

Willard Elementary PTA Meeting  
November 6, 2019 at 6:30  
Approximately 47 people attended

Co-President Tiffany Simons Chan welcomed everyone and suggested that everyone consider their own purpose for coming to the meeting so whether or not it is accomplished can be evaluated. She also reminded everyone that dinner, childcare and Spanish translation were available.

### **PTA Updates: Goals and Mid-Year Requests**

Two goals have emerged with the Executive Board that will be the focus of 2019-20. First, to aim to better meet the needs of under-represented or under-served populations of Willard. And second, to review the current state of all programs and address what needs to be changed. In order to accomplish these goals, there is also going to be a focus on streamlining processes, including considering proposals at multiple times throughout the year.

### **Alderman Tom Suffredin**

Ald. Suffredin introduced himself and spoke regarding the Salvation Army. Ald. Suffredin shared that the Salvation Army had withdrawn their proposal hours earlier. Lack of transparency was brought up regarding the Salvation Army proposal. Ald. Suffredin explained that the different committees hold the responsibility to review proposals.

In order to stay more connected, Ald. Suffredin suggested signing up for all the city newsletters, including his, although our ward is relatively quiet. It was requested that future proposals be submitted to Owl Notes to allow for awareness, but Ald. Suffredin pointed out that it wouldn't be appropriate until a proposal was a bit more verified or 'real'. Mr. Michel shared that, from his experience with proposals such as the proposal for the bus cut out, once a proposal is in front of the zoning board, their questions are incredibly detailed.

When a decision will be made that will impact our school community, the PTA will continue to aim to provide space for transparency. For instance, a few of the meetings about the salvation army proposal were held at Willard to allow for engaging with information.

Ald. Suffredin went on to discuss his awareness of alley cut throughs and other issues during pick up and drop off. Following the marked signage and obeying laws was encouraged. He also mentioned that some residents on Hurd or Lincolnwood were considering petitioning for speed humps in the alley and possibly the street due to people speeding in those areas.

The darkness in NW Evanston was also discussed which led to a discussion of the Streetlight masterplan. The company that previously manufactured the Tallmadge light doesn't make the parts any longer. There needs to be a plan to replace the lights once they fail from corrosion, breakage, etc.

### **PTA Committee Updates**

#### **Craft Fair**

The craft fair will be on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. -noon. Elizabeth Pence, co-chair, shared that this is an opportunity for children to create treasures and sell them. Registration forms will go home and be available on the PTA website. The cost is \$10 per crafter and everyone must bring your own table. She shared that items sold make great stocking stuffers, teacher and grandparent gifts, and more. Elizabeth offered that anyone can email her with questions at [elyonspence@gmail.com](mailto:elyonspence@gmail.com) and she urged everyone to start early on their crafting. She also encouraged everyone to come and shop even if their kids

don't make something.

### **Willard Family Fund**

Jenny Golem, co-chair of the family fund, introduced the Willard Family Fund. She shared that this PTA committee's goal is to provide security and stability to any Willard family in need. Because both she and Sarah Price will be aging out of Willard next year, and they have handled this committee since inception, they are starting to look for two co-chairs to work closely with the social workers, to help families in need. If families experience things such as a house fire, loss of a winter coat or other hardships, the Family Fund is there to help.

One way the committee has expanded its role this year is with Breakfast Club. This initiative started because teachers noticed many students were coming to school without eating breakfast. Because Willard doesn't qualify for state funding, teachers were buying and making breakfast for these students. The committee identified this need and started providing Grab and Go breakfasts that include applesauce, a cheese sticks and a bagel. It is only in its 7<sup>th</sup> week, and already over 250 breakfasts have been served. The need is far greater than expected. Donations requested include specific kinds of applesauce pouches and granola bars. Details can be found on the sign-up genius from the committee linked in Owl Notes. As the role of this committee expands, they will be looking for volunteers to do shopping, packing, and potentially help with homework. Donations can also be made via cheddar up.

