

## **Parents' Association General Meeting, April 17, 2008**

### Administration Report

Ms. Chory announced the dates of upcoming events in May and informed the PA that the school underwent the School Quality Review Process recently and that the preliminary assessment is positive. Among other things, the school is characterized as having a clear vision, mutual respect and high expectations. The school needs to and is working to improve the use of data and on increasing students' voice and involvement in and ownership of their own learning and the school. The Student Council needs to go to the next level, for example.

During the question and answer session, Jennifer Marciano asked Ms. Chory why intermediate students' backpacks had been searched that day. Ms. Chory explained that it was part of the spring locker cleanout. Certain items, such as certain types of markers and white-out were confiscated. The items are not allowed – this is clearly documented and known among students. There has been a recent rash of graffiti - which is a normal spring time occurrence – and this is one reason why these items were confiscated. Cell phones were also confiscated and parents were notified to pick them up. Ms. Chory reiterated that the Chancellor's regulations prohibit cell phones altogether and that while the Administration has tried to follow a "if we don't see it, it's not there" approach, they are required to confiscate cell phones when they are in evidence.

Ms. Chory mentioned that she is increasingly concerned about internet safety. Many students are using their cell phones to take pictures or video of their friends and are then posting them on the web. Ms. Chory stated that while most of these pictures or videos are innocent one must remember that other people can see them as well. She stressed the need for parents to monitor their children's use of the internet and to be mindful of internet safety. Nicky Kram Rosen mentioned that she knows of some schools where parents, administrators and communities have come together to develop some innovative strategies that address parents' concerns about safety while abiding by the Chancellor's regulations. Ms. Rosen also indicated that she could get an expert or resource person at the Department of Education to come talk to parents about internet safety if there was interest. Wilma Lopez expressed concern that her daughter had downloaded a violent video game from a computer in the school. Ms. Chory promised to investigate the matter. Jennifer Marciano registered her strong objection to the way in which the backpack searches were conducted and handled and Ms. Chory acknowledged her statements. Administration left and the rest of the meeting continued.

### Minutes and bylaws

The minutes from the March general meeting were approved with a correction by Christopher Kapetanos regarding the audit of the PA finances. Kirsten Cowal announced that changes to the bylaws would be proposed at the following meeting and that anyone who wishes to submit proposals for changes should do so in writing by May 19<sup>th</sup>.

### Funding decisions

Francesca Di Mauro proposed allocating \$2,700 from the PA budget for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade video project - \$2,600 for the instructor's fee and \$100 for supplies. A motion to approve the allocation was raised, seconded and passed with no objections. Kathy Brito next proposed allocating up to \$300 for the "trout release" project. She explained that Ms. Luna secured funding for this science project involving the harvesting and raising of fish but that due to unexpected costs had run short of money. The PA funds would be used to pay for bus transportation to take students to the site where the fish will be released. Stevie Ray Dallimore then reviewed the budget for the Talent Show. He explained that the organizers decided it would be more cost effective to buy rather than rent a snake (a cable running from the stage to the back of the auditorium that makes it possible for the tech people to not have to sit up in front). Ms. Chory and Mr. Leoni indicated that they would be happy to receive the snake as a gift to the school and would take responsibility for storing and maintaining it. The cost of purchasing the snake is \$260 compared to

\$150 for rental. Mr. Dallimore also explained the change in the honorarium budget line from \$200 to \$100 and its classification from honorarium to classroom donation. A motion was raised to approve the Talent Show budget, was seconded and passed.

### Talent Show

Ariel Knackmann, co-organizer with Stevie Ray Dallimore of the Talent Show, exhorted parents to publicize the show. A press release has been sent to the Manhattan Times and Jessica Shapely will be asked to advertise it on her “mommy and me” email list. Wilma Lopez suggested that a nicely formatted email invitation be designed for parents to send to their friends and that idea was welcomed. Judith Michael indicated that \$910 has been generated in advertising and that there are 4 spirit ads left. Susan Saar and Tory Frye were thanked for securing donations of food and drinks for the performers and crew.

The plans for the concession stand were discussed. Wilma Lopez indicated that a flyer soliciting donations of water, juice boxes and candy bars will be sent to parents. Nicky Rosen asked that healthy alternatives be offered as well. Susan Saar discussed the plans to order and sell Schoolapalooza t-shirts at the event. The t-shirt was designed by Aryn Chapman and will be sold on a routine basis through Café Press. Sixteen t-shirts from Café Press (adult and kid sizes) will cost \$200 without tax, \$215 with tax. A less expensive option would be to purchase 24 t-shirts from balloonprinting.com for \$159.80. A consensus was reached to order t-shirts from balloonprinting.com and to let others know that t-shirts are available for order from Café Press. A motion to approve the expenditure of \$159.80 for the purchase of 24 t-shirts of assorted sizes from balloonprinting.com to sell at the Talent Show was raised, seconded and passed. The t-shirts will be sold for \$10.

### Other business items

Denny Chern-Kelk spoke next about the need to make arrangements now to secure vendors for next year’s fall fundraisers and class pictures so that these events unfold more smoothly next fall. Ms. Chory has already approved the dates for picture days. Ms. Chern-Kelk requested approval to meet with vendors on May 5<sup>th</sup> and sign contracts. Her request was approved by acclamation with one dissenting vote by Nicky Rosen who objected because there was no discussion about the vendors and the products that would be sold as part of the fundraiser.

In conjunction with the subsequent discussion about the upcoming elections, Francesca Di Mauro proposed changing the date of the next general meeting to Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> from Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. There were no objections to the proposal.

Joey Brenneman announced that flyers announcing the elections and soliciting nominations will be sent out in the beginning of May and that a candidates forum will be held at the next general meeting. The PA election will be on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and the SLT election for 2 positions on June 10<sup>th</sup> with voting times scheduled in the morning and evening. Parents interested in helping on the day of the election were encouraged to contact Ms. Brenneman. It was clarified that parents who are running for office can’t help with the elections and Ms. Rosen encouraged the nominating committee to be sure that Spanish language assistance is available during the elections. Renee Cooper volunteered to help with the elections.

Stevie Ray Dallimore described Ms. Chory’s concerns about unleashed dogs in the school yard. A suggestion was made to contact the Department of Recreation to obtain signage since the area currently doesn’t have any.

During the Open Forum Leonisa Ardizzone handed out information she compiled on the OASIS and Nagle Avenue Y after school program proposals. As a follow up to the informational session held on April 16<sup>th</sup>, she will consolidate the information into two pages in a comparative format and it and other material will go out in students’ folders in mid-May. If there is sufficient interest, a working group of parents will be formed and an on-site after

school program will be up and running in September. Ms. Ardizzone stressed that any program will be flexible and comprehensive. The current after school enrichment programs will probably be folded into the after school programs somehow and the Nagle Avenue Y program will continue with parents having the option to enroll their children in both programs. A parent who attended the session indicated that both presentations were very good and that each program has its pluses and minuses. OASIS emphasizes curriculum in their after school programming and they have a lot of expertise in after school programming because it's all they do. They do not have any programs in northern Manhattan and PS/IS 187 would be the first for them. The Y is deeply embedded in the neighborhood and committed to serving the community from cradle to grave. OASIS would offer drop in care while the Y would not.