

# MINUTES OF NICHOLS SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

## ATTENDEES

S. Angelakos; C. Augustine; M. Bacon; M. Bisone; D. Bourne; J. Brannen; J. Brason;  
D. Briatico; R. Bryan; R.M. Canestro; N. Carney; S. Chevli; M.J. Cipolla; K. Collins; D. Corbett;  
C. Cumming; J. Ennis; C. Fenn; A. Fitch; D. Friedlander; G. Gibson; M. Goldfarb; M. Grenda; E. Gurney;  
P. Hafner; J. Hamilton; M. Heitzhaus; L. Hotung; P. Houguton; L. Keating; S. Kowalski; J. Lipke; W. Lowe;  
P. Marcucci; K. Matthews; J. McNamara; D. Millar; J. Munro; N. Oak; J. Osinski; C. Pegado; A. Pollina;  
C. Poth; B. Regan; L. Reindl; K. Schlehr; W. Schutte; K. Selbert; M. Soukiazian; R. Stenlik; M. Tomczak;  
C. Winter; E. Wright; L. Wright; D. Zacher

## REPORT OF MR. RICK BRYAN, HEADMASTER

- **Nichols 118<sup>th</sup> School Year Begins:** Great start with unbelievable energy level/enthusiasm. Reported new roadways/parking working quite well as people become accustomed to changes. Addressing the long lines at lunch: changes will improve situation/also 15 Spanish exchange students leave soon. New curricular efforts will be covered at Parents Go To School Night.
- **Spirit Day:** Continuing discussions will allow students to participate in plans for a new tradition
- **Community Service Day:** (next Friday 9/24) Much planning in progress; Asked parents for suggestions of any service organization opportunities they are aware of within walking distance of campus. Student leaders choose 6-8 specific, focused projects that groups will work on that day and continue throughout the academic year; watch for news on the website.
- **Communications with Parents:** Website contains more day-to-day details/interesting features; new staff member (digital media specialist) hired. Faculty now required to update webpages daily.
- **Center '63:** Construction progress on the new Math & Science building is on schedule. Following today's meeting, parents have their first opportunity to tour the building, observe what the new facility will provide and the work in progress. By mid-December Center '63 will be available; equipment to be moved in during the Holiday Vacation; classes to begin in new building in January after the break. Headmaster focus with Board of Trustees this year: get Center '63 online/paid for.
- **2010-2011 Enrollment:** happily announced full enrollment; accomplishment unexpected this early, due to present economic challenges. Stressed important role of current parents/students in recruitment: a key factor is continued word of mouth to neighbors/friends. Working hard with Board of Trustees on long-range (3-4 years ahead) Admissions/Marketing plans. Asked for continued parent feedback on experiences at Nichols.

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

- **New School Year:** Amazing start; highest enrollment in a decade with 194 Middle School students. **New at MS:** Added an extra section of 5<sup>th</sup> grade math/3 ability levels of small classes. Class trips: Hugely successful scaled back 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade trips (8<sup>th</sup> grade Toronto Day's exciting athletic event mentioned "TBA" last May was Blue Jays/Yankees game, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Griffiths

Sculpture Park trip/building relationship with Essex Gallery here in Buffalo) 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade trips as usual: Weona/Camp Allegheny. Roadways tend to be a bit snarled at start of new year: MS day finishes at 3:30; suggested parents do not arrive before 3:30 for pick-up but at 3:35-3:40 for avoid congestion; he chaperones dismissal daily to ensure safety of students.

- **Ski Club:** Led this year by Art Teacher Andrea Mancuso, assisted by new webmaster, Matt Kianka due to retirement of Coley Felser (who is deeply missed). **Slight change for MS skiers:** departure to be as close to 3/3:30 as possible, no longer leaving school early. MS skiers return to Nichols at 10:30 pm. Still working on frequency schedule.

**Parent comments for Headmasters:** Asked about Upper School policy on faculty turn-around time for returning corrected written work/assignments/quizzes and requested that teachers write remarks legibly; John Munro will ensure Head of Upper School addresses these issues.

### **REPORT OF ELIZABETH GURNEY, DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

- **Development Staff Updates:** Director of Parent Relations has had a health related set-back; Nichols community is providing meals for her family. Serving as Parent Relations interim contact until Gyda's return is Parent Association Ex-Officio President Stephanie Angelakos who can be reached at [sangelakos@nicholsschool.org](mailto:sangelakos@nicholsschool.org). Emails to Gyda Higgins will also be answered.

