

Serendipity Center
Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2021
Meeting held virtually via Teams

Present: Rachel Gardell, Rick Larson, Erika Schwartz, Paul Fields, Lori Silverman, Wendy Ricketts, Shannon Dale, Mark Takehara, Belinda Marier, Erik Mudd, Eric Robertson, Dan Smith, Patrick Wrobel, Michael Hsu, Matty Berryessa, Megan Pine, SY Wong, and Breesa Culver

Absent: Sidney Villanueva, Kat Hendrix
Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Wendy motions to approve the May 2021 Board Meeting Minutes and Michael seconds the motion.

- 1) Finance Report (Dan): Reviews income statement. Revenue is lower for last year due to COVID. Normal to run a deficit in the summer and historically we make up the deficit in Sept/Oct with increased enrollment. Nothing stands out in spending. Budget will be updated as enrollment and staffing numbers change throughout the year. Presents proposed budget and contextual considerations. Finance Committee feels that this level of annual deficit is acceptable for the short term because we have reserves to weather it.

The Finance Committee will be looking at the level of detail of the information presented to the board; will be presenting salient points for the board to understand organization and make decisions.

Matty summarizes the proposed budget with lower enrollment. Tier 3 students will receive different placements due to safety concerns/staffing issues. Staffing is a region wide issue (PPS is down 200 staff). Currently contracting with a substitute service, but the applicant pool is unclear. The budget is built on full staffing, so payroll will be affected by 24-person staff shortage. Currently offering \$1000 signing bonus and \$250 referral bonus.

Started this school year with enrollment of 83, but will reduce to 78 with changed placements. Are not currently able to address referrals.

Discussion about some of the factors affecting staffing.

Dan motions to approve the budget with projected enrollment of 80. Rick seconds the motion. Unanimously approved.

- 2) Policy Adoption (Megan): Reviews Non-Discrimination and Code of Ethics and Conduct policies. Reviews Board Grievance Form (available on Board Portal). Board Grievance Form is based on the Family Grievance Form and is to be reviewed by Megan/legal counsel to determine type of concern and resolution steps.

Discussion about COVID procedures/compliance. Guidelines for private alternative schools are very similar to public schools. Must be looking at relevant County case rates (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Clark Cty, WA for Serendipity). Currently decisions are being made in conjunction with local OHA private school liaison.

3) Grassroots Fundraising (Breesa): Reviews fundraising documents.

Case Statement purpose and use: Quick resource for approved, accessible language that describes the why of Serendipity and what the program offers. Use for any public-facing communication (staff and board). Will be updated every year.

Fundraising Assessment: Identifies Serendipity's key strengths and challenges in fundraising, makes recommendations for moving forward. Will help new development director with clear path.

Grassroots Fundraising: soliciting smaller gifts from people and businesses instead of focusing on large gifts from corporations and foundations (patronage model). Broaden fundraising practices. Serendipity does not have enough major donors to sustain the program, must bring more donors in. Primary vehicles for fundraising will include mail, phone calls and social media rather than relying on 1:1 donor meetings. Community centric fundraising aligns with our equity goals.

Donor pyramid: bottom is small gifts (\$50 or less) and top is large gifts. Goal of grassroots fundraising is to steward people up the pyramid as possible. Majority of dollars comes from top two tiers and majority of gifts come from bottom tier. It relies on a big enough group of supporters, which Serendipity doesn't currently have. Best way to increase donor base is by telling Serendipity's story.

How to tell the Serendipity story ethically and clearly: emphasize authenticity and integrity by allowing people to tell their own stories. MATTY'S METAPHOR. Never other the students in order to entice a donor. Invite students/families to tell their own stories rather than talk about them.

Discussion about storytelling: Paul feels sense of urgency has been missing in discussing the pay equity/staff retention challenges. Paul has concerns about how to tell student stories while avoiding talking about their individual traumas. Breesa shares that donors care about outcomes, not about the organization. Matty has concerns about focusing messaging on the traumas because it could alienate some segments of our family and donor base; sensationalizes. Wendy wants to change the focus from urgency to confidence in our model and methods, need to focus on the potential supporters/donors who relate to us. Shannon wants to focus on sharing the story in a way that shows impact on community (what donor is going to get out of supporting Serendipity Center). Erika wants focus to be on supporters' opportunity to be part of Serendipity's programming rather than saving a traumatized kid model.

Development Director will need media relations experience.

Review of Four Pillar Campaign (Impact Report and campaign brochure). Discussion about challenges of reaching new donors. Breesa refers to suggestions in assessment, including applying to gift guide, earned media, targeting special educators with mailings, etc. Board should be prepared to support new Development Director in these efforts. Michael suggests exploring staff stories in addition to students stories. Lori emphasizes that we are a relatable organization due to prevalence of mental health concerns/universal experience with school.

- 4) Strategic Priorities (Mark): Board focus on subcommittees and reporting back to whole board. Serve more students through capital expansion while maintaining quality of programming. Increasing donor base, increasing awareness. Strengthening current processes. Reaching pay equity (immediate need). Mark would like committees to discuss staff recruitment and retention.

- 5) Introduce committees: Finance Committee, Donor Advisory Committee, Program Advisory Committee, Capital Projects Steering Committee, Nominating/Equity Committee, Outcomes Steering Committee. Committee Chairs review benchmarks.

Mark will be sharing board matrix to identify needs within the board as well as officers succession plans. Will help with strategic board recruitment.

Update from George Ricketts. Recognition of Belinda.

Meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.