



29th Meeting

FreeSchools World Literacy Australia

DATE: Sunday 1st October 2017

LIVE VENUE: Hepburn Victoria

An impromptu face-to-face meeting was held at Hepburn (Daylesford) Victoria as we happened to have Geri Johnson (President FSWL-USA) and several Australian committee members together in one place attending a conference.

Fundraising and other matters were discussed at the meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Rollcall of members and others present and apologies.

There were 9 participants in attendance

Robert Coenraads (President FSWL-Australia)

Geri Johnson (President – FSWL-USA)

Ian Esmore (Public Officer FSWL-Australia)

Graeme Chapman (Committee Member FSWL-Australia)

Kathleen Swadling (Committee Member FSWL-Australia)

Friends of FreeSchools

Dylan Roberts

Isobel Esmore

Julian McGarry

Peter Smith

Committee Members not present:

Merindi Belarski (Treasurer)

Bernie Belarski (Committee Member)

Delphine Swadling (Secretary)

Donna Cervantes (Committee Member FSWL-Australia)

Marion Lesaffre ((Committee Member FSWL-Australia)

Delphine Swadling (Committee Member FSWL-Australia)

DISCUSSIONS

Robert Coenraads:

Robert presented an introduction to FreeSchools World Literacy for those present (Dylan and Peter) who had not before been aware of its mission and its programs in India, Thailand and Africa.

Geri Johnson:

Geri discussed fundraising issues she has been having in the USA due to the recent spate of disasters in the US and Central America (devastating hurricanes). These have stretched the donor dollar with people understandably turning to help their immediate country folk and near neighbours. Geri advised that FSWL-USA would be prioritising India over Thailand due to the budget shortfall. This is because FSWL's partner in Thailand, the Mirror Foundation has access to alternate funding sources whereas the Sacred Hearts (Sister Crescence) in India is solely dependent on FreeSchools funding.

Geri advised that the number of individual schools in India has been reduced with the more distant ones in the network being phased out that could not be properly monitored by the Sisters. Also there has been a focus on teacher training to up-skill teachers together with a salary increase in order to ensure that their skills remain in the FreeSchools system and that the program is sustainable in the long term. As a result of these changes, the educational cost per child per year in FreeSchools has risen to approximately US\$35 and that the yearly budget for all of the schools is now around US\$25,000.

FUND RAISING

Geri Johnson:

Geri advised that she is going to continue to try to maintain contact with her Singapore and India donors, although this has become increasingly difficult since her move back to Hawaii and the loss of face-to-face contact.

Geri is planning to establish a new philanthropic network in Hawaii and also planning to raise funding through offering her services as a special-needs educator.

The USA and Canada continue to rely upon faithful and regular donors, and other bequests. For example, the *Ellen White School* was named after a donor who bequeathed funds from her estate to build the permanent Free School.

Robert Coenraads:

Robert has been presenting talks to his local church group to raise funds. The talks have been on the FreeSchools program and also general interest talks on his various books on geology, natural disasters and related topics. These talks raise \$100 to \$200 per presentation.

Robert would like to extend the range of organizations to which he presents in order to raise more funds.

Robert proposes use the budget prepared by Geri to approach various Australian philanthropists known to Friend Julian Martin with a plan for regular financial support.

Ian Esmore:

Ian spoke about using his position and contacts in Rotary to obtain project funding. He had a near success with a Japanese club providing funding for a mobile library in Thailand, but this unfortunately fell through due to lack of support from his local club. He is willing to try this avenue again in the future.

Ian also suggested that we check on the status of Thai government scheme of taking over responsibility for the running of those FreeSchools (i.e. teacher pay support etc) that achieve 3 years of successful operation with ongoing high student uptake. This would prove the value FSWL fulfilling its current NGO role in the community.

Kathleen Swadling:

Kathleen spoke of using concerts to raise funds. Together with her husband Trevor and other musical friends, they held a concert in Humph Hall, Allambie Heights, Sydney in 2010. This concert raised a total of \$1,000. Kathleen is willing to try that again.

Julian McGarry:

Julian pledged to make a donation to FreeSchools. He liked the concept of small regular monthly donations into the FreeSchools Westpac bank account

Name: FreeSchools World Literacy
BSB: 032 196
Account No. 26 6690

Julian's mother, Betty Lyon (a Friend of FreeSchools) has also raised funds for FreeSchools through various concerts and luncheons.

Geri Johnson:

Just before close of the meeting Geri showed the meeting, the FSWL slideshow that she uses for public presentations. She provided a copy of the slides to the Australian Committee on a memory stick.

MEETING CLOSE