

WILLINGDON HOME AND SCHOOL MEETING –

September 21st 2016

Present: Charlotte McCaffrey, Carmen Nicolas, Cornelia Mandoiu, Rossitza Ribarova, Tom Bock, Catherine Lavoie, Mary Ellen Kenny, Luisa Carpio-Mak, Catherine Masson, Catherine Britt-C. Annick Gauthier, Isabelle Gaul, Geneviève Trudeau, Sally Burnett, Geneviève Lemaire, Hanne Landbo, Tanya Savickey, Irina Lazariciu, Meghan Donovan.

Welcome and introductions:

The meeting starts at 7:30pm.

Mary Ellen Kenny welcomes everyone, explains that she, and Luisa Carpio-Mak will be co-chair of the Home and School this year. She wishes a warm welcome to the new principal, Carmen Nicolas and there is a big round of applause for her; she talks about her past experience, it's quite impressive! She was a High School teacher for 13 years: Pius X for three and at Lauren Hill Academy for 10. Subject taught: Math, science and Dance (Full time for the last 6). Then, she became Vice-Principal at Lester B. Pearson High School for 2.5 years and Interim principal of Lester B. Pearson High School for 6 months. It's her first year as principal but she is very excited. Everyone present introduces themselves. Cornelia Mandoiu will be our teacher representative, she is a kindergarten teacher, first year here at Willingdon.

Approval of Agenda:

Agenda approved on a motion by Annick Gauthier, seconded by Charlotte MacCaffrey.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from September 7th required no changes and were approved on a motion by Tom Bock and seconded by Luisa Carpio-Mak.

President's Report (Luisa Carpio-Mak):

- She and Mary-ellen were busy getting acquainted with new year objectives and activities like the welcome activity Barantaga. Mary-ellen will be attending a QFHSA workshop about H&S.
- Their main goals are to focus on the fundraising drive, promote the involvement of parents in the school, the involvement of the school in the NDG community, and family fun. They also want to leave a healthy fund and a thriving association.
- Luisa explains the family emergency fund. It is a fund set aside because lower income families can't afford field trips or other activities like pizza or Fro-yo. Nobody knows who those families are, only the administration has access to that information. The need is greater as the school population is growing, we used to be able to fundraise only through Cabaret Night but it's no longer enough to meet the demands.
- Next Meeting dates: Oct 11, Nov 9th, may or may not have one in December. The ones for 2017 will be posted at a later date.

Principal's Report (Carmen Nicolas):

- School board came with a new company for declarations of volunteering and background check. Everyone that will have access to children has to sign it. In the office, bring 2 pieces of id, fill in the form, it's supposed to take two days to be approved. In the past, it was not really followed

but the board has decided to really follow through. Every 2 years, it will have to be redone. Someone suggest to put the form online; it could be pre-filled but the id has to be checked in person.

- Progress report will be sent home on October 14th.
- There are 522 students registered has Willingdon, 4 k, the classes are filled up to capacity. Grade 2 are looking into opening a new class; the EMSB has up to Oct 15 to do so.
- Pelo forms went home, a lot of interest but not enough to open a class. 14 students per language per cycle are needed, the ks are not included.
- Teacher's workshops: start the year with energy, The teachers had a workshop on mindfulness; how to be more mindful and teach it to their kids. Google classroom workshop and digital citizenship: Nov 3rd by doctor Sklar, for parents and students grade 5 and 6. Looking at inviting other schools like Royal Vale and Edenborough.
- There will be a fire drill on October 7th.
- Monthly calendar will appear on the website and sent by email, with a newsletter. This year again, the school doesn't have access to it's own website, it has to go through the EMSB and they update it.

Teacher's Report (Cornelia Mandoiu):

- Good beginning to the school year, kindergarten students are doing great, adapting well. She didn't have time to collect any feedback from teachers about the welcome activity; she will have some to share next meeting. The co-chair ask the people present what they thought of the activity and if they had received feedback from their children. It was mix reviews. Some children were very pleased with it and came home excited and some less. Some kids were disappointed to miss their gym class, others found it too loud. Some parents voiced their concerns about it not being educational enough, especially for the money that was spent. Other comments included that music in any form is good, it was one dimensional. This activity had been approved and reserved the previous year, after discussion, it was decided that it would not be something to redo.
- Cornelia reads us a note from Ms Kathleen Usher: Willingdon has had a long and very fruitful relationship with Home and School. Teachers have long benefitted from H&S's active participation with respect to library volunteers, fundraising and the planning of school photos, fun fair etc. The community has also benefitted from food drives, and Caroling nights. H&S has also made possible school-wide performances and events and contributes to a Family Fund.

