

Friends of the Willow Glen Children's Theatre

Meeting – January 10, 2015

Minutes

Attendees: Diana Pohle (President, Friends), Hans Cardenas (Vice President, Friends), Linda Bojorquez (Treasurer, Friends), Sandy Shapiro (Treasurer, Friends), Neil Shapiro (Secretary, Friends), Amy Shackelford (WGCT staff liaison), Gavin Coffing

Any action items coming out of this meeting will be indicated in **bold** and added to the action items list.

Diana welcomed us and reviewed today's agenda

Neil presented the minutes from our November meeting. Hans moved, Sandy seconded that these minutes be approved as written. The motion passed unanimously. **Neil will send Hans copies of past meeting minutes, for posting on our website.**

WGCT Next Session: Registration, Budget, and Logistics

- We have 10 signups so far.
- Diana mentioned that WGCT has approximately \$50,000 as of December per Torie. This did not include the registration or staff expenses for the last session. It is expected that the WGCT is in good fiscal standing at this time; however, specific budget details were not available at this meeting.
- We need to confirm the dates of this session (set to start January 31), the performance dates (right now, April 17-19) and whether our contract explicitly includes the use of the stage lights. **Diana will contact Torie to get these confirmations.**
- Do we want to investigate the theatre at Hoover as a possible alternative location? Gavin wasn't sure that Hoover has its own lights. **Hans will check this.** Hans stated that if we can't get the theatre at Willow Glen Middle School confirmed by January 31, we should look into Hoover as five years ago there would have been no cost to us for its use. . However, Gavin told us that we would be dealing with the same bureaucracy that we have at WGMS. Diana thought it is unlikely to be free, given the 35% overhead that the city imposes now. This also moves us out of Willow Glen.
- Diana would like us to continue head shots and cast bios; we need to coordinate these activities with the WGCT staff. Diana asked Amy what the staff needs from Friends to make these activities happen smoothly. **Linda will let Amy know when she will take the head shots.** We should give the cast bio forms to both participants and their parents. **Amy will make sure the staff is on top of getting the cast bios back from the participants.**
- We discussed the information sheets that the staff gives to parents on the first day. Gavin thought that we should include when we will be doing head shots and when we need the cast bios returned. We should also include the date of the

parent's meeting. Amy thought this information should be on the WGCT website as well. We should then make sure that the website address is also included on the first day information sheet.

- We next discussed folders. Hans reminded us that we used to give folders to each participant with their name on it. These could be used for scripts, but should also be used for any information the participants are to take home (like cast bio forms). Hans believe we should reinstitute this practice. **Diana will buy a supply of these folders and Friends will donate them to the WGCT.**
- Amy brought up the idea of purchasing WGCT sweatshirts to sell at the concession table. We all thought this was a great idea! This will be something that Friends pays for. Linda suggested that we only order 10-12 at first, to see how they sell. No one was identified as taking the lead on this. It should be discussed at the next Friends meeting.
- We discussed giving out T-shirts to the participants in the upcoming session. The program has a supply of these already. We could give out T-shirts and the first-day information sheets on the first day of the session. Amy suggested we give the T-shirts during the second session. We thought that having them available both the first and second Saturday's would be good. **Linda will help with T-shirt distribution on the first day.** We still need to coordinate getting the T-shirts from the office at Bramhall. Amy and/or Gavin need to advise us if they want Friends to help with this task.
- Diana wants us to let parents know the date of the parent's meeting the very first Saturday. Hans suggested the WGCT staff should also e-mail or call this session's parents in advance with this information. **Amy will work to get this contact information. Neil and Sandy will provide Amy with a half-sheet flyer with the date of the parent's meeting, which will go home with the participants on the first day.** Diana urged that the WGCT staff provide most of the information at the parent's meeting, with the Friends board there to fill in details, if necessary. At this meeting, we need to explain exactly how the cast party works.
- A few more logistical notes:
 - Sandy pointed out that the 3rd Saturday of the upcoming session is February 14, the Saturday before the start of President's week. It is possible the Willows Community Center will be closed that day – we need to confirm this with Torie.
 - **Amy will ask Torie about providing the staff with the alarm codes for the Center.**
 - **Amy will e-mail the script to Friends at friends@wgct.org.** It can then be posted on the website
 - Linda suggested we put a list of frequently asked questions for each session on the website.
 - Amy asked that any staff-related questions that come to the Friends e-mail address (friends@wgct.org) be referred to the new staff e-mail address: wgct.staff@yahoo.com. In addition, Diana asked Neil to investigate **if we can create an automatic reply for any e-mail that comes to**

friends@wgct.org, thanking the sender for the message, giving them the staff e-mail if this is a WGCT program-related issue, and otherwise indicating that someone from Friends will reply to them soon.

