

**SRDS Parents Guild Meeting -  
Thursday December 7, 2023**

- I. Welcome & Approval of November 2023 minutes** - The December 2023 Parents Guild meeting commenced with a welcome to all parents / guardians from Ms. Rosanna Young and Ms. Nassdja Anthony and the approval of the past meeting's minutes.
- II. Lower School Student Spotlight – Matt (K) and Noa (3rd grade)**
- Introduced by Ms. Stern, Matt and Noa demonstrated their competition dance skills, with the Cha-cha, Samba and Jive. They are dedicated to competitive dance with 2-3 times per week of practice and competitions across the US and abroad. Polished and ready to dance, they which delighted the parents with this special treat. Well done Matt & Noa!

**III. Division News:**

**Ms. Dana Stern, Head of Lower School (L/S)** provided the following updates:

- The Pancake Breakfast will take place Friday morning, 12/22 – please buy your tickets online by 12/15 as walk-in ticket purchases will not be available. Please note, this is a shine only event.
- The Bristol Nursing Home will be the next recipient of SRDS community outreach.

**Mr. Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School (U/S)** welcomed parents / guardians and provided the following updates:

- In Robotics, SRDS is now ranked in the top 20 from a population of 500 teams.
- Look for the U/S Newspaper which was just published!
- The U/S mini courses received positive feedback from students for the experience, content, and deep dives into interesting topics. The group that participated in the Cheese Making course not only visited a farm, but they also luckily had the opportunity to see a birth of a calf.
- The baseball team effort is coming together for the Spring with the plan for approximately 8-10 games.
- Mr. Kettlewell held the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade college forum and on January 30<sup>th</sup>, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> parent forum will take place.
- The Annual Door Decorating contest is underway, and the students are planning, coordinating, and demonstrating their creative skills - we can't wait to see them all!

**Ms. Anastasia Kelly, Head of Middle School** provided these updates for M/S:

- Remember to check the MS Happenings doc for the up to the minute information and updates.
- The Vienna group returned and had a memorable experience and trip! The performances were great, and the group was asked to participate in future events.
- Mini courses were completed for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades from Monday – Wednesday and offered courses such as: History of Cosmetics, Sports Nutrition, How to Produce a TV show, Muppets & Puppets & Stop Motion animation.

- Today is registration for the Math competition, which will take place in January 2024.
- Last week we had a Chess Tournament as well as a Debate competition.
- Mr. Glasser – Debate team overview, opportunities, and success stories:
  - M/S participated in a statewide competition.
  - An amazing team effort as they won 1<sup>st</sup> place with the overall school award, which highlights their strength as a team.
  - Incredibly challenging, as students do not know which side they will represent until 15 minutes prior to the debate – they worked together and did an excellent job.

**IV. SRDS LA Film/Video Production Trip, February 2024, Mr. Shai Zacaraev, Head of Upper School (U/S)**

- Look for an email Sunday, 12/10 regarding a trip option to Los Angeles, California which will focus on Film and Production, as well as visiting LA's famous sites. The trip scheduled dates are February 7-11, 2024.

**V. Admissions Update from Mr. Bowman:**

- We are wrapping up our open house sessions, the last student visit day for 2023 is on 12/16 with 15 students for 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Early decision application will be sent by 1/22/24.
- Pre-K through 8 contracts will be sent by 1/20/24 and will be due back by early/mid-February.
- Move up contracts: Grade 4 to 5 will be sent the week of 12/11 and grade 8 moving to 9 in early January 24.
- Thank you to the SRDS Parents Guild and all volunteers which work so hard to make the events a success.

**VI. Ladies Night Out Recap, Jacqueline Vasquez, Co-Vice President of the Parents Guild**

- What a night it was! Thank you to all the volunteers and attendees contributing to a successful fund raiser and a fun event with over 240 attendees at the Tides Estate in North Haledon.
- A survey will be sent to all attendees and volunteers for your thoughtful feedback.

**VII. Holiday Market- Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> at SRDS. Judy Han and Cindy Mueller Giardina provided this update:**

- This year we are holding the Holiday Shop for L/S & M/S students, and each class will have their scheduled time to shop with a maximum price of \$10.
- Each class will have their schedule time and will have helpers as needed.

**VIII. Office of Community Engagement news from Ms. Lebovitz:**

- Many activities for both students and parents:
  - Remember to sign up for Coaching Academy – great selections of courses for students.
  - Sign up for Ski & Snowboard instruction.

- Rebel Readers book club on 1/11/24 – How to Build a Boat is January’s book selection.
- Crafty Rebels -12/13 Resin workshop

**IX. Tech Opportunities for SRDS Students, Kevin Merges, SRDS Chief Global Impact Officer**

- Parents had an opportunity to hear from Mr. Kevin Merges who joined SRDS in 2023.
- He highlighted the dedication of the staff and teachers as he works to connect SRDS globally.
- Currently there is an effort underway to provide online education to Afghanistan, as education is challenging especially for young women.
- Other opportunities will focus on employers providing students with experience and highlighting SRDS strengths globally.

**X. Gala 2024 - Save the Date April 13th at Alpine Country Club, Nassdja Anthony, Co-President of the Parents Guild and Rosanna Young, Co-President of the Parents Guild**

- Planning for the 2024 Gala will start after the holiday break in 2024!
- We are looking for your ideas for themes, experiences and both silent and live auction. Send your ideas to Nassdja Anthony and Rosanna Young.
- More to come after the break – stay tuned!

**XI. Motion to Adjourn – Next meeting on January 11, 2024, 8:30am Alford Hall, PAC**