

Parents' Association Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Introduction

The Parents' Association (PA) is an active association representing parents' interests within the European School Karlsruhe. The Association is a non-profit organisation and membership is voluntary. Members of the PA committee (henceforth committee) represent the parents in the school and in the various committees in Brussels. The members all work voluntarily for the benefit of all pupils and parents in the ESK and can influence the decisions made by management locally and at the system level of the European schools. The role of the PA is unique to the European Schools and therefore it is imperative that the PA is active in the school community and parents take advantage of this rare opportunity. The membership fee is currently €30 per family per school year. More details can be found on the ESK PA website: www.esk-eltern.de

Year's review

This year the ESK PA Annual General Assembly (AGM) took place on 20th of November 2019. The members of the Association present approved the previous year's Annual Report and the new PA Committee members were elected during the AGM. The financial accounts had been audited and the assembly approved them. The full General Assembly minutes can be found on the PA website.

The newly elected PA Committee held their first meeting on 27th of November 2019. The committee members elected the Board: President – Debjani Basu, Vice-president – William Scott-Stewart and Treasurer – Brynn Thompson-Renz. It was also decided that Felicitas Martens will be the acting Vice-President.

Furthermore, the other 14 Committee members are - Sabrina Beaubay, Cristina Chinese, Rachelle Tracey, Letizia Dalle Donne, Benoit Garoche, Saida Goudrar, Annabelle Humanes, Annika Koltes, Eleonore Kutzner, Felicitas Martens, Thorsten Soeffner, Ilka von Bauer Monteiro de Paula, Olaf Walter and Clemens Wollfarth.

The various positions represented by the members are:

After-school Activities: Brynn Thompson-Renz

Canteen: Eleonor Kutzner, Felicitas Martens, Anna Heral, Rachelle Tracey, Clemens Wollfarth

EuroBoutique: Cristina Chinese, Saida Goudrar, Annabelle Humanes, Ilka von Bauer Monteiro de Paula

Interparents: Sabrina Beaubay, Christina Chinese

SWALS: Letizia Dalle Donne

Transport: Olaf Walter, Thorsten Söffner Clemens Wollfarth, Ilka von Bauer Monteiro de Paula

Website: Saida Goudrar, Felicitas Martens, Annika Koltes

Events Coordinator: Annabelle Humanes, Saida Goudrar, Rachelle Tracey

Christina Chinese, Olaf Walters and Sabrina Beaubay stepped down from the PA committee due to personal reasons. Members of the PA Committee represent each Language section in the secondary and primary school. As of September 2020, Bill Scott-Stewart is an observer to the PA as he does not have a child in the school. Elaine Dolan was co-opted to the committee on September 25, 2020; Rachel Cerini and Kati Reeb on November 18, 2020. Furthermore, Kati Reeb is an Interparents representative.

Additionally, Anja Bühner, Amy Chia-Gaess and Cristina Chinese are in-charge of the organization and coordination of after-school activities.

PA Objectives

In 2019 - 2020 the priorities of the PA remains the same as in the past years –

- Close monitoring of changes to the “new” marking system and curriculum of Secondary
- Strengthening of relationship and improvement in communication between the different members of the school community.
- Support in building and maintaining a positive school spirit
- Support of ongoing activities and projects

Most of the activities that we generally support every year were cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Some of the activities that we were pleased to have supported this year are:

- Organization and sponsoring of (book) vouchers for the OS pupils
- financial support to
 - DELF – French Language Diploma
 - various projects both in the primary
 - and various other class trips and projects

The members of the committee represent parents in meetings such as –

- Adhoc meetings with the management
- Biannual PA/Parents’ representative meetings
- Biannual ESK statutory Administrative Board meetings
- Biannual Educational Council meetings (Secondary, Primary and joint)

- School Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic the members of the committee switched to online meetings for most of the above mentioned meetings.

Please send us an email, in case you would like full details and minutes of the various meetings.

Website (Saida Goudrar, Annika Koltjes & Felicitas Martens)

In the year 2019/2020 the shop was online only for the first semester, as most of the classes were cancelled during the COVID 19 lockdown.

As with any website, there were of course some uncertainties or problems for us. Our team, including our financial officers, extracurricular organizers and our accompanying programmer, was always available and eager to find a quick fix.

We had planned to add a „small adds“ section for our members. The project is currently on hold.

We look forward to future challenges and welcome any ideas that you may have for the website. We offer our continued support in all your concerns at all times.

Financial report (Brynn Thompson-Renz)

(see also tables in the appendix)

A tax declaration for 2017-2020 was submitted in October 2020 and is still outstanding.

