

UPPER ST. CLAIR PTA COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES & PTA COUNCIL REPORT –
Nov 6, 2013

PTA COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

November 6, 2013

9:35– 11:00 a.m.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35am

Approval of Agenda/Minutes

The agenda was approved as presented

The minutes were approved as presented

New Business

1. Statement of the Treasurer
2. President Susan Speer - Thanked Brooke T. for a successful TIP/TIE Open Mike with Dr. O'Toole on
3. The PTA Council meeting originally scheduled for February 5 at Ft Couch has been moved to Streams March 5 meeting has been moved from Streams to Ft Couch.
4. Sylvia Ramos, the committee chair, is in the process of creating a manual to help guide successive chairs in managing the directory. Directory committee is in the process of implementing solutions to make sure all households who ask to be included are listed. Because the information listed in the directory is sensitive, numerous safeguards have been created. Families can verify their information in the directory at any time; no deadlines for verification exist. The Directory Webpage has information on how to verify.

UNIT Reports

Ft Couch Report - Chrissy Sileo

November 6, 2013

Evening Social:

The second student social was held on October 18th from 7 - 9pm. It was held in the gym and nutrition center. The gym was open for basketball and four square. DJ Steve Maffei Jr. entertained dancers in the nutrition center. There were snacks and beverages sold at the snack bar. There were no "issues" to my knowledge. The kids seemed to have a great time! Roughly 350 attended.

Red Ribbon Week:

Red Ribbon Week was October 21st - 25th. Students participated in a variety of activities during the week. The theme was "One School, One Goal: Bully and Drug Free". Students participated in a variety of activities to build awareness of the dangers of drug use. All students were given a red, rubber bracelet to kick off the week. They were also encouraged to participate in the weeks' worth of theme days.

!

Monday, October 21: "Support Red Ribbon Week" - Students wore red.

Tuesday, October 22: "Sock It To Drugs -- Hair's to a Drug-Free Life" - Students wore crazy socks and/or hair styles.

Wednesday, October 23: "Team Up Against Drugs" - Students wore Pittsburgh sports attire.

Thursday, October 24: "Our Futures are Bright Without Drugs" - Students wore college attire.

Friday, October 25: "One School, One Goal: Drug & Bully Free" - Students wore Upper St. Clair spirit attire.

7th Grade Halloween Toy Drive:

All 7th grade students were asked to bring in new or gently used toys, electronics, books, hats, gloves, baby items or monetary contributions. The items were collected for the Steel Valley Children's Center. The team section that collected the most items acted as big sister / big brother chaperones when the daycare center visited Ft Couch last Wednesday, October 30th. The children trick or treated through the school and each child received a toy bag put together by the 7th grade guidance classes. Mrs Falascino and Mrs Leonard's classes won the "contest" and participated in the trick or treat event with the day care students.

Student Council Conference:

Last Friday, November 1, 2013 Fort Couch Middle School was selected to host the 2013 PASC (Pennsylvania Association of Student Council) Mini Conference. Our theme was **Under Construction: We are Building Character!** We had a terrific guest keynote speaker, Jackie Jaros, whose speech was "Today is the Day!" She talked to the students about how each day is a new opportunity, how to best use each day, how to find and use individual strengths, and how to become a philanthropist. This conference encouraged middle level students to become a great part of their student council team. At the 2013 PASC Middle Level Mini Conference, over 240 delegates from 11 neighboring schools attended two workshops that helped them build leadership skills, character, and teamwork. This conference was meant to help younger students to understand how to fine tune and build character to make them stronger leaders tomorrow! Overall, the conference was a huge success. Students left empowered to be stronger

leaders in their own schools as well as met and learned from leaders at other schools. As delegates walked from the gymnasium to their busses they could not help but be motivated by the enthusiasm, cheers, and confidence built here!

Lemony Snickett:

Author Daniel Handler, a.k.a. Lemony Snicket, came to Ft Couch to speak! His best selling series A Series of Unfortunate Events and All the Wrong Questions have sold more than 60 million copies! About 60 Ft Couch students got to see and hear him live in our library. About 45 of them are members of either our Creative Writing or Popcorn and Paperbacks Book Clubs. The remaining 15 were chosen by raffle from a list of 200 who wanted to attend. During his talk, Mr. Handler discussed what it's like to be an author and what it is like when that book is turned into a movie.

