**Friends of Cutler Meeting Minutes**

**Friday,12/12/14 at 9:30 am**

Attendees: Board Members; Jennifer Clifford; Katie Parker; twelve parents; and Guest Speaker, Mary Lee, Reading Specialist

**Sarah Olson** offered introductions, overviews, and initiatives, including the following:

* The **Book Sale** was very successful, grossing over $12,000 in sales. As a result, Cutler reached the top tier and earned the highest “give back” incentive. Cutler families and friends, as well as other members from the H-W community, specifically enjoyed the musical arrangements and teacher readers.
* The **Social Committee** is looking for volunteers to assist with both the solicitation of auction items, as well as event planning. Save the Date for Friday, April 10, 2015, at the Wenham Museum.
* The **Hospitality Committee** and parent volunteers organized a Cookie Swap in the Teacher Lounge to recognize the faculty this holiday season.
* The **Fund Drive** will be actively collecting donations through this spring via the “Reach for the Stars” campaign. All proceeds will benefit the Outdoor Learning Classroom.
* **Amazon** links have been reset on our Web site. The affiliate program earns more money for Cutler than the Amazon Smiles one.
* **Cultural Enrichment** sponsored a successful “Change is Simple” program for all grades, which tied in well with this year’s STEAM theme.

**Jennifer Clifford** updated parents on the happenings at Cutler, including the following:

* The 4th and 5th Grade Honors **Chorus** and 5th Grade **Band** will be touring all three schools on Monday, December 15th and will hold an evening concert at the high school on December 16th.
* An **All School Music Concert** will be held before vacation. This is for students and faculty, as Cutler cannot accommodate a community event.
* The **PEM Field Trip** for **First Grade** was successful. The students’ experience with museum and gallery etiquette was noted.
* The **Fourth** and **Fifth Grade** teachers have been attending a **“Best Practices”** Workshop.
* The **Kindergarten** and **First Grade** teachers have earned **Professional Developmental** credits in the subject of **Literacy**.
* **Report Cards** have been distributed to all grades, less kindergarten. (Kindergarteners will receive theirs at the halfway point.) The district is now utilizing Aspen, a secure Student Information Management System. The portal will eventually allow parents to electronically view address and contact information, attendance, report cards, and more. The interface is different than past models, so the learning curve has been challenging. Teachers were accustomed to creating “the whole child picture,” as opposed to plugging in all students’ grades by subject, across the board.

**Ken Swanson** provided the most recent **Budget** addendums, including the following:

* The **Ski, Skate, Board & Ride** event almost doubled the profits. Income was higher, and expenses were lower. The books plan to be closed before vacation, and final figures will be tallied and relayed.
* **Pie Sale** profits earned $765 for Acord Food Pantry.
* **Apparel**, for the first time, is earning a profit as a result of selling last year’s inventory off and restructuring to a per order, on-line market, rather than bulk order on hand.
* The **Fund Drive** continues to grow. The current income is $1998.00.
* **Field Trip** and **Cultural Enrichment** expenses continue to be sorted out.

**Martha Farrell** shared the latest on behalf of the **Apparel** team, including the following:

* Sales on the new Web site are going well. The committee welcomes feedback on additional items students, parents, and faculty wish to purchase.
* Items, such as water bottles, cinch bags, and lanyards, will also be for sale at upcoming events.
* The Web site was down for a period of time due to an illness by our vendor. For orders placed by the December 10th deadline, Matt, at Hytensity, is able to fill and turn around orders by Christmas.

**Mary Lee, Reading Specialist,** presented her PowerPoint slideshow on and personal connection to reading. She also read All in a Day, whose message on the importance of telling a story was amplified. Some of the other highlights, include the following:

* Mary grew up in Pawtucket, RI and began her education at a small Catholic school. She struggled with reading and comprehension, which lead to a fear of going to class. After her second grade year, Mary attended a specialized, progressive school for what became a Grade 2 and 3 “Transitional Year,” where she learned to read. This foundation lead to her love of reading.
* The **keys to mastering literacy and creating a “lifelong learner**” should begin at home and be mirrored at school. Some tips are as follows:

1. **Start early!** (Reading begins on the lap of a parent.)
2. **Show children that you love to read.**
3. **Let reading become a universal language and integral part of your family’s lives.**
4. **Read lots and lots of books for lots and lots of hours**, especially books THEY love. (For children that cannot read, let the child “read” the illustrations and tell a story.)
5. **Never stop reading aloud** as your child gets older. Family Read-Alouds will create treasure troves.

The next Friends of Cutler meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. Location is TBD. Guest Speakers will be Dana Allara, EdFund Representative, and Allie Kelley, Friends of the Arts Member.

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of December 2014,

Allison M. Odoardi

Co-President