

Connections

Community invited to support MICMS

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In preparation for the new year, Marco Island Charter Middle School (MICMS) says "out with the old and in with the new," welcoming two new board members during a meeting last Wednesday.

Jennifer Tenney and Bill Morris will now participate in making resolutions for the future of MICMS in 2008.

Tenney, who grew up in Marco Island and went through the local school system here, says she was impressed with her first meeting as a member of the board.

"Everybody seemed very interested and involved. I'm very honored," she said. "I think it's very important to be part of the community. My parents have always pushed education my whole life. It has always seemed a really important thing to do. I definitely think that the charter school has been a great addition on the island."

She added, "I am not a parent yet but I will be someday and I hope it will get even better."

Part of Wednesday's meeting included saying goodbye to former school board President Vince Magee and hello to the newest man at the top, Jim Reinders. As MICMS Board President Reinders' main objective will be to configure and launch an endowment fundraiser which has been in the works for some time.

"Regardless of what you have for a tax base and no matter what the Collier County School District would like to do, they're only going to get so much per pupil for operating expenses. In our situation, we suffer on the 'lack of' scale," he explained. "We're a student body of only about 400. Of course we have nice, new facilities, for which we are grateful, but our costs are more now too. Air conditioning, lights.... We've got more costs and shrinking income. We need to find a way to enhance our revenues. Our objective is to raise a significant sum."

"Smaller scale" fundraisers, including events such as silent auctions and tailgating parties, will raise \$100-150,000 toward operating expenses at the school this year.

A larger scale "endowment" fundraiser, in the works, will encourage people to give larger gifts, likely in the 2 to 5 million dollar range, to sponsor a room at the new school for a designated period of time. Reinders clarifies that the exact configuration of how the program will work is currently pending formulation and approval.

"Our goal is to find one-time gifts, invest that money and then use that income on an annual basis to expand curriculum, add programs and so forth," said Reinders. "Our restriction is that we can't actually name facilities



Outgoing President of the Marco Island Charter Middle School, Vincent Magee, shakes the hand of new board member, Jennifer Tenney, during last Wednesday night's board meeting at MICMS. Tenney, a Marco Island native and local attorney, follows in the footsteps of her parents, who both actively participated in the community as members of the local school board, as she was growing up. *Harmony Oswald/Staff*

after folks. But it seems that if you put a plaque on the door with the name of a 'sponsor'.... it might work. But that too, is yet to be determined."

The school board plans to es-

tablish a fundraising brochure to present for approval. Creating a complete package may require the aide of a paid professional. The gymnasium will likely also be open for sponsorship sometime

in the near future.

For more information on making a donation to sponsor a room at Marco Island Charter Middle School, call Jim Reinders at 649-6310 extension 214.