The only significant source of income in 2020 was membership fees. Membership fees amounted to €6793.79 in total for 2020 (€9620.39 in 2019). Due to COVID-19, the other two significant sources of income, the Sommerfest (3962.64€ in 2019) and the Open Day (1587.11€ in 2018/2019) were not possible. These represent a loss of approximately 5549.75€ for 2020.

The PA also supports the sale of ID cards. In 2020 this represented a minimal income of 88.35€.

In a normal year, the PA also raises funds through the Euroboutique. In 2020, investments were made in January and February 2020 in order to fill the inventory before the Open Day and the Sommerfest. Due to COVID-19, the Euroboutique ended the school year with a result of -1251.07€. However, the inventory is intact and able to be sold if/when school events resume. This represents an approximate loss of income of 900€ based on income in 2018/2019.

In 2020, the PA's largest expenditure was 3172.90€ in the area of support for school projects (3456.38€ in 2019). All but 772€ were allocated and committed to before COVID lockdown in keeping with our normal pattern of support for school projects. The second largest expenditure was

1680€ for Interparents. Even though Interparents reps were unable to travel to meetings during 2020, the Karlsruhe PA also pays an annual membership fee which was 1680€ for 2020. Though it is a healthy expense for the PA, membership in Interparents is invaluable for informational purposes and to collaborate on the future of the school. Incidental expenses were also 1296.76€ (4837.66€ in 2019).

A few but not all of the projects we supported the past school year were starting inventory for an economics project in Secondary, the annual Kangaroo Maths competition for all language sections years P3-5, access to Language Nut for Primary, the book prizes for the best in class in Secondary, and the Primary's ice skating trip, among other things.

Even though the Open Day did not take place, expenses of 240.95€ for refreshments were accrued in preparation. The refreshments were returned and the 240.95€ is a positive balance to be used in the future.

Funds were not drawn from the SAP donation for this reporting year. Bank fees of 46.80€ were paid.

The social fund was used in 2020, for a total of €280. The PA did not receive any donations in 2020. Bank fees of 46.80€ were paid.

The guest pupil left the school in summer 2017. So, no school fees were incurred for the new school year 2018/2019. Bank Fees of €46.80 were paid. A balance of €1867.80 remains.

In 2020, the biggest financial decision reached by the PA was in the area of extracurricular activities. When the COVID-19 lockdown started, the PA had a balance of 13,091.98€ after paying insurance obligations of 1008.97€ to the main PA account and 1000€ in payments to our two extracurricular activities organizers, Amy Chia-Gaess and Anja Bühner. After much discussion, ESK families were asked whether they would like a refund of course fees paid or whether they would like to donate their already paid course fees to paying the outstanding salaries. The outstanding salaries amounted to 10,000.98€. An overwhelming number of ESK families decided to forego a refund and only 3420€ in course fees were refunded in July 2020.

The extracurricular activities bank account finished at 166.22€ on 31.12.20. In 2019, the account finished at 18,850.19€, holding outstanding salaries for instructors for the second half of the 2019/2020 school year. Extracurricular activities did not take place from September to December 2020 so no fees were received but also no expenses were accrued. The account is in a holding pattern and has no recurring expenses except for bank fees of approximately 50€ per year and 1008.97€. The insurance costs will have to be carried by the PA for 2021 until courses can resume or the insurance is discontinued. All other expenses are directly linked to course operations. The account is simply in a holding pattern for the coming calendar year and the current school year.

Important to remember for the following figures is that the PA accounts are all self-contained. The only interaction between accounts is the transfer of membership fees collected by our Stripe account, deposited into the Extracurricular Activities account, and then passed on to our PA account. Though we report the PA finances as an entire entity, the accounts, in essence, do not interact with each other or share funds, with the occasional exception of the PA account and the social fund.

The official final result for 2020 was negative at -18,622.74€. Normally at this time of year, the Extracurricular Activities would be holding the same amount of fund in Extracurricular Activities fees in preparation for paying salaries in 2021. The PA account itself was negative at -1257.28€. Normally at this time of year, we would have taken in 2800€ more in membership fees.

However, proactive measures had been taken for 2020/2021 and an application for COVID-19 funding of 9,353.74€ was submitted with the responsible government department. The application has been cancelled since the school community has come through positively with total membership fee contributions of 3059.43€ so far in 2020/2021. Any income that was declared as endangered would have had to be reimbursed with interest on the subsidy. A new application for 2020 is in the process now that the year has come to an end.

