

Parents' Association General Meeting, December 20, 2007

Kathy Brito opened the meeting and talked of a fresh start in 2008 for the PA and its ambitious plans for P.S./I.S. 187.

Francesca Di Mauro spoke of the most recent meeting of the School Leadership Team in which a consultant was brought in to initiate a process that will, it is hoped, culminate in a transformation of the school's philosophy and approach to teaching and learning. This is a long term process – five years – and one that involves a change in school culture. This approach would consist of more differentiated classroom teaching of particular subject matters based on students' interests. The standard curriculum would remain in place but teachers could organize special units as enrichment components.

Francesca Di Mauro expressed her sense that Ms. Chory and the rest of the administration are very interested in and receptive to this approach which has created excitement in the SLT. There may be some meetings outside of the SLT to disseminate information and solicit feedback and support.

Ms. Di Mauro also indicated that she spoke with the ethics officer from the Board of Education regarding the permissibility of collective gift giving to teachers. She was told that it can be done but that it must be done outside of the classroom (since the teacher cannot know of it) and that all parents must be contacted and given the opportunity to participate. Every parent must also be included – regardless of whether they contribute – in the list of gift givers (i.e. every parent must sign a card, etc.). Since it is too late for the 2007 holiday season, parents can consider this gift giving option for the end of the school year.

Denny Chern-Kelk gave a brief report on fundraising activities. The candy sale is over and done with. The sale didn't make as much money as in previous years. The fundraising committee is working with the grant writing sub-committee on upcoming and potential activities.

Susan Saar from the fundraising/grant writing committee (FR/GW) spoke of the annual appeal and indicated that outreach to parents to provide information to them and seek their support would begin in January 2008. Volunteers have been and will continue to be solicited for the following committees: 1) school liaison – getting in touch with teachers to find out what they want, 2) grant search – identifying potential funding sources, 3) grant writing – writing grants and keeping track of deadlines, 4) follow up – documenting project results, donor maintenance, 5) Materials for the Arts – shoppers are needed, 6) Donors Choose – helping teachers go online to make requests or making the requests for the teachers and 7) the 501c3 committee.

Another committee that is under discussion is community events – “fun raising” – movie nights and the like.

Parents were encouraged to contact any member of the Executive Board or Fundraising Committee with any questions or ideas. An informational flyer will go out in January.

Jeanine McAdam stressed that we are trying to change the school culture in terms of how we approach parents and ask for money. Of necessity this is a slow and lengthy process.

Susan Saar also announced that Family Yoga Night will take place on a trial basis on Fridays in order to increase turnout.

Chris Kapetanios gave a report for the Environmental Committee. He stated that the three main drains – one on the path and two in the school yard – are draining well. The neighbor's garbage (900 Cabrini Blvd.) is being collected more frequently which has stopped complaints by neighbors. In prior years, the

garbage presented health hazards for the children and staff at PS/IS 187 because of rats and because it was potentially an obstruction in the case of a drill or evacuation. Mr. Kapetanos stressed that while the situation has improved that it needs to be continually monitored.

The minutes for the previous general meeting were approved.

The meeting moved to the open forum. Holly Gould announced that the music department will be receiving a check as a token of appreciation to Mr. Leoni for his help on movie night.

A member asked why there has been a drop off in attendance at the general meetings. Another parent indicated that the first meeting was a turn off to a number of parents because of its contentiousness and confusing nature. The possibility of having a separate meeting or orientation for incoming parents was discussed and various parents indicated that it would be a good idea. Marci Stringham announced that a publication with school information will go out in January and which will, it is hoped, answer some of parents' questions or fill some of the information gaps.

Kathy Brito reminded the membership that parents who turned in the money for the class photos after the due dates will receive their pictures in January. The picture sale made \$6,163 all of which goes back to the photographer. It is not a fundraising activity – it is merely a service that the PA provides to the school.

Wilma Lopez asked if we could put a suggestion box in a convenient location for parents. Guillermo Penate volunteered to bring a suggestion box. Ms. Lopez also mentioned that she works for IBM and would be interested in bringing a speaker to the school. She was advised to consult Mr. Miller, the dean of the upper school.