

PAC Chair Year End Report 2016/17

This year the PAC has continued to welcome new ideas and people to Willows. We've built upon our past traditions and introduced some new ones that support our community values.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize some of the highlights from the school year and to acknowledge the people that contribute hours of service for the benefit of us all.

Our year kicked off in September 2016 with our helpful volunteers sporting their red PAC t-shirts at our Staples School Supplies Pick Up in the gym during the first week. A gallon of coffee helped ease parents back into the school routine and encouraged everyone to stop and chat awhile. The PAC values community and the picking up of school supplies and having coffee together enabled us all to connect after the summer break. Dana Bell - thank you for sourcing and organizing the stationery for our parents. It saves us all a lot of hassle and is much appreciated! We are pleased to welcome Samantha Crawshaw on board as the new coordinator as Dana adds more to her plate and tackles a Masters degree in September. Best of luck!

Once staff and students had their bearings, it was time for the first Parent/Teacher Interviews of the year. The PAC took this opportunity to host our annual Ice-Cream Social. The children are always excited to receive this treat and this year was no exception. Angela Jackson, you really do know how to ingratiate yourself with 600+ kids! Thank you for creating a positive association for the children and parents with this night.

We can't leave September without mentioning the inaugural Sausage Fest. On a particularly wet Saturday morning our stalwart volunteers helped set the scene for a feast. Throughout the day Willows parents worked tirelessly to create a successful event. The Oak Bay Firefighters Charitable Foundation rewarded our volunteer efforts with a cheque for \$8,400 which is currently sitting our playground fund and is soon to be used!

As the nights drew in, Natasha Stott got the new to Willows Grade 1 to 5 parents into the pub. A happy evening of introducing Vancouverites to other Vancouverites ensued. Thank you to Natasha for helping newcomers feel part of our school. We're so glad you're staying in your role and happy that you'll have Kristina Millen joining you in your efforts.

December saw the PAC hosting our 2nd annual Movie Night in the gym. This was again a huge success! We had a junior (K-Gr.2) and senior (Gr.3-Gr.5) night. Popcorn from Kernels was handed out by helpful elves and parents and children snuggled in for an 'Arthur Christmas' adventure.

2017 began with our Kindergarten parents snuggled (we do lots of it here at Willows!) up together at the pub. New connections (and hopefully friendships too) were made that night. Katie Shaw, our Kindergarten Liaison rep has done a great service for this kindy year. Thank you for your ideas on how to get your group bonding! The more we know and understand each other the stronger our school.

In February a brightly coloured bench appeared on the K/Gr. 1 playground. This Booster Bench provides a space for children to go in case they're feeling lonely and for the other kids to notice and include them in their games. Thanks to Christina Smith for getting the ball rolling on this initiative.

In case the winter months had depleted supplies of Kleenex in the classroom, the PAC did their very own St. Valentine's Day delivery to staff. Chocolates for teachers and Kleenex for noses were prettily packaged and delivered on wings of love by volunteers.

The final eight weeks of the school year were a busy time for the PAC. A new event which we hope will continue was the Kindergarten Picnic, again, organized by Katie Shaw. A sunny Friday evening at Fireman's Park was enjoyed by all.

From playgrounds to pavements... An event which always encourages kids and parents to be more environmentally friendly and healthy, is our Bike to School Week and Grade 4 Rodeo. The PAC funds the prizes for this week long event and the kids are rewarded with spot prizes. The class at the end of the week that has the most cyclists wins a pizza lunch provided by the PAC. A big thank you to Jacqueline Lines who orchestrated this fun week.

With two successful years under the belt May is now officially the Blossom Tree Festival month. A perfectly sunny evening was the backdrop for families to linger under the great trees and have food truck delicious dinner and dessert at communal tables. The children ran riot in the gym, spending their tickets on game favourites like the Balloon Stomp, the Treat Wheel and Potty Toss. Outside UVic students made elephant toothpaste, kids took aim with water shooters and ninjas dodged their way through obstacles. Everyone agreed that it was a brilliant community evening. Thank you to the EPIC team that pulled the BTF together. If you blew up a balloon, manned a station, created a poster, spread the word, brought your family, ate a burger then know that without you there would be no Blossom Tree Festival. Thank you!

The first weekend in June saw Willows parents and students shaking their red and white down the streets of Oak Bay for the Tea Party Parade. This year the PAC provided red and white candies for the kids to hand out along the parade route and supplied them with their own 'thank you for participating' bag of sweets at the end. Not to mention the \$20 worth of tickets raffled off for attendees. Thank you to Wendy and Christine for playing parade music in the week leading up to the parade to help inspire the kids and thank you to everyone who came along to show Willows' spirit!

With the winding down of the year, the PAC had the opportunity to host a Staff Appreciation Lunch on the June Pro-D day. A cheerful team of parent volunteers (and their kids) helped set up a beautiful al fresco lunch in the front of the school. Truffles Catering provided a delicious luncheon for 53 members of staff. This was a pleasant event and staff enjoyed the gesture. Thank you to the helpers for getting everything set up and taken down.

