

MINUTES

JANUARY 11, 2012 PTO MEETING

This meeting of the Colfax A.L.A. PTO was held in the school cafeteria at 3:30 p.m. The meeting was led by PTO President Jenny Ganger.

1. Party for Play: Sat. February 18 (Jenny) This is our adults only annual fundraising party. We hope to raise between \$10,000 and \$15,000 but it is all dependent on attendance and donations.

- Buy tickets today! Tickets are \$45 until February 8. For staff and prospective parents, ticket cost \$30. Patron tickets are \$100. You may buy tickets tonight or on our website, with a check or through PayPal.
- Item donations are due February 6, both for the grade baskets and individual items.
- Volunteers are needed for the night of the event, and usually work 1 hour shifts.
- We will be having a cookie table, so plan to bring cookies to share.
- It is not too late to buy ads in the program.
- JCC “kids night out” babysitting will be available for JCC members.

2. Community Activities

- Big Brothers / Big Sisters Speaker Tom Baker spoke on behalf of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh and provided a “Community - based Program Fact Sheet.” Tom is from Pittsburgh, attended Minadeo Elementary School then Allderdice High School, and is currently on the North Hills School Board. He got involved in the Big Brothers program right out of college.

Big Brothers Big Sisters serves 6 to 13 year olds kids, about 12,000 per year. Mentors are between 21-81 years old. The mentoring is site based and community based, meaning the mentor comes to the child’s school every week and the mentors are from the child’s community. Parents come with their children to the first meeting with the mentor. This may be done at the child’s school if needed. The mentors and kids spend 3-5 hours a week together.

The program needs male and female mentors of all ages, so consider being a mentor. Also consider referring a child. There is no longer a 2-3 year wait; kids are being accepted right now. Most kids are referred by single parents. Tom said he would have been a good candidate because his dad died when he was young. Think of people like that.

- Harrisburg Strategy Group A group of Colfax parents has formed a “Harrisburg Strategy” group to increase funding for public education in Pennsylvania after the \$1 billion state budget cut to public education. In particular, the group is pushing to have funding restored/increased in the 2012 state budget. Others throughout the community have joined the effort. The group is partnering with Education Voters, PA, a nonprofit public school advocacy group based on Philadelphia. Ed

Voters is hosting a “Western PA Strategy Session and Workshop” today (January 11) at 7:00 at Hamburg Hall on the Carnegie Mellon campus. Please come and help strategize. There is also a Harrisburg Strategy Google group. Please join. A fact sheet was provided entitled “Help Save Funding for Public Education” outlining tonight’s meeting in paragraph 4 and instructions on how to join the Google group in paragraph 5. The steering committee, comprised of all Colfax parents, is listed at the end of the fact sheet and their contact information is included.

3. Events Update (Abbie)

- Ice Skating Night: This will be Monday, January 23 from 7-9. Admission is free but people will need to pay for skate rental. The snack bar will be open. Only Colfax people will be using the rink. We are not providing buses because of the need for parental supervision at the skating rink. (The middle level has their skating event later.)
- Carnival planning: Planning for our end of the year party is getting started. It is a night of family fun and we will be needing lots of volunteers. Abbie will wait until the next meeting to distribute a volunteer sign-up sheet, but we will need lots of help.
- Teacher Appreciation Week was very successful. The usual people contributed to its success. Abbie gave thanks to all those who helped.

4. Budget/Treasury report (Ellie) Ellie presented the “Thank You” poster given to the PTO by the cheerleaders for our contribution to the purchase of their uniforms.

