

Hawthorne PTA General Meeting
April 23, 2014, 8 am

Attendance: Laura Durudogan, Chrisie Burke, Debi Lilly Springer, Jill Webb, Molly Vandermeid, Kristin Pillsbury, Christine Lee, Juliet Birnbaum, Cathy DeMille, Marie Mactal, Trista Copenhagen, Karen Meier, Sheryl Necheles, Dana Hub, Emily Casey, Jennifer Lewandouski and Stephanie Traven

Teacher Feature – Mr. Birden, Physical Education

It's Mr. Birden's second year at HSA. Prior to coming here he worked at Washington Park School. He started his career teaching 3rd grade and then moved to PE because he wanted to work with all grades.

Mr. Birden focuses on developing the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of the children. He stresses team building, from simple rope games to small group activities. He knows that many HSA kids compete all the time and he wants to teach them that it's not all about competition. Good sportsmanship is just as important.

Mr. Birden has also brought new sports teams to HSA. We have a new Track and Field team this year and a pom/cheer squad. He plans to start a tennis team next year.

He thinks the kids at HSA are great, and building the relationships with them and seeing them grow up is amazing. He said, "I hope to learn more from the kids as they learn more from me."

President's Report (Laura Durudogan)

PTA Slate – Originally Karen Prince was slated to be president, but she recently took a new, very busy job, so she had to decline the position. Juliet Birnbaum stepped up and is slated to become president. The rest of the slate is as follows:

President-elect – Molly Vandermeid

VP Fundraising – Debi Lilly Springer

VP Fundraising – Heather Cannon

VP Education – Julie Wilen

VP Community Outreach – Christine Lee

Treasurer – Jill Webb
Asst. Treasurer – Stephanie Traven
Corresponding Secretary – Jenn Mackowiak
Recording Secretary – Emily Casey
Faculty Representative – Dan Schuh

Garden – The fundraiser bricks that were sold several years ago are finally in the ground! Kristin Pillsbury arranged the installation with a landscaper and it's already a great improvement to the area near the playground. If the PTA decides to do another round of fundraising, it will be easy to add more bricks.

Laura Maye has gone through CPS training to get a composting permit and is working on getting grants for a new edible teaching garden and a water source for the garden. If the grant doesn't come through, we'll get quotes for the installation of new planters.

Treasurer's Report (Jill Webb and Stephanie Traven)

They are very busy reconciling all the accounts due to the large volume of deposits from the Spring Auction.

Vice Presidents' Reports

Fundraising (Debi Lilly/Heather Cannon)

All of the fundraisers throughout the year did well. By June, we project we'll have raised approx. \$300,000 this year!

The spring auction has brought in \$165,000 so far and corporate matches are still coming in and the cash call number is growing.

Here are the numbers so far – Raffle, \$41,000; Teacher Outings, \$11,895; Silent Auction, \$10,000; Live Auction, \$27,000; Paddle Raise \$53,100; Cash Call, \$19,830; Corporate Matching, \$2,182; and Drink Tickets, \$3,200.

We had more than 200 orders for classroom art projects alone. Teachers who still had spots to sell are working the class lists to fill in spots. We cannot thank Karen Meier enough for heading the silent auction – it alone raised \$10,000. We are grateful to all the local

businesses that contributed and we've posted thank you notes all over social media.

Open forum for feedback on the annual event:

Auction – We discussed the pros and cons of returning to an online auction next year or trying one of the firms that uses cell phone bidding:

- If we are doing the auction at the event and using bid sheets, the space is a little too narrow for all those big tables. We could try doing high tops or doing bid sheets on walls or on easels.
- If we do the auction online, it frees up space in the room and we should use the same venue again.
- People like shopping, so we should always have some items to bid on at the event.
- Whitney Young used the cell phones for bidding at their auction this year and it was a learning curve. Checkout was a problem.
- In the past, one person did all the work for the online auction. This year we learned that it could be broken down into manageable parts for a few people. If we start solicitation early and do data entry as items come in, 2 or 3 at a time, it will be easy for a few people to do.
- Moving the party upstairs for the live auction was a success. It allowed us to get people seated and quiet for the live auction and paddle raise. We need a space that seats 100 people.
- It was good to have access to the space all day so we could take our time setting up.
- We need to close out the bidding before the people move upstairs because people continued to bid. If we have auction items at the event we'll need to improve that process.
- If we do the silent auction again, we should figure out the numbering of the items to keep them in an order that makes sense.

