

**Alexander Hamilton School HSA****June General Meeting**

June 14, 2011, 9:30 a.m., Media Room

Sandi Stern, Presiding

**Attendance:** H Brown, C Cornell, A Feige 5C/P, C Finegold, J Fisher, H Goshin, D Heller, E Howe, M Kapiloff, G Mauceri, K Paradise, K Williams, N Redmond, M Sapoff, L Sasson, L Schultz 5C/P, J Silva 3SC, K Speizer, S Stern 3M, M Walsh KAM

**Approval of Minutes,** Sandi Stern

L Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by M Sapoff, and followed by a unanimous vote to approve them.

**Principal's Report,** Irene Pierides

Thank you for a really great year, we have been getting so much done! So many things on the list that I can't even begin to mention all. It is the partnership between parents and staff that allows us to get so much done. When I look around this room, I think of at least 2-3 things that each of you have done to help our school.

Academically, we have had a great year. Our professional develop, curriculum writing, and workshops are on-going every year, and we care about and value our teachers and that translates to great teachers that care about your kids, All four schools are becoming more coordinated, coming to know each other and share more good ideas. Test prep was stronger this year, including test-taking skills that will serve them forever. Test taking goes through SAT, doctorate, etc., so these are skills that will serve the students well. And, every year our teachers become more knowledgeable. We have great long-term subs in third grade, really qualified.

Socially, we have done great things through the character education program with Dana Pavese. I know the kids talk about. We have been asked about our program by other schools. When we decided to focus on Character Education this year, we looked for a program and couldn't find one. Nothing like this existed. Our fifth graders did a great job with peer mediation, and it's wonderful to see how they talk to each other. I often have lunch with the kids and it's great to hear what they are thinking and how they interact with each other.

Our committees have been amazing. Janet and her team are great, the tastings are wonderful. Earth Day, Every Day program has been great – really, you can't find anything like that in any of the local offerings such as Project Impact. We have created all of these programs, and there is nothing like them anywhere else. Our manners initiative has been a huge hit; now Coleman is taking the whole program. There are so many wonderful volunteer committees, like the Subway lunch team, and so, so many programs that get done. I would love to see a list of gift of things that the HSA has given in total, as it must be quite long and it has been impactful. The budget and everything that happens seems to not affect us because the HSA does so much for our school and our students.

Thanks to the current board and welcome to the new board. Look forward to next year.

Many of our initiatives have grown from parents who have shared an idea; please know my door is open. Please bring your idea to me and we'll see if there is a fit for it. It might be a great

thing! If you see anything that our children should learn about let me know. Mrs. Pierides shared a poem about how parents entrust the school staff with their children and how seriously the staff takes that role.

K Speizer asked about staffing. Mrs. Pierides said she cannot discuss it because it may not be accurate. K Speizer asked specifically about third grade teachers, but Mrs. Pierides said she cannot be certain about plans yet. C Cornell asked if there would be a change so that kids can “move up” to their next classroom as they do in Ridgewood so that the kids will know where they are going. Dr. Verducci is discussing how to improve and change the process. Classes for the 2011-12 year will be announced on the school doors in August as always.

The issue of students riding motorbikes on school grounds came up and Mrs. Pierides noted that she has had conversations with one family and will discuss it with the other.

### **Treasurer’s Report**, Merri Kapiloff

M Kapiloff reviewed the budget, noting items as she went through such as the teacher allotment. That is a budget line item that goes toward items that the teachers purchase for the children, such as the pockets on the back of the chairs, etc not supplies which comes out of Pierides’ budget. Stern explained that it is now a pot from which the teachers can draw and it’s not limited to a certain dollar amount per teacher.

C Finegold mentioned that the Book Fair profit line does not reflect the value of the gifts in kind. Kapiloff mentioned she didn’t put them into the budget, as they aren’t reflected in our bank account but that in almost every meeting we have discussed Book Fair profits being accounted for separately, and that they have proven to be of tremendous value to the school.

One notable change in the budget is that there has been a big shift to reflect all the separate activities that now seem to be ongoing. For example, Habitat Day will have its own line item accounting.

Comedy Night made \$400 over what we budgeted we’d make. Due to laws regarding raffles benefitting schools, the raffle money must be spent immediately, and so we will spend that on the padding for the front of the stage.

Our budget totals will come down once everything comes in and gets paid out, but we probably have about \$8,000 going into next year.

Grocery script has changed, only made \$1000 rather than \$2000 because Pathmark/A&P is out of the game now. Next year Teicher will make more of a push on this when there are specials, such as when the Gap offers promotions. Pizza day made less, but we had less pizza days this year so that affected our total profit. Also, next year we will have one less class and that will affect our total as well.

