

Burns Park PTO –November Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Meeting called to order by Lynda Norton, President, at 7:05 p.m.

- I. Kathy Morhous, Principal, update
 - a. The roof is almost complete on Room 103 (Sue Cramer's Kindergarten classroom) and they should be able to move back in a few weeks.
 - b. During Staff Development Day they did a lot of work on equity and improving it in the school. They talked about new strategies to reach certain kids that will also benefit all students. They are reading the book, "In the Skin That We Speak".
 - c. The Summer Learning Program Award Ceremony was on Wednesday, November 18th. The kids were delighted and very proud to receive their medals. Kathy Cramer added that one student even wore it for her school pictures. There were a couple of workbooks from 1st and 2nd graders without a name...Lynda will send message to 1st and 2nd grade families to let them know.
- II. Lynne Heumann, PTO Council Representative, PTOC Report
 - a. Lynne just became the Burns Park representative to the PTO Council meetings that are held every month.
 - b. Andy Thomas, former Burns Park parent, led a break out group, and also personally donated \$1,000 to the AAPS Educational Foundation
 - c. Janice Lieberman suggested that we post Lynne's notes from the PTOC Council meeting on the Burns Park PTO website. (rather than retyping all of the notes here, please go to the website to read them there).
- III. Jackie & Joel Dalton, Burns Park Run, Co-Chairs, update
 - a. Making an effort to reach out to other schools that have expressed an interest in starting a Run to help raise money for their school PTO. Want to get more kids running from other schools and increase the size of our Run. Forsythe and Haisley schools are interested – Forsythe wants to do it to help raise money for a class trip. We can offer to let them participate in our Run, but have the money they raise through registration go back to their PTO. May request that they have adults help at Race and try to get sponsors. May have each school have their own registration form to help keep track of the numbers. If someone registers from another school (not BP, Forsythe or Haisley), the money will still go to Burns Park.
 - b. Met with the Ann Arbor Track Club and they will be sponsoring the Run next year. This means we don't have to pay insurance, which saves money. Also, will help to get more kids involved in the Track Club, and in the Run. They will put the Track Club logo on the BP Run shirts. Track Club is a great organization that has a lot of youth programs, but few kids from Ann Arbor. This partnership will benefit both of us.

- c. VOTE: Janice Lieberman moved that we allow the participation of other schools at the Burns Park Run, Courtney McCreddie seconds. ALL vote in Favor.

IV. Lynda Norton, President, read the following letter from Andy Thomas

November 16, 2009

Lynda Norton, President
Burns Park PTO

Dear Lynda,

One year ago, the Burns Park PTO, with the help of Sandy Kreger's fifth-grade class, helped launched the Karen Thomas Memorial Fund, administered by the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation. Thanks to your efforts, we managed to raise over \$34,000. I would like to update you on how these funds are being used.

The purpose of the Karen Thomas Memorial Fund is to encourage and support reading at the elementary school level, particularly among economically disadvantaged children. The AAPSEF received a grant request from three teachers at Pittsfield Elementary School, one of our community's most diverse schools in which nearly half the students qualify for free- or reduced-lunch. Three teachers representing second- third- and fourth-grades requested funding to purchase classic children's books for their classes. AAPSEF decided to utilize Karen Thomas funds to support this initiative.

As a result, students are reading high-quality, age-appropriate literature that was not otherwise available to them through their school. Second-graders are reading lyrical, imaginative books such as Ralph Fletcher's *Twilight Comes Twice*. The hands-down favorite among third-graders is the entire *Chronicles of Narnia* series. And the fourth-graders are enjoying classic English and American literature in both abridged and unabridged editions (*including Treasure Island, Pride and Prejudice, Little Women, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Huckleberry Finn, The Merrie Adventures of Robin Hood, and King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, to name only a few*). Many students start out by reading the simplified version of a particular book, then rereading it in the original version.

Although results of this initiative are difficult to quantify, teachers report that students enjoy reading more, read more critically and with improved comprehension, and think actively about the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by characters in the books. One teacher shared with me a student's essay on how Huck Finn was affected, positively and negatively, by his derelict father, and speculating on what kind of father Huck himself would make. This, from a fourth-grader!

Karen would have been extremely proud to know that her name is attached to this initiative. AAPSEF plans to use the remaining balance of the Karen Thomas Memorial Fund to sponsor similar innovative reading programs throughout the District. Once again, I would like to thank the Burns Park community and the many others who made this possible.