To make Bidding for Good work, everyone has to be registered with an active credit card. We should try charging a nominal fee, \$5 or \$10 for the event ticket that includes a free drink ticket, so the event is still basically free, but people can't skip the step of registering. This year there were many people who didn't RSVP or didn't update their credit

card information in the system, so it created a lot of work at the door and a lot of follow up in the weeks after the event.

In the two weeks after the auction, they cleaned up all the mistakes, missing items, expired credit cards, etc. By report card pick up, all the paperwork was done. This year the timing just worked out that way, but since it worked so well, we should try to time it the same next year. Then we can have the convenience of having no check out at the event.

Raffle – Laura had to talk to the 8th grade classes about their poor showing at the raffle. She told them to remind their parents how much the school has changed over the years. They rallied and came back with a strong showing. Someone should do a pep talk with the seventh and eighth graders every year because they (and their parents) lose motivation as they get older.

A room parent said she'd like to let parents know how well the classes are doing in the raffle – if you tell them that they are in 3rd place and it would only take a small push to get ahead the parents would get more competitive and sell more tickets. And in the end, report back on how each class did, so they can try harder next time.

Volunteers (specific to event) – About 20 people got in touch with Laura when we put out a call for volunteers. Some were people that Laura didn't know. Kindergarten moms really stepped up (usually about half of the K parents are new). Can we use incentives to get people to volunteer – free ticket or drink tickets? Can we find some sort of incentive to make it fun to volunteer? We need to recruit more dads for the clean up.

Volunteers (general) – We need a gateway to ease people into getting involved. Maybe we should bring back the signup sheets for specific committees at Open House at the beginning of the year. It gets new parents involved. But our processes have been streamlined so we don't have the large committee structure that we used to.

Laura has a three-page document listing positions with the structure of the reporting from VPs down to committee chairs. The goal is to fill in all the positions over the summer.

The PTA email is redone and great. The PTA website is the next thing that needs to be revamped. We want to make it a go-to place for all the PTA information. Maybe we should add a calendar of events – if you have time to volunteer in October, here are the things we need help with. Also, room parents can get more involved in identifying people who are not able to come to the PTA meetings. Almost everyone opens email from room parents.

Next steps: We'll ask Nate if he has something in mind for the theme and we'll work on getting venue, date and theme now. Get the committees going for next year. Jamie volunteered to spearhead the silent auction and Dana Hub volunteered to help.

Community Outreach (Molly Vandermeid)

The teacher/staff luncheon at Report Card Pickup was amazing – Meher Owens, Agnes Hong, Lourdes Lozano and Chrysa Moster make it extra special by adding touches like tablecloths and flowers.

Education (Julie Wilen)

Arts Partnership – The 8th grade play is always fun and worth seeing even if you don't have a kid in the class. This year they are doing an educational piece on the topic of slavery.

Spirit Wear – (Sheryl Necheles) Orders are due by Monday, April 28 and will be delivered in early May. There are sample sizes in the office. We need to get order forms to the new kindergarten class. We rebuilt the system this year and it will be ready to go throughout the year next year. We don't make money on the spirit wear; we do it as a service to our families.

Teacher Appreciation – Teacher appreciation week is May 5-9 this year and the committee will start planning for it. Last year we did a daily raffle drawing, a big bulletin board (with fun facts about the teachers) and posters on the teachers' doors for messages from kids.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 8am, North Basement

Submitted by Chrisie Burke, Recording Secretary.