

## Minutes of Parent Council Meeting

April 3, 2008

In attendance: Bill Powers, Pamela Glasser, Terrie Hartsoe, Jeanne Roy, Beth Coyne, Stephanie Purcell, Liz Lightfoot, Sarah Chadderton, Peggy Steiner, Lisa Miller, Lynn Haversat, Susan Luchini, Margaret Esposito, Laurie Fasano, Heidi Presto, Sheila Salkin, Roberta Lombardi, Sherri Palmer, Joanne Arrandale, Lowri Foyle, Dyana Rudden, Kathleen Zane, Susan Weber, Emily Phillips, Janet Gochberg, Lynne Hubbard

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

Pam Glasser introduced four first graders, who recited their acrostic poems, based upon the letters of their first names. All spoke beautifully to the group, with clarity and confidence.

Bill Powers encouraged all in attendance to attend TCS morning meetings, which typically last for twenty to thirty minutes. Mr. Powers shared that Pam Glasser has been spearheading an effort to introduce sign language in the lower school, and several signed phrases are now regularly used at the lower school meeting. Mr. Powers reiterated the importance of public speaking as one of the hallmarks of a TCS education, citing its use throughout all grade levels at our school. Mr. Powers then praised sixth grader Ian Zane, who introduced Earth Hour to TCS recently, wherein all lights in a household were turned off for one hour last week at a single coordinated time. Mr. Powers reminded the group that TCS' mission statement emphasizes the importance of learning both inside and outside of the classroom, and of sharing new opportunities for community growth and development with the entire school community.

Mr. Powers and Terrie Hartsoe spoke with pride about the many TCS students who were selected by judges to participate in the Regional band and singing competitions, and thanked John Gage for all of his efforts in the area of music development for our students.

Ms. Chadderton reviewed the upcoming TCS events:

-Embrace the Challenge – May 3 at Mystic Aquarium. Tickets are \$75, and can be purchased online, by emailing Lynn Haversat at [LTHAVERSAT@comcast.net](mailto:LTHAVERSAT@comcast.net), or by contacting Bill Leidt or the Farmhouse staff at 421-3113 ext. 600. The ticket office will remain open until April 23. T-shirts will be available for sale in the courtyard by Fran Ginsberg starting next week. Three adult sizes will be available for a cost of \$20; three youth size t-shirts will also be available for \$15. Proceeds will support Outdoor Education.

Teacher Appreciation Week – May 4-10. Margaret Esposito and Susan Luchini volunteered to head the committee to coordinate events for that week. A volunteer will be needed to direct a group responsible for providing either breakfast or lunch to our faculty members on one of the days of that week.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day – May 9. Lisa Miller explained that, this year, we will be hosting a breakfast for grandparents and special friends, to be enjoyed while listening to an all school meeting and to selections from this year's performance of Fiddler on the Roof. Volunteers are still needed to help with setting up and service of food and coffee, as well as to serve as table captains and to guide our guests to the appropriate locations on campus after breakfast. Anyone who wishes to help in any capacity is encouraged to contact Lisa Miller at [islandavemom@aol.com](mailto:islandavemom@aol.com). Ms. Miller thanked Roberta and Tom Lombardi, who will be providing valet parking for our guests for the event.

RJ Julia Book Fair – May 20-21. Ms. Chadderton thanked all in attendance for their help at the TCS Scholastic Book Fair this Fall. After polling students and faculty members, it was determined that the Scholastic offerings had been lacking in titles for the middle school grades. RJ Julia Booksellers will provide TCS with summer reading list titles for all grades, as well as with a selection of other books of interest for grades PK-8. Tracy Rams will be chairing this event for us, and can be reached at [tracylrams@yahoo.com](mailto:tracylrams@yahoo.com) for those interested in volunteering. A

volunteer sign-up sheet was distributed, which will also be shared with Ms. Rams. Room parents are asked to share this information with other parents from their respective classes to ensure communication about this, and other, events, as well as to provide opportunities for other parents to volunteer. Set up will take place on Monday, May 19. Cash, checks and credit cards will be accepted.

Pen Pal Day – May 30. Susan Weber, Chair of this event, spoke about the enthusiastic reception our first through fifth graders received last year when TCS traveled to Bridgeport for Reading Buddies Day. It is expected that some 380 children from both schools will participate in this year's events. Ms. Weber and Jeanne Roy shared the pride the Bridgeport students and families felt in welcoming our students to their school last year, and expressed a desire to match that enthusiasm this year when our campus hosts this wonderful event.

Ms. Chadderton gave a brief Treasurer's Report in the absence of Parent Council Treasurer Julie Flynn Cashman. To date, the Parent Council's profit has totaled \$13,920. The Scholastic Book Fair, which was a separate event this year, and held in the TCS library, raised \$2862 after all expenses. The Holiday Boutique posted a profit of \$9728 this year, as compared to \$5000 in the prior year. Ms. Chadderton thanked Susan Weber and Kathleen Zane for this record effort.