WGCT Publicity

- The flyers for the upcoming session are ready. We just need to get final school approval, divide them up, and then distribute them. Do we want to distribute them to libraries as well as schools? We thought this is a good idea – especially libraries near the Willows Community Center. Amy thought that putting up our flyers in bookstores might help us reach home-schooled children. We had a couple of home-schooled participants last session. Sandy is currently tutoring a couple of home-schooled children. **She will talk to them and their parents about the names of home-school organizations to which we might want to reach out.** Hans found the name of one: South Bay FREE Scholars.
- Do we want to send out letters to past participants? Yes, **Diana will follow up with Torie to send them out.**
- Amy mentioned that we have information on how parents of participants heard about the WGCT.
- Hans told us that our website tells where people who visit the site are coming from. The most common sites are Google search and a site called BayAreaKids.com (Hans wasn't sure of the exact name). Hans thought we could investigate this site. Diana cautioned that they may be a competitor checking out our site to see what we are offering. **Hans will gather more information about the BayAreaKids site and share it with the Friends board.**
- Hans told us that we can get free Google ads. All are in favor that we should investigate this (Secretary's note: this is already on our action item list).
- Neil suggested that we should post reviews and testimonials on our website and also on Yelp.
- Gavin urged us to think about the reasons why people sign up for the WGCT rather than the other programs out there. We listed several reasons:
 - Sense of community
 - Fun
 - Affordable
 - Unique
 - Little parent involvement required

How do we use this information in our advertising?

- Hans suggested we hold focus groups to do market research. Diana could help with this. We could start with parents; a 30 minute exploratory discussion. Amy suggested an online survey which could reach a wider range of respondents. Neil volunteered to help collate and analyze the results. The upshot of this

discussion is that **Diana volunteered to put together a research plan for consideration at our next Friends meeting.**

- Diana asked if we can order a banner with the title of the play from our source (Banners on the Cheap) for publicity during performance weekend. Everyone seemed in favor of this; however, it is dependent on knowing the title of the play in advance. Gavin cannot commit to this.
- Hans suggested advertising at San Jose Giants games. There was discussion of having a WGCT night at the San Jose Giants as our annual fundraiser. We could all go wearing WGCT T-shirts. **Diana will investigate options and report back to the Friends board.**
- Hans asked if we should join the Willow Glen Business Association. **He will investigate this and report back at our February meeting.**

Scholarship update

Our Scholarship Committee (Hans and Neil) approved a request for a 100% scholarship in December. Sandy reminded us that the Willows staff has a check to be used for Friends scholarships. **The Scholarship Committee needs to check with Torie to see if that is the case;** otherwise Sandy and Linda will have to give them another one for this scholarship. Diana and Amy mentioned that there are other participants who may be interested in scholarships – we should reach out to them.

Treasurer's Report

Sandy reported the following:

- Since our last meeting, we had income of \$902.00 from concession and photos
- Since our last meeting, we had expenses of \$1,250.71
- Our current balance is \$8,913.99

Sandy provided Diana with the latest copy of the reimbursement form

Diana asked that Sandy reimburse her for a group cast photo poster which is now hanging at Rosie's Pizza.

Neil mentioned that our P.O. Box is likely coming up for renewal soon. Diana moved, Hans seconded approval for renewal of the P.O. Box. (Secretary's note: Later that same day, I received an e-mail from the USPS telling me that it was indeed time to renew. The cost will be \$92.00)

Diana asked that Linda and Sandy present a budget proposal for 2015 at our February meeting. We should carve out a certain amount of money for scholarships, and also list other expenses such as the P.O. Box, our web domain, and costume reimbursement. Funds with no immediate plans for use should be considered to be placed in stronger investment options such as CDs or some form of interest bearing account. **Linda and Sandy will meet before our February meeting to discuss the budget.**

Next meeting

Our next meeting is tentatively set for February 7, 2015 at 10:00 am.

We adjourned at 11:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Shapiro

Friends of the WGCT Secretary