

**Nelson Waldorf School Parent Council Meeting
April 16, 2009, 7-9pm, Parent Room at the school**

In attendance:

Iain Pardoe (Parent Council Treasurer, meeting chair), Bronwyn Murray (Parent Council Co-Chair), Patricia Forte (meeting recorder), Phil Fertey (Faculty - Parent Council Liaison), Beverley Barcham (Board/Administration - Parent Council Liaison), Danny Finley (Social Inclusion Coordinator), Martha Wilson, Jennifer Arrowsmith, Florence Christophers

Review of action items from this meeting:

ACTION: Meeting attendees and other interested parents to be encouraged to consider filling currently vacant executive positions.

ACTION: Iain to add a Parent Council page to the school website.

ACTION: Florence to draft a news article on this meeting and to circulate to other attendees for comment; article to be posted in the April 22 Bulletin.

ACTION: Iain to decide on a time/date for the next meeting after consulting with other attendees and interested parents and to post an announcement in the April 29 Bulletin.

ACTION: Patti to write up a draft of the meeting minutes, Bronwyn and Iain to edit and circulate to other attendees for approval; approved minutes to be posted on the Parent Council page of the school website before the next meeting.

1. Open meeting

The meeting began with a candle-lighting and meeting attendees joining hands and reciting Steiner's "Social Motto."

2. Introduction

Iain read the Parent Council mission ("to design, hold, guide, and facilitate the participation of parents in service of the Faculty and Board of Directors of the Nelson Waldorf School"). He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to provide information about the parent council, to begin coordinating work on two specific initiatives (the lower field playground and fundraising), and to begin thinking about filling currently vacant executive positions. He also pointed out his willingness to chair this meeting and to continue to help get the Parent Council up and running, but he ruled himself out of taking on either the Chair or Co-chair positions to avoid any potential conflict of interest (since his spouse is a teacher at the school).

3. Faculty and Board support

Phil talked of the role of the Parent Council as the *form* within which parents, working in collaboration with the Faculty and Board, are able to effectively support the life of the school. The Council's integration into the body of the school would be facilitated by two official liaisons, those currently being Phil Fertey (from Faculty) and Beverley Barcham (from the Board/Administration). A thriving Parent Council is not only a place where people can enhance their school but also, in doing so, foster community.

4. Consensus decision-making

Phil shared that in faculty meetings a consensus process is used to make decisions. After full discussion of an issue, individual faculty members can support, stand aside from, or (rarely) block decisions. The Board uses consensus as far as possible but can default to Robert's Rules if a decision needs to be made in a more timely fashion than consensus might allow (this has not been necessary in the last few years).

5. Social Inclusion

Danny shared about Social Inclusion at the school and the work of Kim John Payne with faculty and staff. Conflict can be seen as the beginning of peace not the end of it. Danny gave a beautifully painted NWS Code of Compassion to the Parent Council and explained the Code's origins. (Class 9 last year went to each class to discover their desires for the code. They then distilled all the suggestions into the six points: **Share** fairly, **Communicate** with care, **Help** build trust, **Openly** welcome everyone, **Offer** respect to all, **Listen** with interest.)

6. Parent Council Constitution and Executive Members

Iain passed out copies of the Parent Council Constitution and talked about this as a living document that may need to be modified in the future. He also reviewed responsibilities of the Parent Council Executive Members: Chair, Co-chair, Treasurer, Grant Application Coordinator, Secretary, Volunteer Program Coordinator, Event Coordinator, Adult Education Coordinator, School Beautification and Playgrounds Coordinator, Hospitality and Social Inclusion Coordinator, and Class - Parent Council Reps. The constitution states that Executive Members are appointed by way of election in November, but it would be good to fill some of these positions on an interim basis before then.

ACTION: Meeting attendees and other interested parents to be encouraged to consider filling currently vacant executive positions.

7. Report from Playground Committee

Bronwyn reported on behalf of Erica Konrad (Playground Committee Chair) that the Parent Council had been awarded a \$20,000 grant for a playground for the lower school from the BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development. A committee of parents and faculty is currently designing a natural playground to be built by the beginning of the school year in September (by which time all grant monies must be spent or forfeited). Design decisions will be made by the end of May, with construction ongoing through the summer. Decisions will be made using a consensus and social inclusion approach. The next Playground Committee meeting is Monday April 20 at 3pm.

8. Report from Fundraising Committee

Bronwyn reported that a group of parents and Bev have been brainstorming with ideas for improving fundraising at the school. A couple of questions that have arisen from these discussions are the connection between fundraising and parent volunteerism and how fundraising relates to other sources of income in the school. A recent parent survey asks some questions around fundraising and volunteering and results should be

disseminated in the next few weeks. The next Fundraising Committee meeting is Tuesday May 12 at 8:20am.

9. Any other business

Florence enthusiastically mentioned some ideas: organic farming at the school and selling at farmers markets; building community amongst the parents.

Grant Writing: Iain and Florence talked about teaming up on this.

Iain offered up a way to communicate Parent Council news through the Bulletin and the website. Florence offered to write a piece on this meeting to run in the next Bulletin.

ACTION: Iain to add a Parent Council page to the school website.

ACTION: Florence to draft a news article on this meeting and to circulate to other attendees for comment; article to be posted in the April 22 Bulletin.

Bev noted the school communication protocol that email is a tool for arrangements, confirmations and information, not process. Meeting in person is best for discussing issues as it establishes healthier connections among us.

Three levels of documentation were mentioned: referring to the Parent Council Constitution; practices such as Social Inclusion; and school policies and protocols as outlined in the Parent Handbook.

The next meeting will be in May, time and date to be announced.

ACTION: Iain to decide on a time/date for the next meeting after consulting with other attendees and interested parents and to post an announcement in the April 29 Bulletin.

ACTION: Patti to write up a draft of the meeting minutes, Bronwyn and Iain to edit and circulate to other attendees for approval; approved minutes to be posted on the Parent Council page of the school website before the next meeting.

10. Close meeting

The meeting ended with Phil reading Steiner's "Verse for Teachers and Caregivers of Children," meeting attendees joining hands in a moment of silence, and extinguishing the candle.