- Current budget update: Ellie reviewed the up-to-date budget figures as presented on the reverse side of the Agenda, noting our total income to date of \$22,558.18 and total expenses to date of \$16,704.03. Funds raised so far include \$16,000 from the Ask Drive (we estimated \$5,000.) The Ask Drive is officially over, but people may donate at any time. Ice cream sales have raised \$1723.83, Spiritwear has raised \$527.05, Artware (wall tiles) has raised \$1155.78 and the Newsletter Advertisements have raised \$1186.75. So far the Winter Fundraiser (Party for Play) shows income of \$1020.66. On the expense side, \$1325 of the Principal’s Discretionary fund has been spent, \$175.38 of the Middle Level Events fund has been spent, and \$185 of the Staff Appreciation fund was spent for holiday gift cards for the custodians and printer. The Librarian asked how to request funds, as she is considering a request for a multi-grade enrichment field trip. Jenny responded that fund request forms are located in Diane’s office, so she could fill one of those out and submit it to Jenny, Shannon or Ellie. Some field trip money is already included in our budget for grade level trips and these do not have to be approved by the PTO. But other requests do need to be made in writing and submitted to the EB, especially to get the ball rolling.
- Outlook: (Jenny) Overall, we need to raise \$5,000 more this year to meet our fundraising goals, and \$5,000 more to carry over to next year. A parent asked what would get skipped if we used up all of our funds? Jenny believes maybe it would be the field trip requests that come in for the end of the year, since the

teachers often do not ask for these funds until May. But, we have never had to prioritize between funding those trips and carrying money over to the next year. We are hoping all of our remaining fundraisers go well so we don't have to this year, either. A parent asked about the cost of Party for Play, as this is our main remaining fundraiser. Last year Party for Play cost \$3,000 and cleared \$12,000. So far this year we paid a deposit of \$1000. We do not know the total expenses yet.

- Memory Tiles: We are still selling Memory Tiles for \$26 each. The beginning of our mural is up. We will keep selling tiles until we fill the wall. They are a good idea for 8th grade students, others with something to commemorate, or anyone else. The photo of the Colfax baseball team worked as a tile.
- Grant proposals: We would like grants for the edible school yard. The cost of \$6,000 is a lot for the PTO to maintain yearly, so if anyone hears of applicable grants or is willing to seek them out, please do so.

5. Other updates The newsletter submission deadline is January 16th. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please contact Mark Beck or Jenny, whose email is listed toward the bottom of the Agenda, and she will forward it to Mark.

6. More on decision to suspend lunch-time ice cream sales after Feb. 10 The PTO Executive Board decided to comply with the school district policy prohibiting the sale of items of low nutritional value during lunch. This does not mean we won't ever sell sweets. The money earned from the ice cream sales went to the school groups who worked the sales, rather than into the PTO funds. The sales were nice for those who wanted to donate a small amount at a time. They were also nice because groups or causes could earn money themselves, rather than needing us to give them the money. The fruit sales now being conducted at lunch will not cover the money raised from ice cream sales (fruit sales do not make as much as ice cream sales), and they are not being conducted through the PTO. A parent suggested selling tubes of yogurts instead of ice cream. A teacher who works lunch duty sees that anything sold at lunch is distracting and causes problems because of the limited time available. But, so far the fruit sales have been okay. A parent physician said that she was happy for the choice to stop selling ice cream. Her concern is for all people, to encourage good health habits for later. She asked if older students could volunteer to help with the fruit sales. She observed that the kids went crazy for the apples during the last sale, but the bananas were too green. Middle level teacher Kipp Dawson said that one of the reasons the ice cream sales were so successful was that the middle level teachers (and lower level teachers) were buying for their whole class as a reward. This could also be done with fruit. The librarian suggested selling the fruit for a late morning or early afternoon snack. Kipp gives her students a snack mid morning everyday to help them with their late lunch. She would like a fruit sale option mid-morning. Jenny said that the EB discussed this and got a lot of feedback that it would be too disruptive. In addition, difficulties arise with the prep and clean-up. But, we could work more on this at a later time.

Jenny asked people to contact her (email listed on the Agenda) with additional questions or comments. Email Camille Harris (also listed on the Agenda) if you wish to join the email announcement group. The next PTO meeting is Wednesday, February 8, at 7:00.

Secretary Marjorie Minkler