

ESPO Meeting Notes

January 17, 2018

1. Welcome Remarks & Introductions: Anja Lehmann

Anja thanked everyone for their support of recent Emerson events. The Book Fair and Bake Sale were both wonderfully successful. Anja is very thankful for everyone's contributions and the wonderful nurturing environment at our school.

2. Coordinating Committee Reports

a. *Budget Review*: Annie Bruienne

- Book fair proceeds were \$2,170 and went to the library for books and supplies.
- Bake sale proceeds were \$2,800 and went to the Technology department for the Innovation Lab.
- Annual dues have been collected. Dues income was under the expected amount by 11%. Annie is investigating the reasons for the shortfall.
- Pizza lunch 1st semester income was fully transferred to ESPO. Income and expenses are on target with ESPO projections. ESPO gifted \$200 for families receiving financial aid.
- Halloween expenses came in 30% under budget. There may be a few more expenses coming in. Great job to everyone!
- More events coming in the winter and spring. We have enough cash on hand to cover our expected expenses. Any second semester pizza lunch income can be saved for future plans.

b. *Pizza Lunch*: Diana Rooks, Maria Bichakjian, Dana DeBord

All is going well with pizza lunch. Change orders need to be submitted by January 26.

3. Event Chair Reports

a. *Book Fair*: Elaine Mar & Terry Chang

Anja reported that the Book Fair was very successful, bringing in nearly \$2,200 for the Library.

b. *Bake Sale*: Elizabeth Caswell & Janine Huber

Anja shared that the Bake Sale was also very successful, with many creative and beautiful items. It generated \$2,800 for the new Innovation Lab.

c. *Teacher Treats*: Katherine Warner

Anja reported that Katherine has generously agreed to lead teacher treats. Two dates have been coordinated with the school administration, one in February and one in April. Signup Genius will be sent out soon.

4. Committee Chair Reports

- a. *Emerson Cares*: Abbie Lawrence-Jacobson
Abbie reported that we gave a welcome gift to Gloria Hoover (part of 4th grade team) and a baby gift to Rose Hacker.
- b. *ESPO Communications*: Kelly Richardson
Anja reported that Kelly is doing a wonderful job keeping our ESPO bulletin board up to date. We will also be trying to start a newsletter about ESPO's efforts in the coming months. The newsletter will include fun data about ESPO's impact at school.
- c. *Anti-Idling*: Caroline Begola
Anja reported that Caroline is working on new efforts to take the anti-idling initiative to the next level. They are exploring several possibilities, including encouraging vendors to turn off engines when they come to Emerson.
- d. *Green*: TBD (by Maria Bichakjian & Anja Lehmann)
Maria and Anja are exploring ways to get students involved in green efforts. They are talking to Carol Kelly (Junior Honor Society) about student led green initiatives. Working to come up with a comprehensive program of good practices going forward. Andy Zimmer also shared that there are several opportunities coming up in the Middle School to integrate green efforts (clubs, intersession week, and National Honor Society).
- e. *Box Tops*: Jodi Wilkins
No update at this meeting.

5. Emerson Development

- a. *Annual Fund*: Beth Anderson
Beth thanked everyone who responded to the fall Annual Fund appeal. We are currently at 40% parent participation in the Annual Fund (compared to 26% at this time last year). Goal is 75% participation. We will take a break from the Annual Fund for the Auction, then focus on it again in the spring.
- b. *Auction*: Lorna Hildebrandt
Lorna reminded everyone to mark their calendars for the Auction on March 9. There are many ways to support the Auction, including sponsoring, advertising, donating to your class basket and volunteering. Lorna highlighted the auction committee leads.

6. Kids Care Fair: Sarah Hong of Jewish Family Services

We welcomed Sarah Hong from Jewish Family Services to talk to us about the upcoming Kids Care Fair. Sarah is the Director of Programs and Outreach for Jewish Family Services (JFS).

