

Friends of Fireweed Academy (FoFA-PTO) Minutes

Date: **Thursday February 27, 2025**

Time: 3:15pm-4:45pm

Location: Mo's Classroom at Little Fireweed

FoFA's Purpose: To support the educational purposes of Fireweed Academy

fireweedpto@gmail.com

Present: Greta, Ash-Lee, Lisa Nordstrom, Mike Smith, Kyle, Travis, Ray, Mo, Maygen.

FoFA's Mission:

- Community building with Fireweed Academy's students, teachers, families, and the broader Homer community.
- Fundraising for Fireweed Academy
- Volunteer Coordination
- Staff Partnership and Appreciation
- FUN!

All individual time commitments and talents are greatly valued and needed.

Fireweed Academy & FoFA Sponsored Events

2024-2025 School Year

Upcoming Events:

- May Day Celebration: May 10, 2025, seasonal community celebration
- FWA 6th Grade Trip

Accomplished Events:

- *Harvest Fest; Nov. 15, 2024, fundraising event for schoolwide artistic endeavors, music (Fireweed Frescoes), field trips, hands on learning, and community building.*
 - *Solstice Spiral; Dec. 15, 2024, seasonal winter celebration, community engagement event.*
 - *School Lantern Walk; seasonal, community event.*
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Celebrating Our Recent Bright Spots & Big Wins!

🎉 - Big Win! Thanks to LFW parent, Margaret Devlin, the Fireweed Family was invited to FREE skate time at Kevin Bell Arena on early release day 2/7/25. Students, parents, grandparents, staff members & their families had a blast ice skating! It was a well-attended event and we sincerely appreciate the community building opportunity this brought us.

🎉 - Big Win! 6th Grade Field Trip- We got the *Ecological Stewardship For Kids: A Hands-on Application of History, Ecology, and Leadership* grant from Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council (\$4,669) again this year. Thank you, Kyle! In addition to fundraised money and money in the account from last year, the 6th Grade trip is fully funded!

★ - Bright Spot recap report on One Campus Meeting with the Homer Foundation on 2/17/25

Staff, FoFA & General Fireweed Updates

Kyle | *Fireweed Academy Principal, FoFA Director, President, Treasurer*

- KPBSD Budget: There are many unknowns, we will know more later- perhaps much later as last year's KPBSD budget was not finalized until June 28 and school starts mid-August.
- One Campus: Locations/Plans: Possible for FoFA to get a long term lease of borough land and make a yurt school (lease similar to the SPARC). If there are school consolidations, BPE or Middle School? Could we afford rent and utilities? Consider the cost of other services (food service, would the borough pay to maintain?)
- Part of One Campus Dream Committee met w Homer Foundation 2/17: would like to cooperate on space needs for an after school and summer program for local kids, non-profit office space.
- Any anticipated impacts on what FW looks like next year? Have to see what happens with the KPBSD budget.
- LFW campus will be used for Music Camp and HoWL this summer

Mo | *Little Fireweed 2nd Grade Teacher*

- Update on Artists in the School (AiS) for LFW; Mo reached out to Debbi Piper will do AiS maybe week of April 14-18 or following week. Sculpture: based on "Roots" theme. Has not reached out to Bunnell re: matching funding may be about \$1500-2000 total (w no match).
- Parents: need to collect driftwood, 2x4 pieces for the sculpture bases

Greta | *FoFA Director, Secretary*

- Tuesday, March 4th at 6:00 pm in the WHE library the WHE PTA is holding an informative session with our local school board members Zen Kelly and Tim Daugherty to update us on what education funding discussions are happening on the local, borough, and state level as well as how we can advocate for our kids. ALL area families are invited.
- Transitioning Fireweed's "PTO" as "FoFA"
Tessa and Ash-Lee leading the broader communications efforts: Ash-Lee working on making a FoFA website to connect parents with the organization, ability to donate online, One Campus info.

Ash-Lee | *FoFA Person, APC Member*

Fund Reporting

- District 710 Account: 6th Grade Field Trip Updates and Overview
Total 6G trip cost for the 15 students is \$6,000
- Trip Funding Achievement Summary:
 - 1) \$4,699: Grant from The PWS Regional Citizens' Advisory Council
 - 2) \$1,072.34: 710-6th Grade Field Trip Account Balance
 - 3) \$593: FoFA Account

☀️ **\$6,364.34** ☀️ **Raised!**

Phenomenal success by the 6th Grade Class!

RE: 710 Accounts

Clarifying info update: KPBSD refers to the Sector of Fiduciary 710 funds as "Student Activity Funds" or "Pupil Activity Fund". This guidance comes from Alaska's D.E.E.D. 'Uniform Charting of Accounts for Public School Districts' which states;

"STUDENT AGENCY FUND - A fund used to account for student generated and controlled funds only. This fund is used to account for assets received and held by the school district on behalf of student groups. Local revenue received from school sponsored or interscholastic activities is recorded in either the General Fund or a Special Revenue Fund and is considered to be revenue of the school district. The distinguishing characteristic of student agency funds vs. district general fund activity is who has ultimate authority for determining the use of the funds

resources.” DEED further suggests that project codes be utilized within the Agency Fund(s) to differentiate transaction activity for a student group or club.