M Walsh asked about bike racks, and said it would be great to have some near the kindergarten classroom. E Howe said the only reason we held off is that we hoped that the town Safe Schools initiative may provide something such as support for racks, and so we chose to hold off spending our own HSA funds on that. We will look for closure with the Safe Schools initiative, and perhaps move forward on this. Just to clarify, only 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders are allowed to ride bikes to school alone; all other students are welcome to ride bikes to school but must be accompanied by a parent.

**BOE Report**, Holly Goshin

Anita Kalra resigned via letter to the BOE. Anyone interested in filling her position, which ends April 2012, should contact the board.

Verducci defended his decision to hold school (during the tremendous heat on Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>) based on his concern for child/aftercare. Many people complained during the course of the meeting, most notably one person who said that the principals were not on board with this decision and was insensitive toward the students. Another meeting attendee noted the liability of the attendance office in trying to verify if students were allowed to leave the building and that the district should be grateful that nothing happened to anyone.

The board has approved Mission One for the teacher assistant positions. They were the only company that came out to bid. Two BOE members voted no on them. BOE announced that Mission One would send letters with information to the current aides in about two weeks. Next meeting is June 27<sup>th</sup>. Location TBD as the High School will be closed for asbestos removal.

**Hamilton School Community 5K Run/Walk/Fun Run**, Holly Goshin

Event will be held on Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, starting at 8:30 a.m., Columbus Day weekend, all the details available soon. Sponsors needed! Looking to kick-off fundraising for the year.

Sponsorship forms are available now from Holly, Michele or Donna. Will be available online soon.

C Finegold asked what companies have been approached; H Goshin said she will send a list of companies that have already been approached out to her and otherwise feel free to ask anyone for a sponsorship. M Walsh is looking at water bottle donation; H Brown said that she might have a donor for that if needed. Fred Cox is doing the bag donation again. Also looking for t-shirt donations and that could be a donation of the shirt, the printing or both. We could use as little as 250, as much as 300. K Paradise offered to check a possible t-shirt donation from her husband; M Sapoff was quick to point out that the Paradise family has been very generous already in donating the banner. Paradise, Goshin and Sapoff will discuss further.

Please come to the event, do the Walk or Run if you can because it's wonderful to see Hamilton families involved.

**Paver Fundraising Program**, Sandi Stern

They look great! This fundraising program will continue, with orders accepted through the school year and installation will now happen every May, no matter whether it's one brick or 15 bricks through Top Quality Paving. This company has donated a lot of time to our school. The cost is \$60 per brick; info will be on the web site.

**Boiling Springs program**, Sandi Stern

Boiling Springs will give the HSA interest on all accounts that are linked to Hamilton. This comes at no cost or loss of interest to the account holder. It is confidential; no one at Hamilton will know if your account is linked to ours. We only know the number of accounts that are linked. Once we meet the required number of accounts, we start earning interest off the total balance of linked accounts. This might be a great place to have Girl Scout accounts. If you are interested, a deposit of \$10 will open an account. D Heller asked if they charge for checking; G Mauceri said that most banks won't charge Scouts but you have to go in once a year and remind them that this is a scout account, and not to charge fees.

**Amazon**, Sandi Stern

Please go through our website if you use Amazon! According to G Mauceri, we will get up to 6% of your purchase. Remember that gift cards and even college books can be bought through this link.

**Field Day**, Sandi Stern

Field Day was a great success! Many thanks to Jen Casey and Lyn Clark! I Pierides noted that in most schools, it's just a few classes at a time that come out, that parents are not involved, etc. making is much less of a big event. C Calbi asked about Jedi Knights – that the game becomes too rough, and in one grade the boys decided together to knock out the girls first. Someone else suggested that we have traditional activities such as the fifty-yard dash. Another suggestion was to put in a break, as the day can be hot, sunny and long. K Williams noted the t-shirts are too small. Let parents decide on the size. I Pierides suggested that these comments are important and should be passed on to Mr. Holmgren so that the event can constantly be improved.

**Pool Party**, Sandi Stern

The all-Hamilton school pool party was awesome -- food, DJ, etc. was great. General feedback was the time was good. Federated HSA is trying to move it to 5:00-9:00. Central and Byrd went till 10. This year, it had to start at 6:00 because of Kindergarten swim. (In the past it started at 4:00.) Now, Federated wants to push it earlier to 5 because it's a little late for the younger students, especially for those schools that hold their parties on school nights. Many thanks to Donna Giannantonio for running such an organized, fun event!