Whilst the PAC doesn't have much to do with the Fun Day in June, we do provide the cherry on top by handing out popsicles as a treat for students. Thank you to Angela for purchasing all of them, Kristina Millen for storing them and for all the volunteers who helped hand them out on the day. It's amazing how quickly over 600 popsicles disappear!

That sums up our PAC-related events for the year. Our monthly PAC meetings continued as well as our Coffee Mornings. We had some interesting speakers over the course of the year ranging from Wendy Payne educating us about reading/writing learning; Melinda Budgell, our school counsellor speaking to us about bullying; Jennifer Gibson got us comfortable about talking about sex (baby!) and Marketa Lund and the Oak Bay Emergency Preparedness team galvanising us into earthquake action.

There are a few initiatives that the PAC has focused our efforts on this year: Firstly, the new Grade 4 / 5 playground. We have followed the guidelines set out by the SD61 for getting a new playground. We're currently in the final stages of their requirements. SwingTime and Suttle Recreation are the two vendors that we have proposals from. We are currently awaiting sign off from the school district that they are feasible. We hope to have a vote on which playground to install by the end of they year and the playground installed early next year. Thank you to Christina Smith for all of her chasing and organizing on this important initiative.

Secondly, we continue to fund the Field Trip Allotment and Bus Project with Gaming Fund Grant money. It's popular amongst staff, students and parents alike. We spent just over \$15k on this initiative and will continue to for the foreseeable future.

Thirdly, we've increased our budget line to support Clubs & Societies at school. Staff are in the early stages of starting a Coding Club, a Board Game Club and a STEM Club. We've also increased funding for the Library. Our PAC wouldn't be able to sustain the initiatives and projects that we do without the Contributions from you, the parents. Thank you for clicking on our PayPal link on our website every October and helping us remain a commercial fundraising free space. Your \$40 to \$80 funds new playgrounds and library books, our community events, our educational speakers, our sports equipment, our presence at the Oak Bay Tea Party... The list is very long! Thank you for supporting the PAC. By doing so, you're supporting every facet of educating your child at Willows.

Working under the PAC umbrella are a variety of important coordinators and committees. A big thank you to Kim Kuran and Michele Montgomery, Pizza/Sushi Day Coordinators; Kim Kuran and Marguerita Chapman, Lice Check Coordinators; Greg Swann and Daphne Wood, Earthquake Preparedness Coordinators and Alyson Enge and Fiona Auld, Hospitality Coordinators. Your hours of emails, research, strategizing and time spent at the school do not go unnoticed. Our lives at Willows would be less yummy, more louse-ridden, less safe and more confusing without you all. Thank you!

Once again, I feel privileged to have worked with the very experienced PAC executive members. You were always available to answer my questions via email or in person. Your support over these months has been invaluable. A heartfelt thank you to: Dana Bell, Past PAC Chair, your continued service to our school is so appreciated; Angela Jackson, Vice-Chair, your enthusiasm and can-do attitude buoy all the teams you work with; Jenny Dickson, Treasurer, you took our budget and spreadsheets to the professional level and became yourself a professional cheque writer and Chelsea Wozniak, Secretary, your ability to distill my ramblings into minutes is an art - thank you and Lisa Rogers, VCPAC Representative, thank you for your tenacious approach which has helped our parents voices be heard at higher levels in the education system. Our Members at Large were Stephanie Novak, Kate Donahue and Katie Shaw. Your respective roles as the Canadian Parents for French representative, the Class Representative Coordinator and Kindergarten Liaison Officer are all vital to the health of our parents' council. Thank you for your immense dedication and service.

To those of you that are moving on or dropping or changing portfolios; I wish you well. You have enriched our experience of this fantastic school that our children are privileged to attend.

Wendy Holob, Principal, and Christine Patterson, Vice Principal: thank you for your continued support of the PAC. Your open door policy has been well used by me and I appreciate the words of advice that you've both given. The PAC looks forward to continuing to build a strong relationship with Administration and Staff as we navigate the future of the school.

Christine, we are going to miss you. Thank you for being our Vice Principal and Gr. 5 teacher. Lakehill Elementary are very lucky to be getting you. We will remember you fondly.

Last but not least, to all the parents without a portfolio or title but with a desire to be present in your child's schooling career, thank you for stepping forward to help out, for voicing your opinion, for offering a solution, for being part of the classroom, for answering a call for helpers... Everything that you put in makes Willows a richer place of learning and life.

In closing, I'd like to say farewell to you in my capacity as PAC Chair. I've learned so much and have built such meaningful connections. It's been an honour working with all of you. I know that I'm leaving you in capable hands and I hope you will support Cindy Rodier as well as you've supported me during my time on the executive.

I'd like to wish you all a well deserved summer break and I look forward to seeing what next year brings.

Thank you.

Bronwen Sharpe
PAC Chair
June 2017

