campus, help move Save Girard’s Food Pantry to a new facility on 11/8

Report of Michele Speach, MS Community Service Leader on MS School-wide Service Initiatives

- 4 annual service projects occur, one per season: Denim Day benefits breast cancer research (students pay \$5 to wear jeans to school); Clothing drive benefits PS 45; Winter Blanket project benefits Child Advocacy Center (students buy kit to make blanket); Casey’s Crusade benefits Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (students collect pledges and walk)
- 1 ongoing project: Boxtops for Education collection, a “house” competition, so label the back of each boxtop with your child’s name so points can be allotted appropriately.

Report of Annie Newall, MS Community Service Leader on MS Grade-level Service Initiatives

- 5th graders visit Goodwill, learn about their mission, sort goods for sale or donate winter clothing to International School
- 6th graders visit School 54 several times per year to partner with their kindergarten, do word/math games and a year-end picnic
- 7th and 8th graders make care packages of toiletries/entertainment items/snacks and send to soldiers serving overseas

Heads of US/MS and Service Leaders on How Nichols Ensures Meaningful Service Learning:

- Consolidation: Attention focused on four big charities school-wide (MS) to ensure the students know who is benefitting, what they are doing to help, getting a lot of support behind it and knowing the mission of the charity. Not just putting coins in a jar each week.
- Connections: Direct involvement ie: International School-students deliver clothing, see kids newly arrived in this country receiving their very first winter coat/boots.
- Feedback: Students hear directly from agency where/how their gifts were used. Reps from charities involved are invited to Nichols after events so students have face to face contact. Military Letters of response went directly to home-rooms, read to students by teacher. Point brought home: students are making a difference in someone's life.
- Sharing: Upper School students get up to speak to their peers at Morning Meetings about their experiences; 3 students gave very moving presentations on how their families have been affected by breast cancer; other students related well to the personal stories shared .

REPORT OF LORI VOSSLER, UPPER SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR

- 9th Grade: Students enjoyed a successful Breakfast in October. Parents' Coffee at Bagel Jay's on 11/13, a Spring parent event may be planned
- 10th Grade: Parent Gathering, Cocktail Party 11/7
- 11th Grade: Students Junior Poetry Paper Breakfast will be on 12/19 Spring Parent event on College theme may be planned
- 12th Grade: Students Halloween Breakfast 10/30. Spring Dates: 3/17 Breakfast, 5/15 Picnic Parents' Get-Together at Garret Club on 12/5

REPORT OF JACKIE ENNIS, MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR

- 5th Grade: Parent Meet and Greet was held 10/15
- 6th Grade: Parent Meet and Greet will be 11/5 at Creekview Restaurant
- 7th/8th Grade: Parent gatherings will be scheduled after Capital Campaign parties are over

COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Capital Campaign: Trustee, Chair of Major Gifts, Jane Hettrick

Began 3 years ago, Board of Trustees quiet phase raised \$19 million, meeting with previous large donors/out of town constituents- funded turf fields, roadways, faculty enhancement, scholarships. Next phase, \$4 million goal, began with Nichols Future kick-off party, 9/26. Commended full support of dedicated faculty/staff: 100% commitment to Capital Campaign. Thanked parents who already made a gift to Capital Campaign, encouraged others to participate. Asked for our help to spread the word through the parent community. Every parent invited to informal gathering organized by zip code for convenience, hosted by a Nichols parent to chat one on one with administration, learn more of Capital Campaign projects. In addition, all are invited to gathering 12/3 at Nichols.

❖ Annual Fund: Michele Goldfarb

Acknowledged the importance of the Capital Campaign, encouraged participation also in the Annual Fund to cover annual operating expenses. A high percent of parents have already made their Annual Fund gifts; aim is 100% participation. Directed parents to the Parent webpage as a way to make their contributions. Invited parents to help with Annual Fund note writing on 11/5/08.

❖ Wrapping Paper Sale: 75 students sold. \$5,250 profit directly to Technology Department.

❖ Spirit Committee

Arts Division, Josanne Greco/Athletic Division, Barb Regan

Each event will have 2 parents helping with support and supplies; contact Josanne to volunteer.

Check online for all arts, athletic events. Spirit Committee to meet with Athletic dept- plan parent help/support of athletic teams. Introduced new school cheer: "Go Green!" (response) "Go White!"

- Homecoming: New in '08: two games on Friday (Football/Varsity girls field hockey), New Friday BBQ, sponsored by Spirit Committee parents/Saturday BBQ-a Nichols tradition, sponsored by Alums. Homecoming was very successful, kids had a good time.(fans even got a wave going!) More ideas in the works to get the kids further involved in Homecoming and excited about the school year.
- Big Green Viking Dinner Auction 11/21: To avoid conflicts, no athletic events will be held that night. Encouraged attendance and donations for gift baskets-athletic theme not required.

❖ One Community (previously "Global Opportunities"): Warren Lowe

New for parents/faculty; supports Nichols core value of diverse community, understanding, mutual respect. Goals: learn of each others' ethnicities, increase student awareness of global events.

Parents/faculty/students sought as speakers. Dr. Rockwell leads discussions; next meeting 12/9, 7:45 am, Conference Room. Point person / blog moderator: Madame Zamor.

<http://nicholscommunity.blogspot.com> to post family traditions, customs.

International Dinner: Date in early Feb TBA. Volunteers are needed

❖ Derby Day Auction: Mary and Wayne Bacon

Mint Juleps and Tulips on May 2, 2009. Asked parents to please keep in mind while shopping, that acquisitions are needed! To donate empty baskets, drop off at school. Advertising dollars are especially helpful, as full amount goes towards this good cause.

NEW BUSINESS

- Kew-Raiser Lecture: Elizabeth Gurney invited parents to attend "The World in 2009" by distinguished speaker, Daniel Franklin, Executive Editor of *The Economist*, 10/30 at 7:30 pm

OLD BUSINESS

- Minutes of the Parents' Association General Meeting on September 9, 2008 were approved upon motion by Lori Vossler, seconded by Josanne Greco.
- Secretary Report: Cards sent on behalf of Parents Association expressing our support: 5 Get Well/Encouragement, 3 Sympathy (Alex Giotis '08 for his father, Rob Greene for his father '60, Sara Carney for her mother-in-law). 2 New babies (son to Rob Greene, daughter to Dan Dolan)

Meeting was adjourned upon motion by Warren Lowe, seconded by Jane Hamilton at 5:00 pm.

Following the meeting, a preview of Parent Portal webpages was given by Gyda Higgins, Director of Parent Relations and Joe Bach, Director of Technology in the Alumni Room.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Pegado, Nichols Parent Association Secretary