A new reality for Willingdon and indeed all public schools today is that we no longer have any surplus in our budgets and as such need to count on H&S more than ever to help our most needy families and to enrich our student experience. It is in light of this new reality that I write this note.

I ask that H&S put heads together with admin and with teachers to best allocate funds and to plan whole school events. Now that we have a new leadership in H&S and a new principal at the helm this might be a good time to refresh things like welcome back activities and recommit to building a solid family fund to help offset costs so that our underprivileged students may partake in activities such as Grade 5 and 6 camp, specialist field trips, etc. It would also be good to share what whole school events are already planned and funded by the school (such as the French Piece de Theatre before the holidays and a Geordie Production in the spring) so that H&S's contributions to student life enrichment could benefit the whole school with as much 'bang for the buck' as possible and with good integration within the school program as well.

In addition to doing such a great job at building community around fundraising activities (Fun Fair, Cabaret Night...) Home and School could also be a partner in the school's success plan planning activities that promote success in math, fluency in French, the creative process, STEM (science, technology engineering and math) that touch students in meaningful long term, rather than one-off, ways.

I write this with respect and admiration for all the parent volunteers involved in H&S. Your dedication and commitment to Willingdon makes the school great. I hope this note is taken in the spirit it was written: as a way to make things even better for the students and the community of Willingdon.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Usher

Science Specialist (and former Willingdon H&S president 2005-2007)

VP Communication (Tom Bock)

- The way to work that is best is for the coordinator to write their own communications and send them by email. Chairs will approve and publish. EX: baking coordinator can ask for the list of volunteers and email them personally but if they want to send something out to the general population, it has to go through those channels. The emails won't group the information, it'll be be one message, one call to action. It will also end up on the Facebook page. Posts also have to be approved to be published on the page.
- Someone raises the question about admin of Facebook for coordinators to post pictures of activities on it. It had been decided in the past that that there will be no posting of children on the Facebook page, only on the internal screens. (Discussion about pictures and the children that can be published or not). Differ to admin : Does the form that was signed at the beginning of the year include social media? Yes it does, also television, like when CTV come to the school to shoot footage etc. In the past, the experiment was done that the children that could not be photographed were wearing a tag or a lanyard! Not doing that anymore. Question: If we sign yes for the school, is it ok for H&S? TBC.
- The website needs to be updated, look into making it more user friendly

Treasurer's Report (Andrea Burns, regrets)

- Same thing as last meeting but one thing to add: the first activity of the year Barantaga, was 3000,00\$. We have healthy fund so that means more to spend on Santa breakfast for the Ks and on Haunted house. Luisa explains, and re reads it the report from last meeting.
- Family fund: in previous years, the cabaret night was not enough to cover the need, the demands would come to H&S on a case by case basis and H&S would donate the funds. This year and going forward, It has to be managed in a way that there is always money in the fund. Meghan Donovan, who had been president of Home and school from 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, adds that previously, H&S held the money in their account with a subtotal for it; some years it was barely touched some years it emptied. Someone suggest that it might be something to consider to split fundraisers, ex: Frank (sponsored child)/family etc. The need is greater because of a change in demographic; Camp Boutte en train is expensive (grades 4-5-6).

New Business

Review of H&S Activities for 2016-17 (including open coordinator positions)

- FRO-Yo coordinator, to work hand in hand with grad committee, ½ to be split with H&S and grad. (last year it all went to grad because we were missing a coordinator, we want it back but if we can't find a coordinator, it'll all go to grad.) It happens once a month up to May, 4 times for H&S and 4 times for grad/H&S would like to collect through forms ahead of time, it was agreed that no child will be left out. Charlotte McCaffrey and Annick Gauthier so far in charge of the grad

committee, but no one came forward for Fro-Yo. The hard part is at the beginning, collect the forms etc. the once a month part is easy. Catherine Britt seems maybe interested...

