

Nelson Place School PTO Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2011

President Beth Proko opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the officers, Vice President Tara Prentiss, Treasurer, Matt Crue, Secretary, Pam Landry and recognized Debbie Jerszyk for her outstanding work on the newsletter.

Mr. Kelley's Report

- Staff introductions were made.
- Thursday, October 27 will be conference day. Children will leave school at noon and parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled between noon and 5 p.m. A schedule will be sent home. If you have a conflict, please send a note in and your conference will be rescheduled.
- At our next PTO meeting on October 17, people from the school plant office will be here to discuss what is happening with the building to keep it safe for the children and the possibility of replacement.
- Between 12,000 and 15,000 students are bussed in Worcester every day. The busses were slow at the beginning of the year. Mr. Kelly received nearly 50 phone calls about the busses. Some drivers weren't familiar with their routes and things are improving now.
- If your child is being dismissed or going home on a different bus, please send in a note. If they don't have a note, they are going home the normal way.
- The parking situation at Nelson Place is terrible. Due to a state law, there is no parking permitted on the school side of the street. Neighbors don't like it when people park across the street from the school either. It is okay to park across from the school for the 15 minutes before and after school. Please be respectful of our neighbors and don't park in or in front of their driveways.
- To contact Mr. Kelley, either call the school or email him at kelleym@worc.k12.ma.us. If dissatisfied with his response, contact his boss at 508-799-3499.
- There is a first grade student at our school with a serious health problem. Right now, their support system is good and they don't know of any way that our community can offer assistance. If needed, we may be able to help them down the line.
- Once things settle down for Tracy in the office, all notices will be sent home via email.

Treasurer's Report – Matt Crue was not present, so Beth Proko spoke on his behalf

- Each month, Matt provides a report of the money going in and out of our PTO bank account. We try to keep a \$5,000 buffer as part of our charter. It looks like we have a lot of money, but much of it is already committed. We set a budget for each committee, then try to raise the money needed. Whatever money is not spent by the committees is turned back into the general fund. Each month, teachers come forward with requests for classroom supplies and we want to have enough money to honor the requests.
- Our goal this year is to raise \$20,000. A big part of this goal is earned through our Yankee Candle and Entertainment book fundraisers. We received \$2,000 from the Box Tops program last year and \$400 from Papa Gino's night and another \$400 from the 99 Restaurant night.
- Motion to accept treasurer's report was approved.

Enrichment Committee – Gretchen Switzer

- Committee consists of teachers and parents who bring cultural programs to the school to enrich the curriculum. The committee meets 3 or 4 times a year in the morning before school and you can bring your children.
- If you have ideas for programs or would like to join the committee, contact Gretchen at switzers4@verizon.net.
- Amelia Earhart will be coming to the school in October.

Operation Turkey – Gretchen Switzer and Kristina McGrath

- Collect canned goods and cash donations before Thanksgiving to make it possible for families in our school who might otherwise not have a Thanksgiving dinner to have one.
- Recipients are anonymous.

Generous Offer - Gretchen Switzer

- Gretchen has recently published a new book entitled "Menopausal Mommy and Other Essays". The book is primarily for women. The book costs \$14.95 and for books purchased within the Nelson Place community, Gretchen will donate 35% of her royalties to the Nelson Place PTO.

Family Nights – Lori Rauktis

- Once a month, something fun is scheduled for kids and families.
- Pumpkin Night will be held on October 21. – pumpkin painting, a DJ, hot dogs, raffle baskets and more! Volunteers are needed for set-up and clean-up and to help out during the event. This is Lori's first year chairing Family Nights, so experienced volunteers would be a big help. Also needed are themed basket donations for the Pumpkin Night raffle.
- Other activities include a Sharks night, where Nelson Place children will get to sing God Bless America before the game, Tornadoes night and theater tickets.

Fundraising – Deb Steigman & Tara Prentiss

- Tara Prentiss will be co-chairing the Fundraising committee with Deb Steigman this year.
- Fall fundraising programs include:
 - Entertainment Books - This is the purchase that pays for itself. There are coupons for Christmas Tree shops, Davis Farmland and more! We need to sell at least 100 books to get the most money per book.
 - Yankee Candle - The catalogs have scratch and sniff! Every other school receives 40% profit on orders placed. We receive 50%! Order forms are due by October 3. Orders will be delivered before Thanksgiving, and before any ice storms.
 - If you don't want to purchase anything, feel free to make a donation. We accept cash or a check made out to Nelson Place PTO.
- In the spring, a special fundraiser will take place to raise money for art supplies for Mrs. Imbergamo.
- Put the FUN back in FUNdraising, join the committee!

Hospitality – Deb Steigman & Tara Prentiss

- This committee organizes events such as:
 - Teacher Appreciation Week, including a breakfast in May
 - retirement teas or celebrating events such as the birth of a child
- It's a fun and easy committee. Sign up and you'll be informed about what is needed in terms of help.
- Mr. Kelley spoke about the first grade child at our school who has a serious health problem. The hospitality committee is still thinking of ways to help the family. They are considering a gas card (since the family will be traveling back and forth from Boston regularly) or a restaurant gift certificate to make their lives a little easier. A gift for the child will also be made.

Books & Beyond – Jill Andros & Colleen Fisher

- A reading program for grades K – 3.
- Great volunteering opportunity. Very easy and not time-consuming. It takes about 10 minutes once a month.
- Volunteers needed to tally student's reading submission paperwork and distribute prizes once a month. Those who volunteer must find time to go into the classroom to distribute prizes and turn the children's Books & Beyond forms in for the raffle during the first week of each month. You get to be the fun parent who comes in to deliver the prizes.
- Books and Beyond runs from November until February.