If received, these funds are to be used with caution. Any future income that was listed as endangered in the application must be deducted, in the case of funds being realized, from the funds received and returned to the governmental agency with interest. In order for the PA to continue operating in the same manner, additional sources of funds must be acquired. The recurring costs per year are 4056.39€ for insurance (for both the PA and the Extracurricular Activities), bank fees, Interparents fee, and website hosting costs. The current liquid capital of the PA is 4275.02€. Commitments of 450€ for a tentative school project have been made for 2021. The PA traditionally supports approximately 800€ in book prizes at the end of each school year. The PA possesses 10,795.31€ in retention. Due to good housekeeping during the creation of the website, none of the emergency funds were needed. Whether these funds are used in the coming year to maintain normal business or whether the PA goes into a holding pattern as well must be voted on by the 2021 PA Committee after official election.

The financial statements are being audited by an independent auditor and will be finished before the January 2021 AGM.

It is proposed to continue with the membership fee of €30 per family per year. It is proposed to incorporate usage of the canteen and the transport under the umbrella of PA membership.

The PA committee voted to close the guest student account and allocate the funds to the Social Funds to be used not for school trips but for school supplies and similar expenses related to normal school life.

After School Activities (Anja Bühner, Amy Chia-Gaess and Cristina Chinese)

This school year there were again many different courses:

All proven language clubs (German, French, English, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Greek, Romanian, Korean and Dutch).

New is a Persian course.

For all language courses, except German, English, French and Italian, we had to increase the price from 110 to 150, as the demand for these courses is not so great.

New courses were origami, a STEM / MINT course and a robotics course for GS and OS, self-defense for 10 to 13 year olds and an Arduino club for the OS.

We were also able to offer some musical instruments this year: piano, violin, flute, guitar and harp.

We also had numerous sports activities (capoeira, football, basketball, yoga, ballet, gymnastics, parcour and athletics).

Movement games for the little ones from KG were new to the sporting courses.

The tried and tested swimming courses in the fan pool continued to exist.

The DFJW (German French Youth Office) gives us a large grant for our French courses, which can therefore take place with fewer children.

We had language courses in German, Italian and Spanish for parents and teachers.

There were a total of 64 different courses with 318 registered children. Most of the children were from the GS.

For the KG there were 12 different courses this school year, for the GS there were 45 and for the OS there were 27 courses.

From March 16, 2020, due to the corona pandemic, no more AA courses could take place. We then asked the parents whether they would forego repaying the fees for the months that were lost so that we could still pay the teachers' salaries. Very few parents wanted a partial refund of the fees, so that we could ultimately pay the teachers their salaries from April to June.

For the new school year 2020/21 unfortunately no AA could take place so far.

Transport (Olaf Walter)

Holiday Child Day Care (Anna Héral)

The PA organises every year up to 6 weeks of holiday care for kindergarten and primary school children provided by Lenitas for the shorter holidays and by the AWO for the summer holidays.

In 2020 3 weeks of holiday care took place at the school, 1 week in February and 2 weeks at the beginning of the summer holidays.

Due to the current pandemic 2 weeks have been cancelled (Easter and Autumn 2020).

For 2021 the PA hopes to carry out 6 weeks of holiday care:

- 1 week at the beginning of the Easter holidays
- 1 week in May
- 3 weeks at the beginning of the summer holidays
- 1 week in October

After consulting with the school directors, there will be no holiday care during the winter holidays in February 2021 due to the ongoing hygiene plan at the school and the requirements in Baden-Württemberg. Nevertheless, we are planning to offer a third week in the summer, taking place on school grounds and provided by the AWO.

More information about registrations and fees will be published on the PA website in due times.

Interparents ()

Conclusion

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the PA was not able to support school events such as the Open Day or the Summer Fete,. We have tried to be helpful contact for the parents and the school in this very uncertain times.

The work of the PA has only been possible through the help and support of parents volunteering their time and effort towards the running of the office and commitment to follow up on issues discussed at the administrative and pedagogical meetings. Due to the missing funds of the Summer fest and the open day we will need the support of all the parents so that the volunteer work of the Committee can continue effectively.

We foster a good working relationship with the school directors, teachers and staff, keep continuous flow of information and try our utmost to maintain regular communication with the parents.

Thank you

We would like to offer our thanks to everyone from the PA Committee for their hard work and commitment throughout the year. Our heartfelt thanks also go to all the teachers, and staff of the school and to the management for their support, help and involvement and to the parents for their dedication and enthusiasm.

The PA tries its best to achieve their objectives, which is designed to make this an exciting and outstanding school for our children. As always, we hope for your active support.

Karlsruhe, January 2020

Debjani Basu (President)

William Scott-Stewart (Vice-President)

Brynn Thompson-Renz (Treasurer)

On behalf of the Parents' Association of the European School Karlsruhe