

Stanmore Public School P&C

President's Report 2012

Alexander Mackenzie

2012 was a significant and busy year for the P&C, including the Executive, regular P&C members and the many volunteers and contributors to P&C events.

Following the successful application by the school for a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Scheme grant the P&C had a very strong fund-raising target. It would be fair to say that fund-raising, with the Kitchen Garden in mind, was very much the main focus for the P&C in 2012.

The P&C also had two clear goals with major events. To foster enjoyment and engagement with students, parents and teachers alike, and then to offer an event or opportunities to draw in support from the wider community, who may not have a current direct link with the school.

By any measure the major events of 2012 were very successful in achieving these aims. In re-creating the Big Night Out / Trivia Night at the Cyprus Club with approximately 200 attendees, and over \$20,000 raised, the parents, friends and local businesses had an enjoyable night and profitable night.

The second major event was the Night Market held on 30th November. Involving local stall holders, Stanmore parents, P&C managed activities, food suppliers and carnival-style attractions the Night Market was an outstanding success. As a parent, P&C President, and regular BBQ volunteer, I could not have been more proud of the P&C, the parents, students, friends, relatives and businesses whom contributed to make the night such a memorable experience. Raising funds was an important goal, but it was fantastic to see the wider community come together in the school grounds to enjoy themselves. There were many comments of support & requests to make it a regular Stanmore Calendar event.

In addition to the Kitchen Garden the new Library was completed and so there were some additional fund raising goals associated with that. Primarily in terms of increasing the funds raised and the engagement of the school and parent body with the Annual Book Drive. The results, as evident in the Annual Financial Report, show the success of the Book Drive in 2012. Having such a defined and exciting objective greatly helped raise interest and awareness of the Drive, and hence the funds raised.

This year approximately \$54,000 was raised by P&C events, and over \$10,000 in donations made to the Building Fund. Whilst fund raising for the Kitchen Garden was the key focus for the P&C, the P&C also became closely involved in the development and execution of the actual kitchen. In the latter half of the year a number of the P&C Executive, and volunteers with interior design, building and project management skills, stepped in to assist the School in completing the design and required steps for the build of the kitchen. This focus and energy helped push the project along and will help get our school a fantastic made-to-measure kitchen at a greatly reduced cost.

Through 2012 there were a number of other issues raised to the P&C by parents, and addressed by or within the P&C. As President I would comment that the P&C has not moved on these issues as successfully as it has with fund raising, and this is something the 2013 Executive and wider P&C membership should consider.

Communication between the school and parents is an on-going concern. Many parents valued the information given out at morning lines and the weekly assembly, and the social aspect of meeting and talking with fellow members. This sense of engagement with the school has been lost and does need to be looked at. Parents do not believe that SNIP, or notes in school bags, are adequate replacements for this. With the school recently creating a Facebook page the P&C will be able to communicate to parents via this channel, as well as the P&C pages on the website. It is important that the P&C strives to use the website better in 2013.

Road safety is also a concern for many parents. Stanmore Public School is in a busy location, with Newington Junior and High School nearby, as well as the train station of course. The P&C has taken some steps to communicating with Marrickville Council and other authorities to get some action to improve road safety, particularly around drop off and pick up times. In the end we must all, as parents, be responsible not just for our own children's safety but also the safety of all children attending Stanmore Public School. I appeal to all parents to show great caution and safety when driving around the school environment. In 2013 this is an issue I suggest the P&C can follow up on further.

Another major discussion point through the year was the changes initiated in 2011 to the boundaries of Newtown High School of the Performing Arts. This has impacted many Stanmore parents, and their local schools will now be Marrickville High School and Leichardt High School. Parents have understandably been concerned that they are now in a different catchment zone. Concern was also raised about the actions of the P&C, and in particular the P&C Executive, in 2011. It is my view that this issue around P&C action or inaction is now closed. To ensure all parents had the opportunity to hear how and why the Department of Education made the decision they made, Paul Parks, School Education Director, Sydney Region, attended the P&C Meeting held on 4th September 2012. At this meeting parents had the opportunity to ask questions, and hear the Department's views. Following that matter the P&C made the decision to ask the Principal of Marrickville High School to address the P&C and parent body. This was originally planned for 2012, but then agreed to move to 2013, to better assist parents in years 4 and 5 that are starting to plan for high school.

Finally, the auditor's comments, on the 2012 Financial Statements, makes clear that the P&C need some tighter controls on cash collection, accounting and reconciliation. I would like to formally remark that I have full confidence in the accuracy of the accounts, and that all claimed expenses were legitimate and accurate. Many members of the P&C, particularly those closely associated with the major fund raising events, use their own personal funds to purchase required products, food and other merchandise prior to events. It is imperative that receipts are provided by suppliers, and invoices collected. The current P&C Treasury team are putting some new systems and procedures in place to assist in this control, aiding reporting and reconciliation.

In concluding my report I would like pay special thanks to the Executive that have contributed so much through the year. Vice-President Madi Morrison, Fund-Raising Vice Presidents Sue Rose and Kylie Williams, Secretaries Jana Hunt and Lea Dawson, Treasurers Sarah Cleary, Gina Angelicas and

Deahna Sheerin, Sally Fryer and Adam Shapiro for maintaining the website & weekly SNIP communication, and Laura Arnesto, Grants Co-ordinator.

And of course many thanks for the parents that come along to the P&C meetings, who contribute agenda items, and all those who contribute to the many events and activities as volunteers, chocolate egg buyers, BBQers and so on. We get a good deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from being involved with the school through the P&C and hope that you enjoy and a get a real benefit from our combined efforts.

2012 has had some good outcomes, and we can all look forward to a great 2013.