

## **White Wing Annual Summary 2014-2015**

By Hal Holway and Julie Riley of the WW Board, 6/2/15

### **Members:**

Hal Holway, Co-Chair

Julie Riley, Co-Chair

Chris Droznick, Treasurer

Sarah Widhu

Hilary Keating

Jennifer Berube

Eleni Eliades

This past year has been a continuation of the enrollment crisis which has been troubling the school for several years now.

- The co-chairs met with the teachers regarding their concerns over some changes the WWB made to their contracts in response to the budgetary crisis. The whole board convened to discuss what accommodations might be made for the teachers while adhering to the necessary fiscal principles. A compromise was reached. (July-Sept)
- Anne Ryder needed to step down from the board for personal reasons, and the board began the search for her replacement.
- Co-chairs of the WW Board (Hal Holway, Julie Riley), and WW Director Deb Castonguay met with members of the Executive Board (Harry Purkhiser, Mike Wilt, Rev Janet Newman) to discuss the enrollment and budgetary problems of the school. The Executive Board expressed their support of White Wing, and requested the WW Board to provide financial information and a plan for changing the school's fortunes. They also gave their support to the idea of approaching Children's Wintergarden about the possibility of a merger of the two schools. (September)
- To increase awareness of White Wing in the church membership, the Board asked Deb to start submitting news about White Wing to the church email blast. The board assisted with several October events, including White Wing School Open House, Book Fair & Potluck Dinner, and the White Wing Fall Festival. The Board contacted Rivier College, inviting the school to consult with us about our program as part of their ongoing educational programs.
- The board assisted with White Wing's participation in The Lil' Iguana's Children's Safety Foundation Craft Fair & Raffle. Hal Holway met with the teachers to address their concerns about the stability of the school, and to hear their advice about advertising and marketing the school. Board members and Deb Castonguay and the teaching staff begin working on an after school discovery program to better serve the community's need for quality child care and to attract more enrollment. (Nov)

- Ongoing work on White Wing's new program offerings. Meeting with Wintergarden Director and Treasurer about possible merger. Agreed to continue considering the possibility, though the Director . Tentatively planned to have Treasurers meet and discuss financial details of what a merger would look like. (Dec)
- Announced new program offerings for the 2015-16 school year. Voted to raise tuition given need and comparison to other schools. Held Kindergarten and preschool information nights. Discuss trying to get a partnership with BAE, especially given our new program offering. Discuss finding a way to renew NAEYC accreditation. (Jan)
- White Wing Task Force began meeting in February.
- Meeting with the UU Executive Board – Julie and Hal reported that the UU Board has promised \$5000 to White Wing to help with NAEYC accreditation, May rent (\$1,900), and advertising (\$1,500).
- Rick Spitz off the WW Task Force works with Deb and Board members to improve White Wing's internet presence. To date, they reviewed and reworked the main page, added more links, cleaned up and reworked the main page content, created and added a preliminary WW School overview video, enabled google analytics and webmaster tools, among other details.
- Julie reported on her meeting of April 16<sup>th</sup> with the teachers. She reported that they were enthusiastic and pleased that Deb has been asked to pursue the NAEYC accreditation, which is due April 30.
- Donna Dye volunteers to replace Sarah Widhu when she leaves the board at the end of the church year.
- There was a discussion as to what the configuration of the staff will be in the fall. Due to financial constraints, there may need to be staffing changes.
- Rick Spitz discusses new marketing campaign beyond the internet, with ideas such as providing WW information to area realtors, including WW information in Welcome Wagon packets, Advertising in the South Nashua Living magazine, the Telegraph, and the Hudson-Litchfield News. Teachers have suggested sending letters to families of younger children.
- The board is working with Bill Kennedy to place an article about WW in local media, also another article idea about the new afterschool program for the Hudson-Lichfield news.
- The board is working to find a replacement for the rocks currently serving as surface fill for the WW playground.

**Overall**, the dominant theme of the year was of finding ways to improve White Wing's enrollment, though introduction of new and expanded offerings, improved advertising and marketing. We also had many discussions with the Executive board on the past and future relationship between WW and UUCN, focusing on ways of increasing awareness of and involvement with the school. We've also been discussing ways that WW could shift its mission to become even more in line with the UUCN's community outreach than it is already. It's been a tough year, but the outpouring of support from the Executive board and the church has been tremendous and we are optimistic that the changes we've made and are continuing to make will get WW through this difficult period.

