

**Parent Group Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2011**

Approval of agenda and minutes

Joe – Minutes will be posted on the Flash

Root Down Presentation

Root Down came to present on their catering program and brought sample meals to pass around. This is Root Down's third year working with private and charter schools. Meals are the same at every school. 25 to 30 different lunches rotate through the course of about six weeks. The most popular items come up more frequently. Chicken Noodle soup is the most popular recipe. Meals are a balance of protein, whole grains, vegetables, and fruit, and milk and juice. Names of students/classroom are written on the container. The containers are made of 100 percent compostable corn product and the sporks are also recycled and compostable. Root Down works with some schools that have composting on site. The company has worked at Aquarian and Rilke School developing gardens there, and for the first time this year, was able to use their own locally grown vegetables from the school gardens. Parent fills out order form for student and Root Down handles billing and checks. They make sure lunches are delivered daily and can accommodate last minute requests and field trips.

A website where meals can be ordered is under construction and it is hoped that it will be up by November to do away with paper ordering process. They are also building an iPhone application so parents can order on their phones. High rate of student use – 40% average at every school they serve eat Root Down meals every day. Rilke is 80%. The kids love it and actually eat it.

Root Down serves about 300 lunches per day. Typically they need around 40 per day per school to cover driving, and other costs. They have only dropped one school because the school was not consistently ordering and not sure why. Given that Steller is 7-12 grade – variety and size options are available. This would be Root Down's first MS/HS. They are going to serve at Grace Christian and Anchorage Baptist Temple schools. Junior and larger sizes are available, measured by ounces. Root Down's owner also owns a restaurant so he is experienced at balancing things. A full size lunch meal means kids don't need sugar and are satisfied. Large lunch is \$5.00 if regular order, or \$5.50 if ordered on random days. \$6.00 if parents place an order at the last minute.

The school could decide the best delivery point, maybe the kitchen? Kids could go to kitchen to get it. With larger schools Root Down sends a list rather than names on container because everyone would get the same size option. We offer a vegetarian option every day. They have no vegetarian menu, but whatever the meal of the day is, the meat is soy, or vegetarian version. Boost up vegetarian part. Tofu, soy products – they just switch out protein for vegetables and other proteins. Meals do not need refrigeration or heat. Delivered in special bag, drop off close to lunch time. Root Down is business partners with Rilke, Aquarian and Winterberry. Last year Root Down donated about \$12,000 back into those schools.

A comment was made that Steller is active in gardening. Root Down could work with the school and could incorporate some of veggies grown at Steller into the lunches. Owner teaches culinary classes, gardening and composting. Garden club at Aquarian works with Root Down. Owner spends about 10 hours a week in school gardening effort, and his staff also works with gardening clubs. The school grown veggies are put into the lunches so kids to see the full cycle. During the summer, Root Down took over gardens for schools and took care of them. Do worm composting indoors. Root Down would be interested in teaching an intensive and having interns. Steller would be interested in composting coffee grounds from TOB. Owner's restaurant is called "South" – it's a small restaurant serving southern comfort foods. Root Down has been nominated for 18 awards, including entrepreneur of the year, green star award nomination, etc. Restaurant closed right now for remodeling. The business is expanding rapidly.

What is happening at Steller!

- Principal and Staff Report - Phillip read principal's report as Dale was not present. Phillip was also present as parent representative to the parent group. Dale's report was written and read. A digital copy was not available from Phillip. Principal's report included: Drama starts this month. There is mixed feedback on having intensives at the beginning of the year and staff will be looking at input from students. Some were very ready to get back to academics and have a shorter orientation. Legislative grant requests not in yet, but Dale is asking for a rock wall for the gym, upgraded lighting and a greenhouse. Drama and choir are off-set so students can go to both
- Advisory Group Report – basic beginning of year stuff, electing officers, discussion about the kitchen policy which came to the ad group as a proposal from the parent group at the end of last year. The policy was approved for implementation. The policy is about how to purchase supplies. There was previously no policy for a process to get the supplies, now someone will be assigned to do that and on a regular basis. The supplies are used for TOB, fundraisers, BBQs, intensives, etc. Food handling policies, use of Kaladi machine, etc, all addressed in policy. Goals for upcoming year were discussed
- Auction - auction planning is moving along well, with dedicated people working on different aspects. The auction is **November 12**. It's about fundraising and community. Items are solicited for the auction. Volunteers will be needed to help on the day of the event, to organize advisory group baskets, and there will also be some work to be done the week before. Auction planning meetings will focus meetings on topics so not all involved have to go to every meeting. September 27th meeting is going to be on calendaring. Will set meetings for a focus and topic and get notice out to those people who need to be involved. Mary Vittone is in charge of soliciting donations. The auction theme this year is "Planet Steller". There will be a meeting with students on Tuesday this week. Rochelle can report on that. Joe let parents know the sorts of things they can donate – like a dinner for four, bake a cake, items new or gently used. The solicitation group is going out to businesses, but families are also asked to donate items – new or gently used, and students contribute to advisory group baskets which will have a theme. Other ideas are donating an hour of computer time, babysitting, math tutoring, quilting teacher, etc.

