

## Pine Hill CSA Meeting 2/4/21

**Present:** Tara Hourihan, Royale Abrams, Crista Mahoney, Aimee Cronin, Dr. Brown, Monika Acharya, Chinar Dara, Kaitlin Dunham, Molly Cullum, Nikki Miller, Lynn Frigiani, Irene Saranteas Bassalee, Meg Siegal, Elizabeth Speyer, Hannah Ireland, Ranjini Dowley, Julie Vitale

**Absent:** Rory McGrath, Peter Rovick, Katie Garvey

**Call to Order:** 7:03pm

### **President's Report** – Royale Abrams and Tara Hourihan

**Teacher Grants:** Dr. Brown submitted a few over the last few days, and Co-Presidents will send out to the board over the next few days to vote at the next meeting. The Kindergarten teachers submitted a grant last year and we approved 50% of it last spring, so we will revisit with the Treasurer to see what is possible for this year. We did fund grants that came in “late” this year because we carried money over from last year. The sooner grants are approved, the sooner purchased, so we can set the timeline for approving them.

**Outside Grants:** We weren't sure how successful we would be in the winter the fundraiser so Royale looked into community grants. Our community profile is not a good fit for many of them, but we applied for a few of the smaller grants, and we are waiting to hear back.

**Book Fair:** March 2-5 this year, Aesop's Fable is hosting (Pine Hill family, the Yerres), so we are hoping to make it worth their while as well. Kick-Off will be a Wacky Hat Day. Tuesday, March 2nd is Dr. Seuss and Read Across America Day, so do we want to connect with this? Dr. Brown commented that this day would be good for morale in the school. Book Wish Lists are trickling in from teachers, but Dr. Brown will keep encouraging it in her weekly bulletin to faculty and staff. A reminder that it doesn't have to just be classroom teachers! Dr. Brown shared with the committee that Laurie Ryan who is currently teaching 4th grade, was grateful to have Seuss day picked up in this way while the library is out of commission this year.

**Box Tops:** We got a box top check (around \$200), made out to Pine Hill School. The question was raised about how to deposit it if it's not made out to the Pine Hill CSA. Dr. Brown says we could deposit in the Student Activity account and then give back to the CSA via a check, or allocate it for something specific and give it to that. Peter will contact Box Tops to make sure this is amended and will follow up with Chinar. Chinar highlighted that the bank has been more particular about checks being addressed to CSA

**Passwords:** Co-Presidents and Treasurer raised the question of who has passwords to old accounts? We need to compile a resource that contains passwords for everything we need (Box Tops, Amazon Smile, One Cause, PayPal, etc.). There have been some websites that have been hacked, so commonly used passwords need to be changed. All gmail accounts were set up with the same password. Meg Siegal recommends using Bitwarden, a secure place to share passwords with larger groups.

**Teacher Signs:** We will be doing lawn signs for Teacher Appreciation Week (May 3-7). Meg Siegal has 15 or so yard signs that kids can paint, which are currently in Kristen Susco's garage. People can also do their own signs. One idea was to give a color scheme for some consistency. If we have everyone take a picture we can share them on social media. Most agreed not to purchase any signs with Chickering or DSMS/DSHS. Meg Siegal volunteered to take the lead on the project.

**Valentine's Day Teacher Treats:** Royale and will be putting together a little bag of treats for each teacher. Julie Vitale offered to help with this.

**Raffle Baskets:** Raffle baskets will start the week after the Book Fair, and tickets will be pulled the Thursday before April Break. Katie Garvey will organize.

**Other:** Ms. Sidman wrote a nice thank you note for the document readers, expressing how helpful they are.

## **Principal's Reports – Dr. Brown**

Dr. Brown has been hearing a lot about the snowman contest, a great idea and a lot of excitement around the ASM shoutout (photos of submissions shown during ASM).

**Covid/School Reopening Plans Update:** Next Tuesday is the Sherborn School Committee meeting, and Dr. Brown is hoping that the joint school committees can meet after. The focus will be on the budget planning before it goes before the town. The Superintendent will reveal the next reopening phases. More information will go out in the next few weeks. The goal is to be nearly full-time by the end of this school year so we're ready for the next school year. It seems likely that masking and socially distanced classrooms/spaces will remain in place, but the goal is to be full-time by September. Sherborn families have been great about keeping students at home when they are not feeling well. This has really helped contain the spread. We have had 3-4 teacher cases, 12 student cases. Inside the building you can almost pretend it's pre-pandemic time. Great energy and curiosity continue, even now. We miss having parents in the building or chatting on the curb, so we will look into doing a video inside the school.