**School Supplies**, Sandi Stern

Now is the time to order! There has been attention to detail with the budget and items ordered. Thanks to Michele Khan for all this work!

**Vote to amend the Alexander Hamilton School HSA Bylaws**, Sandi Stern

This vote is in regard to the President Emeritus. We are seeking to change one element, so that the president emeritus retains her right to vote in a general election.

Proposed amendments of the Alexander Hamilton School HSA By-Laws

**Article 2, Section 9 presently reads:**

Section 9 – President Emeritus - The position of President Emeritus shall be offered each year to the outgoing President. Should the outgoing president decline the position, the incoming president shall appoint, with the advice and counsel of the other incoming members of the executive Board, a former executive Board member to fill the position. The President Emeritus shall serve in an advisory capacity and shall not vote. In the event of a tie, the President emeritus shall cast the deciding vote. During the School Year of 2002-2003, the Principal of Alexander Hamilton School shall cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

### **Proposed Amendment**

Section 9 will now read: *The position of President Emeritus shall be offered each year to the outgoing President. Should the outgoing president decline the position, the incoming president shall appoint, with the advice and counsel of the other incoming members of the executive Board, a former executive Board member to fill the position. In executive meetings, the President Emeritus shall serve in an advisory capacity and shall not vote. In the event of a tie, the President Emeritus shall cast the deciding vote.*

H Goshin made the motion to approve the proposed amendment, and M Kapiloff seconded it. There was a unanimous vote to support this amendment.

### **Vote to Approve New Art Room Purchases, Sandi Stern**

Fifth grade graduation means we have an extra room, so Art will move to Mrs. Mutch's room and Music will remain in its current room.

*Motion to allot an amount not to exceed \$1700.00 for the purchase of 4 shelving units, a wall mounted drying rack, a safety mat and clay containers for the new art room.*

A Feige made the motion to approve the purchases and M Walsh seconded the motion. There was a unanimous vote to approve these purchases.

M Sapoff asked if they could get the shelving anywhere in the district, but that doesn't seem to be an option. Many things are coming from the district, such as tables, sinks, pencil sharpeners, and some items for the Art room will be purchased using the teacher allocation, etc.

C Finegold mentioned Mrs. Menke might find useful things in the Scholastic Catalog. Not to step on Mrs. Tomaselli's toes, but we could use those things for the Art room instead. M Kapiloff said, absolutely, let's get everything we can from Scholastic Budget.

### **Upcoming Events, Sandi Stern**

- 6/20 Awards Ceremony during school, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Night, 7pm
- 6/17 Last Day of School

### **Voting in of the 2011/2012 HSA Executive Board, Sandi Stern**

President- Holly Goshin  
 1<sup>st</sup> VP- Carmela Calbi  
 2<sup>nd</sup> VP- Margaret Walsh  
 3<sup>rd</sup> VP- Michele Sapoff  
 Treasurer- Merri Kapiloff  
 Secretary- Elaine Howe  
 Communications VP- Hallie Brown  
 President Emeritus- Sandi Stern

S Stern thanked the Executive Board: The Board this year was pleasure; they are the ultimate volunteers and they will do anything to support our school! One person is leaving the board, Grace Mauceri. Grace is my dear friend, and what I am going to say is as much about her as a person as it is in reference to her board work. Grace is my mast, my even keel. She is the one to say it's fine; everything will work out or point me to that path that does work things out. Every single person that volunteers in the school has been touched by Grace because she organizes all volunteers! Thank you, Grace, for everything you have done for Hamilton.

Hallie Brown and Margaret Walsh are two new members, and we are so grateful for them!

C Finegold made the motion to approve the 2011/2012 HSA Executive Board, and G Mauceri seconded the motion. There was a unanimous vote to approve the board for next year.

H Goshin noted the only reason I could possibly ever be president is because Sandi has it all so organized, everything is there waiting for me, a folder for everything, and she had promised she will sit next to me for the next two years, and she couldn't make it easier for me. So thanks go to Sandi for her amazing work as president!

E Howe noted that in one of Sandi's first letters to the parents, she encouraged us to always assume the best, that sometimes people do things that upset others but the reason that everyone does what they do is for a good reason and we should think the best of each other and that will make for a vastly improved relationship. Sandi was right! This positive approach did affect us all. Her smile, her upbeat attitude, good judgment, and hard work make Hamilton a better place.

### Adjournment

H Goshin made the motion to adjourn; M Kapiloff seconded that motion. A unanimous vote adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elaine Howe