

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR FCYM AGM

Saturday 29th November 2008

At last year's AGM I reported that the Friends activities could be summarised under the three headings: funding a wish list of small projects, improving communication, and expanding the range of services FCYM offers.

I am happy to report that FCYM has indeed moved forward on all three fronts. During this past year we have taken important steps to improve communication both within FCYM and with CYM, sought more collaboration between parents, tutors and students, and indeed widened our scope of activity.

The CYM newsletter, UPBEAT, was reintroduced last Autumn with an 8 page black and white issue. For the Spring edition I was joined by Rachel Storm, a CYM parent with journalistic skills and the patience to learn how to use Publisher. I was also fortunate to enlist the help of two other parents Marina Imperi and Lorenzo Lees, both professional photographers. As a result the overall presentation and content have improved and the Summer issue increased to 14 pages. I have been delighted by the increasing support from tutors, parents and students resulting in the current bumper issue of 28 pages, truly reflecting the enormous diversity and wealth of talent at CYM. Thank you to everyone involved. Each term we print about 1200 of these newsletters and they are sent out to parents, subscribing Friends of CYM, current students of the LSSO and LYWB, participating schools, libraries, boroughs, as well as being used by FYM and CYM for marketing purposes.

The most recent improvement to communication can be seen on the CYM website. FCYM now has its own web page accessed from the main menu. This gives FCYM a higher profile and enables information to be easily available online. Here you will find the AGM reports and accounts, minutes of the most recent FCYM meetings, our Friends Guide, music accessories price list, and of course UPBEAT. Please do take a moment to look at the FCYM page and give us your comments and feedback.

Another innovation this year was the first Parents Forum held in March, at which our two curriculum managers, Francesca Hanley and Geoff Harniess, outlined their new ideas for musicianship classes and sought parental feedback. This was a most helpful dialogue and so we intend to hold another such event next year.

The membership data for the subscribing Friends of CYM (those whose children have now left and other supporters) is now up to date along with their subscriptions, thanks to Alberta Mills our Membership Secretary, and we will be looking at ways of increasing the membership. For £20 annual subscription, subscribing Friends receive copies of UPBEAT and a free ticket to the Annual Concert in March.

We have continued to inform tutors of new developments especially in relation to music ordering and music accessories available to buy at FCYM's 'Music Shop' at Notre Dame. Roger Shaw, in conjunction with tutors has expanded the range of music accessories, in particular oboe reeds. This information can now be found in UPBEAT and on the website.

Parents of new students received a welcome letter following successful auditions, and a copy of The Friends Guide at the Induction Day. All parents will have received the annual request sheet asking for volunteer help for the canteen and in other specific ways. Thank you to everyone who has offered their help, it is greatly appreciated.

Following the AGM last November we decided to make a change to the twice termly FCYM meetings and this seems to be working well. The first meeting of each term, on the 3rd Saturday, takes place in the afternoon and is devoted to planning each term's events. The second meeting, on the 3rd Saturday after the half term, is now an informal discussion of specific topics at 11.00am. At these morning discussions we have been focussing on fundraising and I have been delighted by the input from an increasing number of parents of a wide variety of ideas. You will be glad to hear that we have already started to implement some of them as you will have read in UPBEAT.

I mentioned earlier that we have widened the scope of FCYM's activities. At the first of these informal discussions in March we learned of the urgent need to repair/kit out a number of CYM instruments in order to be loaned out to students, for which there was no funds available. This seemed to us to be an ideal project for FCYM to take on and one where FCYM's resources could be most effective.

It was agreed to immediately release £3,000 of FCYM funds to pay for all the most urgent repairs. This has been done and all those instruments are now back out on loan to students. Subsequently we have set aside a further £5,000 to continue the work with the aim that over the next two years all the instruments in the CYM collection available for loan to students are in full playing condition.

In addition we have funded the moving of pianos at both Morley College and Notre Dame School to accommodate the three new pianos paid for by donations from Haberdasher's Company,

Alongside all this new activity is of course the mainstay of FCYM's fundraising activities, the Canteen run by volunteers here at Notre Dame School. Without this vital lifeline on a Saturday none of this could take place. The income from the canteen, which serves students, parents and tutors, provides us with an average income of roughly £2,000 per annum which is used to provide the extra benefits enjoyed by everyone – today's recital is just one of them.

The canteen 'menu' has expanded too and alongside the extra weekly homemade cake donations which are always appreciated, we have been exploring more healthy options too. It is interesting to note that the demand for pot noodles has greatly diminished and demand for bagels is up! However, due to the rising cost of ingredients we have had to increase the sandwich price to £1.40, but compared with commercial outlets we believe this is still good value.

Coordinating the canteen rota is becoming easier each time, partly because Christine has found that emails are generally the best way of communicating with everyone, (saving time and endless phone calls), and partly because of the generosity and commitment of many new Friends, who have recently offered their time and made volunteering a much less onerous task. In the past a small group of volunteers had to give an enormous amount of their time to ensure the canteen ran smoothly each week. Now most volunteers are only asked to help once or twice a term, which is much better. So thank you to you all.

I would like to extend our grateful thanks on your behalf to Ruth Jenkins, Vice Chair of FCYM and Canteen Purchaser, Christine Bisatt, Minute Secretary and Volunteer Canteen Coordinator, Lucia Gomez-Santana, Sandwich Rota Coordinator, Roger Shaw our Treasurer and for also running the FCYM Music Shop, Alberta Mills, Friends Membership Secretary, for all their dedication and hardwork over the past year. Thanks are also due to everyone who has given time to help in the canteen, made sandwiches and cakes, bought bagels, donated smoothies, sold concert tickets, stuffed envelopes, helped at Open Days, taken photographs, helped man the reception desks, and done a myriad of other things to support FCYM and therefore CYM. None of the activities I have mentioned could have taken place without the wonderful teamwork that you as parents and carers give to FCYM. Thank you very much indeed.

We, in turn, would like to express our thanks to all the CYM staff, from Director down, for their unfailing support to us during the year, and also thank Angelo, the Site Manager here at Notre Dame for all his invaluable practical help on a Saturday.

As I complete my second year as Chair of FCYM I feel proud to be involved in a such a vibrant organisation. We have achieved an enormous amount in two years and I look forward to what 2009 will bring with your continued help and encouragement. Thank you.

Nicy Roberts
Chair FCYM