710 Transfers

PTO: Whole account balance of \$884.47 transferred to Field Trip account \$764.21

710 Balances

Field Trips:\$1,323.68

Art: Jan 30th paid BFW Artist in the Schools, account now has \$10,844

General Fund: \$5,926

Grade 6 Special Projects: \$1,072

PTO: \$0

*The money in the 710 accounts has come from fundraising, donations, and grants- not the school district. Since FoFA non-profit just started in summer 2024, all of last school year’s Harvest Fest and Peony fundraiser money, 6th grade PWSRCAC grant, and donations went into 710 accounts. Once money is put into a specific 710 account, it can not be used for another purpose (ie. money in the 6th grade projects account can not be used for LFW field trips). The PTO account is the exception- one money was put in there the PTO could distribute it to other accounts. Reimbursement out of the 710 accounts is strict (even individuals get 1099s), vendors must do extra paperwork/can not just be paid w check or credit card, and we could not be reimbursed for purchase of used items.

Friends of Fireweed Academy Non-Profit

FoFA allows more flexible spending that does not have to go through the district process and be managed by Sharlyn. FoFA can purchase items online, locally, and can buy from the used market. Reimbursement is much easier. Most importantly, FoFA can raise money and apply for grants that can be used for One Campus! FoFA account is housed at Global Credit Union.

FoFA’s Charitable Contributions: \$2,000.00 - FoFA’s *first* check went to Homer OPUS for contribution to enhancing music education for our community schools.

Balance: \$12,233 (*Balance Source: Earnings from Harvest Festival, General Donations, 6th Grade Field Trip \$593-Nutcracker Ushering \$350.00, Harvest Festival Donations \$243.00*)

Despite district uncertainty, the Fireweed “extras” money is in place! Ash-Lee has been working on getting more solid numbers of what we need for field trips, art, hands on learning so FoFA can forward-fund/budget for the school’s needs and be able to clearly communicate the financials with families.

Discussion Topics

- 1) Peony Fundraiser:** can’t remember how much was raised last year–will ask Sharlyn. She has handled the order forms (Google sheet and paper forms), money, and product distribution the last 2 years.
 - Spring orders for bouquets that are delivered in August at back to school BBQ, soaps, bath soaks, tea.
 - Parents and staff at the meeting would like to do this fundraiser again, as FW families can choose to participate or not and any amount of money is helpful.
- 2) FoFA Structural Housekeeping**
 - Bylaws/Administrative Policy--did not discuss
 - Grants- Homer Foundation has upcoming grants
- 3) Beautification Day, Spring Planning**

Description of event and how it traditionally goes (culture preservation documenting)

Know the needs for maintenance in advance/specific task, or a 2d option. -Date: April 26, 27 with follow up, as needed May 3, 4

-Location: LFW

-Time: TBD- give options both Saturday and Sunday, outdoor work can be done any time, timeframe that building will be open for indoor work.

-Garden box rebuild, weeding, bed prep

-Greta will donate soil testing- Homer NRCS office \$35. Need the soil to be thawed.

-Review the list next meeting (attach to email w meeting minutes)

4) May Day, Initial Planning

Description of event and how it traditionally goes (culture preservation documenting)- we have good documents on the FoFA Google Drive, photo album of the event.

-Date confirmation: May 10th (Kim and Abimael confirmed date)

-Location confirmation: Little Fireweed

-Time: 1-4pm

Details: Kids and parents at the stations for the event, encourage students to take ownership, big kids mentor littles.

Tasks: Volunteer needs/duties, main contact person, supply checklist, needs/wants/haves

FoFA: get crown supplies, need to buy new pop-up tent since ours was destroyed by weather in December (keeping boughs dry for Solstice Spiral). Communicate w BFW to see if students can “prep” the raffia for crowns. Get as much student participation as possible for planning and day-of for bigs to role model for littles and students to learn how to make an event, see that many peoples’ contribution can lead to wonderful, fun events.

5) Staff Appreciation, Brainstorming

-all agree to use FoFA \$ that was donated but not specifically earmarked

-food, flowers, coffee

-early release day catered lunch

6) Fireweed T Shirts (green ones abound) - what to do with them?

-give away shirts to incoming Kindergarteners

-give some away at beautification day, if there are enough for incoming kinders

-get more adult shirts, big kids: Ink to Press- Greta to contact re: timeline and pricing. Get a small stock, getting individual orders would be too much coordination for this year.

7) OPUS Updates and request: Read Kim’s Updates- document attached to the minutes email. OPUS is looking for a Hospitality coordinator to draft a Signup Genius for Sea of Strings concert: Greta volunteers, she will reach out to Kim.

8) Major Fundraising Future Planning (‘24 Harvest Fest Recap, Ideas/Changes)

-Fundraising options. Need for more “lead dogs,” for Harvest Fest to happen again in 2025. The planning committee was stretched too thin. We have good planning documents, need more human-power: many hours of planning, then work at the event, followed by thank you cards, tax deduction letters after the event.

Harvest Fest: tradition and great community fundraiser. October ‘25.

- Student participation: Each class has a tradition for each event (ie. BFW making table runners, LFW student art, we had some BFW students helping with set up at the event). Kids are capable, find places they can help with the event/fundraising for their education.
- End of the year and beginning BBQs and at orientation butcher paper with sign ups.
- Start asking for Harvest Fest donations in the summer-businesses on the Spit.

Ideas

- Mike: selling Christmas trees! He will contact the Ninilchik Native Association. Families go out to mark trees in spring, fertilize in May, cut in Nov. Pre-sell and have ready for pick up at Harvest Fest (if in Nov).
- Would some parents like to donate \$ vs participate in fundraisers? Make sure parents know how to donate to FoFA.
- As Ash-Lee gets the numbers, make sure parents get an end of the year cost breakdown: The amount spent on art, field trips, events.

Lisa: We need Ellis Island Volunteers!: Wednesday, March 5: set up, helping during event, clean up.

- project based learning "Roots"
- themes same at LFW and BFW (BFW doing Ellis Island on March 5th)
- multi-age, full school pot luck Thursday, March 6