**Superintendent Search:** The three finalists withdrew, so the school committees will keep us posted on an interim superintendent.

**Enrichment Programs:** This past month students enjoyed and welcomed the excitement of having these programs. Because our learning is so classroom-based, we need to break things up with project-based learning. Dr. Brown highlighted that new teachers and long-term subs have been rockstar teachers, and we are hoping to keep them on. Chinar commented that both of her children are remote, and the new teacher from Chickering who is doing remote schoolhouse is great. He energizes and inspires. Dr. Brown commented that everybody is pitching in, like Charma who is teaching remote Kindergarten in the morning and doing desk duty in the afternoon.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Events – Molly Cullum and Hannah Ireland**

#### **Winter Fundraiser:**

- The final tally was \$20,200 online (before fees) + \$800 cash/checks
- 122 contributors
- Net = \$20,010 (goal was 20K for this year, 20K next year)

Students will get their movie day! Dr. Brown suggested that because next Friday is the last day before vacation, and when the school will celebrate Valentine's Day, we should look ahead for the final Friday in February or after. Each class can choose an appropriate movie, or we could do something K-2 and 3-5. She will let this be teacher-directed, but make sure it is not "educational" to keep it fun! Hannah will email Mrs. Hodge to announce this at next ASM. A special thank you to Dr. Brown for kissing Hugo!

**Snowman Contest:** Kids are very excited about it, there have been around 20 photos sent in. We will announce the winner at the end of February. Aimee will create a gallery on the website and post on social media. There was some discussion on the best way to select a winner, but likely that the CSA will vote for the winners from each category. The prize will be something like a hot cocoa mug and treat, a PH shirt, or something small.

**Custodial Appreciation:** Custodial staff has gone above and beyond and are constantly cleaning to keep the community healthy and safe, so Hannah suggested we should do something more for them (make sure to include 2 night custodians). We will include custodians in Valentine's Day goody bags and do something else before Teacher Appreciation Day. Dr. Brown will ask Peter Gimblett if there is something that his staff would enjoy. DD gift card is always good.

Hannah will also change the sign in front of school.

**Cocktail Class:** Events committee will be shifting to a cocktail class with small appetizers instead of Cooking Class. The hope is that it will be like a cocktail party, because people have been doing so much cooking. They will reach out to find someone to lead it (Hannah's brother, Troy Clarke, or someone else). Aimee volunteered to help deliver materials. The timeline is unclear, maybe in March.

## **Communications – Aimee Cronin and Elizabeth Speyer**

Please get any Newsletter Updates to the Communications committee by Thursday.

**Website Updates:** Communications has added sections on Committees, and contact info to make it easier for people to find who they need. They would like to add photos and request approval to use facebook photos of committee members. The Community section of the website can include sports, scouts, etc. They are working to make it less dense and easier to navigate. We will use Communications Google Drive to add a link to CSA meeting minutes on the website.

**Fundraising Platforms:** Aimee suggested that we upgrade Squarespace for \$10/month so we don't have to pay fees. We took a big hit on the winter fundraiser with online fees. Chinar will look into listing our PayPal account under non-profit to see if the fees can be reduced. It is currently listed as a business account.

## **Treasurer – Dr. Chinar Dara**

### **Budget Updates**

- Directories: \$1710, Net \$1124.65
- Make A Wish: 15 people donated \$30, after fees only \$23.70
- Winter Fundraiser: Raised \$21,240, Net after fees \$20,010.33
- Gross Income (so far) \$28,464; Total Expense (so far) \$2,885

Chinar has assessed that we are not overspending in any area. She will send out numbers to the board periodically if that is helpful. The current practice is to send them after an event or significant change in budget, 2-3 times per school year instead of monthly. She will send out now after the winter fundraiser, after raffle baskets, and then at the end of the school year.

## **Enrichment - Kaitlin Dunham, Lynn Frigiani**

**Scheduled Enrichment Learning:** The following programs have been scheduled.

- K - Discovery Museum, Forces in Motion, Feb. 25th (hoping for an additional spring

program)

- Grade 1 - likely all set, already have had 2 programs
- Grade 2 - just had the NASCAR Hall of Fame program
- Grade 2 - trying to book NE Aquarium Tide Pool program virtually
- Grade 2 - LeTour, an author program and PH parent
- Grade 3 - David Coffin, recorder musician on 2/10
- Grade 3 - Animal Adaptations with Worcester Ecotarium
- Grade 4 - bring back Jacqueline Davies, Lemonade Wars series author
- Grade 4 - NE Sci-Tech to do something on circuits
- Grade 5 - Museum of Science: The Changing Sky
- Grade 5 - The Paul Revere House (both of these available to the Remote Schoolhouse)

Author Peter Brown to PH in April, planned for last year. Now he is doing virtual programs. (Would like to try to do a whole school event on Wed. April 28th). Does it matter if kids are viewing in school on big screens through smartboards? The Enrichment Committee will talk through with Dr. Brown whether the program should be done at home or in school on larger screens through smartboards. MCAS are still scheduled for this spring, so we will have to work with this schedule.

