

MINUTES



Birchtree Parent Guild

Mission of Birchtree Charter School: to nurture and promote the development of healthy, responsible, and creative human beings.

Mission of Birchtree Parents Guild: to support the Birchtree Charter School and its teachers for the betterment of the children attending the School.

The Birchtree Learning Plan includes that:

- The personal behavior of adults and teachers at BCS will be an example to the pupils.
- Each class will be a learning community for respect, tolerance, and understanding.
- BCS is designed to function as a living system that balances initiative and accountability. All teachers, staff, and participants will be asked to make a commitment to develop him or herself along with the pupils.

Priorities of the Birchtree Parents Guild: 1-Rhythm 2-Communication 3-Community Growth
4-Universal Giving 4-Providing Financial Support 5-Connect To The Larger Community

Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Time: 3:50-5:30

BPG members present: Heather Lee, Laura Sampson, Amy Sharrer, Anna Folsom, Paula Werner, Tiffany Kent, & Nancy Black.

Also attending: Gena Chastain

- I.** Heather called meeting to order and motioned to approve the agenda Amy moved to pass; Laura seconded it; all in favor: motion passed.
- II.** Heather motioned to approve the minutes. Laura moved to pass the minutes from the March 19th ; Nancy seconded it; all in favor: motion passed. Amy moved to pass the minutes from the March 26th ; Paula seconded it; all in favor: motion passed.
- III.** Board Membership.
 - A. Heather entertained motion to elect Tiffany Kent as an elected BPG member. Laura moved to elect Tiffany as an elected BPG member; Nancy seconded it; all in favor: motion passed.
 - B. Amy nominated Tiffany Kent be elected BPG treasurer. Laura seconded the nomination. It was an Unanimous vote electing Tiffany Kent as BPG treasurer.
- IV.** Standing Monthly Reports
 - A. Parent Partnership – Gena
 - Pentathlon-

Mrs. Levesque, Mrs. Tran, Mrs. Hill, and Mrs. Jones are in the beginning stages of planning for the 5th grade Pentathlon. This year, Birchtree will host the pentathlon; it is scheduled for May 8th and will take place at the Sherrod soccer field behind Academy Charter School. I will be working closely with Mrs. Levesque and Mrs. Jones as they plan this fun event.

- Intent to enroll-

Intent to enroll forms are due April 9th. I have been gathering enrollment information from our wufoo site, inserting it into an excel spreadsheet, and preparing it for the lottery. The lottery is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16th at 7:00 PM.

- Kindergarten Roundup-

Mrs. Busbey and I will attend the Mat-Su School District Kindergarten Roundup at Larson Elementary Thursday, April 17th from 5:30-7:30 PM.

- Nonviolent Communication Seminar-

Nonviolent Communication Seminar will be held at the Palmer Senior Center, April 25th 26th, And 27th from 9-5. 1-2 credits may be available for indistrict employees. The seminar will cost \$35 for one day or \$75 for three days. Space is limited to 100 people. We are asking our community to RSVP to Birchtree to secure their spot. Kirsten Gerrish asked Mrs. Tran, Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Phillips to consider using this event as a fundraising opportunity. I have not heard back from the teachers regarding whether they will participate and to what degree they will participate in this event.

- Spring Concert-

4-8th grade spring concert will be held at the Wasilla Bible Church on Monday, April 28th from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Mrs. Fry and Mrs. Eddings request performers to arrive at 6:00 PM to prepare for the concert. Like the winter concert, Mrs. Fry and Mrs. Eddings will hold a rehearsal on Monday, April 28th (teachers will accompany their students on the field trip). Rehearsal information:

Board the bus departing Birchtree at 12:30 PM.

Arrive at Wasilla Bible Church at 1:00ish Rehearse concert until 2:10 PM Depart Wasilla Bible Church at 2:15 Arrive back at Birchtree at 2:45ish

Concert Information:

All call at 6:00 PM Concert begins at 6:30 PM Ends at 7:45 ish

- It was discussed that we are unterutilizing the Volunteer Software. Heather has access to allow the BPG to use it more
- Carrie Rainavick will be doing Box Tops
- A 2014-2015 School Calendar will be published

B. APC- Anna

- **Principal Report:** Cathy and Kirsten Garish have planned the Non-Violent communication workshop to be held on April 25th-27th at the Palmer Senior Center.

