

December 2009 PTSA Meeting

The December meeting was called to order at 9:30. In attendance were: Jean B. Tompkins, Lauri Harder, Kim Breda, Diane Corcoran, Candy Wood, Anne Andrews, Margot Abrams, Phyllis Rhodes (Wasko), Reghan Diaz, Stephanie Belleveau, Marisa Schoenberg and Mary Pat Cieri. From the Administration and Staff: Mr. Tom McMorran, Ms. Anne Kipp, and Ms. Gina Pin.

PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Pin gave a presentation on "40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (ages 12-18)." She had a slide show and classified the assets by external vs. internal and went over various statistics of some of the assets. The study shows that the more assets a student has, the less risks they take and the more resilient they are. Joel Barlow has a student "Assets" group which meets once a week and will guide a 10th grade health class next month.

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. Tom McMorran said that it has been a sad couple of weeks at Barlow with several losses for the staff, students and families. He is encouraged by the outpouring of support and the sense of community at Joel Barlow.

The ERCC (Easton-Redding Community Coalition) sponsored volleyball player "Beat Bob," who presented his anti-substance abuse message at an all-school assembly last month.

The budget process has begun and Mr. McMorran said we are in a tight spot. Four out of our five fixed costs will be going up and they are negotiating on those right now. The total student population at Barlow should crest at about 1000 in 2012 and then decline to approximately 780-790 by 2018. It is very difficult to estimate these figures and especially so in a poor economy.

Minutes of the November meeting were approved. (Abrams/Wood).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Staff Luncheons: Wednesday, January 20th is the winter staff luncheon. The committee is deciding between caterers (O'Neill's/Georgetown Saloon). They have a \$3,000 budget (that is divided between the winter and spring luncheons; this one costs more because of the hot food required). There will be about 165 people attending. The committee will be doing it a little differently this year by not asking for salad donations. They will ask volunteers to donate desserts and water, and to set up, serve, and clean up. An email requesting volunteers will go out shortly.

Reflections: The deadline for submissions is January 6. Kim reports that Claire-Anne has distributed forms to the Main Office. Forms will also be on-line very soon.

Mini Grants: Reghan reviewed 4 requests for mini-grants from faculty. We voted in favor of giving \$250 to Dr. Nuzzo for CTASR 2009-2010 (Breda/Belleveau). We voted in favor of giving Ms. Desmarais \$250 for the Model United Nations Team (Abrams/Wood). We voted in favor of giving \$211.00 to Mr. DeAngelo to purchase a documentary named "In 500 words or less" (Corcoran/Andrews). We are having the Arts Foundation, headed by Phyllis Rhodes, look into funding the mini-grant request from Ms. Bailey for the Murals Club. Phyllis will report back to the PTSA in January.

FOCUS: Diane delayed the last deadline for several weeks and then had to get it out. The Nov/Dec issue is now on-line via the PTSA link on the Barlow website. It is 12 pages long and includes some new features, a teacher article/profile, (about and by) Jacqueline Whiting about her "paper-less" classroom, and an article/profile of an X Period Club, written by student Brittany Calzone about INTERACT, whose members participate in community service projects. Also included are 2 pages of photos from "Suessical", the fall musical (and a big hit!) performed at Barlow in November. The next Focus due date is the last week of January.

Arts Foundation: The Troup de Jour will be putting on a performance (including vacationing college students) on January 9th at the Redding Community Center. Flyers and announcements to follow. The PTSA will be a co-sponsor, and some of the money raised will benefit one of our projects.

NEW BUSINESS

We had a discussion about a memorial gift for Jean M. Tompkins. Jean, the mother of 2 Barlow students, passed away unexpectedly on Dec 4. She was an active PTSA member over the years, and this fall she was working with the Transition Committee, headed by Colleen Joyce. Several suggestions were made (donate books in her name to the library, a book award at Award Night, JBHS Scholarship Award) and we will decide at the next PTSA meeting in January. There will be a local memorial service at St. Mary's in Ridgefield on December 16th at 10:15 AM.

We discussed an upcoming series of events for parents and students on the topic of "Alternatives to 4-Year College". Colleen is planning an evening event in early January, featuring a panel of Barlow graduates who took a "gap year" before attending college. Our February 9 PTSA meeting will feature a member of the Guidance Department who will give an overview of the many alternatives to 4 year college. Events and dates will be advertized in the new year.

Kim talked about a plan to hold a "Coffee with the Principal" and said that Mr. McMorrnan was interested and may also bring in several administrators to answer questions.

We discussed other ideas for future presentations and one topic was the five year planning strategy for the school. We may also consider a presentation on gender differences in communication.

Reghan Diaz said that Leon Karvalis of the Region 9 Board of Ed would like to attend the next PTSA meeting, and it was also suggested that we invite the new District Superintendant, who begins January 4. Kim will organize a "Meet and Greet" in place of a presentation for the January 12 meeting.

Mary Pat gave out a copy of the budget. No review.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20. The next meeting will take place January 12th from 9:30-11am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Harder
Recording Secretary