TRRIP (T-Rex Reading Incentive Program) – Jill Andros & Lea Carnes

- A reading program for grades 4 - 6.
- Great volunteering opportunity. Very easy and not time-consuming. It takes about 10 minutes once a month.
- Volunteers needed to tally student's reading submission paperwork and distribute prizes once a month. Those who volunteer must find time to go into the classroom to distribute prizes and turn the children's TRIPP forms in for the raffle during the first week of each month.
- Volunteers are needed for the TRIPP carnival in June.

Ice Cream – Chair Dawn Fleming was not present. Overview was provided by Beth Proko.

- Ice cream is sold after lunch each Friday for 75 cents and the children always look forward to it.
- Contact Dawn Fleming to sign up to hand out ice cream one Friday each month.

Library – Peggi Harris

- The library is run by volunteers.
- Each teacher has a weekly library time scheduled and volunteers are needed. Come in once a week or once every other week. 2 volunteers are needed for each class.
- Volunteers are especially needed for Kindergarten and first grade classes.
- We hope to open the library in October. We'll be working around MAP testing.
- Contact Peggi Harris (chaz@charter.net) to volunteer. The more, the merrier!

Box Tops – Maureen Economou was not present. Overview was provided by Tony Economou.

- Box Tops end up all over your house. Please cut out Box Tops and send them in with your child.
- Maureen has raised thousands of dollars for the PTO through Box Tops.
- Tony has seen lots of orange paper around the house, so he expects that a Halloween Box Tops flyer will be coming home soon.
- Don't be shy about calling Maureen with questions.

Spree Day - Meg Giarusso

- Spree Day is an event for students, (takes place in June).
- Activities include face painting, various bouncy equipment, hot dogs, cotton candy and a dunk tank.
- Volunteers are needed for set-up, clean up and to man stations during the event. It's fun to volunteer. Meg will run the event just the way Eileen did in the past.

Scholastic Book Fair – Amy Hurley

- The book fair will take place the first full week of March. Children can shop for books during their classroom visit, or come with their families to shop one evening.
- Volunteers are needed to help children choose books, run the cash register, set-up and clean-up.

Landscaping/School Pride – Dave Francis & Beth Proko

- Assumption College came out and did a tremendous job in cleaning up and landscaping the school grounds. 75 volunteers came on August 23. They weeded, repainted the basketball court and 4-squares, cut branches, spread the clay on the upper little league field, rototilled the base material of the playground and more! One person brought an excavator and bushes were removed at the end of the driveway to increase visibility. Mayor Joe O'Brien did a lot of work and got poison ivy.

Holiday Store – Dave Francis

- Low-cost gift items are available for sale at school, so children can buy holiday presents.
- Volunteers are needed for set-up, clean up and manning the store while students shop.
- \$500 of the proceeds from the Holiday Store are donated to a less fortunate school in Worcester.

PTO Newsletter - Debbie Jerszyk

- The PTO Newsletter is sent home in backpacks every month, usually around the 1st of the month.
- Submissions are due the last couple of days of the month. To submit information for the newsletter, contact Debbie Jerszyk at debra.jerszyk@sepracor.com.

PTO Website - <http://www.nelsonplacepto.org> - Sarah Kyriazis

- The website is sponsored by local businesses. The sponsorship cost is \$100 per year, and it enables us to maintain the website and pay for hosting. Contact Sarah at sarah@newmarketmedia.biz to learn more about sponsorship opportunities. We currently have 9 sponsors who we hope will renew and we are looking for 3 more sponsors.

CPPAC (Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council) – Deb Steigman

- Meets second Thursday of each month at Worcester Technical School at 6:45 pm. It's open to the public and all are encouraged to attend.
- The purpose is to open the lines of communication between school administrators, school committee members and parents.
- As a result of CPPAC, the math curriculum in the WPS system has been changed for the better.
- CPPAC will host a know your candidate in October where people will have the opportunity to meet those running for school committee.
- Two years ago, CPPAC sponsored a round-table event in which best practices were discussed. 98 percent of Worcester Public Schools were represented.

New Business

- Mr. Kelley announced that MCAS scores will become public within the next day or two. We were one of the 6 schools in the city with adequate performance. 6 students had perfect scores and a whole bunch had nearly perfect scores.

- Students who scored proficient or above on the MCAS will be treated to a pancake breakfast at school along with their parents. Mr. Kelley asked that the PTO fund the pancake breakfast.
- A motion to fund the pancake breakfast was approved.
- A question about the Tools for Schools program was asked. We have received a check and catalog from them and will spend the money received. We also received a small check from Target.
- The minutes from the May PTO meeting were approved.
- A question was posed about nurses at school. Mr. Kelley responded. Nursing coverage is 1/2 day from noon on. Mr. Kelley keeps petitioning for a full time nurse but is told that it's a budgetary issue. Perhaps speaking about the lack of adequate nursing care at schools at CPPAC meetings would help.
- Miss. Quitadamo spoke about the Hole in the Wall Gang, a charity established by Paul Newman in 1988 that offers children who are seriously ill the opportunity to go to summer camp. Her class produced a poetry collection which they sold in order to raise money for the Hole in the Wall Gang. They raised \$3,000.
 - There is a drop-off box for art supplies in the lobby of the school to support Hole in the Wall Gang These supplies will support their hospital outreach program at UMass Memorial, where camp specialists visit the bedsides of seriously ill children weekly. Children get great pleasure in putting arts & crafts supplies in the box.
 - Last spring, we held a used book sale that raised \$1,100 for Hole in the Wall Gang.
 - 5 representatives from Hole in the Wall Gang came and spent time with our children.
 - We are planning another book sale this spring.
 - We are also planning to put a volume 2 poetry book together. .

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Landry
PTO Secretary