Sarah started by telling us about JFS:

- JFS is a nonprofit social services agency. They have been in Ann Arbor since the early 90's.
- They are the only refuge resettlement agency in Washtenaw County.
- JFS also offers older adult services, counseling services, employment programs, ESL classes and an international program.
- JFS serves everyone in the community. The majority of their clients are not Jewish. Their mission is based on the Jewish faith's focus on serving the world.

The Kids Care Fair is coming up on Sunday, March 18th. This is the 4th year of the Fair and it will be held at Emerson School.

- JFS is excited to partner with Emerson this year in offering this service learning fair.
- They will be bringing lots of service agencies into the fair with hands-on activities. The activities at the fair help kids feel they can make a difference in the world.
- A range of activities will be offered. For example, American Red Cross will focus on emergency preparedness, using activities to teach kids to think about how to be prepared. Alpha House will talk to the kids about their mission and have kids at the fair help design thank you notes that are sent to their donors.
- Keynote performance at end: Mariah's Amazing Puppets. A fable story will told.
- Food will be provided at the fair. Amanda's Kitchen will provide the food, including healthy snacks.
- Suggested donation: \$25 per family, which goes towards programs.

Questions and comments:

- Attendance: 220 last year, including youth volunteers.
- How do we get older kids and younger kids at same event? Try to have older youth volunteers at each table.
- Emerson may also include service learning themes in the classroom. Teachers and classes might have small group projects (working with Lisa on this).
- Want help getting as many people in attendance as possible. Any help the Emerson community can provide in getting the word out would be appreciated.

Next ESPO Meeting: March 20, 2018

Guest Speaker: Carrie Berkley, Emerson School Counselor

Carrie Berkley, Emerson School Counselor, generously joined us as our guest speaker. Carrie shared a very helpful presentation on the issue of anxiety.

Carrie feels that anxiety is a very important issue. Anxiety is the number one problem Carrie encounters in her job. Carrie talks about anxiety to both the lower school and middle school students.

We all have worries, fears, anxieties and that is normal. How do we know when it is a problem?

- When worries are more intense than the situation warrants.
- When feelings last longer than they should.
- When worries negatively impact others.

Carrie shared several examples of anxieties: school, unfamiliar toilets, travel and food.

What can anxiety look like?

- It can involve physical symptoms; such as headaches, stomach aches, nausea, sweating, increased heart rate, and lightheadedness.
- The person may also have difficulty concentrating and sleeping.

Carrie shared a diagram showing how situations, thoughts, feelings and behaviors can all interact and produce anxiety.

Thinking traps, or unhelpful thinking styles, that can lead to anxiety were described:

- All-or nothing thinking
- Jumping to conclusions
- Emotional reasoning
- Over-generalizing
- Ignoring the good
- Magnification, “catastrophizing”
- “Should” statements
- Judging yourself unfairly
- Accepting helplessness

Treatment options for anxiety:

- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
- Medication

Carrie discussed Cognitive Behavior Therapy and ways parents can help at home.

- Carrie stressed that we can help our children by teaching them, “don’t believe everything you think”.
- We can help our children use Cognitive Coping. For example, instead of thinking, “my teacher hates me”, think, “maybe my teacher isn’t happy about my behavior”.
- Gradual Exposure to the situation or item your child fears can also help.
- Teach your child to label the problem accurately.
- Remember the cardinal rule of parenting: be sure to choose the right moment.
- Teach children how our brains work. Our brains can’t think clearly if they are in a heightened state of anxiety. Teach children how to calm down with deep breathing and exercise.

Carrie recommended the following helpful books on anxiety:

Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents

By Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons

Companion book:

Playing with Anxiety: Casey’s Guide for Teens and Kids

By Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons

Seven Steps to Help Your Child Worry Less

By Sam Goldstein, Kristy Hagar and Robert Brooks

What to Do When you Worry Too Much: A Kid’s Guide to Overcoming Anxiety

By Dawn Huebner