

**Pittsburgh Colfax PTO Meeting and Volunteer Orientation Workshop
December 12, 2007**

Meeting called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Executive Board members in attendance: Diane Condie, Shannon Ewing, Paul Foster, Jenny Ganger, Darcy Gordon, Barbara Griffin, Donna McCartney, Jane Opgaard, Ida Simpson

Minutes taken by Darcy Gordon, Co-Secretary

PTO Meeting Items

Paul Foster encouraged introductions and provided EB business including announcement that a first grade field trip was approved.

Shannon Ewing reminded everyone about the Party for Play / Bossa Nova event on January 12, 2008.

Mr. May-Stein

- Announced that the teachers will be moved into the new building and “everything is on schedule and will be ready to go.”
- People are encouraged to write letters to UPMC to thank them for the \$100 million commitment to the Pittsburgh Promise. Write to:
Mr. Jeffrey Romoff
President and CEO
UPMC c/o UPMC Media Relations
200 Lothrop Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2582

Or email: mediarelations@upmc.edu

Volunteer Orientation Workshop

Jenny Ganger introduced the volunteer session and was the evening’s moderator.

Paul Foster gave an overview to the evening

- There are many opportunities to volunteer – any time can make a difference.
- In addition to working directly in classroom, volunteers are needed for: laminating, photocopying, writing late slips, sports, lunch/recess, library and more.
- Serve on a committee or be on the PTO board
- Meet with Diane Condie to discover opportunities or make suggestions on how you can help.

Diane Condie spoke about clearances

- Must have child abuse and criminal clearances.
- The school can obtain clearances for you or you can seek them on your own.
- See Diane to get clearances, to see if the clearances you already have are still valid or for questions.

Colfax Academic Coaches Honey Forman, Jenny Kellman, Marilee Glick spoke about various volunteer opportunities

- Mrs. Forman recently surveyed teachers to ask what help is needed and the results were: writer's workshop, computer room, cooperative groups for science, math grouping and library (helping kids select books that are appropriate).
- Training for any classroom/library volunteer project can be provided.
- Having adults around to support children in small groups is valuable.
- Cobra time could use volunteers. Think about any talents you have and how they can be integrated into Cobra time.

Cheryl Rettger provided tips for interacting with kids of various ages

- Building rapport with kids is crucial– a good way to start is to show interest in them and what they are doing.
- Attending sporting events or volunteering for student council for the middle level students would be appreciated.
- Recommended book: **Yardsticks – Children in the Classroom Ages 4 – 14 A resource for parents and teachers**, by Chip Wood.

David May-Stein distributed the rules for lunch, recess and the hallways. He reminded the group that redirecting student behavior is not the job of volunteers.

Ellen Rubin spoke about skills for mentoring.

- Introduced an exercise for listening and talking – body language is important in relationships.
- Discussed characteristics of good mentors.
- Having academic or non-academic mentors has a positive affect on children – improves academic success. Kids perform better when people care about them.
- Quality time together is key to making relationships work.
- Make activities fun – that accomplishes the most.

David May-Stein discussed confidentiality: If you are working with students and learn something personal, treat that with complete confidence – do not share it with your peers. Do not breach the trust you develop with the children.

Meeting adjourned @ approximately 9:00.