

MINUTES

Larchmont PTO Meeting

October 6, 2015

Attendance:

Wendi Lyons – President

Danielle Koenig – Vice President

Kevin Koenig – Treasurer

Tamia Johnson-Wooten – Financial Secretary

Christine Radtke - Corresponding Secretary

Rosa Grimes - Parliamentarian

Michael Mattle - Recording Secretary

George Jackson - Principal

Also present: Danielle Stoffo, Christy Gallo, Latesha Belmont, Tara McKean, Kristine Atkins, Lainie Rogers, Jennifer Favorite, Clarissa Di Fronzo, and Kandi Tucker

1. Meeting was called to order by Wendi Lyons at 7:00 PM

2. President's Report:

- Wendi Lyons opened the meeting by describing how PTO money is deposited and withdrawn. Tamia Johnson-Wooten, Financial Secretary, makes all monetary deposits in the bank, while Kevin Koenig, Treasurer, pays all invoices and issues requested checks.
- Introduction of PTO board members (new and old).
- Wendi explained that she attends a district PTO Presidents' meeting each month. From September's meeting, Wendi wanted to share the following information: The new Superintendent's search is fully underway and families are encouraged to fill out the search survey located on the district's website. PARCC results from 2014-15 academic year will be released in November. The Target Red Card education program ends on May 14, 2016. The PTO received approximately \$1,100 per year in donations from this program. Target announced that it will be providing one last payment to schools, but they have not disclosed how these final donations will be determined.
- Wendi recently purchased a prize wheel which will be used at various events though out the school year (dances, book fairs, family nights, etc). Prizes will include such things as posters, pencils, pens, homework passes, magnets, etc. New prizes may be added as the year progresses.

3. Treasurer's Report:

- Kevin Koenig stated that there is a need to set a budget for each activity throughout the year. Tentative budgets that were set by the board were reviewed. Kevin indicated that he will bring up items with the board as time goes on in order to set budgets.
- The biggest fundraiser in September was Rita's night which netted \$172.00
- A new playground sign (round Larchmont bear emblem located in A-wing playground) was purchased through Signarama for \$237.00
- Upcoming Pumpkin Party/Fall Book Fair budget was tentatively set for \$500.00 (includes DJ, snacks, pumpkins, etc.)
- Annual PTO insurance policy was purchased for \$133.00. The policy specifically covers and protects PTO funds and assets.
- Current bank account balances are: \$7,919.00 – TD Bank Checking Account; \$4,089.00 – TD Bank Gaming Account (New Jersey requires all money collected from games of chance be deposited in a separate banking account) There are two outstanding checks totaling \$113.95 that have not been cashed (these checks were dispersed to room parents during the 2014-15 school year). These checks will have to be voided.

4. Principal's Report:

- Mr. Jackson extended a "Thank You" to all involved with the PTO for their time and dedication.
- Over 400 students were on Larchmont's roll as the school year began. Last year, there were 375 students on the rolls at the beginning of the year. As of 10/6/15, there were 397 students enrolled at Larchmont. This population is proudly the most diverse in Mount Laurel – economically, socially, racially, and culturally. Mr. Jackson feels that embracing our diversity is the key to our success.
- Mr. Jackson is still working with various teachers and staff members to establish a new school vision. A building-base committee will meet to review all parental responses and input. The new vision will revolve around "learning, growing and working together." Mr. Jackson would like to instill the notion that the educational process at Larchmont will include, "a shared responsibility for all ALL involved" (including teachers, students, staff members, school officials, parents, guardians, and community members).
- With regards to PARCC and other state assessments, Mr. Jackson would like to see each student grow approximately one year on average (academically, emotionally, etc). In order to achieve this goal, Mr. Jackson would also like increase student comfort and support.
- School Constitution was developed by students, teachers and staff. The key points include: 1) Be respectful; 2) Be responsible; 3) Be an active learner; and 4) Be your

best (never give up). The constitution was reviewed and ratified during “family” meeting times.

