

Orchard Home and School Association March 2023 Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 9:12AM on March 16, 2023

Attendees (Principal and Board Members): Mary Ferreri; Co-President: Patty Leung; Co-President: Tia Ly; Vice President: Becky Chin; Assistant Treasurer: Shweta Dixit; Corresponding Secretary: Sarah McCourt; Recording Secretary: Jen Zolcinski [Treasurer: Bonita Shimpfky, absent]

Other Attendees: Mrs. Wolf; Suzette dela Rama; Britt Tunick; Heather Madigan; Vanessa Carr; Mugda Mukherjee, Crystal Cambareri; Jimmy Judge

Via Zoom: Maria Sanchez; Adrian Walker

Patty requested approval of February Minutes and Shweta approved said minutes.

Co-President's Welcome (Patty Leung):

Patty thanked Shweta for the Holi event. She thanked Michelle Elias Macdonald for the reading marathon. Ms. Bonfanti's class won the challenge and will have their pizza party today. Patty thanked Becky for the Science Fair. Becky mentioned there were 45 projects at the science fair, which was a great amount considering it was no longer online.

Treasurer's Report:

Shweta: There was an \$11,290 deposit for Friends of Orchard, but we have another almost \$7,500 additional that will be deposited in March (noting the as she reports on previous month end numbers but wanted to make clear there was more activity).

For the Talent Show concession sales, we will lump the gift bags sold and the bake sale together. We plan to earmark it for the 4th of July float and will discuss how to do that offline. She asked if we are expecting income from orchard wear campaigns, and noted we are also waiting on

yearbook income. She also noted that Marya Larkin, as well as the landscaping committee, have asked about available funds.

Vice President's Report:

Becky: The yearbook committee is still collecting pictures. They will have a deadline soon, as well as information on how to purchase a yearbook.

We have some middle school students helping with some upcoming events. If any committees/teachers need help, they may reach out to Becky to inquire about availability of these students.

Becky is still looking for a committee chair for the 4th of July Float, as well as the Auction. The Auction is next year and takes advanced time to plan, so she is looking for a committee chair now.

Corresponding Secretary's Report:

Sarah: no updates.

Committee Reports:

International Night

Crystal Cambareri: Middle school students are volunteering to assist. Instructions have been sent to parents. There will be three performances. Crystal asked about storing photos of the event. Patty replied we use the Google drive, so that we can access for the yearbook. An email will be sent to parents reminding all of this drive.

Sweets Sale

Tia: Orders are due by March 24 and will be distributed on March 30 (right before spring break). Please consider ordering for any celebrations you may have, just for treats, etc. They are nicely packaged.

Nominating Committee

Heather: She and Vanessa Carr are getting it rolling for the 2023/2024 school year. They will send forms via next week's e-news. If anyone knows someone that wants to be on the board, they can nominate them, or individuals can self-nominate. The nomination process will close on Tuesday, April 11, 2023. Then the committee will go through the forms and announce the slate on April 20, from when voting will be open until May 4. The new board will shadow the current board at the May meeting. The June 15 meeting will mark the start of the new board. Heather and Vanessa will provide a document detailing which positions are open along with what the role entails.

Spirit Wear

Vanessa Carr: They will be using Varsity Hues again. Additionally, they have created a 4th of July t-shirt that can be ordered by all participating in the 4th of July Float (or anyone else). In the past, the 4th of July Float Committee and volunteers made the shirts themselves, however, last year there were issues with not having enough, so now, anyone can order through the Varsity Hues site.

The spirit wear sale is part of the school supplies company used, and is ongoing. Next year, we can check to see which was more profitable and decide how we will move forward with spirit wear sales.

Culture Committee

On April 11, Ragas to Reels will present on the fusion of Indian and Irish music. It will be interactive. For example, a fiddle player will be on stage and kids will be picked from the audience to go on stage and "direct" him.

5th Grade Fundraising

Britt: The remaining 5th Grade fundraisers are Goat Yoga (to which parents are invited, not just the kids) and Spring Movie Night (slated for May 25).

Friends of Music

Britt: Friends of Music is holding a concert on May 29. If your child has a musical talent and would like to perform, this is an opportunity for them. More information will be shared soon.