A flyer was in the Friday update, and has been shared with Winterberry, Anchorage Waldorf and Kirsten's midwife community. Saturday the focus is adult-adult communication, Sunday is adult to children communication. Please consider attending.

Also the APC has ordered two books for a book study; *Creativity in Education* by Rene Querido and *Understanding Waldorf Education* by Jack Petrash. Not sure at this time if the book study will be open for others.

- **Prairie, (Waldorf mentor):** Shared some great insights on evaluation methods for principal and teachers that are commonly used at other Waldorf schools. Help build trust and community.
- **New Business/Action Items:**
 1. Increase Pupil-Teacher Ratio for grades K-8 (Approved)
18:1 in kindergarten, 24:1 in grades 1-6, and 20:1 in grades 7-8
 2. Thursday Early Release for 2014-2015 school year (Approved based on staff recommendations.)
- Please add to BPG agenda voting to allow two co-liaison positions from the APC. An APC would still only be allowed one vote on the BPG even if they had 2 liaisons. This needs to be made official so we are acting in accordance of our bi-laws. Thanks!

C. Finance –Heather



See Scanned report.

D. Parent Engagement

- i. Pastries for Parents
 - Pastries for Parents May 2, 2014. This is the last Pastries for the year.
- ii. PITCREW – Laura
 - made nothing--spent nothing
 - two meals and two cornbread were delivered
 - addendum to last months report- we used 2 bags of chili for the Simplicity Parenting evening.
 - 4 pans of enchiladas remain
 - one bag of cornbread remain
- iii. Charter School Outreach-Heather
 - Great Alaska Schools contacted Heather to increase base student allocation.
 - Heather and Laura plan to go to Open Meeting May 1, 2014 **Was this Winterberry?**

- Alternative school fair briefly discussed
 - Heather agreed to attend staff meeting to bring up curriculum night with event calendar.
- iv. Volunteer participation proposal-Jennifer

Proposal for New Volunteer Participation Support / Procedure

The Parent Guild proposes that a new structure for parent classroom volunteering be put into place.

1. Purpose:

1. To make the work of lead classroom volunteers easier and more effective for both volunteers and teachers.
2. Encourage and inspire parent participation in general – what is your passion?
3. Give each grade representation on a school-wide board (the Parent Guild) for communication, planning and creation of events.
4. Facilitate communication and rhythm school-wide
5. Inspire a culture of giving and of personal growth and renewal within the parent volunteer body.

2. Proposal:

I. Each classroom identifies the following volunteers:

One parent who is the Parent Guild representative. This parent is then a BPG board member. They would share the position with another parent volunteer from the other class of the same grade. They could attend parent guild meeting together or alternate meetings as they see fit. The grade would have one vote.

One lead volunteer for each kind of activity engaged in by the classroom as determined by the classroom teacher. See the For Teachers paragraph (3C) below for an example.

II. Staff participation in monthly Parent Guild meetings: Each month a different teacher (not one of the BPG members) would attend the monthly BPG meeting. This schedule determined at the beginning of the year for the semester and in January for 2nd semester with a sign-up sheet. No work is required other than participation at the meeting. This is for input, awareness and communication.

III. Board member calls: Birchtree families receive a check-in phone call from one Parent Guild member and one APC member each year.

IV. Informed Consent by Parents:

Parents are informed of this new policy in the Parent Handbook, at parent meetings, during Registration and in the Friday update

Everyone understands expectations and intent well ahead of time and have the tools to fulfill them, i.e. It is universally understood that volunteer hours are important for grants and to demonstrate school support after 36 hour requirement is met. Keep logging hours. Demonstration of how to do it from own computer through helpcounter. Demonstration of kinds of things that can be logged – time at school, time at home, travel time, money spent on supplies. These all demonstrate volunteer support.

Each families' ability to serve and individual passion to be honored and encouraged. This could look like a commitment to get kids to bed early and at same time each day, to arrive to school on time and avoid screen time during the week.

It could look like contributing to the school during school hours or with special events after school hours or with special skills outside of school. Anything that contributes to Birchtree counts.

