

OAK KNOLL KINDERHAUS MONTESSORI
1200 Lake Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104
BOARD MEETING: December 14, 2002

Members Present: Claudia Alvarez, John Barrone, Joyce Barrone, Dorothy Chambless, Martin Regalado, Maryrose Regalado, Jonathan Spaulding
Guests Present: Elisabeth Dimopoulos (Executive Director) and Laurel Beck

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Dorothy Chambless called the meeting to order at 9:20 am.

Presentation by Laurel Beck: Elementary Program Marketing

Laurel Beck gave a presentation regarding marketing ideas for the Elementary Program. Her presentation is based on a meeting with Diana Manchester, an advertising and marketing consultant. For presentation summary, please see attachment #1.

In regards to marketing costs, Laurel explained that Diana Manchester is willing to work for half of her regular rate. For instance, creating a one-page manual (a "talking paper") that can be used as a guide for talking to people outside the school and creating ads will cost approximately \$100. Revisions of the school's brochure, creating supplemental inserts, and incorporating the one-page manual into the school's website would cost approximately \$40-\$60 each. Ads in local newspapers would cost approximately \$200.

Martin Regalado expressed concern regarding time and money spent on marketing an elementary program that does not yet have a teacher or a site. Jonathan Spaulding added that the school should not pay for marketing costs associated with the elementary program. Prospective elementary parents should raise the necessary funds.

Executive Director's Report (Elisabeth Dimopoulos)

The Silent Auction is scheduled for March 29, 2003 at the Senior Citizen's Center. The Center charges a \$550-600 non-profit rate. The committee has not yet decided on a theme.

Jonna Dennis will be working on a security system for the school. An update will be available at a later date.

Financial updates are not available at this time. Maryrose will help Claudia update finances. All reports will be available at the next meeting.

January's expected tuition is \$21,000. Previously, tuition was approximately \$18,000 per month. This increase in tuition will allow the school to stabilize financially. The school should now focus on paying off bills and building a cushion of two to three months operating expenses, in case of emergencies. It should also set aside and /or designate any excess for construction, school supplies, etc. In addition, a suggestion was made to designate Silent Auction profits for a specific purpose, instead of allowing profits to be used only for operating expenses.

A discussion regarding tuition insurance was tabled.

The school has a new payroll service, "Payroll One". They debited December payroll taxes at the beginning of the month, instead of on the 15th, which resulted in insufficient funds for the school checking account. Consequently, Citizen's Business Bank charged overdraft fees. A suggestion was made for Maryrose to contact Citizen's Bank, explain the misunderstanding with the new payroll service, and ask for the overdraft fees to be refunded.

A representative from the Pasadena Development Corporation visited the school last week. They had previously loaned the school \$25,000 and would like to include the school as one of their "success stories". As part of their presentation, they would like to include photographs of the campus and improvements that were made. They are also willing to include a link to our website from their website.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Maryrose will help Claudia update the finances.
- Maryrose will contact Citizen's Bank and ask for refund of overdraft fees.

President's Report (Dorothy Chambless)

The AMI Conference in February will take place in Los Angeles. Lisa Sapetto will take a refresher course. Dorothy and Elisabeth will take an administrator's workshop.

The landlord hired tree trimmers to clean up the palm tree just outside Miss Dorothy's classroom. Maryrose should send him a thank you card.

ACTION ITEM:

- Maryrose will send landlord a thank you card.

Treasurer's Report (Claudia Alvarez)

Tabled for next meeting.

ACTION ITEM:

- Prepare reports for next meeting.

Committee Reports

Grants- A discussion regarding scholarships took place via e-mail last week. Board members had expressed concerns regarding scholarship funding. (See attachments of e-mail correspondence). Basically, there were two main concerns: First, the timing of scholarship donation requests and, second, how scholarship funds were being spent. Martin Regalado suggested that the school have a separate account for scholarship grants/donations as opposed to depositing it into the school's checking account and using it for operating expenses. Tuition for scholarship students would be debited from this new account and deposited into the school's checking account monthly.

Last year, there was not any money in an actual scholarship fund. Scholarships were actually tuition discounts or, as Dorothy said, a "gift" to those families who could not

afford to pay full tuition. Scholarship students paid reduced tuition, but there was not any scholarship money available in a scholarship fund to make up the difference in tuition.

