

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting
February 21, 2008

In attendance: Bill Powers, Pamela Glasser, Bob Borden, Brian Perzanowski, Beth Coyne, Stephanie Purcell Setaro, Terrie Hartsoe, Jeanne Roy, Liz Lightfoot, Sarah Chadderton, Sheila Salkin, Carolyn Rambus, Peggy Steiner, Kathleen Zane, Lynn Haversat, Heidi Worcester, Barbara Tsipouras, Tracy Rams, Kim Hastings, Joanne Arrandale, Nancy Young-Soobitsky, Dyana Rudden, Lowri Foyle, Nancy Lorenze, Dana Barsky, David Gottlieb, Jim Sachs, Janet Gochberg, Ruthanna Terreri, Barbara Ballard, Debbie Cianciolo, Roberta Lombardi, Cathy Golden, Lynne Hubbard, Dee Davis

Sarah Chadderton called the meeting to order at 8:40AM.

Bill Powers thanked the fourth grade room parents for providing refreshments for the meeting. He congratulated all the students on their fine efforts in this year's MacLane Poetry Recitation, TCS' most longstanding tradition. Mr. Powers commented that, over the course of a student's tenure at TCS, he or she will be exposed to hundreds of examples of poetry, both from personal research in selecting each year's piece, as well as to exposure to the poems chosen by peers throughout the school. He and Beth Coyne commended our students for their consistent courage in challenging themselves to speak publicly – a skill uncomfortable for many, both children and adults. Mr. Powers reminded the audience that all parents are always invited to attend the finals of the Poetry Recitation, traditionally held on the Friday before the long Presidents' weekend.

Mr. Powers thanked the parents in attendance for spreading the good word about TCS to potential families in the area. Approximately forty-five people attended the Open House at the Clark House recently, representing not only those families with children interested in the Pre-K or Kindergarten, but older children, as well. Mr. Powers reinforced that TCS does not advertise extensively, and has found, over time, that word of mouth is the most effective means of communication from our constituency to potential families, as well as to potential employees. Mr. Powers credited the fine efforts of TCS' Farmhouse employees – Jeanne Roy, Bill Leidt, and Liz Lightfoot – in welcoming potential families and spreading a positive and consistent message. TCS now enjoys robust enrollment in the middle school, and is experiencing an encouraging increase in interest for the lower grades, as well.

Mr. Powers explained that a letter has been mailed to all TCS families to aid in the effort to find prospective trustees. Trustees may either be nominated (anonymously) by another, or an individual may nominate him or herself for a position on the TCS Board. The goal of the Board remains to ensure that the grandchildren of the grandchildren of this year's graduating class will be able to attend TCS.

Mr. Powers mentioned that there have been problems recently transmitting The Little Hoot to families via SBC Global, and encouraged anyone experiencing such a problem to contact the Farmhouse.

Mr. Powers referenced two articles: one brought to his attention by Liz Lightfoot, and another in Education Week, both of which emphasized the positive benefits of recess and exercise to students' academic success. In an era when many schools have been forced to eliminate or drastically reduce outdoor time for students, Mr. Powers was proud to note that TCS believes strongly in continuing this important tradition for all students.

Beth Wood-Leidt spoke about Grandparents and Special Friends Day, which is scheduled for Friday, May 9. Volunteers were solicited for set-up (the evening of May 8), serving, and clean-up. This year's format will vary somewhat from that of years past; the event will start at 8AM and end at approximately 11:30. Grandparents and special friends will have an opportunity to enjoy a performance or performances by the TCS troupe, and will also have a chance to view our students' artwork throughout the gymnasium. Jim and Kay McGourt, grandparents of Hannah (Grade 8) and Sarah (Grade 6) have graciously offered to serve as grand marshals of this wonderful event. Ms. Wood emphasized that all invitations will be mailed on March 3, and encouraged any parent who has not yet verified, corrected, or submitted names and addresses of invitees to Deborah at the Farmhouse to do so at once. This year, attendees will have the opportunity to purchase a navy blue commemorative full zip TCS fleece with the owl logo and the words "Learn. Play. Grow." Embroidered below. The fleece tops will be delivered with each purchaser's registration materials at the start of the day's festivities. A full breakfast will be served while attendees enjoy the TCS troupe's entertainment. Efforts are underway to ensure the availability of valet parking for guests, facilitated by faculty offsite parking for the day of the event.

Bob Borden provided background and details about Pen Pals Day, which will take place on May 30. Historically, students from the blue ribbon award winning Multi-Cultural School in Bridgeport have either traveled to TCS for the day, or our students have traveled there. This year TCS will be hosting our students' pen pals for the day. Volunteers were asked to sign up for set-up, service of lunch, and clean-up.

Peggy Steiner shared the opportunity afforded to TCS families to visit Mystic Aquarium for TCS days on March 29 and 30. When mentioning one's affiliation with TCS, a much reduced admission of \$14.50 per adult and \$10.50 per child will be charged. Questions can be addressed to either Kelly Milton at (860) 572-5955 or Dr. Robert Ballard's assistant, Janice Meagher, at (860) 572-5955, ext. 602. Ms. Steiner thanked Dr. and Mrs. Ballard for facilitating this wonderful lead-in to our upcoming Mystic event.

Debbie Cianciolo spoke about the Mystic event, which will take place on May 3. The event is a fundraiser for TCS in support of our outdoor education initiative, expenses for which rise every year. Ms. Cianciolo reinforced the unique nature of this initiative, and reminded those in attendance of the longstanding tradition at The Country School of outdoor, experiential learning – a hallmark of the school's educational philosophy and

mission. She and Barbara Ballard spoke about the life changing nature of TCS students' experiences, whether rafting, hiking, climbing, pitching tents, or traveling throughout the Southwest as eighth graders. Terrie Hartsoe commented that, upon return from the Moab trip in eighth grade, she's always confident that our students are ready to strike out on their own and experience the next steps in their journey through high school and into adult life. Beth Coyne reminded the attendees that this year's event at Mystic is a nice piggyback to last year's spring event at Chamard Vineyards. She and Barbara Ballard reinforced the desire to have families participate in giving toward the Outdoor Education fundraising goals, emphasizing the value of participation over dollar amounts.

Ruthanna Terreri suggested that a link be established between TCS' Outdoor Education initiatives and Pen Pals Day, and all agreed enthusiastically that this was worthy of further consideration.

Jeanne Roy mentioned that invitations to the Mystic event will be extended not only to current TCS families and faculty, but to past faculty and families, as well as to those families accepted for admission to next year's classes at TCS. Ms. Roy extended the thanks of Linda Penn, Acting Chair of the Development Committee, in absentia for the efforts of all involved toward making this upcoming event a huge success.

Ms. Chadderton explained that Julie Cashman, Parent Council Treasurer, was not able to attend this morning's Parent Council meeting, and that a Treasurer's Report will follow under separate cover. Ms. Chadderton also thanked all in attendance for their efforts in support of Parent Council events this year to-date, and extended this same appreciation to those unable to be in attendance.

The School Store is currently under the leadership of Tracy Rams. Orders can be placed directly with her at tracylrams@yahoo.com. Order forms will soon be added to the TCS website, as well. Stock is good, and most items ordered can be delivered almost immediately, with the exception of those items to be monogrammed, which adds approximately one week to the order. Order forms are also available at the Farmhouse.

Ms. Chadderton adjourned the meeting at 9:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Steiner
Secretary