

Pathways

A PUBLICATION OF THE TESSERACT SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

SUMMER 2010 ISSUE



Casino Night Co-Chairs Daphne Cadwell and Jennifer Hannum

2010 Green Tie Event, Casino Night

Tesseract School's Green Tie Event, Casino Night on March 19, 2010 at the Ritz Carlton was a night to remember. Co-chairs Daphne Cadwell and Jennifer Hannum along with their committee did an incredible job of putting on the very best that Tesseract has to offer. Dressed in 1920's attire, guests started their evening surrounded by a beautiful outdoor setting, bidding on more than 200 silent auction items. Ladies who purchased a glass of champagne had the opportunity to win a pair of diamond earrings, compliments of Estate Watch and Jewelry. Following the silent auction guests moved to the ballroom for an

incredible dinner buffet and casino games. The Texas Hold'em tournament was a huge hit with parent Patrick Liu, who held the winning cards and took home the first-place prize. Our D.J. for the evening enticed guests with music from the 1980's and 1990's, allowing all to dance and enjoy themselves well into the midnight hour. Thanks to Allen and Liz Rosen-Ducat, the entire evening was captured in photos. Congratulations to Daphne, Jennifer and their committee for an evening we will not forget! ●

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Tell a Friend.

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Thank you to our
2010 Green Tie Event
Committee members and
volunteers!

Daphne Cadwell and
Jennifer Hannum, Co-chairs
Denise Voss
Heide McDermott
Cathy Garz
Leslie Folz
Kathy Bremner
Danielle Merrill
Veronica De La O

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Allan Alvarado
ASU Summer Bridge Students
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Thank you to everyone
who donated to the silent
auction!

Thank you to our print
sponsor, Salt River Water
and Solar, for their
generous sponsorship.



2011 Green Tie Event

We are delighted to announce our
co-chairs for the 2011 Green Tie
Event, Tesseract parents Denise
Voss and Heide McDermott. Both
of these incredible leaders worked

tirelessly on the 2010 Casino Night
to help make it a success. We look
forward to their leadership next
year. Thank you Denise and Heide.

2009-10 Tiger Annual Fund Donors

The Tiger Annual Fund is still in full swing. A "HUGE" thank you to all the families who have participated so far. While we are hoping that each class will reach 100 percent participation, the second grade is currently in the lead with 78 percent.

It really is all about the participation. Please consider a gift before June 30, 2010 so we may add you to the list of families who support our annual giving fund. ●

Anonymous (10)
The Alberti Family
Mr. and Mrs. John Allen
Mr. and Mrs. Allan Alvarado
Mr. and Mrs. Jett Anderson & Family
Mr. and Mrs. Jae-O Bae
The Ballard Family
The Beairto Family
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Mr. and Mrs. Todd Stottlemeyer
Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Suchala
Mr. and Mrs. Nigel Taplin
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Tesseract School Second Grade Parents -- In Honor of Peg Pellillo
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Mr. and Mrs. Michael Zuieback

Your 2009-2010 Tesseract Parents' Association (TPA) Dues in Action

Each year the TPA's **Cultural Enrichment Committee** brings the arts to our school's campuses to enhance our children's curriculum. This year the committee sponsored:

- Guest speakers from the Chinese Mandarin & Culture Academy who visited the kindergarten class
- The Upper School Artist in Residence Program, which included a Southwest Shakespeare Company workshop and a field trip to see its performance of "Julius Caesar"
- Seventh and eighth-grade students' trip to the Herberger Theater to attend "13"
- The Lower School Artist in Residence Program, which included a week-long visit by the Arizona Opera and its "Opera in a Box" program as well as free tickets for all students and their families to see the dress rehearsal of "The Barber of Seville" at Phoenix Symphony Hall
- A presentation by Reptile Adventures for the early childhood students
- The mariachi band, food and decorations for el Mercado, which was enjoyed by students from both campuses
- A visit by author Mike Graf, who signed books and spoke with the lower school students
- Mosaic tiles, which artist Darcy McGrane created with the middle school students, which now adorn the fountain area of the Shea campus

The TPA's **Faculty Appreciation Committee** has volunteers at both the Doubletree and Shea campus to insure that all 75 members of our faculty and staff know how special they are to not only the children but also their parents. This year our volunteers provided:

