

Brownsville Elementary PTO
General Membership Meeting

October 20, 2009

In Attendance: Katherine Merhige, Jess Haden, Sue Brown, Jean Petrell, Wendy Bragaw, Lori Benedict, Jo Vining, Linda King, Deanna Robertson, Ian Sole, Jeanette Abell and Cady Garey.

- I. Meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Jess Haden, PTO Vice President.
 - a. Katherine Merhige moved to approve the September 16, 2009 General Membership Meeting Minutes, this motion was seconded by Jess Haden. The motion passed unopposed.
- II. Reports of Officers
 - a. Principal, Jo Vining
Thank you for a great Golf Tournament and Arts and Crafts Festival! Kris Sukovich, who heads up grounds beautification, has been approached by many people to help work on the grounds surrounding the school. Mrs. Vining and Kris Sukovich met with Lorraine Green, who is a Sustainability Consultant and a Brownsville parent. She is interested in pulling together all of the ideas that are currently floating around regarding the grounds and possibly manage the implementation of work in a thoughtful and cohesive manner. Would like to present a plan to the PTO in the near future.

The Flu shoot will be given out at school this Wednesday. The County predicts about 70% of students will participate. Brownsville has been in good shape until the beginning of this week when absences shot up from a normal 3% to 11% or 12%. These numbers are still not as high as other county schools. Brownsville teachers and staff are encouraging hand washing and sanitizing. Volunteers are needed to help with flu shoots; the schedule of when grade levels will get shoots is in the Buzzings. Kudos to Becky Ruscher, Brownsville's Health Clinician for all of her hard work!

This week is Bus Driver Appreciation week.

Blair Jones thanks everyone for their support.

- b. President (Joanne Meier was unable to attend due to illness, President's report postponed to next month)
- c. Treasurers' Report (Wendy Bragaw and Sue Brown)
Sue handed out budget and talked about needing clarification of last year's gifting—both budgeted gifting and special gifting at the end of the year. Tax returns are being worked on. The treasurers and Mrs. Vining had a great meeting with Tonya Newton, the account manager for the county, about where gifting funds go. After tonight, everything will be set. Perhaps things will be clearer at the end of the year.
- d. Volunteer Coordinator (Lori Benedict)
Web registrations going well. Room parent slots are full, Art Print still has 6 to fill and Brownsville Publishing still needs 3 volunteers. Brownsville Bakers, Arts and Crafts and Teacher and Staff Appreciation report fewer volunteers than in the past.

III. Reports of Standing Committees and Special Committees

a. Parent Council (Ian Sole)

At the last meeting, there was a tour of MESA, the school within the school at Albemarle High School. Parent Council Meets at Brownsville in December. There was an open discussion on how to increase parent participation and a great list of ideas was created from the discussion. Woodbrook has asked that each family commit to 2 volunteer hours per year. Perhaps we could post in the Buzzings each week a small box: Got 30 minutes? Got an hour? and list small ways to volunteer.

Barnes and Noble will allow school to use store for a book fair fundraiser. School chooses a day, parents shop, % of proceeds go back to school. This information needs to be passed onto Mrs. K.

John Hunter, gifted teacher at Angor-Hurt and his program "The World Peace Game" is showcased in a new upcoming documentary which will be presented at the Paramount Theatre on February 21st at 6pm. The game is played by 4th graders who work together to raise the assets of all countries and solve problems. Parents are urged to get out and support the film. We would like to invite Mr. Hunter to come and speak. The film is called "World Peace and other 4th Grade Achievements" and is directed by Chris Farina.

The School Budget and current levels of the H1N1 Flu infection was discussed. The privacy of student information was also discussed, specifically the amount of information that is retained on students. All information may be obtained from the school board by anyone through the Freedom of Information Act.

b. Bee Program (Katherine Merhige and Sally Cushing)

Fifth year has been the most tumultuous, with all the changes. Great opportunities for our kids, but growing pains are being felt. There was a short discussion of the communication of kid's health issues to BEE teachers. Nicole Risetto is now helping with check in. If anyone knows of any foundation who has extra money to help pay for web site, please let Katherine know.

c. School Directory (Jean Petrell and Leah Daniel)

There has been a response rate of 82% from parents regarding information that should be included in the school directory. Jean asked how much longer should she wait before publishing? They received 225 fliers back and 103 families do not want a hard copy of the directory. Jean plans to send notes home with individual kids to find out what information parents want to be included, or not included in the directory. Marianne suggests purchasing a computer for use by parents who do not have access.

d. Kid Pan Alley (Terri Allard and Sally Cushing)

