



Dear Park Community,

It was wonderful to see many of you at the Holiday Party. The pictures from professional photographer Dave Hunwick that Jill sent in last week's newsletter caught such special moments shared by families, friends and staff. The party felt magical because so many people came together to make it happen. A huge thank you to the school staff, and to Jill and Sasha, for your extraordinary organization, for collecting such generous donations from local vendors, and for putting together beautiful decorations and setting everything up so festively. A big thank you to parents, staff and their families who helped wrap baskets, sell raffle tickets and make the clean up go so smoothly. So many people pitched in, and that to me represents Park School in a microcosm. It makes me reflect back on the school year thus far, and the numerous ways our community has donated its time and energy to give back to the school. Thank you to the many staff and parents who volunteered at Streets Alive in September, holding the limbo bar and helping paint rocks. Thank you to Annie Joseph for preparing our PTA audit. Thank you to Wannapa Eubanks for taking charge of spirit wear at our Open House, and a huge thanks to Claude Eubanks for donating materials and laying out a stone border for our sensory garden, a project we will continue in the spring. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to PTA meetings, both parents and staff — Jenny, Wannapa, Margarets One and Two, Aimee, Anees, Jill, Ren, Heather — your input has been invaluable. I want to thank our PTA Vice President Anees Mohammad for spearheading a new fundraising campaign and advising us to develop a long-term spending plan, to Margaret McIntyre for designing our flyer, and to the indomitable Margaret Storey for setting up our GoFundMe site.

As many of you know, our sensory room provides critical therapy for our students, encouraging them to calm themselves, focus, engage and interact. Yet much of the equipment is old and no longer fully functional. I wanted to share with you the happy news that the PTA has received an

incredible, anonymous gift of \$10,000 to invest in upgrading the equipment. These completely unexpected, urgently needed funds will allow us to redesign the space to best serve our students. The gift comes on top of approximately \$2,300 in donations made in memory of beloved student Kiran Theis, who passed away last year. The PTA will use those funds to purchase a state-of-the-art bubble tube for the room, as that was Kiran's favorite piece of equipment.

As we get ready for break, I wanted to highlight our upcoming **January PTA meeting**. We have rescheduled for **Wednesday, January 8 at 7pm** to accommodate our presenters. We will welcome Sarah Liddell, Franklin's mom, and Heather Sweeney, who are co-organizers of Next Steps Evanston, a district-wide book group working to put discussions of racial equity into practice. Find out more about their important work here: <https://www.nextstepsevanston.com> And please join us if you can. This is one of several district-wide initiatives that our fellow schools have worked hard to include us in. Another is the upcoming Black Lives Matter in School Week, February 3-7, 2020, a district-led initiative with a curriculum designed by dedicated D65 educators and staff. If any parents or guardians would like to contribute to this week's events, possibly by reading a book to a class, sharing a story or meaningful object, your participation is more than welcome. Please contact me. The curriculum will be available in January, and your ideas are always welcome. And more generally, if you have ideas to share, ways you would like to volunteer or contribute, please let us know. We all benefit as a community from your valuable input.

Wishing all of you a Happy Holidays and restive break, and looking forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Kind regards,

Anna (Max's mom)

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