### **Community Conversations**

Sara Petersen, co-chair, shared that the first action session based on the book *How to be an Antiracist* will be November 13<sup>th</sup> at Orrington for all the Haven feeder schools (which includes Willard). The discussion will look at policies and procedures currently in use. A handful of copies of the book are available to borrow and then pass on through our community to read.

### **Francis Willard House**

Francis Willard is Willard's namesake. A new permanent exhibit has been created at the Francis Willard House to educate regarding Francis Willard's view on race and her legacy, both good and bad. There is an upcoming opportunity for a small group to attend a curator talk to understand Francis Willard's view on race.

### **Green Team**

Beth Flintoft, co-chair, shared the Green Team has led composting of about 6000# of food waste at Willard. There is currently composting in both the lunchroom and at all PTA meetings and events. Plastic recycling is also ongoing. This effort has been so successful more volunteers are needed to take plastic bags to Jewel for recycling. Anyone interested can contact a Green Team co-chair for instructions. Conveniently there is a place to drop larger amounts of plastic bags vs. having to just put them in Jewel's bin by the door.

The Green Team also held an Eco day program on the D65 half day. The purpose was to engage with students, but also to fundraise to continue supporting things like the rap-tivist that came to Willard last year.

Beth also shared that native flowers were planted along the bus cut out and on Central Park. Five Oak trees were also planted that will hopefully make it through the winter.

### **District Green Team**

The district Green Team met with the vice-principal of Haven. There is hope that composting will soon start there with the 6<sup>th</sup> graders. A Student Climate Club is also starting at Haven. There is hope that

Orrington School will start soon as well. The green teams from across the district meet monthly at the Civic Center. An environmental justice curriculum is being developed for use with K-8.

### **Yearbook**

Ryan Gregory, Yearbook Chair, discussed all the different kinds of pictures in the yearbook which total 493, outside of the individual portraits. The goal is that every student be portrayed in candid pictures as well as their portraits. The deadline for the yearbook to be submitted to the printer is the first day of spring break. Ryan requested that everyone submit pictures taken at events, both past and future, by emailing them to ryanpgregory@gmail.com. Also, there will be a yearbook sign-up genius sent out to allow sign up to cover taking parents at specific events. He shared that field trips, pick up – any time that is a good time to capture groups of students together is a good time to take pictures and everyone should consider themselves on the yearbook committee. He shared that cover art is chosen by the fifth graders by secret ballot. Extra care will be taken to make sure all students, including those who join school late, are included. Both Mr. Michel and classroom teachers will have a chance to review the portrait section before publication. If any kids were not here for pictures, and also missed retakes, their picture will be taken to be used in the yearbook. Notice will be given so parents are aware of the date in advance.

### **Spring Fundraiser**

Maggie Nichols, co-chair, shared that April 25<sup>th</sup> is the tentative date for the fundraiser. Chairs are needed for a couple of sub-committees, including silent auction. If there aren't volunteers, the silent auction won't be available. Plenty of information is available from the past to guide what needs to be done and how it can efficiently be done.

Last year, the fundraiser grossed 42K, of that 15K was the buy-in parties, and approximately \$8.5K was from silent auctions. Because the budget for this event is so low (\$4K) community sponsorships are something that helped last year and would help a lot this year. Venue options and suggestions are welcome. The venue needs to hold 200-250 and needs to be available within a budget of \$500-1000. Last year comprehensive conversations were held to address issues regarding equity and inclusion and resulted in changes to the event. Those conversations will continue this year and input is welcome.

### **PTA Council**

The next PTA Council, a group that has a representative from the PTAs of every District 65 school, meeting will be held on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Willard.

### **Principal Michel Updates**

A bid will be opened a few days before Thanksgiving looking for options to solve the drainage issues on the west field. Also adding a small track. The hope is that the plan will move forward next summer.

Next summer will include construction to replace tiles in the main hallways to replace tiles originally installed in the 1960s. A current draft of the Mission Statement was also read. This statement is still in development and will continue to be tweaked.

The meeting was closed, and all were reminded that suggestions could be sent to Willardowlspta@gmail.com.