While Handler visited Fort Couch Middle School, the encounter was broadcast live to six additional schools in the Pittsburgh area. Each district was given the chance to have students ask a question to Handler.

Mr Handler visits about 100 schools nationwide annually. It was a very exciting day for Ft Couch!

Blue Ribbon Award:

Congratulations to Mr Demar, Mr Rozzo and the Ft Couch Staff on being awarded with the National Blue Ribbon award for school excellence. Mr Demar and Mr Rozzo will be traveling to Washington DC during the week of November 18th to accept their award. A school celebration will be forth coming and is in the works.

Chick Fil A Spirit Night:

Chick Fil Spirit Night is tonight, November 6th from 5 - 8pm at the Chick Fil A on Washington Road. Chick Fil A will donate 15% of it's profits to Ft Couch. Take a break from cooking tonight and stop by for dinner! The team with the most sales will win a free milkshake coupon. Also, the cow will be visiting the students today during lunch. This was a huge hit last year! The kids LOVED having the cow and one class even got to have "him" sit in on one of their classes! We are hoping for a fun night and a successful fundraiser and we are encouraging everyone to "Eat More Chicken!"

PTSO - Shelly Snyder

October 4 – Homecoming Football Game

October 5 – Homecoming Dance

October 9 – Open House

October 16 – PTSO meeting

October 22 – Choral Concert

October 29-30, Nov 2-3 – Fall Play

Streams – Christine Vinay The big event for October was Streams' Stravaganza. The theme this year was "Surf's Up!" and it was a huge success. I don't have official numbers yet, but all the preliminary figures show we made at least \$1,000 more than last year.

- Also, we finished our KidStuff Coupon Book sale. We raised over \$2,800, so we're pretty excited about that since this was the first year we did this.
- Streams held our fall spirit wear sale in October. Items will be delivered in November.
- Open Mikes – 4th grade parents attended an Open Mike on October 17th and Kindergarten parents were hosted on October 24th. At these events Dr. Miller and one of the teachers from that grade are hosted at a house of a parent in that grade. The activities and curriculum for the school year for that grade are discussed.

- During the month of October, Streams did a contest to see which classrooms collected the most Box Tops and which classroom collected the most Campbell's Labels for Education turned in. The students in the winning classrooms will receive a \$5 gift certificate for the Scholastic Book Fair held tomorrow & Friday.
- Streams students also participated in Bus Safety Week, Red Ribbon Week, and National Day of Writing.
- On Thursday, October 31st the kids participated in the Harvest Parade and each class had its own Harvest Party.
- Outreach – this week until Friday, November 8, Streams is holding its annual CANDY COLLECTION. All candy will be donated to SHIM.

Eisenhower – Jeanne McNamara (no report)

Baker - Kim Megonnell (no report)

Boyce - Kathy Teresi

Deer Valley Fundraiser:

Our annual Deer Valley fundraiser, which allows Boyce students to fundraise in 5th and 6th grade for their curriculum based trips to Deer Valley spring of their 6th grade year, was a big success with over 50% of the student body using the sale to fund their trips.

Open Mikes:

Our first Open Mike offering of the school year, held on Friday, October 4, and hosted by Principal Amy Pfender, featured the topic "What is Boyce Middle School? What Does It Offer My Child?" We drew a nice crowd of about 40 parents, many with fifth graders.

Our second Open Mike is November 7 at 9:30 am. Hosted by Amy Pfender, John Rozzo and Ray Berrott, it will cover the new Parent Portal and Electronic Report Card.

Outreach:

SHIM Coat Drive: Our first Outreach project of the year, collecting new and gently used coats, mittens, hats and other cold weather gear for SHIM has just completed.

Operation Treats for Troops: Boyce is also in the midst of Treats for Troops collecting unwanted Halloween candy to send in care packages for soldiers overseas.

Thanksgiving Food Drive: Boyce Student Council has also launched the annual Boyce Thanksgiving Food Drive to create complete meals to deliver to local families in need. Each team at Boyce is asked to provide donations for a certain part of the meal, or \$5 Giant Eagle gift cards. The Thanksgiving Drive is part of the Random Acts of Kindness Week coming up at Boyce the week prior to Thanksgiving.

