

## **Parent Association Meeting Notes – December 8, 2015 General Meeting**

Parent Association PA President Kim Merino welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited to introduce themselves, include the name and grade level of their child(ren)

Kim mentioned that many parents aren't aware of the role of the PA or how to become involved. She stressed that every parent is encouraged to be involved in the Parent Association and presented this purpose statement for the PA: *The purpose of the EPSPA is to promote community, hospitality and school volunteerism. The Association's mission is to facilitate and enhance the relationship and communication between our community of families and the school, to support the school's exceptional learning environment, and to enrich the educational and social experience for families, students, faculty and staff.*

Kim then recapped the activities of the PA so far this year including the grade level picnics, ice cream social, Fall Harvest, staff appreciation and student appreciation. Upcoming events include the February "heart fest" for faculty/staff and students and the EBC potluck dinners.

Kim introduced Kelly Moore, who was asked to speak to parents about talking to their kids about traumatic events. Kelly presented information that was adapted from Kira M. Newman's article for Great Good Science Center. The key points from the article included: initiating the conversation with your child, reassuring them, listening to them and validating their concerns, clarifying what it is that they know (or think they know) about the traumatic event, encouraging them to share their feelings, sharing your own feelings (being careful not to add to their sense of worry), focusing on the good (finding the helpers in the situation), encouraging children to act (writing notes, raising money, etc.), and finally, knowing when to seek outside help (a general guideline is to seek help if more than 3 months have passed and your child is still suffering). Kelly will post the entire article in the Friday email for parents to review. A link can be found here: [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/nine\\_tips\\_for\\_talking\\_to\\_kids\\_about\\_trauma](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/nine_tips_for_talking_to_kids_about_trauma)

Parents asked if this information would be reviewed with students. Kelly and Bart mentioned that information conversations are already happening in many advisory groups. Another parent asked if the school practices drills and mentioned that sometimes the drills themselves can cause anxiety. Kelly mentioned that in addition to fire and earthquake drills, we do practice lockdown drills with students. We intentionally call them lock down drills in order to avoid causing anxiety.

Kelly mentioned that Eastside Prep is taking part of a statewide suicide prevention program called Forefront which is a non-profit through the University of Washington. The goal of this program is to provide community wide training (all adults in the community) in effective suicide prevention strategies. Several EPS faculty have already been trained and all EPS employees will be trained during the January PDD. We are hoping all EPS parents and guardians will also join us for one of the two parent trainings to be held Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm and Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00am. More information will be sent out as the dates approach.

Bart Gummere, Upper School Head, presented information on Eastside Prep's college counseling program. Bart stated that Eastside Prep's philosophy has been that college counselors are also teachers and/or advisors to ensure that they know students in multiple ways during their time at Eastside Prep. Not all schools work that way, but Bart's experience has shown that it is the best way to support the

process. The goal is to know the students well, remove some of the fear and worry from the process, support students through the process and then celebrate with them each acceptance they receive. Bart reported that the school will be moving from four college counselors to six college counselors next year. There will be three returning counselors who will each work with one new counselor next year. Those new counselors will then be prepared to take on their own students the following year when EPS will graduate a much larger class.