

VPS Families

As we outlined in our newsletter of September 25, the school anticipates a significant loss of revenue over the next few years due to decreased enrollment resulting from the current health crisis and economic downturn. Fortunately, our reserve accounts can absorb this loss (which would have been substantially more if we had not made various staffing reductions).

As we begin the process of rebuilding enrollment, one of the keys to this effort will be a robust *Tuition Assistance Program*, supported by a **Tuition Assistance Fund** with monies specifically earmarked to provide financial assistance. For the current school year, we have allocated upwards of \$75,000 of support (a 25% increase from last year). However, the average independent school typically allocates monies equal to **10%** of their annual revenue. We are currently allocating less than 5%. This needs to improve. How do we do this? Fundraising!

For more details, please review two important sections below: Finance Update & Fundraising.

John Black, Head of School

jblack@vpredlands.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 26 - October 4:** VPS Book Fair at the Frugal Frigate in Redlands (see attached flyer)
- **September 28-30:** VPS Nights at the Gourmet Pizza Shop in Redlands (see attached flyer)
- **Early October:** Progress Reports for students struggling in Math, English, Science, or Social Studies.
- **October 9:** No School
- **October 27:** Picture Day
- **October 30:** End of 1st Trimester (Noon dismissal)
- **CANCELLED:** In accordance with our Campus Safety Plan, we will not have a **Fall Fest** (Halloween Carnival) this year.
- **TENTATIVE:** We are considering a *virtual Grandparents Day* for later in the Fall and a *virtual Winter Concert* in December. See info below about our annual **Halloween Parade**.

SCREENING FOR COVID-19

As the school continues to develop an effective **screening process** with respect to Covid-19, please be advised of the following (taken from the CDC website) ...

1. Please **keep your child at-home and inform the school immediately** if they have either of the following symptoms: (1) Temperature of **100.4** and above; (2) consistent coughing and/or sneezing
2. Please **consider keeping your child at-home** if they have any of the following symptoms: shortness of breath; fatigue; body aches; headache; loss of taste and/or smell; nausea and/or vomiting; diarrhea; sore throat; congestion or runny nose.
3. Please **keep your child at-home and inform the school immediately** if, in the past 14 days, your child (or a member of the household) has been in close physical contact (6 feet or closer for at least 15 minutes) with a person who is known to have Covid-19.

CLASS PARTIES

Please be advised that food for class parties (such as birthdays) must be restricted to store-bought items which are individually wrapped. After coordinating with the teacher, the parent may drop-off the items in the front-office. The teacher will distribute the items to the students at the appropriate time.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FAMILIES

As previously announced, after consulting with *Boojum Outdoor Adventures*, we have decided to move the **Colorado River trip** from October to April. We will also be adding the 6th grade to the trip, thereby allowing

the entire Middle School to attend. Additionally, we are planning a single-day trip to **Joshua Tree** for the entire Middle School, probably in early March. Finally, we have tentatively scheduled the 8th grade trip to **Washington DC** for early May. However, we will wait until December to begin the registration process. Further details will be forthcoming about these three trips.

DL-STUDENTS

Please be reminded that failure to attend a particular class via Zoom will result in the deduction of points, which can adversely affect a student's trimester grade on the Report Card.

HALLOWEEN PARADE

We are currently giving consideration to an acceptable format for this year's Halloween Parade, scheduled for October 30. In accordance with our safety protocols, we cannot allow parents on-campus or class parties that involve the sharing of food. But we will endeavor to broadcast the parade via Zoom. We also expect to dismiss the students at Noon. Further details will be forthcoming.

EMERGENCY FORMS:

At the beginning of each school year we ask parents to complete the Emergency Form which provides important contact and medical information. Your cooperation in completing this form is appreciated!

FINANCE UPDATE

As we outlined in our newsletter of September 25, the school anticipates a **3-year loss of nearly \$300,000** due to decreased enrollment resulting from the current health crisis and economic downturn. Fortunately, our reserve accounts can absorb this loss (which would have been substantially more if we had not made various staffing reductions). As we begin the process of rebuilding enrollment, one of the keys to this effort will be a robust *Tuition Assistance Program*, supported by a **Tuition Assistance Fund** with monies specifically earmarked to provide financial assistance. For the current school year, we have allocated upwards of \$75,000 of support (a 25% increase from last year). However, the average independent school typically allocates monies equal to **10%** of their annual revenue. We are currently allocating less than 5%. This needs to improve.

Why is this important?

1. Valley Prep tuition rates are high compared to other local private schools, thereby making the recruitment of new families challenging (not to mention the retention of current families).
2. Multiple grade-levels have fewer than 12 students. This is not optimal from a socialization perspective. Our enrollment goal remains 15-18 students per class.
3. Higher enrollment ensures the continuity of the Valley Prep "program," including Art, Music, Languages, Library, etc.
4. Higher enrollment allows for annual surpluses which can be reinvested in the school's facilities and programs.

How is Tuition Assistance currently awarded?

For the current school year, nearly forty families submitted applications for tuition assistance to Smart-aid, a division of the same company that manages our tuition collection. They review the financial information submitted by the family, and then recommend to the school a particular level of support. All too often, the school is unable to offer the recommended level of support. Based upon available funds (which is driven largely by our enrollment), the school will typically offer a tuition reduction ranging from 5% to 20%. The family will then decide if the reduction is sufficient to allow them to send their child(ren) to the school. In too many cases, the reduction is not sufficient ... and we lose the family. This further demonstrates the importance of establishing a more robust *Tuition Assistance Program*.