Sincerely

Andy Thomas

- V. Anne Steinhauer, Sally Foster Fundraiser, Co-Chair, Update
- a. The Sally Foster gift wrap sale raised \$5251 this year (\$600 of that was through on-line sales). Down from previous years.
 - b. The Sally Foster program is changing...it will be completely on-line, and students will only sell \$25 gift cards for people to use to purchase the gift wrap on line. This could exclude people without computer access. Also, now we have to pay for shipping.
 - c. Another company sells gift wrap so we could look at that as a replacement or we could figure out another fundraiser.
 - d. Lynda will look at the PTO Today magazine...there are a lot of resources and ideas for fundraising. Janice suggested doing a survey to Burns Park families to get ideas and find out what fundraisers they would like to do.
- VI. Courtney McCreadie, Volunteer Coordinator, Co-Chair, Movie Night Update
- a. So far, we have 56 participants registered to attend.
 - b. The plan is to skip December since it's both a short and busy month, then do a movie night in January, March and April (not February due to Mid-Winter Break).
 - c. Popcorn is coming from Trader Joe's.
- VII. Lynda Norton, School Garden Update
- a. Herbs, strawberries and bulbs have been planted by Kindergarteners and 1st graders and their parents.
 - b. Janice Lieberman thanked Lynda and Emily Hastie for all of the work they have both put in to bringing this garden to life.
 - c. Joel Dalton asked about diverting rain water run off from the new roof to the Native Plant and Butterfly Garden right next to the Room 103 windows. It is supposed to be set up to do that.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by Elizabeth DeRose, Secretary

PTO Council Report
Lynn Heumann
November 19, 2009

3 meetings this school year

Meeting 1: Discussion of Dues, By-Laws, Training and Millage. Minutes Available

Meeting 2: Launch Party with PTO members invited.

Breakout Groups covering ideas for PTO structure, Fundraising etc. BP appears to be a leader. Other schools have more difficulty organizing more than one fundraiser per year and deal with lower parent involvement. Certain schools have a more

transient population (Northside) with people renting or buying homes for a shorter time span.

http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/ptoc.home/links_and_resources provides Enrichment and Fundraising ideas/programs from schools around the District.

Officer and Treasurer Training: Increased dues this year \$25 to \$50 from each PTO to the PTOC will help with cost of training to be held at The New Center (provides services to help non-profits succeed). Actual cost is over \$300 and will be covered through other sources. Training will take place in February or March with info to follow. Concern about it being late in the year. Idea that investing in training these particular individuals will strengthen the community as a whole. These people are likely to volunteer for other Boards etc.

Meeting 3:

AAPS Educational Foundation

Receiving donations post Millage defeat. Announcement of Andy Thomas' \$1000 gift

Foundation monies support: Initiatives for Excellence, Teacher Grants, Scholarships, Tutor Programs, Other. Encourage Staff to apply for Teacher Grants

Cannot be used for teacher salaries or other ongoing fixed costs because would need enough \$\$ to support on ongoing basis

Posted on Educational Foundation Page www.aapasef.org :

Urgent Notice

The proposed Washtenaw School Enhancement Millage did not pass. With massive budget cuts to the Ann Arbor Public Schools District, public education in our community needs your help more than ever. Maintain the strength of our nationally ranked schools. Help our children prepare for the demands of the 21st Century. The quality of our public education is necessary to protect Ann Arbor's reputation as one of the nation's best places to live, work and retire.

Approximately 54% of voters in the Ann Arbor Public Schools district voted yes. If each of 12,971 "yes" votes were to donate an average of \$250 annually (based on an average home value of \$250,000 and a taxable value of 50%), we would instantly raise \$3,242,750 annually to support public education in the Ann Arbor School District.

School Funding Presentation

- Donna Lasinski (PTOC Deputy Chair) created Presentation with help of Robert Allen (AAPS Deputy Superintendent and CFO)
- Presentation can be found at <http://bit.ly/uRDHu> and is also on the AAPS site
- 13 page presentation – complex. Discusses State Funding issues; costs of District including fixed mandated costs outside District's control (student testing, retirement, benefits etc), and what individuals can do to help

- Numbers used are from Audit and School District report to State. Question raised on Manipulation of numbers. Explanation regarding Admin. costs
- Bottom line undisputed – Minimum of a 10% cut over the next 2 years. Absolutely no choice. \$17 – 18 M. Grade School classrooms will get bigger and High Schools will have fewer offerings
- State needs to be pressured legislatively. Past Rallies: 1000 people – no response; 15,000 and up – response
- AAPS is extremely fiscally responsible. Won't go into deficit. Detroit schools operating deficit now. State gets involved in management. Not inconceivable that in next 2 years ½ of Michigan School Districts will be insolvent. Other State solutions: Hawaii eliminated Fridays; PTO chartered buses – pay to ride.
- District will handle decisions regarding cuts for this year. Community meetings will be held for input regarding 2010-2011

Questions/Comments