



Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, October 4, 2013

Welcome & Verse with Mr. Mike Baker

Introductions

Parent Council Business: Approve the Parent Council Mandate

Co-Chair Brooke Camfield read the Parent Council Mandate to the group, and pointed out some changes. The present members of the council approved the Mandate.

Social Inclusion Within DWS

- Mike Baker presented a brief overview of Restorative Justice, an approach to conflict resolution that has been adopted by many school districts in cities across the country.
- According to the website healthyschoolsandcultures.org, “Restorative Justice is focused on the belief that those affected by harm can work together to repair it and that this collaboration leads to true accountability.” Both the theory and practice of Restorative Justice emphasize: (1) identifying the harm, (2) involving all stakeholders, and (3) true accountability—repairing the harm and addressing its causes.
- Both Mike Baker and Judy Lucas expressed that our school community is investigating the concept of Restorative Justice and how it could fit at different age levels to meet the evolving needs and challenges of our students and families.
- Kim John Payne’s upcoming presentation on Thurs., Oct. 17th. His talk is entitled, “Keeping What’s Great in a School Community & Dropping What’s Not.” This event will be held at the school from 7-9 p.m., and the school will gratefully accept \$10 donations at the door to offset the cost of this highly sought-after speaker.
- Judy mentioned that one possible approach to integrating Restorative Justice into our school could be to bring trainers in to work with the High School’s That Peace Group, a self-selected group of students interested in peace and social justice. That group would then bring the method to the rest of the High School, which could then be involved in helping the Middle School adopt the practice. The Middle School students could then support the Grades students. Although the emphasis would be put on students being empowered to resolve conflicts, teachers and other key adults in the school community would be heavily involved and step in if needed.



Parent Resource Presentations

- **Kidpower with Kelly Church**

Kelly, a Woodrose parent, is also the Denver Program Representative of KidPower, an international organization that focuses on safety education for children and young adults.

She presented an overview of the KidPower approach, which stresses the idea of People Safety, both in interacting with strangers and in setting good boundaries with people we know. Designed for ages 4-18, KidPower believes that safety should be taught matter-of-factly, without disempowering kids through fear. The skill-based program uses role play for children and offers workshops for parents.

For more information about this program and its upcoming workshops for parents, please contact Kelly Church (Kelly@pikespeakyouth.com).

- **Parenting by Connection with Kristen Volk**

Kristen Volk, parent of 2 DWS students, is a certified instructor of the Parenting by Connection approach, which provides support, resources, classes and tools for nurturing the parent-child connection and creating long term family success. Parenting by Connection is dedicated to creating a world that supports the difficult work of parenting. By connecting meaningfully with our children, parents can help shift their behavior and help them get “unstuck” from emotional blocks.

In Kristen’s classes, she helps parents of children aged 0-12 to build a largely non-verbal “superhighway of communication.” In contrast with most modern approaches to discipline, which focus on behavior, Parenting by Connection strives to heal the hurt that’s underneath the behavior.

For more information about this program and its upcoming workshops for parents, please contact Kristen Volk (kris@teamvolk.com).

Future Coffee Talk & Parent Education Topics Brainstorm

Parent Council regularly holds Coffee Talk events for parents. Some ideas for possible topics include:

- Waldorf Milestones: Understanding teeth loss, the nine-year change, the four temperaments and other notable moments and events in child development from an anthroposophical perspective
- Colette Green: Simplicity Parenting overview
- What DWS teachers do to prepare for and “hold” each class
- Exploring the role of form drawing throughout the Grades curriculum
- Revisiting past successful topics, such as when Mr. Clark presented on how science and art are taught in the High School
- Social Inclusion & Restorative Justice (possibly as a Coffee Talk or as a workshop)



Parent Education

Leigh Rhysling holds the Parent Education budget within the Marketing Budget, and is responsible for facilitating speakers coming to the school. She evaluates whether speakers are in alignment with DWS goals and values.

Leigh mentioned that with DWS is a part of ACIS, we have more information about speakers that come to the other independent schools in our area. Molly Burke, Community Development Coordinator, will add a list of speaking events at other schools to our website.

As a school, DWS promotes Anthroposophical events and occasionally informs about other events that are aligned. Additional suggestions for other parent education events from the Parent Council included:

- Early Childhood Festival Overview
- Race to Nowhere movie screening with panel (repeated topic from a successful previous event)

Leigh sent out a list of publications from the previous Race to Nowhere event via email to Brooke, who has distributed it to the Parent Council representatives.

Upcoming DWS Events

- School Picture Day – Friday, October 11th
- Kim John Payne: “Keeping What’s Great in a School Community & Dropping What’s Not” – Thursday, October 17th, 7-9 p.m. in Festival Hall

Questions & Comments

Q: How can parents keep up with other students’ food allergies in classrooms?

A: The Denver Waldorf School partners with the parents of children with food allergies to ensure that their food restrictions are being followed. Teachers and classroom aides are also key partners in this effort. While it’s important that other parents within a class try their best to comply with any prohibited foods (such as no peanuts), the primary focus should be on the allergic child’s family and teachers providing safe alternatives and monitoring new food items, especially in situations where a child’s allergies may still be evolving.

Q: Rules about “the Bowl” (part of back playground that fills with water during inclement weather)

Addressing the issues around the Bowl is part of a larger discussion that the school is having about landscape architecture. Mr. Baker said that this is an issue that the school is aware of, and that DWS will be actively looking for near-term solutions.



Next Parent Council Meeting

Co-chair Elizabeth Strammiello requested that some time at the next meeting be set aside to discuss what other members of the council hope to get out of the meetings.

The next meeting will be held on **Friday, November 1st from 8:45-10:45 a.m.** Please join us!