Small Group Discussion Topics: Parents broke into small groups to discuss several topics that came out of the year's first parent meeting and to summarize ideas out of the small group discussions and a way forward on ideas. Topics were:

- **Healthy lunch possibilities:** Sample from Root Down who is delivering lunches to Winterberry, Rilke, Aquarian, and explore what parents think would be best for Steller
Pros of Root Down: quick, easy, healthy, learning opportunities. Cons: cost? Size, logistics (via ad group)
Way forward: Present Root Down to op group next week; family survey on the Flash after op group presentation to see if there is interest in this service. Jennifer will draft survey and Root Down might have useful input for the survey questions. See how many families would be interested.
- **After 2pm offerings to our students:** what are student interests and how can we offer more?
Came up with list of clubs and wish list. Put on the Flash in its own location and have a point of contact to connect people with clubs. Way forward – need a survey to the kids asking them what they would like to see. **List of activities parents came up with:** choir m/w/f; drama t/th/f; Chinese classes; chess club; Planet Steller; slam poetry; quiet room; battle of the books; Romig/Central/West activities e.g. skiing, etc.; youth court. **Wish list:** put club list out on the Flash and on the website: computer lab; community schools program (like Denali Elementary); junior achievement; robotics; honor society. We need to start with students – survey students as

to what they would like to see.

- **Budget review and discussion:** parent group funds are available. Some ideas: contributions for new greenhouse – soil, boxes, tools, etc.; compostable trash bags; utensils for TOB.
Way forward: Rebecca will make available the funding request form to all staff so they know that they can request funds from parent group; a budget will be proposed for change/editions/approval at the next parent group meeting. About 35% of what we collect is allocated to special projects, sometimes Coalition of Essential Schools, Math Counts, etc. Regular allocations: teachers each get \$100 and the nurse gets \$100. \$500 on administrative expenses. Parent group has received \$2400 in parent donations so far this year. Parents can make funding proposals or students can make suggestions for purchases – this money is parent group money. Op group has some of their own money. Ad Board decides how to spend their own money, they have auction money, and use money for intensives
It also came up that students are sharing text books in Chemistry and not able to take books home. This is a concern but this is a district Philip will investigate and handle this with Dale and science staff.
- **Strategizing our building improvements:** Facility needs were identified by all community, staff and parents by the end of last year. A list was posted to the Flash for comment/other suggestions. Katherine suggested working with Helen's list to summarize it as a simple list for parent input on the Flash, and give a week for comments, then send to Dale. **Way forward:** short summary to the Flash for a week comment period to provide families one more opportunity to weigh in then we need to move ahead to get our needs heard at the CRAC. Need to figure out who the Steller CRAC representative is and get our needs to that person to advocate for Steller for long term planning. Katherine will take Helen's summary document and make it into a list of identified needs/wishes, with an explanation to parents, and run it by Helen and co-chairs before sending to the Flash for comment for a week.

Business:

Art teacher request for \$300 to replenish painting supplies and clay and glazes. There is an art supply fee, but this money is needed for necessary materials for student growth. Each teacher only gets \$100. John made a motion to approve the art supply request in the amount of \$300. Jeanene seconded. Vote carried

Notices:

Parent volunteers are needed for the monthly dessert baskets. Colleen will do December; Jeanene will do March.

Seeking parent liaisons for advisory groups – Alyse described the role of liaison as the communicator and go between for advisor and parents. Email tree, for example, to communicate information and would also be the person to come to the parent meeting to bring back information to the advisor. Looking for liaisons for Bob, Gerald, Jennifer, Lee and Phillip's groups. This will also be posted on the Flash

First lunch for teachers is next Wednesday sponsored by Ashley and Gerald's groups. Those advisory students and parents will provide food for a staff lunch.

Next Meeting: October 19, 2011

Auction meeting: next meeting will be a calendaring meeting

Adjournment:

7:45 pm