

Willard PTG Meeting
September 17, 2018

Attendance

Robin Baughman, Denise Carleton, Elizabeth Colgan, Jennie Garofalo, Jaimee Healy, Marieke Herrero, Sam Jaddou, Peony Keve, Janet King, Meagan MacNutt, Kristin Martines, Danielle McKenna, Motoko Mitarai, Liz Nadzo, Candace Root, Alex Ruhmann, Julee Vitello, Susan Wagner, Kathryn Watson, Erika Woodhouse

- Made introductions around the table.

Social Events (Meagan MacNutt)

- Ice cream social went well. The committee is considering a switch to Bedford Farms. Reasons to be Cheerful was hard to deal with this year now that Wade has sold the business – they wouldn't deliver this year, the order was screwed up. Wade used to give a discount as Willard family, but we cannot expect any discount going forward. Bedford Farms was great to work with for Willard Carnival prizes, they seem to be community-oriented given their involvement in the Milldam Ducky Race, etc., so they may be worth a try.
- PTG Welcome Coffee went well. It made a big difference to have the coffee on premises. Moving forward it may be better to schedule the coffee after the first board meeting to space events out a bit, i.e. late-September.
- Parent social is next up on Sept. 29th. Social committee plans to send out a dedicated email blast. Not having the presentation at back to school night makes it difficult to connect with new families, so maybe a flyer for just kindergarten families or a blurb in the teacher newsletters, if they are willing, would be helpful. Discussed Room Parents as another resource, but unfortunately they do not have classroom lists yet.
- First email blast for the Parent Social should go out on Tuesday, Sept. 18th, followed by a blurb in the Weekly on Thursday.

Communications (Kathryn Watson & Sam Jaddou)

- Sam is taking over the Weekly this year; Kathryn will be her backup.
- All submissions should go to: Willardweekly@ptg.org. Nothing should be sent via personal emails/texts.
- Sam plans on completing the Weekly by Wednesday night; Thursdays are too late to submit anything. The formal deadline will be Tuesday.
- Submissions should be as clear and complete as possible as Sam learns the role.
- We discussed utilizing Room Parent Coordinators/Room Parents more for targeted communications.
- Kathryn is researching the appropriate security license to protect the website.
- All committees are supposed to have an email alias but some do not have one yet, i.e. Gardening club, International Fair, so one will be created.
- Sam is a user experience designer by day so she expressed an enthusiasm to volunteer for any design-related projects.

Before and After (Denise Carleton & Jaimee Healy)

- Bobby Dyer is willing to run the Lego program again, and has added a creative lab every other week. There is one spot remaining in this session.
- Maria has reached out to offer Italian classes again. She is willing to do it for no charge, but a nominal fee is probably appropriate.

- Chess registration is this Friday at 7am.
- Matt has made arrangements with the Recreation Department to host a program every Tuesday after school in the Willard Cafeteria – “Terrific Tuesdays” – so we have a space issue to be aware of because the cafeteria is now booked every Tuesday for the rest of the year. We will need to explore our options for the book fair and talent show (preview day).
- Yoga is starting September 25th; there are two spots left.
- Rory Fivek is hoping to start the BOKS program back up this fall.
- Discussed submitting something in the Willard weekly to solicit parents to teach a skill they have.

Fundraising (Marieke Herrero)

- Annual Appeal is going well so far; contributions are up from this time last year, which is a relief given the change in format of Back-to-School Night.
- Goal this year is \$34,000.
- The mailing will go out in the next week or so.
- There is an awesome prize for the drawing – 4 very nice Celtics tickets donated by the Desrochers family.
- Discussed opening a Willard Venmo account to collect Annual Appeal contributions. Decided to revisit the idea next year.

Treasurer's Update (Kristin Martines)

- Ice cream social appears to have come in under-budget.
- Marieke is working on the Annual Appeal.
- Kristin is currently collecting dues.

Assemblies (Danielle McKenna & Liz Colgan)

- The first one is on Thursday, September 19th. The speaker is Chris Poulos – he is an inspirational speaker who also does BMX stunts on his bike. The message is about anti-bullying and inclusivity, it will be a nice way to kick off the school year.
- Four more all-school assemblies are scheduled; the dates will all go in the directory.
- Assemblies is the single thing the PTG spends the most money on during the year – this is one of the more important areas to highlight in regards to the PTG’s involvement and investment.
- Danielle is planning to update descriptions on the website.
- Danielle will also be encouraging teachers to put assembly information in their newsletters to parents.