November General Meeting:

Our November General Meeting has been moved to Thursday, November 14 in the Boyce LGI.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Reflections

🕒 Winners will be announced this week

Treasurer (no report)

Directory - Sylvia Ramos

🕒 The Chair of the Directory and those volunteers on the committee were tasked with obtaining contact information from the school via the BacktoSchool Online (Infosnap) process and providing it to AtoZ

Directories who were then to format it into their software program to create an online/smartphone directory. There is a Directory Information webpage on the district website that can be accessed by clicking on PTA Council, and then looking for the Directory Information in the menu. FAQ's and other guides are available at that page.

⌚ An important point -The information that is used here is very sensitive such as our children's home address and our children's classrooms in their schools. Because the print directory is a physical object, the damage done by anyone handing it out to unauthorized users is very limited. But with digital information, it can be sent to anyone with just a few clicks.

⌚ So we have processes in place where the information displayed has to hold to two criteria:

- 1) It must be official information that the school provides us.
- 2) The family must be able to verify the information and make any necessary changes themselves if at all possible, before that information is made accessible in the Directory.

⌚ Directory volunteers should not as a matter of policy go into the system and change families data on the basis of a personal email or phone call, since these volunteers cannot possibly verify who each person is that is requesting changes. Nor would we want access to be granted to various former spouses such as is the case with second households or some blended families without the proper authorization. It would not be secure if volunteers just changed data or granted access to everyone who says they are entitled to it only on their own authority. Its better and safer to stick with official information and policies. That is another reason why the "Opt Out" choice was an important step in the Back to School Online registration. Families need to be able to keep their information private. Transitioning to new formats is often frustrating. Unfortunately there is a need for extra safety and security, due to the digital information involved. As the families become familiar with the new format, the Directory should become easier to use and the convenience of updating and controlling their own information should be something that is highly valued by the district families.

⌚ Roll out of the Directory - the Directory verification emails went out over a three to four day period. The elementary schools went first, then the middle schools, then the high school. A Directory FAQ has been posted on the Directory page of the PTA Council site which is on the School District website. A Verification Guide was also posted there. The verification email which provided the log in information included information about the FAQ and the Guide and suggested that everyone print out those documents and use them while verifying. The families were well informed by these postings and posters were also up at the Open Houses. Copies of the FAQ were provided at the Open Houses as well. The Directory verification emails went out over a three to four day period. The elementary schools went first, then the middle schools, then the high school.

⌚ A few days later AtoZ was asked to remove any visible data from unverified families and they did so. On the following Monday the Directory was launched, and went "live". Those families who didn't verify can actually verify at any time, there is a easy method to have the first contact email resent which then enables them to verify. Reminder emails will be sent at regular intervals until all of the families who want access are in the system and have their information appearing as they intend.

⌚ Faculty and Staff were rolled out on Monday, and phone calls to certain key "tester" secretaries showed that the roll out went smoothly.

⌚ There have been many who had no problems with receiving their verification email and using that process to gain access. There have been quite a few who did have trouble initially due to the fact that the primary email that families used in many cases was that of the husbands who often used professional email addresses. This resulted in bounce backs as many business filter or block personal email. Our solution was to create a form for parents in this situation to request the volunteer admins to change their primary emails. The signed form represents an authorization so this is in keeping with our policies.

⌚ A complete debrief is being prepared for presentation to the Executive Board. Our goal is to provide a manual for project managing the Online and Smartphone Directory, so that it will be easy for a more streamlined task to be handed off to a new Chair at such time as a change becomes necessary.

Legislation – Dana Horton (no report)

Partners in Education – Jan Brody / Carole King(no report)

GATE – Gifted & Talented Education – Lisa Clark (no report)

Spelling Bee – Collette LeKachman

⌚ Boyce Wednesday, January 8th at 2:45pm in the Boyce Library

⌚ Baker Wednesday, January 22nd at 3:00pm in the Baker LGI

⌚ Eisenhower Wednesday, January 29th at 3:30pm in the Eisenhower Library

⌚ Streams Wednesday, February 5th at 6:00pm at the Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park

⌚ Ft. Couch Thursday, January 30th in the Ft. Couch LGI

⌚ Regional Bee at Children's Hospital Saturday, March 22, 2014

Further information including study word lists, the rules sheet and student entry forms will be posted on each PTA's website by November 11th.

TIP / TIE - Brooke Tarcson /Upper St. Clair's Youth Steering Committee –

⌚ On Nov 13 at 7:00, Brian's Story will be shown at the Rec Center. The movie is appropriate for middle school students and older.

Other

⌚ The Gala is scheduled for February 22 at Valleybrook Country Club.

Throws are still for sale

Welcome Committee – Stacie de La Parra(no report)