The 4th Wall may come in May, but we don't have the actual day yet. Scheduling depends on what works best for an ASM program. Questions to consider: Will the program invite students to sing? We are not allowed to sing/play instruments that require blowing into them (recorders, etc) in school. ASM will look different on in-person days when we bring students back on some Wednesdays starting in late March. What does audience participation look like on an in-person day during ASM?

### **New Families – Nikki Miller and Rory McGrath**

A couple new families have joined the community, so the New Families committee is connecting them with room parents, a new family match with someone in the class, and a welcome letter. There is a new 2nd grader coming at the end of February, and a possible new 1st grader coming in March. Nikki asked if the weekly newsletters from Dr. Brown (Pine Hill Post) can highlight teachers. This will help parents get to know teachers a little better. Dr. Brown said there is a powerpoint that was created for the teachers to get to know each other, so she will feature a grade-level or two during each newsletter.

### **Family Friends – Ranjini Dowley and Irene Saranteas Bassalee**

Family Friends is planning a virtual meeting after February Break. The Trivia Night went well, so we are getting feedback from families to see what they would like. We will also have Valentine goodie bags for METCO students to distribute on the Friday before break. We have approval

from the district to have playdates after school before the bus heads back to Boston. We are working out the logistics (bus schedule, weather, etc.) before communicating this to families.

### **Volunteers – Katie Garvey**

- See Co-President's Report above on Raffle Baskets

### **Pine Hill Garden – Julie Dreyfus and Kristen Susco**

- The Sustainability Task Force education subcommittee secured a grant from the Grinspoon Foundation to host a "Cooler Communities" virtual fair this spring. The fair will feature projects relating to sustainability at the high school and middle school, as well as PH. The grant will support up to \$1,000 for the restoration, interpretation and expansion of the third grade outdoor classroom and bird garden. The project will take place Spring 2021.
- At PH, the 4th grade will present a prototype demonstration of an alternative energy source. This is in connection with their Better Ideas Institute, part of the existing 4th grade curriculum, which explores alternative sources of energy and their impacts on our world. Working with Courtney Young, Grade 4 teacher.
- The 3rd grade, with support from the CSA, will work to restore and interpret the existing Michael Lisnow Bird Garden, as well as create a window-side, container-based bird garden for the third grade classroom overlooking the playground.
- Garden restoration will include removing dead trees and limbs, pulling out invasive plants, pruning shrubs and perennials, and general clean up of the outdoor classroom. This will be done with volunteers in March, including 3rd grade families and volunteers from the local garden clubs (likely a Saturday, 2 volunteer events). Volunteers will also help create a garden map.
- Interpretation will include garden plaques and signs (some with QR codes) that connect with the third grade science curriculum (thanks to Laurie Ryan's work!). Interpretation will also connect the need for restoring and maintaining wildlife habitat in the face of climate change/resilience.
- 3rd graders will help select bird-friendly native plants and shrubs for the container based garden (use this for Persuasive Writing assignment). They will also help with planting the new garden. In addition, students will help install signs throughout the outdoor classroom.
- Finally, we plan to certify the Bird Garden with the National Wildlife Federation as a "Schoolyard Habitat for Wildlife", meaning the garden fulfills the necessary ecological components of food, water, cover and places to raise young utilizing sustainable methods.
- The project will conclude by late May, when classes around the school will be invited to visit the new space. At this time we will also share the story of Michael Lisnow with the PH community, at All School Meeting, as well as with a garden plaque.

- Finally, we are still planning to install the Kindergarten Pumpkin Patch this spring. Julie needs to find out when the outdoor tents are slated to go back up to make sure we don't have a conflict. Since parent volunteers can not come into the school, we plan to recruit Kindergarten families to help construct the bed, ideally in April, perhaps during the break. Julie will be reaching out to the Kindergarten team to see if they want students to help with the build during school hours. She suspects they will favor just having students plant pumpkin seeds once the bed is completed. We still need to figure out how to have dedication for Bridie Hilperts, given COVID protocols.

### **Box Tops, Amazon Smile, Corporate Matching – Peter Rovick**

- See Co-President's Report on Box Tops above

### **Other Business**

- Next Meeting 3/4/21 @ 9 AM
- **8:39pm Adjournment**