

Tandem Parent Association Meeting

March 2, 2006

After a minute of silence, Parent Association President, Edith McHenry, asked us to hold both Jnanam Maclsaac and Brenda Stephens in the light as they undergo their treatments for breast cancer. Jnanam is a regular attendee of Parent Association meetings and has missed being with us.

Introductions were made around the room.

Announcements: As volunteer organizer for the Upper School Play Twelfth Night, **Anne Brune** passed a signup sheet around asking for volunteers. The play begins on March 9th.

Jenny Clancy passed a sign up sheet around for people to volunteer food for the end of year Teacher Appreciation Luncheon.

Linda Kobert asked to be emailed recipes for the new Taste of Tandem cookbook she is putting together. She especially would love to receive recipes with stories behind them or any that have been shared at past Tandem get togethers. Linda says she feels like she already has plenty of dessert recipes to include. This is a Parent Association fundraiser, but the funds are not earmarked for anything in particular. The emphasis is on this being FUN.

Guinevere Higgins is organizing the Friends Environmental Educators Network, a conference for environmental educators from Quaker Schools, to be held at Tandem on May 11 and 12. Help is needed with dinner Thursday night, breakfast and lunch on Friday, and accommodations for some of the participants for Thursday night. Guinevere would love it if a parent would offer to organize all the volunteering.

A tour for up to 25 people of the gardens at Monticello is included in the conference. The fee is \$11. Thursday's keynote speaker is Pete Myers. Parents are invited to attend all of the proceedings. All pertinent information will be sent out to the Tandem parent body via email.

Lois Myers, who serves on the Tandem Board of Trustees, gave us a report on the progress made in the last five years in reaching the goal of Expecting the Best of Each Other as set in the strategic plan for Tandem Friends School. Much of the work going into searching to see if the goals have been met focused on the details.

~ **Student Life and Community:** A survey of all Upper School students was repeated from five years ago. It revealed very similar responses, namely that relationships with teachers and fellow students is what draws and keeps students at Tandem. We are achieving a better balance between freedom and responsibility with improved education for students, faculty, and parents of what

freedom with responsibility means. The student Senate is strong and active with students being more active in decision making. Class deans have become very important in the Upper School. There has been a decrease in the amount of problematic behavior. There are various staff members who have counseling credentials. There is a 10th grade class on health (including mental health) and a Middle School health program in place.

~ **Extracurricular:** There are advisory groups that meet every two weeks. The number of sports offered has grown and student participation has grown tremendously. There are clubs that tend to be service oriented and student conceived. The LRC has a significant presence and is noted for strong communication with parents, teachers, and students. Participation in drama is also high. A question was raised about achievements in music. Improvement in music opportunities is in process.

~**Administration:** The system for evaluating employees is much improved and more thorough.

Professional Development: There is a more formal professional development program for our teachers. While the program accounts for less than one percent of the budget, the grants to teachers have a disproportionately great and positive impact on the life of the school and classroom teaching. The Board has suggested that the John Howard Endowment Fund be doubled. This goal would probably be rolled into a capital campaign.

To summarize, it was felt that great progress has been made in meeting the goals set in Expecting the Best of Each Other. There was discussion on whether the Middle School is fairly represented in the report. Many of the achievements were true for both Upper and Middle School.

Paul Perkinson informed us of the Consort Singers performance at Cabell Hall on Sunday at 3:00. Various Tandem students and graduates will be in the performance.

Senior project presentations have begun. There is an open invitation to come hear them.

Paul had two Wish List requests. He would like \$500 to spend on appropriate parent resource books to keep in the reception area. He would like \$400/year to have DirecTV or cable in the Blue Room. These were presented to the Finance Committee in February.

Paul also requested that a fund be started for incidental school expenses incurred by economically challenged students. It would be overseen by the Upper and Middle School Directors and Head of School and be confidentially distributed as needed. Need is not predictable currently but may be clearer as the end of our school year nears. This topic was on the agenda at the February Executive and Finance Committee meetings. If the Parent Association would like this fund to start operating then the Executive and Finance Committees will discuss its funding during the March meetings. Our decision will impact how we structure our budget next year. The funding could come from lunch program profits.

Treasurer's Report: In Virginia's absence, Edith presented the Treasurer's report prepared by Virginia. Four Wish List requests were approved: the purchase of four high quality easels for \$400, a boxed DNA set for the Bioethics class \$130, \$500 for Parent Library books and up to \$800 for DirecTV or cable. The treasurer's report was approved.

The February Parent Association minutes were approved.

Spring Fundraiser: Chairman Barb Bousquet informed us that 229 tickets to Cabaret! have been called for: 150 are paid with the remaining to be picked up or distributed to staff. In her mind this is a comfortable capacity for our Community Hall where the event will take place. The plan was to sell tickets at the door, too. Barbara asked for discussion on whether this should still happen given the number of presales. We decided that for the comfort and safety of those who have already bought tickets, Cabaret! should be declared a sellout. This information will appear in Friday's newsletter. We all congratulated Barb on having such a wonderful dilemma. This experience proved that there is great demand for a family event, especially among Middle School families.

Our meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte Rinehart