Ms. Chadderton reviewed the Service Committee's update in the absence of Chair Carolyn Rambus. The group recently visited Forgotten Felines, a 100% volunteer no-kill organization. TCS donated \$150 from the Committee's Valentine-Grams, as well as bringing donations of cat food and litter to the shelter. The next initiative to be undertaken by the Service Committee will be the preparation of May Day Baskets, wherein TCS reading buddies work together to fill and distribute baskets of goodies to local convalescent centers. Ms. Hartsoe noted that the Service Committee meets on Fridays, and that the middle school as a group uses time on Friday afternoons to clean up the campus of debris, etc. Finally, the Service Committee announced that the next date for TCS at the Community Dining Room in Branford is Tuesday, April 15 from 4-7PM. Sign-up sheets are located in the Farmhouse.

Pam Glasser introduced the TCS Long Range Planning Process. Its impetus was from the institution's commitment to self examination and change. TCS' Board of Trustees initiates and supports the long range planning process, and recommended the establishment of a Long Range Planning Steering Committee to review former plans and processes, and establish a sustainable process for the future. This steering committee is comprised of members of every constituency of TCS – from Board members to parents to faculty members and administrators. The steering committee's initial efforts included the drafting of a vision, intended to be the glue that will bind together all the goals and plans to be set forth. The committee recommended that all new processes be tied to measurable results areas to ensure adequate and proper achievement of goals. One of the initial processes was to establish specific results areas, and to have more constituents able to participate in meaningful ways in the planning process. As such, the committee started with small groups of "experts" close to the actual results areas, i.e. the Parent Council Executive Committee. This group brainstormed goals designed to improve the overall community. Now, Ms. Glasser would like to open the discussion up to the larger parent community to get ideas, and reinforced that the Parent Council results area is entitled "community". Other results areas include facilities, finance, and programs, to name a few.

Ms. Glasser identified four key goals set forth in conjunction with the Parent Council Executive Committee:

1. Establish a relationship between TCS and local towns. Become more visible in the surrounding communities.
2. Create a culture wherein families feel welcome and as part of the overall TCS community.
3. Enhance our family/school partnership and communication.
4. Commit to environmental sensitivity by creating and maintaining a green community and campus.

Beth Coyne suggested that the third point above include as a task the communication with parents who can't make it to meetings during the work/school day to include them in this dialogue.

Kathy Weathers inquired about introducing Chinese into the curriculum at TCS. Ms. Glasser explained that this would be included in the list of ideas under the Programs results area.

Mr. Powers explained that the Long Range Planning Process dovetails with the overarching mission of TCS. While still maintaining our promise to our founding students, our individual vision pieces and goals must serve an ever changing landscape. Mr. Powers mentioned that Trustee Rob Newbold guided a recent discussion by asking, "What are we planning for?" The answer was right in synch with our mission statement: to be the pre-eminent Pre-K through 8 school on the shoreline. Mr. Powers reinforced that individual measures may be of a tangible time period – using the abacus to slide rule to calculator to future method as an example of how mathematics education tools have evolved over time, but still support the mission of effectively teaching mathematics. Mr. Powers reminded the group that the overall process of long range planning can take from three to five years.

Ms. Glasser suggested that all thoughts, ideas and questions be addressed to her, or to Terrie Hartsoe or Bill Powers. Mr. Powers thanked the Parent Council Executive Committee for its hard work to date on the Long Range Planning Process.

Ms. Chadderton introduced the website [www.growkids.org](http://www.growkids.org), and mentioned that it may be added to the TCS website at some point in the near future. It provides resources for purchasing recycled and other "green" school supplies such as planners, rulers, etc., as well as environmentally sensitive cleaning supplies. More information will follow, as will follow up on other websites such as [www.goodsearch.org](http://www.goodsearch.org).

Lynn Haversat thanked Kathy Weathers for displaying the Annual Fund placard. As a school, TCS is currently at a 56% participation rate. Only the first grade class has reached the community goal of 75% participation to date.

Sherri Palmer mentioned the enormous volume of clothing, backpacks, shoes, boots, lunch bags, etc. in the dungeon. Ms. Hartsoe informed the group that the Service Committee will be going through all the items in the dungeon on Friday, returning labeled clothing to its proper owner, and then plans to set up tables in the courtyard during the next week or two, sorted by size, so that parents and students can collect their belongings.

Janet Gochberg inquired about Bingo Night, and learned that it is not scheduled to take place this year. Other non-fundraising events have been planned, though, explained Ms. Chadderton, including lower school theme day, this year devoted to caring for the earth, to be coordinated with Earth Day, April 25, at which time the Class of 2007's gift to TCS of a weeping cherry tree will be planted on campus.

Ms. Chadderton invited all parents to attend Field Day on June 9. This year we have decided to return to the old favorite of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs with reading buddies. Volunteers will, of course, be requested to help for this event. More details will follow.

Ms. Chadderton adjourned the meeting at 9:45AM.