

**New Canaan High School Parent Faculty Association**

**PFA General Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

NCHS Auditorium

Approximately 40 people were in attendance.

Ann Whittaker welcomed everyone and called for a motion to approve the November 2019 and January 2020 PFA General Meeting minutes. All approved and the motion carried.

Jody O’Donnell called for a motion to approve up to $50,000 in spending (raised through fundraising efforts) to upgrade the NCHS cafeteria. All approved and the motion carried.

Ellen Brezovsky, Executive Director of New Canaan Cares, introduced today’s speaker Dr. Alicia Farrell, a cognitive psychologist in private practice who works with children and parents on the pressure to be perfect. Ellen asked the audience to fill out the evaluation at the end of Dr. Farrell’s presentation.

Dr. Farrell encouraged the audience to ask questions throughout her talk, stressing the desire for her presentation to be interactive. She addressed a culture where young adults are struggling with anxiety and stress and parents are struggling with how hard to push kids, boundaries, etc. Her goal is to teach parents how to raise well adjusted, productive, self-sufficient, independent, civil adults in a complicated world that values performance over character.

According to Dr. Farrell there are four points of interest: 1) the pressure to be perfect, 2) the consequences of that pursuit, 3) the benefits of failure and 4) what we can do to mentor and support our kids. As a child of a naval admiral Dr. Farrell was raised with the expectation to perform with character and is a “perfectionist in recovery.”

She discussed the definition of perfectionism as believing that your self-worth is based on your achievements. Dr. Farrell outlined 14 core message to counterbalance today’s climate of perfectionism and suggests delivering these to our children through our expectations, support and dialogue (see handout):

1. Suffering is a normal part of life.
2. Connection with others in the most powerful antidote to human suffering.
3. Most people are faking confidence.
4. You always have a choice.
5. Run your own race.
6. Define a successful life for yourself.
7. Fixed ability does not exist.
8. Bring your expectations back to the real world.
9. Use fear as a tail wind to propel you forward not a head wind to hold you back.
10. Stay flexible in the face of adversity and embrace that change is inevitable.
11. Whatever you give time and energy to will grow.
12. Have courage to be curious without knowing the outcome of your interests or actions.
13. Forgive yourself and others.
14. Find ways to laugh even in the most challenging of times.

Dr. Farrell took questions from the audience.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary, Suzanne Harrison