3. Implementation

A. Birchtree Parent Handbook.

Handbook includes a page outlining the volunteer schedule. Here is possible verbiage:

"Parents are required to give 36 hours of volunteer service to the school per family per year. To facilitate the most effective and positive participation, please spend a moment or two thinking about your own interests and passion. You will be asked at registration to tell us. This will be put into the helpcounter database so that opportunities to contribute that are inspiring to you can be identified and communicated to you and others. Birchtree is committed to cultivating a culture of giving. How your family contributes is entirely up to you. For some families, participation at school is inspiring. For others projects away from school or providing items needed at school is a function they are happy to provide. Some families have special skills that require work outside of school such as organizing activities or providing

professional skills. For other families bringing a commitment to early and regular bedtimes, homework complete, to school on time and avoidance of screen time during the week is most of what they can give. This, in and of itself, is a contribution to the community though no volunteer hours can be logged for it.

Your volunteer hours are important to the school even after you have fulfilled the minimum 36 hours per family requirement. Volunteer hours logged into Birchtree's database demonstrate community support for the school. This is a powerful and graphic demonstration of how many hours and dollars it takes to run the school and how much it is valued by the community. Grant providers, especially large ones, use these statistics to approve grant requests. Please log all your volunteer hours. They speak volumes for how much a Birchtree education is valued by its families. You can log hours for time spent at school, for time spent on Birchtree projects at home, for travel time if it is specifically for a Birchtree activity only and for money spent on items contributed to Birchtree. To log volunteer hours from home, click on the helpcounter link included with a Friday Update email and follow the instructions. If you have trouble, ask at the front desk for assistance. To log hours for money you have spent, count one hour for each \$10 you've spent and input it into the "____" category.

Each Birchtree classroom will identify a parent volunteer who will be the Parent Guild Representative for their classroom for the year and a lead parent for areas of activity in your classroom as determined by your teacher, such as communication, field trips, handwork, cooking, festivals etc. See your teacher for the specific jobs in your classroom. On September 10th, there will be a drawing in each classroom to fill any lead volunteer positions remaining vacant. Please assist your class teacher to identify a candidate for each position for whom this form of volunteer service is inspiring. If all else fails, your name is drawn and you do not want to service in this way, you will be asked to find another class parent to replace you within two weeks.

During the course of the year it is the intention of Birchtree's governing board and parent guild board to call each family to personally check-in. If you have something that you would like to share before that time, board member contact info is available at the front desk if not on the website itself.

In an effort to create rhythm, fun and sustenance for all our families and parents, the calendar this year includes more community events. They are open to the greater community. You are welcome to invite your friends and family.

B. At Registration, Volunteer Participation Table. Each family:

Identifies their "passion"

Signs a waiver to receive phone calls or other communication regarding school volunteer issues.

Confirms best contact form, time and numbers

Are informed that each class will appoint the lead classroom volunteers as listed in paragraph I (Parent Guild rep, field trips, fundraising.... Etc. whatever it is that the teacher has set up. See "For Teachers" below) .

Are informed that if there are parent lead volunteer roles that have not been filled by September 10, there will be a drawing in each class to fill the slots and that they may be responsible for finding the appropriate class parent for that job.

Are informed that they should receive a telephone check-in call from a board member something during the year.

C. For Teachers:

Do they understand the new volunteer participation system? Are they happy about it?

Do they have a system in their classroom for implementing it so that it supports them and their parents? Do they want someone to be present at their class meeting to help them explain? Do they have a drawing box for the Sept 10th volunteer drawing, a table for the name and contact number for each volunteer role in the classroom; information on what is required of parent guild membership and the other volunteer job descriptions.

The specific volunteer job positions in each classroom will be tailored to teacher requirement except that each class will have one parent guild representative. This table is an example.

1 st semester	September-December	Phone number/contact
Parent Guild Representative (for entire year)		
Communication lead		
field trip lead		
cooking lead		
Shelter lead		
Fibers organizer		
Festival leader		
2 nd semester	January- May	
Communication lead		
field trip lead		
cooking lead		
Shelter lead		
Fibers organizer		
farming organizer (spring)		
Festival leader		

D. September 10 School-wide volunteer drawings in each classroom:

Put date on calendar. Give notice and encouragement to fill spots two weeks in a row in advance of the drawing date in Friday Update. Emphasize identifying ones' passion in terms of volunteer service. Make sure each teacher has drawing boxes / system for doing the drawing on Sept 10th. Thank each lead volunteer in each classroom in Friday Update afterwards, including vacant spots if there are any in each classroom.