The Kid Pan Alley Intergenerational residency at Brownsville was a huge success! The residency took place from September 28-October 2 and was sponsored by the Brownsville PTO (thank you!), JABA, VCA, the Albemarle County Community Engagement Department, VMFA, BAMA Works and Barnes and Noble. Kid Pan Alley songwriters Paul Reisler and Terri Allard worked with Brownsville 2nd and 5th grade classes along with seniors from Mountainside Living (JABA) to write nine songs. With the exception of the Core Group, each class met with Kid Pan Alley for two (45) minute writing sessions, one rehearsal and two performances. The Core Group (Ms. Grogan's class) met with Kid Pan Alley every day either to write, rehearse, perform or to share stories with the visiting seniors from Mountainside Living. On Friday, October 2, all

of the participating children and seniors performed their songs during an afternoon assembly and again to a packed house during an evening concert for their families and community. The children did a beautiful job. Their songs were funny, touching, insightful and quite good! The Intergenerational part of the residency was also a huge success. The students enjoyed hearing stories from the seniors about what it was like growing up 70 years ago, and they enjoyed sharing stories of their own. The songs written based on these stories were amazing! Brownsville will soon be receiving two beautiful residency photo books (including lyrics) for the school office and PTO. The PTO sold residency CDs of the children performing their songs. (Sally Cushing has a current list of the orders placed and the money raised for the PTO through CD sales.) Many thanks go out to: The Brownsville PTO, Jo Vining, Linda King, Marianne Barbour, Helen Brite, Faye Jones, Mr. Key, Blair Jones, Justine Ix, Sally Cushing, The Brownsville teachers, staff and especially the children. A big thank you to Gordon Walker and the folks at JABA and to all of the participating seniors. We also wanted to be sure to thank all of the wonderful classroom volunteers: Malika Anderson, Cheryl Carroll, Pamela Cochran, Lesli Devito, Missy Donovan, Leah Gallmeyer, Kelly Gobble, Leslie Hubbard, Olga Manrique, Joanne Meier, Thedra Nichols, Vince Petrall, Colleen Pitt, Danica Plantz, Martha Russell, Melanie Wentworth, Cherie Witt, and Erin Woodward. Thanks everyone!

- e. BeeBop (Danica Plantz and Jen Jackson)
BeeBop will happen this Friday. Schedules have gone out to teachers.
- f. Golf Tournament Fundraiser (Jess Haden)
16 Foursomes participated in this year's Golf Tournament. We are projected to have raised between \$10,000 and \$11,000. 28 different sponsors helped make it a great day. Great Prizes and beautiful weather!
- g. Arts and Crafts Fair Fundraiser (Tara Giannini and Denise Moore)
Great event though not as much traffic as last year. Continued vendor interest. Lori suggested moving the event closer to November or December to avoid soccer games or perhaps more the time more into the afternoon. Friday evening? In conjunction with a spaghetti dinner?
- h. Attractions (Becky Hughes)
So far we have earned about \$1500. 409 books were sent out and only 190 are accounted for. Still many books out, the last day for orders or to return books is next Tuesday.
- i. Family Dance (Deanna Robertson)
DJ Layman, a Brownsville parent, will play the event for free—usually charges \$900. Leah Moore from Dance Explosion will teach the cancan.
- j. Book Fair (Lisa Koolman and Maryann Russell)
Will take place November 16-20 in the back half of the Music Room.
- k. Teacher and Staff Appreciation (Amy Life and Betsy Grinnell)
The teacher/staff appreciation committee has been busy with some small projects. We've held "Sweet Treat Tuesdays" each month to celebrate teacher and staff birthdays. We put Kudos Bars in their mailboxes at the end of the first week of school that said "Kudos to you, the first week is through", and we're working on an autumn gift for mailboxes. We sent out to our committee a list of all of our projects and needs through December, and volunteers signed up and filled in all of our needs, so that is good news. We are hoping to do a Muffins and Coffee Morning next month on Nov 20th, unless Mrs. Vining would prefer us to do it on one of the November workdays.

IV. Old Business

a. Vote on Proposed 2009-2010 PTO Budget

A few changes as noted on budget, these changes are presented at the GM meeting. Decrease in budget projection of Evening Event. Website cost increase of \$1500 in case of need for security changes and other costs. Ian asked what if revenue falls short of projection. Basically the result would be less gifting at the end of the year. There was a suggestion of adding a "Show Me the Money" blurb in Buzzings each week showcasing how funds raised are used to benefit the school. Ian moved to accept the changes, Lori seconded. Motion was approved unanimously. Jess moved to accept the budget, Cady seconded. 2009-2010 PTO Budget was approved.

V. New Business

- ##### a. Ian relayed that Jan Kulow, Parent Council President, asked PTO's "Is the Parent Council doing what it's charged to do? Do we know what parents want to know about our children's education?" After much discussion, the general feeling of those present is no, we don't know. There was a suggestion of doing a county wide/school wide survey, perhaps through Survey Monkey. Should this be an Agenda Item on next month's Agenda?

VI. Announcements

The next PTO meeting will be on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 at 6:30pm.

VII. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.