How do we establish (and grow) a Tuition Assistant Fund?

1. Use the interest earned from the school's investment accounts (i.e. our reserve accounts)
2. Fundraising

FUNDRAISING

Our annual fundraising efforts traditionally center-around the Annual Fund, Fall Fest (Halloween Carnival), and the GALA. The Fall Fest & GALA are both considered PTO activities, organized primarily by parent volunteers. The proceeds from these two events are then used for a particular project. Recent projects included: Perimeter fencing, repaving the basketball courts, remodeling the bathrooms, and installing shade structures. As important as these facility projects are, the school's obvious priority is to re-build enrollment. Accordingly, the School Board and Head of School agree that monies raised from these fundraisers must now be used to establish and grow a **Tuition Assistance Fund**.

- **Annual Fund:** This fund "closes the gap" between the amount of revenue collected during a particular fiscal year, and total expenses. Due to lower enrollment, this gap is increasing. Everyone's support will be critical as we work to decrease the gap. Last year, more than 90% of our families donated to the fund, which raised nearly \$40,000. Can we push that total to \$45,000?
- **Fall Fest:** Although we cannot have a Fall Fest this year due to strict guidelines for Covid-19, we must already look-ahead to next year. Last year's event raised more than \$20,000. Can we push that total to \$25,000?
- **GALA:** Last year's GALA was very well-received and raised more than \$40,000. If we're able to hold the event in Spring 2021, can we push that total to \$45,000?

FUNDRAISING GOALS

- 2020-21: Annual Fund + GALA = **\$75,000+**
- 2021-22: Annual Fund + Fall Fest + GALA = **\$100,000+**

STAFFING UPDATE

1. Our Resource Specialist position has been eliminated
2. One Classroom Aide position has been eliminated
3. Library has become part-time.
4. Middle School English & Math have become part-time.
5. PE, Music, Art, French, and Spanish will soon become part-time. In most cases, the weekly frequency of these classes will not change.
6. Mrs. White (our PK teacher) has been working with our PK-K Distance Learners from home, but is now unable to return to campus due to family obligations. We are currently conducting a search for a new PK teacher. The position will be part-time.
7. Homework Club will not be offered during the 1st Trimester. If enrollment increases during the Fall, we will consider reinstating the program.

ON-CAMPUS SAFETY

1. Face-coverings are REQUIRED at Valley Prep for K-8th (and strongly recommended for Preschool & PK). This requirement will be continually reviewed, with consideration given to any changes in CDC and California guidelines. While cloth face-coverings are widely considered preferable, Valley Prep is not requiring a certain type of face-covering, so long as the mouth and nose are covered.
2. Where possible, VPS has increased distance between seats (and bedding in PS/PK) in classrooms. (NOTE: due to the small size of our classrooms, we do not guarantee that every seat will be 6' apart).
3. Student temperatures are taken daily upon arrival. If a student has a temp of **100.4**, they will be sent home. Parents are strongly encouraged to take their child's temperature each day before leaving the house. If a student is sent-home with a temperature above 100.4, the child must be **temperature-free for 24-hours**. In other words, if your child is sent home on Monday, they could not come to school until Wednesday.
4. Teachers constantly promote good hand hygiene (hand-washing and use of hand sanitizer). Hand sanitizer is available in each classroom and around the campus. Two outdoor sinks are also available for hand-washing.

5. Teachers constantly promote respiratory etiquette by reminding students to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available) and to keep their hands away from their nose, mouth, and eyes (obviously this is more challenging with younger students).
6. Classrooms and outdoor play-equipment are consistently wiped-down throughout the day. The school has hired a part-time person to assist Mr. Morales with this important duty.
7. There will be no fieldtrips, inter-school sporting events, or large on-campus gatherings (including Orientation Day, Back to School Night, Back to School Barbecue, Grandparents Day, Fall Fest) until further notice. In addition, monthly PTO meetings will be held virtually.
8. Teachers will do as much classwork outdoors as possible. The school has purchased additional picnic tables for this purpose (and to allow physical distancing during lunch).
9. Teachers will constantly discourage the sharing of supplies and food.
10. Installation continues of **Bi-Polar Ionization kits** into each classroom. Studies have shown that these air-filters have a 99.4% reduction rate on a SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) surface strain.
11. All staff members are being tested for Covid-19 on a rotational basis.

CONFIRMED TO HAVE COVID-19

If a student (or staff member) in a particular class is confirmed to have Covid-19, then the entire class (including the teacher) must **quarantine for 14 days**. Other classes would likely not be required to close. All students in the closed classroom would transition to 100% Distance Learning during the quarantine. After the 14-day period, each student (and the teacher) would need to **submit a "clear/negative" test result** in order to return to campus. This policy/procedure has been approved by CDPH.

EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19

If a student (or staff member) in a particular class is confirmed (or even "suspected," given the circumstances) to have been exposed to someone with Covid-19, then they must **submit a "clear/negative" test result** in order to return to campus. If sufficient background information is available, then it may also be necessary to quarantine for 14-days. If the test result is "positive," then the procedure outlined above will be implemented.