- We need coordinators for 3 challenges: geo, math, and spelling Bee. Geography challenge has to be started right away, register the school etc. If interest is manifested, H&S will buy new globes and Atlas. A teacher acts as liaison, Miss Prentas had done it in the past; Jennifer Khulin will coordinate the spelling Bee; the Math challenge has Saib Hachem but he would like a co-coordinator to help. A call for the positions will be done with details about the position.
- Lost and found coordinators would be greatly appreciated; it's been a couple of years since we had it in H&S, right now, it is a disaster. Warnings are being sent home about giving it to charity but the parents are not claiming the clothes. Willingdon has a big surplus of clothes!!! EDP, gives lanyard to parents that want to go through the box. Isabelle Gaul and Genevieve Trudeau are volunteering to organize it. The food will be thrown out and they will revisit the way it's organized. They will see to it.
- Movie night didn't happen last year because we had no sound system. After we find out what happens with the sound system, we will have the movie nights, they are nice community events. When they are held outside; problem with the license; need to investigate more.
- Teacher and staff appreciation week, we need people, the week of Valentines day. 1 breakfast and 1 lunch, coffee and treats on the Friday; but no set formulas.
- Freesie Fridays: just twice in June, ½ with grad, maybe fro-yo coord. could take it on as well.
- Holiday craft fair: proceeds go to Food depot. Last year it went to H&S with only bake sale proceeds to food depot. Big Craft Fair in the gym, carolling and food drive. Last year Sharon Sweeney did all 3, this year, she'll do Caroling but wants someone to take over the other 2.
- Luisa and Mary Ellen will coordinate Fun fair this year but want to let it go in the future.
- Willingdon gear is sitting in boxes upstairs, we need someone to sell it. However the person wants it. Spread the word.
- Meghan Donovan has she had done a few years ago, will host a pancake breakfast.
- There is a discussion about a winter carnival where one year, they hired a company called dynamyx, it was fun but a lot of work; Another year, Hot chocolate was served the kids loved it. The snowman making contest did not happen because of the weather but the children had fun, cost about 400\$, worth it.
- Book fair dates are Nov 16 and March 2nd The coordinator explains the rewards: For the French Festival, if more than \$1631,00 is sold, the reward is 50% worth of merchandise, if less than that is sold, only 15% worth. So, it is important to promote the French books. The English Festival has more flexibility and gives cash rewards as well as credits. Ideas are given to promote it, Teacher's wish list will be posted on the walls so parents can buy books for them.

Update on Welcome Activity:

- Baratanga was an activity that was inherited from last year, it took place this past week. Some consider it was expensive; every year, H&S spends money on a welcome activity. Looking forward to hear feedback from teachers and kids. Carmen doesn't find it was worth it for the money, it was lacking in learning tools. She considers that a traditional corn roast would have been better, with more of team building activity. There are so many companies that target schools for activities, in January, we will decide about next year, all members should come to the meeting and vote on it

Halloween Activity:

- Date Monday Oct 31, coordinators: Hanne Landbo and Jane Hill, this year, the budget is more than \$50,00\$ It seems activities were lacking last year because it was put together at the last

minute, new coordinators will make it better, set-up the Friday before, EDP has an activities that day but all can work together. Mme Meilleur usually helps with schedule, grade 6 does the animation for the haunted house.

DFS Fundraiser

- Last year it was held in the spring, David MCleod (previous H&S president), said that with minimal help, it raised around 800,00\$. This year, H&S is going with a Christmas campaign. It is the first fundraiser associated with the family emergency fund. The catalogues came today and will be distributed shortly. Feedback from previous year is that it was complicated to order, better communication to help with the ordering this time. Spring campaign might still happen depending on how this one goes. More reactions are about the amount of paper distributed and the junk it promotes. All agree that it's not environmentally friendly.
- Rossitza Ribarova brought a beautiful calendar made by another school as a fundraiser; she helped put it together as she is a graphic artist, she suggest it for our school. Inside is really cute art made by the students, it costs around \$3500,00 to produce but advertisements pay for it. It can be sold for \$10,00 each. It goes from Sept-to August, all of the important dates are included like ped days etc.. Rossitza will put together a package with the components to make it happen. Carmen knows about the calendars because of her son's school; an order form is distributed at the beginning of sept. The calendar have to be put together in the summer. H&S will not rush into it but finds it a great idea; for next year or the year after; it has to be brought to governing board. Businesses have to be solicited, would we be tapping into a market that is tapped out? Because the shown calendar came from the French school board, the English community might still want to participate. We think the ads might not pay for it all the first year. The total brought in for the French school was around \$3500,00 it brings in.

Graduation Committee;

- Charlotte McCaffrey and Annick Gauthier are working together with Carmen to call a meeting and get a committee together. It operates independently of H&S, we will offer support has needed.
- Pizza coordinators asks about the subsidised kids, the information should be better passed along so that the children get their pizza.
- Teacher's wish list; normally, teachers that need things will come to H&S and ask; if budget permits; they receive the funds.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 21:32 pm on a motion by Annick Gauthier , seconded Charlotte McCaffrey

Next meeting scheduled for October 11, 7:30pm.

Minutes submitted by Catherine Lavoie