- A back-to-school bagel breakfast
- The potluck luncheon in November, which provided enough food for two days!
- Festive decorations in the faculty lounges during special events
- A Mexican meal by Chef Brian Day for our winter holiday luncheon
- A Valentine's Day breakfast
- Special treats each day during the National Teacher Appreciation Week in May
- Our annual catered year-end luncheon

The TPA hosted its annual Fall **Family BBQ** in early November. This "fun-raiser" was created to bring Tesseract families together from both campuses for an afternoon of food, entertainment and good times. This year's event included a delicious meal from Dickie's BBQ, bounce houses, laser-tag, karaoke, games, contests, and a raffle for bountiful gift baskets filled with items donated by our generous families and coordinated by our Room Reps.

The **Garden Bloomers** was resurrected with the help of Early Childhood Coordinator Allison Grady this spring. Each grade in the lower school participated in a planting day that "brought children and nature together in a day filled with discovery and appreciation of natural resources." The TPA provided volunteers and funds for the:

- Early childhood butterfly garden
- Sun, Cactus and first-grade salsa garden
- Second through fourth-grade herb garden
- Kindergarten and fourth-grade healing garden

Student Tiger Annual Fund Giving

Congratulations to our middle and upper school students for their generosity and participation in the 2009-2010 Tiger Annual Fund. A total of \$81.00 was raised to support the annual fund from students in fifth through 10th grade. The seventh grade won a pizza party for having the highest participation. A round of applause for our students and their commitment to Tesseract! ●

The TPA established, and annually funds, the **Innovative Teaching Grants** in support of our faculty. The grants assist educators in the research and development of innovative methods and units of study directly related to classroom teaching. The grant recipients for the 2009-2010 school year were:

- Kate Wilkes and Jennifer Greer
- Michelle Kramer
- Evelyn Montanez-Ramirez

The TPA's **Library Committee** volunteers assist the school librarian in maintaining both libraries and obtaining new books for classrooms and libraries. This year's contributions included:

- More than \$4,000 in cash and credit from Scholastic Book Fairs
- More than \$1,000 in credit from our first Used Book Drive
- Donation of visiting author Mike Graf's non-fiction work

The TPA's **Performing Arts Booster** supports two major performing arts events each year and assists the music/drama educator. This year's events included:

- The "Hearts for the Arts" fun-raiser at ASU Kerr Cultural Center in January
- The middle school's outstanding production of the musical, "Beauty and the Beast"

The TPA's **Sports Booster Club** supported Tesseract's after school interscholastic sports program and our Tesseract athletes by:

- Providing uniforms and trophies
- Selling concessions during sporting events
- Sponsoring coaches' and athletes' attendance at the Sports Award Banquet

The TPA's **Tesseract Annual Spring Event Committee**

requires a large corps of volunteers to create a memorable evening for Tesseract families and the community while raising money for our school. This year's successful "Puttin' on the Ritz" event took us back to the Roaring 1920's and

- Helped raise \$123,000
- Was attended by more than 200 guests



Casino Night was attended by more than 200 guests and raised \$123,000 for our school.



The **Tesseract Tiger Annual Giving Reps** help promote the Tiger Annual Fund to Tesseract families. This year the committee created a video starring students and faculty to help educate our families on the "ABC's of Giving" to the Tiger Annual Fund.

The TPA hosted and/or sponsored refreshments at the following events:

- Phoenix Art Museum Opening of Tesseract's Cowboy Art Exhibit
- Back to School Nights at both campuses
- Open House at both campuses
- Ice Cream Socials during the Scholastic Book Fair at both campuses
- The TPA Back to School Coffee at the Learner home
- The TPA Holiday Coffee at the Hochschuler home
- Speakers Dr. Nancy Harris and Not My Kid representatives at the TPA open meetings
- Provided childcare during TPA open meetings for participating parents

The TPA made donations to the school for:

- Transportation of the lower school to attend "Beauty and the Beast"
- Media center furniture
- Shea entryway furniture

Thank you for supporting your children's learning experience, their educators and our school by participating in the TPA. ●

Our History, Our Future

By Robert Engelman

Setting the Stage

Nigel Taplin became Tesseract's head of school at the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year. In the spring of 2004, the Tesseract School Board of Trustees launched its first major long term planning process culminating in the November 2004 publication entitled "Challenge, Hope, Innovate, Excel," Tesseract's first strategic plan as an independent school. This plan focused on goals and initiatives in five major areas:

- Educational Program
- Faculty/Administration
- Students and Families
- Facilities
- Financial Development

The Facilities goal for the 2004-2009 Plan was simple, to "Create a Quality Facility Consistent with a Premier Independent School." At the time Tesseract had one facility of approximately 22,000 square feet, which served 10 grade levels, all administrative functions and had a realistic capacity of 300-320 students. There was no library, no cafeteria, limited administrative and meeting spaces, and no athletic facilities beyond a small playing field. The campus was landlocked and The Town of Paradise Valley had made it very clear that building additional facilities, outside the school's current footprint, would not be approved. Tesseract owed approximately \$2.3 million on the property at that time. Likewise, Tesseract also owned nine acres of land at 40th Street and Shea Boulevard that potentially could be developed, and subject to a \$900,000 mortgage.

Option Review

In early 2005, the board of trustees engaged the consulting arm of DWL Architects to review all of Tesseract's facilities related options. The goal was to recommend a course of action to the trustees based on the richness of the Tesseract educational experience, demographic trends relative to enrollment opportunities and challenges, expected cost of any facilities renovation or expansion, and the financial implications of each alternative from both an operating and a capital raising perspective. Timing of the implementation of each option was also a critical issue reviewed in the DWL study.

DWL looked specifically at five different scenarios:

- Retain Doubletree for lower school and build a new middle school at Shea without site provisions for a future high school.

- Retain Doubletree for lower school and build a new middle/high school at Shea in two or more phases as the high school population expanded.
- Sell Doubletree and build a new EC-8 campus at Shea.
- Sell Doubletree and create a campus for EC-12 on the Shea property.
- Sell Doubletree and Shea, find new land (12-18 acres) and build an entire EC-12 campus.

Besides using available public data, DWL made extensive use of parent and non-parent focus groups, faculty interviews and trustee workshops in gathering their data and putting together their recommendations and estimates. Ultimately the trustees, after extensive review and discussion, felt that retaining the intimacy of the Doubletree campus for lower school children and building (in phases) a modern middle/high school campus at Shea would best enhance the educational program, be the most practical, add the most value to the community, and would allow the school the best opportunity to raise the millions of dollars needed to undertake the project.

While the reasons to add the high school program were numerous, among the most compelling was the fact that there was only one other non-public, non-parochial school in the entire Phoenix metropolitan area. The educators and administrators felt that both the academic program as well as the social development of the student body would be enhanced with a high school component. The fact that Tesseract would have its own high school was shown to be a definite competitive marketing advantage even with early childhood applicants. It was clear from the research that without a high school component, it was unlikely that Tesseract could raise the funds necessary to build a new middle school at Shea. Finally, the long-term fund-raising data from graduates of eighth grade versus graduates of a high school created a very compelling case for future financial sustainability, though clearly a very long term event.

The final Campus Master Plan included 40,000+ square feet of academic space, 5,000 square feet of administrative space, a 10,000 square foot gymnasium, a modern performing arts center, swimming pool, full size soccer field, outdoor basketball court and parking for upwards of 200 cars. Phase I would include a 20,000 square foot academic building, the gym, the playfields and the parking facilities. Additional buildings would be built as

enrollment grew and funds became available. Subject to funding, a goal to have the first phase of the campus open for the 2008-2009 academic year was formally established in mid 2005.

Funding Issues

Having decided on a course of action, but not knowing from where the funds would come to implement the desired program, the board hired Young and Company, a leading Phoenix based fund-raising consulting company. They conducted a fund-raising study during the summer/fall of 2005. Their objective was to quantify fund-raising potential, help identify key contributors, and address leadership, marketing, external donor and recognition issues, should there be a capital campaign.

After reviewing public data and interviewing more than 40 Tesseract families, Young and Company ultimately recommended that the board undertake a \$9 million fund-raising campaign to be launched approximately one year hence. In the interim, extensive planning needed to take place not only relative to the anticipated campaign, but also to the actual development of the property in order to ensure potential contributors that the project was actually going forward. Lingered credibility problems, dating back to the time the school was owned by the Tesseract Corporation, (pre-conversion to an independent school in 2001), meant that potential major contributors were quite skeptical of promises. Obtaining a better sense of zoning and master plan approval from city authorities, plus accurate cost estimates, were critical to the ability to initiate a campaign.