Volunteer Appreciation Policy (Alex Ruhmann & Susan Wagner)

- Over the years after large events, the PTG has generally recognized committee chairs with flowers or gift cards. However, there's a disparity there because that system fails to recognize the work of other volunteers, such as board members who show up to meetings every month or the communications team who puts out the Weekly every week.
- The suggestion instead is to make a public thank you via the Weekly, the Secretary will send a handwritten thank-you note, and there will be an increased emphasis on the volunteer appreciation party in the spring.

Quiet Space (Alex Ruhmann & Susan Wagner)

- There has been a request to have space available at PTG events where kids who are over-stimulated can choose to leave the environment. Instead of just supplying a list of guidelines that goes to every event

chair who then has to be responsible for this additional piece, the board agreed it would be the more thoughtful approach to form a separate committee to be in charge of “Quiet Space” for each event.

- The middle school provides quiet space at each of their events so they may have someone there who is a good resource.
- A write-up announcing the formation of a Quiet Space committee will go in the Weekly this week.
- Quiet Space would require minimal staffing, maybe just one individual to hold down the fort and to reinforce the rules of the space.

International Fair (Motoko Mitarai)

- The International Fair is scheduled for Sunday afternoon, Nov 18th, 3-5pm
- The International Fair committee of 4 volunteers has grown to 7 volunteers.
- The most recent planning meeting was focused on two things: 1) how the event will be advertised (Willard Weekly, backpack flyer, email blast), and 2) whether Matt can help the committee reach and work through the teachers.
- The purpose of the International Fair is to give students the opportunity to learn about different countries and different places, and to play and have fun. The event will have a world map set up where students and families can pin where they are from, where they have been, places they are interested in, etc. Students will be making passports in library. The gymnasium will host approximately 15 table displays with various activities from different countries/cultures, and students can earn a stamp in their passports. A potluck in the cafeteria will follow where people can sample foods from different countries.
- Food will be a volunteer effort through sign-up genius. Volunteers will be asked to adhere to the nut-free policy, list ingredients, name the dish and country of origin, and provide 30-40 bites total.

Other

- Discussion with Julee Vitello
 - Examples of things financial assistance is provided for include: photo day, book fair, free/reduced lunch, PTG before & after programs, PTG directory, anything PTG-sponsored. Julee keeps a confidential list of requests.
 - Not a single family reached out to Julee last year for assistance with before and after programs – the board wonders if that is maybe because we no longer offer the very expensive programs, i.e. cooking classes, fencing; recently many of the programs offered are free.
 - Board discussed the process of screening families and communicating those needs to the applicable event while still protecting family's privacy.
 - The majority of events don't cost anything to attend, but for instance families may need assistance for material costs to participate in the Science Fair, for instance, or purchasing ingredients to make something for the International Fight. Kristin Martines is able to write a check to cash so the family remains anonymous. Julee would need some guidance in these instance, i.e. reimbursable up to how much for each event?? Alex Ruhmann volunteered to spearhead this coordination with the applicable committee head.
 - The confidentiality piece needs to be highlighted on all materials.
 - Carnival tickets – it is too tricky to have to go through the student directly – to remain discreet, ask them to keep it quiet, etc. One suggestion would be to mail tickets directly home to the parents, like we do for incoming kindergarten families.
 - Often it's the teachers who are making Julee aware of families in need, particularly in Kindergarten and 1st grade, because parents aren't aware of Julee's role.
 - Book Fair is tricky because the coupon for purchasing books doesn't maintain confidentiality.
 - Some offline further discussion is needed.

- CORI-checking is something Dr. Hunter brought up in a recent meeting. Bev Lucas holds the list for Willard. Every volunteer needs to check his/her status.
- Jennifer Desrochers is working on putting together a vendor list so events are using same vendors.
- Liz Nadzo is now in charge of Willard Wear. She would like to make an effort to rejuvenate and modernize new and different items. She is working on setting up an online system where items can be ordered throughout the year. Liz has conducted research on several providers, including Amerasport (whose clients include Belmont Hill and Carroll School); they charge one \$500 fee to set up a platform, then it's pay as you go. Liz is meeting with Amerasport this week to see and feel their offerings in person. It will be important to have samples available at events for people to see, i.e. Family Game Night. The online piece will need to be readily publicized to be successful.
- A Willard PTG Funding Request Form is now available, and the link will be added to the website. This process is intended to help the board make thoughtful decisions and remain fiscally responsible in regards to expenditures.
- The PTG spent a little bit of money to produce foam boards with information about the PTG, so committees are encouraged to display them whenever possible/appropriate.

Upcoming Events

- Assembly: Chris Poulos, "Everyday Hero: The Guide to Being an Upstander" – September 20th
- Picture Day – September 27th
- Parent Social – September 29th
- Next PTG meeting – October 1st at 7pm