- **Online Communications:** Building on goals achieved last year towards improved communications methods. Asked parents to continue giving feedback on possible improvements/additional types of info that would be helpful to include. **Nichols website:** Completely redoing site over the next 6 months. **Parent Portal:** Upcoming Parents Go To School Night to include demo for parents. **Nichols Facebook:** 987 FB fans already! **Parent Survey:** coming soon, parent participation requested/encouraged. **Hardcopy 2009-2010 Directory:** sent to printer today, earlier than ever. Available soon; not being mailed, students to bring home.

### **REPORT OF CYNTHIA PEGADO, SECRETARY**

Correspondence sent on behalf of Nichols Parent Association since last meeting included messages of condolence to five Nichols faculty families: Don Cockerill (brother), Curt Steinzor/Elaine Gardner (Curt's mother), Frank Sacheli (father, and later brother), Carol Sue Stapleton (father), Tom Maynor/Nichols parent Clare Poth (Clare's brother, uncle of Frederick '14) and one student family Bridget '16/Henry '14 Hager (grandfather). Congratulations to 3 faculty members: Greg Plumb (engagement), Magdalena Sidell (new baby) and Tim Schwartz (first grandchild-son of Katie '01)

### **REPORT OF MELINA SOUKIAZIAN, MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR**

MS Grade Reps organized get-together picnics for families in August. All parents including reps donated refreshments; very well attended: 5<sup>th</sup> grade picnic, Garrison Park, Williamsville 8/25; 6<sup>th</sup> grade picnic, Brason's house 8/30; 7<sup>th</sup> grade picnic, Steven's house 8/30; 8<sup>th</sup> grade picnic, Garrison Park 8/31.

Grade reps received an email regarding dates for upcoming grade level parent coffees at school.

## **REPORT OF DONNA BRIATICO, UPPER SCHOOL GRADE REP COORDINATOR**

**Form III (9<sup>th</sup> Grade)** New families contacted/welcomed by grade reps; 2 event dates set: Freshman Breakfast, 9/24 7:45-9 am; Morning Parent Gathering, Bagel Jay's, 10/8 Bagel Jays 8:15 am

**Form IV (10<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Grade reps awaiting school confirmation of Sophomore Breakfast date 10/1

**Form V (11<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Events in planning, TBA

**Form VI (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)** Nichols Parent Coffee meeting covered topics specific to seniors- changes in Senior Retreat Day and Spirit Week and college admissions questions. Grade reps organized the student breakfast on Senior Retreat Day and supplemental parent refreshments for the lunch later. Upcoming events TBA: Evening Parent Gathering; Student event in October

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Annual Fund**, Michele Goldfarb, Mary Bacon, Laurie Wright for Kristan Andersen/Tarik Kawi: Participation is important, appreciated; annual fund, completely separate from Derby Day Auction, is a line item in our budget and all funds raised are applied directly to the operating budget; 2009-2010 Kick-off: Letter writing campaign 10/29; Donors of \$1000+ in any fiscal year (September to June 30) are recognized with membership in the Headmaster's Society, a division of the annual fund which satisfies 8% of our operating budget and accounts for 75% of total raised. Every dollar directly impacts our children.

**Wrapping Paper Sale**, Stephanie Angelakos for Heather Williams: Directly funds Nichols technology needs; MS students received order packets in Form Meetings this week, US students may also participate. Incentives for highest individual/advisory group sales.

**Homecoming**, Barb Regan: Postcards have been mailed to families detailing athletic competition/literature discussion schedules. Encouraged families to enjoy campus events for a fun weekend; Asked for volunteers to help BBQ at the Friday Parent Association cook-out.

**Nichols Reads**, Stephanie Angelakos for Kathleen Loree: Homecoming literary discussion tradition to continue this year with *Huckleberry Finn*; Parent Book Discussion groups-Books & Bagels led by John Munro continues; New this year is Parents' Masala Book Group led by parents Jennifer Carlson/Liz Savino separate but in tandem with Sheila-Zohara Zamor's multi-cultural faculty reading group. Reading group books for sale at Parents Go To School Night.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Minutes of the Parents' Association General Meeting on May 19, 2009 were approved upon motion by Chris Augustine, seconded by Clare Poth.

Meeting adjourned upon motion by Rachel Stenclik, seconded by Barb Regan at 5:00 PM. Parent tours of Center '63 followed the meeting.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Pegado, Nichols Parent Association Secretary*