

Westmount High School PPO Meeting 27 September 2017

Present: Susan Finch, Junaitha, Miyuki Nakamura, Jennifer Campbell, Geraldine Lerch Thoillier, Tina Bruna, Hyunhee Kim, Andrea Acel, Chris Clark, Charlotte McCaffrey, Karen Husbands, Ashanta Farrington, Carolyn O'Neill, Sachiko Miyasaka, Agnes Wong, Néomie LaRoque, Luisa Iliaria Flores, Natasha Savoie, Alexandra Zorbas, Marlene Desjardins, Linda LeMoyne, Martien de Vletter, Eunju Kim

Welcome

Martien thanked everyone for coming and explained that she has been interim chair of the PPO since Ann Marie Cote stepped down last spring. Sincere thanks to Ann-Marie and her husband, Jason, who were both very active on the PPO the last few years. We then went around the room and had the returning parents introduce themselves and say a few words about what they do on the PPO and how long they've been a part of it: Marlene, Alex, Carolyn, Charlotte, Susan, Miyuki, Tina, and Jennifer.

Structure of PPO Leadership

While the PPO is a very informal group, Martien explained that a certain amount of structure is required and she suggested a chair, treasurer and communications coordinator, as a bare minimum. At this point, Charlotte volunteered to act as secretary and minute the meetings. Martien asked if anyone else was interested in being Chair but no one spoke up and several people nominated Martien. With everyone's approval, she agreed to act as chair for one year. Alex agreed to be her "second in command," acting as back-up and helping as needed.

Martien explained that the treasurer is really needed to communicate with the school and take care of the budget and any money coming in. She said we have a healthy bank account with an estimated \$2000-3000 (she didn't get an exact number before the meeting but we'll have it at the next meeting). We get \$500-700 from each PLUK (previously loved uniform kiosk) sale and we raised about \$1100 with the spaghetti dinner last year. Most of the money goes towards whatever the school deems important (we ask them how we can help), but we have instated a yearly scholarship of \$250 each for two graduating students (who are chosen by the grad committee). Last year most of the fundraising went towards the Grab-a-Seat campaign to reupholster the seats in the gym. We are open to ideas about how to spend the money and will discuss further at our next meeting when one of the VPs will also be in attendance and can be a voice for the school. Martien wrapped up the budget discussion by asking if anyone was interested in being treasurer for the coming year. Jennifer nominated Carolyn, who works in fundraising, to act as treasurer and she was happy to take on the role, with Susan as back up.

For communications, we discussed that there are really two aspects: social media (website and facebook) and email communications. Martien explained that the Ann Marie was using MailChimp, which is an emailing program that is quite simple to use, for any parents who

signed up to be on the PPO. Mr Cristofaro also sends out school-wide messages for the PPO, from time to time. We also have a webpage within the school's site but it's badly out of date and no one is clear on who/how it gets updated. A discussion ensued about how to organize communications. While everyone is encouraged to provide information to be posted and sent out, it was determined that having a main "point person" would work best, rather than having everyone posting when and whatever they want, which could potentially lead to problems. Charlotte volunteered to take over the MailChimp communications program and Geraldine offered to create a Facebook page and take care of updating the website. Charlotte will keep track of our membership and send out the PPO emails, while Geraldine will be in charge of updating social media with pertinent information as well as posting pictures of events, etc. They will work closely together to make sure information is disseminated accurately.

