

## **GSF 5/18/18 Parent Forum Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Heather Moore, Katie Pohl, Will Klesius, Kim Goodhope, Katie Klesius, Kathy Brown, Alison Rabb, Elaina Shelton, Kristin Maguire, Kyri McClellan, Ashley Walter, Kelly Merrick, Keala Landry, Jaclyn Guelfi, Adam Treewater, Karena Whorton, Molly Nute, Gina Hagen

### **Welcome @ 9:04am**

(Kyri McClellan) Please fill out Volunteer Survey.

Wanted to take a moment to thank our outstanding volunteers for recent successes: Auction - Keala Landry and Kathryn Elia, Teacher Appreciation - Tori Welch, Son's Night - Shannon Myers and Gina Moore, Yearbook - Heather Moore.

As we've all seen, parent volunteerism is dwindling so we created a Parent Engagement Committee to address the issue. Kristin Maguire and Ashley Walter will provide an update on the committee's work and findings.

(Ashley Walter) The main obstacles we came across during our research are:

- Overwhelming number of opportunities
- Not sure how to get involved
- Lack of confidence that the opportunities are prioritized accordingly
- Scheduling difficult for working parents
- Too many communications for volunteer outreach

Because of these obstacles, the same people are volunteering and we are struggling to pull new volunteers in.

(Elaina Shelton) Ms. Rogers class has seen success using a volunteer platform this year.

(Kristin McGuire) Many parents are struggling to participate because of the large time commitment of many of the volunteer opportunities. There is a lack of awareness about volunteer opportunities with smaller time commitments. We are trying to bring awareness to why people volunteer. There are many opportunities - condense them and clarify expectations.

We are planning a communications campaign for the fall to better demonstrate and educate the broader Glenwood community about volunteer opportunities.

(Kathy Brown) People are concerned that if they sign up to volunteer once (e.g., drive for a field trip) they will be required to volunteer on a regular basis. It would be good to let them know that they can volunteer when it works for their schedule (e.g., 1-2X/year vs. weekly for centers). Also we should clarify the time commitment for each volunteer job.

(Ashley Walter) It's more effective when teachers or room parents reach out directly to parents.

(Kyri McClellan) Role of room parent is key. We should select early in the year, train, empower and support. Parents are more likely to read emails from their room parent/teacher.

(Ashley Walter) Need to educate Kindergarten families better with when we need volunteer participation and how. Explain the lifecycle of volunteering.

(Kyri McClellan) We are continuing to evolve how we educate incoming Kindie parents - the expectation, the time commitment and what it looks like. We had more Kindergarten volunteers in the classroom but not as many for school wide events

(Elaina Shelton) It helps to give focus to volunteers because it's a long stretch at Glenwood. Painting a bigger picture of the lifecycle as well as clear expectations (work hours), etc. helps people to optimize their volunteer time. Gives parents a benchmark.

(Kyri McClellan) We are trying to be sensitive to the reality that this is a public school too vs. requirements of a private school (preschool).

(Karena Whorton) When we are talking about volunteer opportunities we need to ensure we use specific language "we need help with breakdown at the auction" vs. "we need help with the auction" to make more manageable.

(Gina Hagen) If you are looking for a lead, provide specific information and let them know what support structure/framework is available. Important to talk about what differentiates Glenwood from other public schools - what is the immediate value. Parent volunteers are the engine that drive those successes.

(Kyri McClellan) If there's one message everyone leaves this meeting with: Glenwood is the only elementary school in San Rafael that offers science and computing. We also offer PE, art and music although other elementary schools have some aspect of this.

(Heather Moore) Need to quantify the total number of volunteer hours we need each school year and then break out by individual parent (e.g., 20 hours per parent will meet our goal). Provide visuals for parents (e.g., Thrive thermometer but for volunteer hours)

(Katie Pohl) We could have volunteer awards to show appreciation.

(Alison Rabb) A lot of people come to Glenwood because of established parent community so people assume it's taken care of. Need to set the expectation in Kindergarten.

(Kyri McClellan) Validate prior commitment at preschool and let people get their footing. Explain the volunteer cycle (e.g., when classroom volunteers are needed vs. fundraising).

(Ashley Walter) We will communicate to incoming Kindie parents at orientation on June 6th.

(Kyri McClellan) We will also be sending out an end of the year communication to existing parents that summarizes what we've learned and what is changing (e.g., community building to family engagement) and signal that we're evolving (condensing fundraising).

(Karena Whorton) There is an unspoken assumption that moms are the ones that volunteer. We need to better clarify that there are ways (besides Dad's club) that fathers can get involved so that it's a family affair.

(Heather Moore) It's helpful when centers isn't the same parents every week - provide flexibility to let more people get involved.

(Ms. Goodhope) Need to know what the year plan is to show volunteer needs over the year.

(Mr. Treewater) Training for centers is important - so could do a monthly training ahead of time.

(Elaina Shelton) Offering flexibility with volunteerism in classrooms will take someone to manage.

(Molly Nute) Helpful for each classroom to have a volunteer hub as well as a school-wide hub for volunteer opportunities.

(Kyri McClellan) Need standardization vs. individual volunteer programs/hubs for 19 different classrooms...as well as all of GSF programs and volunteer needs. Looking at systems we can put in place for fall.

(Heather Moore) Beginning of the year survey with availability so we can go back to people when the need arrives.

(Ashley Walter) Yes, we'll do this.

(Kim Goodhope) I consistently hear that people don't understand why they need to volunteer because their parents weren't involved when they were going through school. Need to explain what we need and why.

(Ashley Walter) Would like to have ambassadors that don't recruit for money and time but are there to explain needs and current environment.

(Kim Goodhope) G3 - Glenwood Grandparent Group - tried to get database going but need to formalize and move to an easy platform.

(Alison Rabb) Grandparent's Day (Special Friends) to get Grandparents involved early.

(Kyri McClellan) Important to engage people in person to person contact instead of relying on email communication.

(Kim Goodhope) What about a "Try It" day to get people to try out volunteering to take away fear or uncertainty?

(Elaina Shelton) Need to ensure more formalized/standardized training for the room parents.

(Kyri McClellan) Both Thrive and Auction were very successful and are allowing us to condense fundraising activities. It's a risk but we're responding to what people we've asked for and raising only what we need. Also we had an update on MPR project -

came in 40% over budget even with competitive bid. Still going to be built with all of the features we asked for but our GSF organization may need to help with some funding. We are in good financial health.

(Molly Nute) We still have some end of the year volunteer opportunities: Art Show, Field Day

**Parent Forum Meeting Meeting ended @ 10:01am**