Breaking New Ground, The Capital Campaign For Tesseract School

By the end of 2006, the groundwork had been done and the "buzz" in the community was positive. Accordingly the trustees felt the timing was right to launch Breaking New Ground, The Capital Campaign For Tesseract School. An initial goal of \$9 million was established (later to be increased to \$12 million). By mid-2007, half the initial goal had been committed and the board authorized the entire building project to move forward. Through the ensuing twelve months, approximately \$1.5 million more was committed, bringing total funds raised to \$6 million—primarily from the 200 families who were at Tesseract in 2006. Bank and vendor financing was obtained to not only fund the pledge commitments, but also fill the gap between the amount of funds raised at the time and the total cost of the project. This financing, which has been amortized as pledge payments have been collected, matures in July 2011.

Construction came in on time and on budget. The campus opened in September 2008 and enrollment has continued to grow. However, the economic shocks of

the fall of 2008 and the subsequent recession have had a material impact on the school's capital fund-raising operations. In recognition of the economic turmoil, the school decided to suspend most capital fund-raising in October 2008. Since then we have focused on bringing the approximately 170 new families who have joined the Tesseract community since the Capital Campaign was launched up to speed on the whole long-term development program.



Robert Engelman, Tesseract Board of Trustees Member and 10th-Grade Parent

Future Additions

The Board of Trustees' Buildings and Grounds Committee has responsibility for the stewardship of the campus master plan. Last summer a new chemistry lab was built at Shea. This summer a physics lab will be built, the library will be divided and become two classrooms, and next fall some educators will have to double-up using the same room. The school is clearly out of its extra space, but will be able to operate with the current structure through the 2010-2011 academic year.

By the fall of 2011, new facilities will be required. It is the board's intention to use modular classrooms for fifth and sixth grades in 2011-2012. The board would like to build a new 10,000 square foot building on the east end of the property to house the entire middle school, and would like to have this facility in place for the 2012-2013 school year. This will require approximately \$6 million more in fund-raising with approximately half devoted to the new facility and half devoted to servicing the current obligation which currently totals \$8+ million (there are approximately \$2.3 million of pledges still to be collected). In order to meet the fall of 2012 occupancy goal, these funds will have to be committed by the middle of next year to allow time for construction. Without this additional funding, Tesseract plans to expand its use of modular classrooms to the entire middle school. This action will complete the separation of the middle and high school classrooms.

While we fully understand that what happens inside the classroom is the critical issue—and the physical classroom is secondary, research has shown that physical environment can play a very important role in learning. If Tesseract is going to achieve its long-term goal of being the "premier independent school in the Southwest," we as a community must band together, reach into our pockets, and make a stretch-commitment to fund the Campus Master Plan. It's hard, but it can be done. Our children deserve it, our community deserves it. ●

Tesseract Philosophy of Giving

As a member of the Tesseract School community, trustees, parents and employees are expected to contribute by giving their time, talents and/or assets. It is through all of our community giving 100 percent to Tesseract's campaigns, funds and special events that we enhance our ability to provide the highest quality education for our students and further our mission of academic excellence.

Love Your School? Tell a Friend!

When we meet with prospective families, we always ask how they found out about Tesseract School. While we receive a variety of answers, the one we are the most pleased to hear is, "From a friend."

We truly appreciate your support, and hope that you will continue to share your love of Tesseract School by encouraging friends, relatives and others you know to contact us if they are looking for a school for their children.

Thank you! •

Paintball Event, 2010 The Year We Make Contact

May 1, ushered in a new event for Tesseract School. 2010 The Year We Make Contact, Tesseract's first paintball event, made its debut at Splatter Ranch in Scottsdale. Adorned with facemasks and paintballs, Tesseract parents and friends made their way to the fields to experience a day of fun. Co-chairs, Todd Belfer, Michael McDermott and Jack Hannum, gave 100 percent to make this new event a winner. Thanks so much to each of them for their time and efforts.

Thank you to our sponsors for all of their generous support. •



Nigel Taplin



Paintball Co-Chair Todd Belfer



Donna Cleinman