Britt asked when the “Birds and Bees” Health lesson would be held (this is for the 5th graders only). Mary replied that it will be held in April/May and Nurse Horton will send an update to parents beforehand.

Co-President’s Report:

Patty discussed the March Federated HSA meeting. They are very close to hiring a new superintendent (on track to start in July). There should be an announcement either this coming meeting (March 20) or at a special session on March 27 (at which the budget will also be presented) pending final contract items.

Also discussed was the Later Start Time initiative. A pilot will start with the high school. There was a special information meeting held on March 14 at the high school for the whole town to learn more about it. Elementary school times will not change. Middle school times will not change either (unless pilot indicates different needs, at which point it could be revisited).

If parents are interested in expanding the world language curriculum in the schools, as we as more physical education time, then you are strongly encouraged to attend the Board of Ed meetings. With the budget being the topic of discussion, the next few meetings are worth paying attention to. Note that there are also Board briefs that come out

each Tuesday morning following the Board of Ed meetings, where you can get more information if unable to attend.

Teachers' Report:

5th Grade Teacher Mrs. Wolf: Mrs. Wolf thanked the HSA for the things we provide for the teachers and school, such as the science fair. She noted that the participants enjoyed presenting their projects to their classes. The teachers appreciated the Holi activity. The teachers love Orchard because we celebrate our diversity, we take the time to share the stories and do meaningful activities. She noted that the children do ask questions when an activity like this takes place; it doesn't just end there, it leads to conversation, more learning in the classroom and a chance for kids to share their cultures/stories/knowledge. The teachers were disappointed that the March author visit was canceled but it has been rescheduled for April. Regarding the 5th grade field trip to Philadelphia, the teachers appreciate the opportunity and it enhances their social studies curriculum. There is a parent meeting coming up to share the itinerary. It will be an exciting event for the 5th graders.

She noted that the 5th grade has a rigorous curriculum, but also includes learning of time management and self-responsibility, giving students the tools they need to move on to 6th grade. There is a lot more freedom in a 6th grader's life, so the teachers begin the conversation with them, even covering walking through the halls and making sure they are ready for their next class, building their confidence, making sure they are not afraid to say I don't understand, working on self-moderating, etc.

Principal's Report:

Mrs. Ferreri: It's been a busy, wonderful year, and she is very grateful. The marking period is ending, and report cards will come out the week before Spring break (parents will receive an email notification). After break, the school will start planning and projecting for the next year. We will be maintaining a three section school in each grade, which is good in that it's a good way to spread out, make new friends, and we don't

have to shuffle teachers. All of the staff can't wait to hear about the new superintendent. The hiring process has been very confidential.

Additional Items:

Heather Madigan shared that she went to the Tim Shoemaker digital workshop presentation for the middle school kids, which lead her to go to the parent workshop that was also offered. It was eyeopening, and she wanted to bring it up as a lot of kids get a phone going from 5th grade to 6th grade. She recommends we look into having a presentation on this for the 5th grader so they understand the impact of phones/internet/social media/etc. ahead of time. It made a really big impression on the middle school kids, including the privacy portion. The presenter said there is no safe way for kids to be on phones. Heather also recommended Childhood 2.0 and Social Dilemma as two good documentaries for parents to watch. She mentioned Bark Phones, which looks like smart phone but very controlled. She believes we should be very proactive about this, maybe even consider a presentation for 4th grade. She noted that the previously referenced presenter can customize his presentation to different age groups.

This information was well received by those attending the HSA meeting, with all chiming in with concern on this matter. It was suggested we consider forming a committee to address this matter.

Mrs. Ferreri shared that she utilizes Common Sense Media, which helps with determining when movies or activities (such as having a phone) are age appropriate. It also provides plug and play presentations for educators.

Shweta also thanked everyone, especially Ms. Chicas, for the Holi event as well as all the other diversity events held at Orchard. She commended the fact that the teachers are so willing to do such activities, and noted the experience our children get is indescribably beneficial, and helps them to not have to feel like they have separate school and home

identities. It creates exposure for the kids and helps them learn something new. This was echoed by Mugda.

Mrs. Ferreri noted the school does morning announcements for Black History Month, etc., and they are considering opening that up for other months to highlight more diversity items. Another parent suggested also recognizing those with disabilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07AM.