It was suggested that if no grants are received for scholarships, then perhaps Silent Auction profits should be set aside for the scholarship fund.

Policies & Procedures Handbook- Martin and Joyce passed out a handout- *Oak Knoll Policies and Procedures Development List*.

Discussion tabled.

Committee Reports will be discussed via e-mail and at next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Prepare Committee Reports for e-mail discussion and/or next meeting.
 - Campus Development (Dorothy)
 - Ongoing maintenance & repair
 - List of maintenance needs for parents to do at their leisure
 - Communication Committee (Martin & Jonathan)
 - February newsletter deadlines
 - Parents meeting to take over newsletter
 - Elementary Committee (John & Joyce)
 - Grants (Elisabeth)
 - Policies & Procedures Handbook (Martin & Joyce)

Old Business

ACTION ITEM:

- Maryrose will update Corporate Book (minutes and attachments).

Next Meeting:

Will be decided via e-mail.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted by Maryrose Regalado.

Approved

12/14/02

Oak Knoll Kinderhaus Montessori School
Elementary School Start-Up

GOAL:

To launch the elementary while safeguarding the resources of the school as a whole.

We need to reach two main markets for students:

1) Montessori-specific parents.

2) Parents interested in "alternative" education (Sequoyah, Waverly, Walden). They probably do not have an accurate understanding of Montessori, though they may not realize this. Many of these parents are deeply committed to alternative education, but haven't been able to place their children at local alternative-philosophy schools due to the extremely high cost of tuition or lack of space. They simply don't know we exist, or don't realize that we are in line with what they are seeking. They misinterpret Montessori language, and have misconceptions about what Montessori is all about.

(There is a third group we will want to reach in the future — parents who are dissatisfied with public schools, but who do not have a clearly defined educational philosophy. They probably do not have an accurate understanding of Montessori.)

NOTE: We need to aim our efforts toward reaching people who don't know about us (and/or don't understand Montessori), but whose views are compatible with ours. We don't want to waste resources trying to sell to people who aren't interested.

URGENT

MONTESSORI-SPECIFIC PARENTS:

Go forward with plans to reach Montessori-specific parents through presentations.

ALTERNATIVE (AND MONTESSORI) PARENTS:

Step One: Develop a clearly defined campaign strategy:

- identify our ideal audience (perhaps John's "woman at Starbucks" image) and *their most urgent needs*
- determine how, where and when to reach our audience most effectively based on their identity and needs
- clarify and/or state our "identity", and determine which elements must always appear and remain consistent (like Mr. Owl); educate about Montessori and dispel the rampant misconceptions; Dorothy's "the Trader Joe's of alternative schools"; our core values, mission statement, etc.
- create consistent terminology; translate Montessori language into "alternative" and general terminology that is used consistently in all written materials and talks

Oak Knoll Policies and Procedures Development List

Collection of tuition

- how it is collected
- process for children on scholarship

Budgeting

- how we build our budget
- targets for tuition vs. grants vs. donations

Accounting

- invoicing and accounting process and practice
- identification of accounts/funding buckets (i.e. campus development, general acct)

Administration of the scholarship fund

- description of the scholarship purpose, goals, funding sources
- criteria to qualifying for a scholarship
- accounting practice (i.e. debit to fund, credit to expenses)
- audit procedures

Enforcement of parent hours

- parent hour obligation
- charging families that do not fulfill their hours
- enforcement/escalation process

Roles and responsibilities of staff (job descriptions)

- (project into itself)
- to clearly delineate the responsibilities of the Board vs. staff
- to clearly define the role of the Exec. Director

Staffing (hiring ratios, process for bringing in new staff)

- what are our hiring practices
- what are the pay scales, benefits offered, etc.
- what are grounds for firing

Special projects (i.e. elementary program, marketing strategy)

- how is the Board involved in this process
- are the decisions made by the ED, Board or both

Parent Contracts

- what is and isn't enforceable
- can we hold a family to paying the entire year's tuition if they leave early
- how much would we keep on prepaid tuition, what if they are month to month
- what are acceptable 'out' clauses for both the parent and the school