

## **CURLEY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 8, 2012**

In attendance: *Dave Demerjian, (co-chair) Genevieve Day (co-chair), Kimberly Rand (treasurer), Lisa Foulger (co-secretary), Katie Finch, Chris Kollett, Jess Ormsby, Kristin Jurkoic, Jon Gummer, Melissa & Daryll Elow, Ingrid Escobar, Kristin Shapiro, Leah Barcan, Lindsey and Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, Bill Elsbree, Maria Torella, Noreen Power, Allison Bell, Molly Marino and Rebecca Neito*

### **SPC BUDGET REPORT - Kimberly Rand**

This year's budget will be largely based on last year's – both for earning and spending. SPC money will be spent on the music program, supporting the art teachers with supplies, field trips funds for teachers, field day, graduations (K2 & 8<sup>th</sup>), the teacher appreciation lunch and some misc, requests that come from teachers and school. The goal is to try to sync money in and money out, though there is a cushion in our account so we can spend a little more than we bring in. Fundraising goals are based on figures earned from last year's events – though this year we will be trying to bulk up the Friend-raiser (more on that in the fundraising report below).

### Report on Music Program – Bill Elsbree

Music at Curley has been mostly parent-funded for a long time and has been expanded in recent years to include 30 weeks of instruction and have an upper school presence. The Community Music Center of Boston provides the instruction, funded through the SPC (which pays roughly half of the cost), a BPS grant, the CMCB itself and the Curley School Budget. Sup. Carol Johnson has been raising money to increase arts in the schools and as part of the BPS grant one of our art teachers, Anna Youman, now acts as an “arts liason” to help oversee our arts programming and stayed connected with BPS's arts initiatives. Anna also oversees the relationship with Community Music Center, something an SPC parent has traditionally done. This year we now have 2 new music teachers (reportedly very good) teaching 18 classes in lower school and 4 in middle school (Middle school also has a Curley-staffed music instructor). With the exception of a few scheduling issues that need to be ironed out, the SPC feels like the program is working well, esp. with Anna Youman's oversight.

A **winter concert** is scheduled for Jan. 23., the SPC would like to host a small coffee reception for parents beforehand. Parents addressed the possibility of funding acoustical improvements in the space or at least looking into the options. Parents in room also brought up concerns about student behavior during school performances. Leah Barcan mentioned taking parental concerns about behavior back to School Site Council and the school administration. There were suggestions about possibly enlisting room parents as disciplinary helpers, providing incentives (paw-prints) given out for auditorium behavior and limiting the amount of time younger grades are in the auditorium.

## **FUNDRAISING REPORT** - Jess Orsmby and Molly Marino

### Fall Fling

They reported on the success of the Fall Fling, the event brought in roughly \$9K. Molly and Jess felt that the “Team” model used for organizing this event worked well. There were about 5-7 categories (raffle, baskets, food, music, etc) each with a team and a captain. This model makes planning more manageable for everyone involved. The goal is to keep up with this model for other fundraising events.

### Election Bake Sale

The Election Bake Sale was also a huge success, thanks to Sara Mallach’s organization and the school community coming together to work the sale and to donate baked goods. It brought in about \$1,700 for the SPC.

### Upcoming Fundraisers

The next fundraisers will be a ***Boing! Shopping Event*** and ***gift wrapping at Barnes and Noble*** in the Prudential Center. This year the owner of Boing! proposed an entire shopping day where a percentage of the day’s proceeds go to the school. The proposed day will be Tuesday, December 11. Other Centre Street shops may be interested in participating, so it can we can have a Curley Holiday shopping day. Folks should stay tuned for more details and plan their shopping accordingly. Volunteers will be needed to sign up for shifts at a table in the Prudential mall wrapping holiday gifts. The SPC historically has made a small amount of money from this event but it is a fun community-builder and folks were interested in continuing it.

The ***Friend-raiser letter*** will be going out soon. Dave D. is heading up this effort and is hoping to grow it from last year. The idea is to tap into the generosity of extended family and friends as year-end charitable giving deadlines approach. Willing parents will be asked to supply a few names and addresses and a personalized letter will be prepared for them. Parents just need to sign and mail the letters. Dave will be reaching out to the community to look for participation.

The ***Midway concert event***, featuring Curley parent musicians, will be in the spring rather than the fall. Folks interested in playing in it or helping to organize it can contact Molly Marino.

