



## **Board Meeting Minutes – April 27, 2022**

**Present:** Rachel Gardell, Lori Silverman, Rick Larson, Erika Schwartz, Paul Fields, Shannon Dale, Eric Robertson, Patrick Wrobel, Wendy Ricketts, Mark Takehara, Matty Berryessa

**Absent:** Dan Smith, Michael Hsu

**Guest:** Kristin Bauer, prospective board member

**Paul Fields calls meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m.**

**Approval of March Minutes:** Wendy Ricketts motions to approve minutes, Patrick Wrobel seconds motion. Paul notes typo on second page. Erika will correct. Unanimously approved.

### **Staffing and ESY updates (Matty Berryessa):**

- Optimistic staffing trends. In the last two months, 6 new employees have been hired, 3 are scheduled to start in the near future and 2 offers have been given.
- Targeted Facebook ads have been a good source of recruitment.
- Therapeutic Rec instructor position is being shifted from paraprofessional to licensed teacher. Planning to be fully staffed for 9 classrooms and benchmarks for expansion are in place. Resignations have slowed down as well.
- 5 new referrals, 3 in process of screening, 2 in process of intake and 3 forecasted for next year.
- Gathering data from sped team and sharing regression data with districts. We are trying to confirm the new students for ESY. Still working out what recovery education (compensatory services for CDL) will look like for summer.

Questions & Comments: Paul is happy to hear the news about staffing. Asks if current staff will be retained for next year. Matty shares that not many staff members have indicated that they will be leaving; less than expected given how challenging the past two years have been.

Lori asks what the difference between ESY and Recovery Instruction. Matty and Erika share that Recovery Ed is a program specifically for kids who lost skills or made no progress during Comprehensive Distance Learning. ESY is for kids who show regression over school breaks. Lori asks if students who would be eligible for Recovery Ed would receive those services at Serendipity or in their home districts. Matty shares that Serendipity will be providing those services.

### **Introductions to Kristin Bauer**

### **Finance Report (Mark):**

- \$46K loss due to low enrollment, but staff was also low and year-to-date loss is a lot less than expected (\$300k vs. \$600k). No outstanding expenses for last month or expected next month. There is optimism for enrollment next year. Fundraising campaigns have closed the gap.

- Initial budget assumptions: starting year with 9 classrooms and have staff ready to open 10th when school opens. Budget will be available for board to preview next month. One outstanding item is open enrollment/benefits costs.

#### **Development Report (Rachel):**

- Shares charts about donor retention, year-over-year comparison from 2018/19 to present. 89 new donors this year and recurring donors have increased as well. The big numbers in 2018/19 have to do with the gala. The next steps will be comparing to donor list.
- The Zoom meet & greet went very well. Donors got to meet Mark and see Belinda. 12 community members came and it was very well received.
- May fundraising plans: The fundraising campaign ends on May 31st and we have met our goal! However, we have not yet met the individual donors fundraising goal (\$165K vs. \$200K); print appeal will be going out to inform donors about ESY programming and needs. Kudos to Rick for providing a Powell's gift card as incentive. E-appeals are also occurring.
- Board phone banking session: Please volunteer for the week of May 23rd. Paul, Erika, Lori, Rick. Thank you to Erika and Lori for calling donors to thank them.
- Capital Campaign feasibility interviews are occurring.
- July garden party event: Donor Engagement Committee is brainstorming July garden event as an open house to introduce neighbors, community members and donors to Serendipity Center. This event will be family friendly. July 16th at 11:00 a.m.
- Gala conversation: additional brainstorming is required to see what will be a better fit and then a proposal will be presented to the board. DEC committee will be working on ideas and creating a proposal.