- Most of the students have been participating in Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) reading assessments (determine reading levels).
- Dismissal procedures have been improving and children should be getting home earlier. Mr. Jackson has been working closely with teachers and the transportation department to develop a more efficient dismissal process. Mr. Jackson is open to feedback and to trying new things.
- T-shirts have been ordered and will be distributed soon (PTO will be purchasing approximately 100 adult sized t-shirts at \$5.15 for teachers and staff and will be contributing \$2.15 per shirt for each child sized shirt (approximately 400 shirts).
- Playground is nearing full installation (mulch has to be installed). The vendor was challenging to work with (wrong sized parts and missing pieces). A special thanks was extended to Kristine Atkins for starting and chairing the playground committee. The students have been very good at playing around construction site. The new playground equipment is located in the A wing playground. This is only the first step. Mr. Jackson has many other ideas (sit and spins, and equipment for students with disabilities). He is trying to find equipment options that are more affordable. He is working along with district’s business office.
- The district has provided 3 new projector boards (grades 3 and 4). Mr. Jackson indicated that he needs approximately 2 more projectors to complete a full update of all 3rd and 4th grade classrooms. Chromebook carts have been extremely helpful (PTO purchased 10 Chromebooks last year). Mr. Jackson would like to get students involved in making videos of various events and daily activities in order to better promote the school community. Mr. Jackson will be working closely with Chris Bowman, teacher, to begin this process.
- Title I clubs (federal funding designated to improve academic performance) will begin on or about October 19th. These clubs will specifically target students who are testing below grade level in language arts and/or math. There will be a support club for both math and language arts (perhaps STEM in the future). Other clubs will begin later in the year, and information will be sent home in the Tuesday folders. Mr. Jackson will have the list of students who meet the criteria for the Title I clubs by the end of next week.
- This year’s 4th grade committee will be chaired by 4th grade parent, Alla Rose. The 4th grade committee is responsible for raising funds for an end of year pool party (for 4th graders only) and legacy gift to give back to school. The 4th grade class of 2015 donated a hand painted growth chart which will be posted between the Nurse’s Office and Guidance area. Mr. Jackson wanted to personalize the chart by including the Larchmont Bear Logo in the design. The new art teacher was able to add the logo with interrupting the integrity of the original design.

5. Upcoming Events:

- Family Kickball Night will be held this Friday (10/9/15). Over 20 families signed up to date. Water and snacks will be available for purchase and proceeds will go to the 4th grade committee. The prize wheel will be utilized with proceeds going towards the general PTO account. There will be two games (one with students/families K to 2nd

grade and one with students/families 3rd to 6th grade) Lenape High School students will be assisting and earning community service hours.

- The Pumpkin Party/Book Fair will take place on October 16, 2015. There will be donated pumpkins and crafts to decorate. A new DJ, who comes highly recommended, will be providing entertainment. Jill Castner, Book Fair Chairperson, is trying to work out another evening for families to purchase books.
- Ladies' Night Out (LNO) needs to be booked in advanced. The tentative date is April 8, 2015. The group strongly felt that this needed to be booked now. Danielle Koenig will be arranging a meeting of potential committee members to discuss details.
- Wendi discussed the addition of more dining out nights, Five Below shopping events, and a possible Barnes and Noble night around the holidays.
- The next PTO community event night will take place in January, 2016 (possibilities include a night at ISC or ice skating)

6. Open Discussion

- Danielle Stuffo presented the idea of forming a landscaping/beautification committee to increase the school's overall curb appeal. Idea of creating a koi pond was also discussed. Wendi Lyons suggested that new trees could be a possible 4th grade legacy gift in the future. Wendi will post in Bear Business.
- Tara McKean suggested putting together a committee to research technology grants. The committee could also explore other avenues of securing additional computers, ipads, chromebooks, etc.
- Danielle Stuffo will explore the Race for Education program and form a committee to see how we can bring this fundraising program to Larchmont.
- Wendi Lyons will re-post the Go Fund Me page for playground fundraising.
- Wendi discussed that ALL parents/guardian/families are invited to attend the outside Costume Parade on October 30th. However, due to fire code regulations, only a limited number of parents/guardians will be permitted to attend the classroom party.
- The new art teacher has agreed to help the PTO with the Square One fundraiser.
- Danielle Stuffo agreed to look into possibly selling donation signs for the playground and personalized pavers to pay for additional playground equipment.

7. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

****Next meeting November 10 at 7:00PM**