Noreen Power compiled a spreadsheet with the names solicited from the ***“FUNdraiser Volunteer Recruitment letter”***. The list should help the team/captain concept build as other events approach. This letter will continue to be a good method for casting a wider net of volunteers from the community and should be used in any time appropriate. This year it was sent home in start of school welcome packet and circulated at the Kindergarten welcome picnic as well as Open House night.

## **SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL REPORT - Leah Barcan**

Leah provided background of what the SSC is. The current group is trying to define the roles of the group. They are expected to vote on the uniform policy, review and discuss school budget and other school policy. They decided “school/home communication” is topic they would like to tackle this year. They would like to define the pathways for communication for parents, teachers and administration. They would like to facilitate more parental volunteer opportunities in the school.

The SSC would also like to serve as *representatives to the administration* if parents have questions and issues they would like to see addressed. They are also interested in helping the schools many groups communicate (SCC, SPC, Instructional Leadership Team, Faculty Senate, etc).

This year they also plan to help implement the *5-R’s plan for school climate and culture*. The school is in the process of approving this plan, which encompasses an anti-bully policy, something every school is required to have. Parents in the room had questions about is where in the process the plan currently is and are interested in getting it started. SSC will be putting together a booklet for parents about the policy.

*School uniforms* are also a topic of interest in the SSC since the community voted in favor of mandatory uniforms, but inconsistent enforcement (or what is seen by some parents as no enforcement) is a continual frustration for the community at large. SPC talked about how to keep parents informed about the importance of compliance. The school administration will be rolling out uniform incentive plan to come after Thanksgiving.

## **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS - Heshan Berents-Weeramuni**

Website (a website of the SPC) is large and thriving with a lot of visitors and traffic. There is an email list of 546 recipients. There is a desire to get more middle school parents on the email lists and getting them online in general. There are currently about 20 people with editing capabilities, which now presents a need for scheduling site updates. Heshan is going to coordinate a publishing scheduling so we don’t oversaturate the community with emails. Website is a good way to get external press for school. Dave D. mentioned that the Curley School can now blog on the Jamaica Plain Patch if we are interested. It could be a good way involve the middle school journalism group. Contact Dave if you have ideas for this.

## **SCHOOL YARD INITIATIVE - Rebecca Nieto and Genevieve Day**

Rebecca and Genevieve provided some history of the schoolyard improvement project that occurred a few years ago. A large piece of the project (the plan to transform the asphalt area behind upper school into a playing field) was dropped due to lack of funds. There is interest in the community in picking this up again. Grants have been written to multiple groups, but have unfortunately been denied.

Grant language and plans are already in place if more parents want help with sending out more grant applications. We also need to find more avenues for potential money. Talk about whether we can/should start some form of a capital campaign. We need to spread word to school community since there are new parents with more possible connections to funding sources and/or building resources. There was mention of Matt O'Malley's possible interest in helping the effort, making it a true community effort in Jamaica Plain, possible work with the Curley Foundation, Mayor Menino, BPS?

**BPS BUDGET UPDATE.** - *Heshan Berents-Weeramuni*

Heshan briefly update the room about the group working with BPS on ways to increase school funding. Now is the time that BPS can actually make changes to their Weighted Student Funding formula, and they have been open to some of the ideas our community has come up with for ways to increase funding for all students and improve schools across BPS. A group of Curley parents had a very positive meeting with Michael O'Neill, the Assistant Chair of the School Committee and BPS Assistant CFO, Seth Racine. They will continue to both lobby the school committee and stay in contact with these people. Contact Heshan if you would like to be included on the email list that addresses this effort.

**MISC. SPC BUSINESS**

Motion to alter time of SPC meetings

At the Principal's Breakfast there were some parents who said they can not attend evening meetings due to working second shifts. An idea was brought up to try alternating the monthly SPC meeting to an 8:30 am timeframe. There was consensus to try this for a few months and gage parental response and participation rate. A concern was raised about it becoming disjointed if a different group of parents attended the meetings, but the folks in the evening meeting mostly all thought they could also attend a morning one.

School preview tours

Doodle poll is up on the website to get tour volunteers for the School Preview Tours for Prospective Parents. The dates are Nov. 16, Dec. 7 and Jan 11, all at 9:00 am Sign up on the website if you can help, turnout for these tours is historically very high and it helps to have lots of small tours conducted simultaneously. A School Preview "Cheat Sheet" will be provided this year with talking points.