

MSPA MS Meeting

January 24, 2018 (8:50 am - 10:05 am)

Welcome! Be True to Your School

Alli Deeter, MS Co-President

Alli revisited her resolutions from the beginning of the school year: 1) choose happy, 2) be in the moment, and 3) be grateful. Alli thanked the parents for creating a supportive environment and for speaking up when things are going well. It is making a difference for faculty and staff, and they really appreciate it.

Alli told the parents how lucky she feels to be part of Menlo School. To celebrate, Allie and some other members of the MSPA Council led the parents in a rendition of the Beach Boys' "Be True to Your School."

Updates

Than Healy, Head of School

Menlo has started hiring for next year, including hiring a new Athletic Director. Menlo had eight semi-finalists come to Menlo for a weekend; Than would be happy with six or seven of them. From those, Menlo selected three who came for a second visit; all were spectacular. Two are coming from the university level. Menlo has never had such good candidates, which is a statement about the strength of the school.

Than read an email from an US teacher, detailing his day. It included teaching, mentoring a new teacher, counseling students, and planning curricular changes. The teacher spoke about how he enjoys his job because it allows him to exercise all of his abilities. Than said that the tuition pays for our kids to have access to exceptional faculty, like this one.

Hard Day's Knight

Kim Guthrie and Jill Layman, Auction Co-Chairs, and Katherine Kelly, Director of Alumni Giving and Engagement

The auction is March 24th. After playing a British word game, they asked for auction donations. They are looking for:

- Vacation packages
- Sporting event tickets

- Hosting a party
- Wine
- Unique experiences, like backstage passes or tours of places not open to the public
- Count-Me-In parties

In addition, please email them or go to the auction webpage if you have additional ideas. The deadline for donating is February 15th.

Parent Ed Conference

Andrea Enright, Co-Chair of the Parent Ed Conference

The conference is on “Parenting in a World of Mixed Messages.” The keynote speaker will be Richard Weissbourd from Harvard. The other speakers will be Ana Homayoun on social media and Jonathan Scott on substance abuse. At the end, Than will moderate a roundtable with all three speakers.

Please register so that we know how many people are coming. You can come for part of the Conference.

MS Dance

Martine Gullung, French Teacher and MS Dance Coordinator

The MS dance is on April 27th. The school needs parents at the start to greet the students and take their phones; the teachers will chaperone; then parents need to be at the exit to return the phones and ensure the students leave with an adult. Please email Ms. Gullung if you are interested in helping.

Middle School Chorus

Liz Bongiorno, MS Music Director

The MS mixed chorus sang two songs for the parents.

Middle School Parent Panel

Katherine Peterson, MS Counselor and Moderator and Parent Panel: Byron Deeter, Linda Knoll, Jenn Miller, Gretchen Wyatt

Katherine Peterson asked the panel to be vulnerable and reflect on things that haven't gone well in their parenting.

Here are some of the topics the parents touched upon:

- Apologize to your child when you overreact or are wrong
- Try not to impose your way of doing things on your child; honor that your child is his or her own person
- Trust that the school will guide your child on schoolwork
- Each child processes things differently and each child processes differently on different days; you need to meet the child where he or she is on that day
- Give your child the “why” underlying the discipline
- Tell your kids about your professional failures, so they understand that it’s okay to fail

The parents also spoke about how they handle electronic devices (phones, tablets and laptops) in their houses.

- Perhaps, don’t give your child a smartphone in MS; a simple cell phone is better
- Electronic devices stay in public rooms, not in bedrooms
- Perhaps, put a limit on cell phone use for middle schoolers; one family allowed 10 hours per week
- The phone belongs to the parent; the parent can always see it and can repossess it if it is being misused

Katherine informed the parents that there will be two events after the Parent Ed Conference where parents can process what is said there:

- 2/15: Follow-up conversation with the MS and US counselors
- 3/8: MS Parent Coffee with Katherine

FLIK Food Service

Tony Lapolla, Dean of Students; Michael Sheets, Director of Dining Services; Mark Geiss, Regional Chef for the West Coast; Orlando Heinz, Sous Chef; Alexia Watson, Catering Manager

FLIK serves freshly-made food that is never frozen or out of a box. It uses as much local, organic produce and meat as possible.

FLIK tries to educate the kids about different foods. Grains are the focus right now with options that include farro, quinoa and other unusual grains. Grilled cheese sandwiches often include brie or gruyere.

FLIK deals well with kids requiring special diets. They have reserved purple pots and pans etc. for kids with serious allergies so they can prepare their meals separately.

To see the upcoming menu, go to the “my school dining” website or app, where you can see three weeks in advance. In developing the menus, FLIK went through two six-week rounds to

see how much was eaten of each option. They got rid of the unpopular meals and are now running four-week cycles.

They have made some changes based on the comments they have gotten back, such as adding toasters. They are continuing to refine things.

The snackbar is open from 7:30 to 10 and then again from 1:30 to 4. It is closed during lunch to encourage kids to eat in the cafeteria.

The new catering menu is up on the Menlo website with new choices and new pricing. FLIK will also work with any parent to come up with something, even if its not on the menu. They can customize a menu to fit any budget.

All leftovers are donated to Chefs to End Hunger, which feeds the homeless in San Francisco.

FLIK has done some ad hoc cooking classes for the MS French and Spanish classes. They plan on rolling out a more comprehensive food education program in the coming months.

The parents spoke about how good the food is. One parent expressed concern that some kids may not be getting enough food in the main entree line. FLIK responded that it makes 600 meat entrees and 150 vegetarian entrees per day. They give each kid a serving and encourage them to come back if they want more. Another parent expressed concern that having pizza out every day keeps the kids from trying the entree. FLIK responded that they try to drive the kids towards the entrees but that they cannot control what the kids want.