

**Muraco Elementary School Parents Association
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2012**

Approvals

- November 2011 Minutes unanimously approved
- The use of surplus funds to pay for an LCD projector for Music Teacher, Kit Walpole, unanimously approved

Committee Updates

Annual Appeal

The annual appeal total stands at \$18,005, with an additional \$1,675 expected in matching gifts, so at \$19,680 we stand just short of our goal of \$20,000. Another email blast will go out soon reminding people that it's never too late to donate!

Curriculum Enhancement

According to the treasurer's budget spreadsheet, to date eleven staff members have already used all or some of their funds. \$1,606.01 of the total budget has been spent with \$3,743.00 remaining. A second letter, with the current budget included, was sent to the teachers/staff via Constant Contact over the weekend reminding them about their available Curriculum Enhancement funds.

MASP

MESPA is excited to announce a new MASP offering. Math Club, offered to 4th and 5th graders, will start next Monday and run through the end of this MASP session. Students will have another chance to enroll in the spring session.

BJ's membership fundraiser

Kim Cohen has been in contact with the representative at BJ's Wholesale Club and will kick off the membership fundraiser in the beginning of April.

Science Fair

The Science Fair is scheduled for March 7 and 8. There are 100 registrations so far. We are still looking for a replacement for next year as this is Lillian Busse's last year at Muraco.

WFEE Update

A big thank you to MESPA - you were the first school parents' organization to get in your information for the Trivia Bee on February 8th. We still have some room for new teams and are looking forward to this year's fifth grade competition. A random

drawing will choose fifth graders interested in participating. All are welcome at the Trivia Bee to cheer on their schools!

Staff Appreciation Breakfast

We are light on volunteers for the upcoming appreciation breakfasts. Please go online if you are interested in helping. Also, Suzanne Leslie always appreciates a hand in setting up the breakfasts.

Mentoring Program

The Mentoring program is underway for 4th and 5th graders. We had roughly 100 kids sign up, and the mentoring committee is making the matches now. We plan to have all matches made by Jan 27th, notify parents of their child's match, and kick off the mentoring process. The night of sharing is set for April 9th.

5th Grade Enrichment

There are trips planned next week for 5th grade to MIT outreach center where our kids will learn to build mechanical Lego cars, with the guidance of Mechanical Engineering grad students from MIT.

Discussions & Announcements

Parent To Parent

Karen Fagan, Co-President of Parent To Parent, described how the organization was founded in 1982 by then McCall principal Vandy French to facilitate networking among parents of adolescents. Since then, it has grown, becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1997, and representing a cross-section of the Winchester parent community, from parents of infants to parents of high schoolers. Parent to Parent hosts a few speakers a year (both local and national speakers) and previews the presentations before inviting them to Winchester. This fall, Parent To Parent hosted Dr. Robert Brooks who spoke on the topic of raising resilient children, and Dr. Richard Weissbourd, who spoke about raising happy and successful children of character. **There will be another program on February 9th on body image and nutrition (7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Next Door Theater on Cross Street).**

Parent To Parent also co-sponsors Book Groups with the Winchester Public Library. The most recent book group was on January 19th and discussed "The Way of Boys" by Anthony Rao.

There are also informational programs, such as the annual Evening With The Superintendent, which took place on January 23rd. Typically Superintendent will give a state of the schools address and discuss other timely topics, such as the school budget and other school-related issues (like redistricting and MCAS results). This

program, like all Parent to Parent programs, is for parents-only.

The Parent To Parent website, <http://www.parenttoparentwinchester.org> contains information on past and current programs, as well as other resources for parents, including “Pearls of Wisdom.”

Parent To Parent would like to have a Muraco representative on its board so please email Karen if you are interested. Her email address is: kmcfagan@comcast.net.

Winchester Multicultural Network

Susan Lewis, representing the Winchester Multicultural Network, gave a brief history of the organization, mentioning how it was founded in 1991 by Winchester resident Sandy Thompson to promote the understanding and appreciation of diversity. The Network runs several **ongoing programs: International Connections**, which is a drop-in gathering held at the Winchester Public Library on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m.; the **Lunch Bunch**, which is a monthly lunch held at different ethnic restaurants in the area and **English Conversation groups**, held on Monday mornings or Wednesday evenings.

In addition, the Network sponsors many **one-time events**: the recent family celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (partnered with FAN) and the upcoming celebration of Black History Month, with a presentation at St. Mary’s Church by the sister of the filmmaker, Henry Hampton, who produced the famous documentary, *Eyes on the Prize* (2/12/12).

Finally, the Network also sponsors (or co-sponsors) several **workshops**: a workshop focused on combating racism with Paul Marcus of Community Change (1/25/12), a community workshop called Winchester in Transition (2/11/12) and an annual community workshop (3/9 and 3/10).

For more information about the Network, visit <http://wmcn.org/>.

Redistricting Committee

Gaurav Chaudhary is the Muraco representative to the Redistricting Committee. Please feel free to contact him with any questions about the process or to give him your ideas or feedback. Questions and/or comments may also be submitted to the Redistricting Committee through the Committee’s website: <http://www.winchesterredistricting.com/>.

Amazon Rewards Program

The Rewards program has been a huge success! Our online shopping during the holidays brought cash back to Muraco. Thank you to Kristen Bellaire for finding the program and promoting it!

Traffic Discussion

A parent noted that drivers were using driveways on Prince Avenue to turn around so that they could head north on Washington Street after leaving Muraco. In some cases, drivers were observed nearly hitting walkers as they turned into the driveways.

A further discussion was held about parking tickets that were given on Math Morning. It was suggested that a reminder be sent on occasions when the parking lot is expected to be crowded so that parents can anticipate the crunch and take steps to avoid parking illegally. It was also suggested that a police officer might come while parents are still parking to prevent illegal parking from occurring in the first place (and thus precluding the need for ticketing).

Next MESPA Meeting

The next MESPA meeting will be on Wednesday, February 15, 2012, most likely in the evening.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, February 2	Early Release
Thursday, February 2	Muraco Ice Skating Party (1:30 – 2:50 p.m.)
Wednesday, February 8	WFEE Trivia Bee (7:00-9:30 p.m.)
Monday, Feb 20- Friday, Feb 24	School Vacation
Friday, March 2	Muraco Rock Hop