E. School Calendar / Friday Update

Calendar is available online and includes all scheduled volunteer events and opportunities, i.e. Parent Guild calendar, school calendar, APC calendar, classroom calendars.

F. Development of this proposal

1st: BPG approval before submission to others for feedback.

2nd.: Executive council ok (Pedagogical council, Admin, Staff)

3rd: Class volunteers who have logged more than 20 hours called for input.

4th: Confirm with teachers that they support this volunteer structure and are excited to see it functioning in their individual classrooms. Do they need support for setting up the system in their classrooms?

V. Recently Completed Events

A. Pay It Forward/Month of Service – Amy

- Donations are being collected.
- The children are getting involved with service.

VI. Calendar Review & Budget Draft

- 2014-2015 Budget Worksheet was started
- Finance/Budget Committee will meet and draft Budget for approval at May 14, 2014

VII. Current & Upcoming Events

A. May Faire – Laura

- It was decided that the May Faire and Spring Craft fair would be combined May 3, 2014 11-4pm.
- Amy is in charge of Spring Market along with third grade-booths prices are set and we are proceeding along
- Jennifer is in charge of music and we have a few lined up-Music will be inside because musicians and instruments suffer in the cold--if it is GLORIOUS AND BRIGHT we may have some outside
- I am lining up demo artists to work on their art for everyone to see--they will not have booths but may have a few pieces for sale and have cards to hand out
- Maypole is 4th grade this year--Anna and Diep will be in charge
- Some leads have already contacted me with booth info
- Laura is planning a meeting this week/next week to make contact with leads and gel brainstorm their booths-
- Planned activities and booths at this time.
- THIRD-Spring Market classes combined
- FOURTH-Maypole-drinks--hair wreaths-both classes combined
- SEVENTH-bonfire
- DEMOS
- PAINTER
- CARVER
- MEDEVAL REENACTMENT
- SPINNER--possible
- Available to be hosted
- bake sale
- lunch sale
- games booth 2-3
- **craft booth 2-3**

B. Spring Craft Fair-Amy

- Not many vendors at this time.
- 3rd grade market will be during the May Faire.

C. Gear Swap-Nancy

- This is to be tabled at this time.
- A possible on-line gear swap or bulliten board was discussed for the future.

D. Summer Arts Camp- Heather

- Summer Arts Camp is coming together with Volunteers coming forward to work in areas of need.
- **Camp Dates:** June 9-13; ½ day sessions, am or pm; may sign up for one am and one pm session
- **Camp Fees:** \$125/week for one session

- **Camp topics/Instructors:** Cake Decorating – Brandt Bowen
- Woodworking – Dan Klauder
- Handwork: Knitting/Crochet – Danielle Terry
- Handwork: Wet/dry needle felting – Anna Folsom
- Watercolor Painting – Amy Sharrer
- Acrylic Painting – Victoria Peterson
- Adventure Camp – Jack Horner
- Choir/Advanced Recorder – Kyle Vandershier
- Guitar, small group lessons – Lora Mahoney
- Mural Painting – Anna Folsom
- **Registration:** Thanks to Jack Horner, we have online registration as a link to the Birchtree website, with ability to pay via PayPal.
- **CAMP PLANNING: see Coordinator Contact Information**
- Woohoo! We have some amazing volunteer Coordinators for this camp. Thank you Heather Betts, Anna Folsom, Kristi Shea, and Dakari Ralph, as well as Theresa Isaac, for taking on these roles.
- **We are still in need of one Coordinator:** Let me know if you know of anyone who might be interested in doing this on-site position.
- **Hospitality Coordinator** – This coordinator would be responsible for providing a hospitality room for instructors and volunteers only during the camp– some light snacks and drinks and a quiet place to escape to plan before and after lunch or the camp session.

VIII. Calendar Check-In

- A. May Faire May 3, 2014
- B. Reports due April 4, 2014
- C. Next Regular BPG meeting May 14, 2014. Time to be announced
- D. Agenda requests
 - Budget Approval
 - Need to have vote bylaw change for APC co-liaison
 - Changing the Mission

IX. Meeting Adjoined Laura moved; Paula seconded. Meeting was closed with a quote from Rudolf Steiner read aloud by the group.