Action Items:

- 1. Martien will determine how the website page is updated and communicate that information to Geraldine who will, in the meantime, get a Facebook page up and running. [Does this need to be approved by Mr Cristofaro and/or Governing Board?]*
- 2. Martien will give Charlotte all the information she received from Ann Marie about MailChimp, including the new sign-up forms recently filled out by parents, and Charlotte will take over email communications. [combine WHSPPO@GMAIL.COM, WHSPPOPLUK@GMAIL.COM, and WHSPPOHELPERS@HOTMAIL.COM to simplify things? Who checks all these?! Do we know how to access them?]*

Upcoming Activities

22 October Graduation: Martien explained that, every October, the school arranges a graduation ceremony in the auditorium with a reception in the gym for all the students who graduated in June and their families. The last couple of years, volunteers from the PPO have helped by being on hand to collect the food (brought in by the graduating families), serve the food, and clean up afterwards [didn't we also provide food?]. This frees up the teachers to enjoy and participate more in the graduation ceremony itself. They have asked us, once again, to help out at this year's grad on October 22nd. Martien doesn't have the exact times but thinks it will likely be 3-6pm.

Alex, Natasha, Geraldine, Miyuki, Linda, Jennifer, Martien and Carolyn already volunteered to help out!

Jennifer suggested PPO hiring a jazz ensemble (from Marionopolis) to play at the grad reception as a gift to the graduating class. Everyone agreed this was a lovely idea.

Action Items:

- 1. Martien will confirm the time and number of volunteers needed for grad and will ask if a Jazz Ensemble would be welcome.*
- 2. Charlotte will send out an email requesting more volunteers (and food?), if needed.*

22 November Parent-Teacher Interviews: The next event we traditionally partake in is the Parent-Teacher interviews where we will set up a PLUK sale, sell water, and have information about the Grab-a-Seat Campaign. Used uniforms get dropped off at the office and are put in the PPO office. We will hopefully get a lot of donations at graduation. Alex has already started taking used clothes home to wash and sort for the next sale. We will need volunteers to take turns manning the tables so everyone also gets a chance to meet with their child(ren)'s teachers.

Extra PLUK Sale: Martien explained that there have been some requests from parents for an additional PLUK sale this fall, before Parent-Teacher Interviews, because of the backlog on uniforms from Piacente. We discussed and decided that the need is really great right now and, unfortunately, we aren't in a position to hold one – both because it's a big job to set up and because we don't really have enough uniforms, at this time, to make it worthwhile. We will therefore hold off until the Parent-Teacher Interviews in November.

Fundraising

There were questions about fundraising from some of the new parents. Martien explained that there hasn't traditionally been any set fundraising beyond PLUK and the occasional wine and cheese or spaghetti dinner. Last year we organized our first big campaign for the seats in the auditorium from January 1 – December 31, 2017. We have raised about \$16,000 so far and the school and EMSB were so happy with our endeavor that they are taking it on and renovating more than we had initially hoped for, including redoing the floor. The EMSB got a grant from the Ministry and the job went to public tender. The renovations will start after grad and are supposed to be done by Christmas.

Chris suggested hosting a talent show as a celebration of the new auditorium and fundraiser in January or February. This idea was popular and will be revisited at our next meeting as we would have to discuss with the school.

Chris also suggested a penny drive to collect old pennies as everyone has these lying around and doesn't know what to do with them. We could collect them at school for one month, say, as a fundraiser that doesn't really cost anything. Susan suggested we could even open it up to the community, inviting the public to drop off their pennies. Maybe some students in woodworking could build some sort of box to contain the pennies. Great idea!

Jennifer talked about the bike shop which hasn't been running for that last couple years but is being opened up again by Mr. Drever. She isn't sure what they will need but wondered if PPO could help by giving some money to support a bike mechanic or ask for donations of supplies, etc. This is a great initiative and something to consider.

Meeting Schedule

We discussed when to hold our next few meetings and determined that Wednesday seems to be a good day, at least for the big group in attendance tonight! We'll try Wednesdays for the

fall and can revisit in the New Year, changing things up if needed. Regarding time of meeting, Martien explained that we used to meet at 7 but Mr Cristofaro asked if we could meet one hour earlier to make it easier for the VP and any teachers who wish to stay and participate. All in agreement that 6 is fine. Martien promised that we will always do our best to keep meetings to one hour.

Upcoming Meetings: October 25th and November 29th from 6-7pm in the library.

Submitted by Charlotte McCaffrey