

PSA Meeting Minutes  
6:30 p.m.  
January 21, 2010  
Neil Building

Approximately 40 parents were in attendance. Administrators included Karen Morse (Head of School), Jami Switzer (Director of Development), and Chuck Harvuot (Director of Admissions). Trustees included Marian Bruce and Al Neil. PSA Steering Committee member, Maura Knight and FRCDS Middle School Teacher, Ryan Wlodek also presented.

The meeting began at 6:30pm with a review of the Annual Fund by Jami Switzer. She reported that \$19,750 had been raised by 18 families toward a challenge match by a group of anonymous donors. The match criterion is that the gift is a minimum of \$250 and that the monies are received by Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup>. She advised the parents that if 21 more families could make gifts of \$250 by that date, we would maximize the value of the challenge's full \$25,000 limit.

Karen reiterated that, as at any independent school, there is a clear expectation that families will financially support the Annual Fund. At FRCDS, we don't prescribe the amount, but we do ask families to give to the best of their ability. The cost of educating each child at this school is actually almost \$16,000, so there is a significant gap between tuition revenue and our operating expenses. She also explained that each department has been watching their budgets very closely. In fact, teachers took a salary cut this year to help overcome the 10% reduction in enrollment.

Parents shared many ideas of ways to communicate the important message about giving. Ideas included:

- Provide parents with facts about what their gift pays for similar to the way Habitat for Humanity and Heifer Intl. do in their literature.
- Set up teas at parents' homes at the beginning of the school year where parents share thoughts about the need to contribute to the Annual Fund; the class with the greatest number of participants could receive a class party or something similar.
- They generally felt that communicating this message through Nuts & Bolts, Parent Post, and development or board letters was ineffective and that face to face communication in group settings like the PSA meetings was a better way of reaching the community.
- The suggestion was made that parents could be creative with their children's birthday parties and suggest an opportunity to contribute to the school through a group donation.

This discussion was followed with a review of the PSA fundraising efforts to date, which includes the following breakdown of \$19,100 to date:

Golf Outing - \$13,000, Fall Fundraiser (Fannie May chocolates & Market Day cookie dough) - \$3,240, Fall Book Fair - \$1,010, Spirit Wear - \$565, Market Day grocery

program - \$540 (Marla reported that we have raised over \$2,500 since the program was started), LL Bean Holiday Wrapping - \$400, and iGive Search Engine Tool Bar - \$345.

Parents had many varied opinions about the best way to approach fundraising for the school. Other ideas discussed included:

- Giving parents a checklist of possible fundraisers planned at the beginning of the year and asking them to indicate which ones they would like to support.
- Initiate a gift card program and put the order form online asking parents to submit their orders for these cards at regular intervals throughout the school year.

Karen shared an update with parents about the status of the tree house for Kids Cove and announced that the work would be complete this Spring and would complete the expenditures of the money raised from the 2008 auction for this purpose.

She introduced MS Science Teacher, Ryan Wlodek, who summarized much of the progress that the school has made in science materials this year from the funds raised for this purpose at the 2009 auction. Specifically the Preschool Department received several new exploratory games and puzzles, instructional books, animal and plant books, investigative tools, etc. The Lower School has received several science kits of various types such as Simple Machines, Electricity, Solar System models, rock collections, sound meters, wildlife guides, animal skeletons, etc. The Middle School science lab received some needed safety kits, fire extinguishers, microscopes, safety goggles, etc. There will be a science assembly at the school being presented by Health World and a field trip to Adler Planetarium is also being planned for Middle School. There will be two all school assemblies this spring from the Rockford Museum.

Al Neil presented information to the parents about a program the school is embarking on as a team effort to be recognized as a National School of Character. He explained the purpose of the teams in which faculty/staff will be divided: Self-Assessment, Values Search, Strategic Planning, and Writing. Parents will be included in the Values Search team to review our current character building qualities and determine if they should remain the same or be changed. The application will first be submitted to the state in March; the national application is due in December, 2010.

Maura Knight provided parents with an update about upcoming PSA activities over the next few months which include:

- 1/27 - Around the World International Exposition & Food Tasting for Auction Kick-Off
- 2/12 – Sweetheart Dance (formerly referred to as Daddy Daughter Dance)
- 2/12 – Lower School Valentine’s Party
- 4/17 – 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Auction – Around the World in One Night