Question & Comments: Matty is excited to invite friends who are neighbors to the garden party. Wendy spoke with a long term donor who is excited to visit the campus. Matty shares that an arts nonprofit is planning a mural in the main courtyard and will have a painting party August 28th. Paul recollects a past event called The Shindig and suggests that it might be a good model for a bigger event. The tickets were lower cost. Matty shares that the idea behind it was to remove barriers that a gala might have. Wendy asks how much lead time is required for planning a large event. Rachel shares that an event like a gala takes a year or more to plan. Rachel Gardell says that we should keep thinking of ideas, but if the event ends up being a gala, we should all work together to make it the best event we can make it. Wendy asks where the 89 new donors came from. Rachel shares that The Arnerich Memorial donations were huge; this was not planned and raised about \$50K donors. Rachel will be working on retaining those new donors. This is also the first year since 2018/19 that we have done a big push for donations.

#### **Committee reports**

**Capital Projects Steering Committee (Rick):** Rachel Gitner has done a great job. The case statement for the facility expansion is complete and feasibility study is in process. Rachel is interviewing 35 donors who have the means to contribute significantly. Will have more information about interviews and feasibility study in June and determine if we will raise the money we need to move forward with the project.

Mark is appreciative that the board is willing to take this big step slowly with adequate planning.

**Donor Engagement Committee (Erika):** Gitner is doing an amazing job. Gardell's videos are wonderful. Thank you calls to donors are fun and volunteers are welcome. Soliciting ideas for gala replacement.

**Programs Committee (Lori):** Committee met in person at the volunteer day on campus. There will be another volunteer day in the future. It's really great to be on campus; please volunteer! Accreditation is going well. Kevin reported that staff morale is on a positive trend. The search for a DEI trainer continues and hopes are for a Summer/Fall training. Please consider writing a letter to staff who go above and beyond (management staff is committing to nominating two people per month); a template is available. Paul asks if Mark can provide a little

blurb about what the staff is being recognized for so board members can include specific info in the letter. Shea is accepting gift cards for staff recognition, any denomination welcomed.

Shannon asks about the staff letters; is there consistency in the gift card giving so jealousy doesn't become an issue? Lori shares that only one letter has been sent, so there is no inconsistency. Erika shares that consistency is a good idea. Two gift card options: 1) any denomination for management staff to use for awards and 2) \$100 gift cards to be given to outstanding staff with letter from board.

Matty shares that selecting Lisa to receive the first letter will be very meaningful.

**Nominations and Equity (Wendy):** Things are going well. Kristin is here! Lori has been working tirelessly. Wendy met with Bahmer Institute to start relationship and they will be touring school soon.

**Data and Outcomes (Paul):** Synergy implementation is nearly complete. Deb Schultz will be shifting attention to outcomes and reporting. We are still working through some issues on the staffing side. Serendipity is learning how to adopt technology and integrate it into the process.

**Executive Director Report:**

- Returning from Spring Break has been the most stable part of the school year. There has been a significant improvement in staff morale.
- We are deciding to keep staff and students masked until the end of the school year. There will be a lot of school events in June (dates will be available at the next meeting).
- Finances will improve as enrollment increases. We will be sending letters to districts to inform them that we will be fully staffed to start next school year. We are trying to enroll as many students as possible by the end of the school year, but this can only happen according to space and staffing.
- This summer will look different than past summers because we are trying to onboard new staff so they can work during ESY for mentorship/training opportunities that we hope will improve our retention.

Questions & Comments: Paul asks about notation enrollment. Mark explains that those are the changes from last month. Shannon asks about tuition related to ESY. Tuition will be collected for ESY and Recovery Ed. Wendy asks about enrollment per classroom. Matty reports that the average is 8-10, though some classrooms can accommodate more students. It depends on who is referred and the specific student needs. The budget is generally set for around 99 students. Mark shares that mid-90s is a realistic goal based on staffing projections.

**Board Chair Report:**

Paul reports that there is at least one nominee for each of the executive positions. The vote is planned for June 21st at 5:30 p.m. with a virtual happy hour. We can decide at the next board meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m. with the reading of the Serendipity mission.**