

## Swanson Elementary PTO Meeting - September 15, 2015

**In attendance:** Lynne Thomas (President), Lisa Meder (Treasurer), Andrea Benslimane (Director of Special Events), Shelly Budde (Co-Director of Hospitality and Outreach), Sara Gauntt (Co-Director of Hospitality and Outreach), Cindy Dries (Director of Fundraising), Wendy Dorn (Director of Programming), Jen Beug, Jen Petersen, Sarah Rykwalder, Jackie Kohlmann, Christopher Forgie, Angela Sidebottom, Rita Staff, Sue Kaloti, Alicyn Keller, Erika Slager, Lisa Fanning, Laura Gundlach, Dawn Bowan, Carla Ferman Jessica Gonzalez, Tracy Lee, Amy Glisczinski, Heather Anderson, Albert Outa, Jennifer Gordon, Chris Ahrens, Urvi Patel, Angela Kwasny, Kim Boyajian, Kori Hartman, Brian Balfany, Mark Hansen

### A. Opening (Thomas)

Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

### B. Review and Approval of May Minutes

After review, Budde motioned to approve; Fermann seconded. Minutes approved.

### C. Principals' Report (Kori Hartman & Mark Hansen)

Mark Hansen, Superintendent of Elmbrook Schools, spoke to the concerns of Swanson's growing student population. While Swanson's enrollment was projected to reach 800 student in 2018, we are currently at 795 students, and functioning at near capacity. Hansen informed the PTO that the District will be working with outside consultants to conduct a population study. A focus group, consisting of district and parent representatives, has also been assembled, and will meet on Thursday, September 17th to consider options for enrollment. Hansen expressed that the District does not want to disrupt families, and has the goal of keeping families unified. His hope is that current Swanson students and their younger siblings would remain at Swanson, but stressed that he cannot make promises. The District would also like to keep the middle school and high school tracks the same.

The District plans to work with the community through this process by holding listening sessions and Town Hall Meetings, with the goal of providing the Board with a recommendation by spring. A tab will be created on the District website with information regarding redistricting. This Friday's email blast will include additional information about the communication plan to families. Hansen acknowledged that tough decisions may need to be made, but stressed that the District is trying hard not to disrupt current families and tracks.

When asked, Hansen acknowledged that expanding Swanson, opening Hillside, or building at the Mary Knoll property have not been ruled out. When asked about a district-wide 4K program, Hansen expressed that he feels Elmbrook should have 4K for all students, but we are not currently able to accommodate this program. There are currently about 62 students enrolled in Elmbrook's fee-based 4K program at Dixon. Hansen plans to attend a future PTO meeting to further discuss redistricting and to answer questions.

When asked about using outside facilities to host concerts, Hartman informed the PTO that she is looking into other locations for these types of events, including the Wilson Center, Wisconsin Hills and Brookfield Central.

### D. President's Report (Thomas)

- 1) Directory Sales Update - As of August 28th, there were 208 orders for one directory and 21 orders for two directories, for a total of \$3540 in sales. Gross profits last year totaled \$3325, for a net of \$2880. This year, we budgeted a gross profit of \$3000 (\$2400 net), so we are ahead of budget. Directories can be ordered through September 30th, but will not be available for purchase after that date. Ordering information can be found on the Swanson PTO website.
- 2) PTO Welcome Brochure - Brochures were sent home with all students last week. These brochures contain information about the PTO, communication information and ways to get involved.
- 3) Teacher Gifts - Each year, the PTO gives \$100 to each full-time teacher and \$50 to each part-time teacher to help with back-to-school expenses. Checks will be distributed on September 16th.
- 4) Open Chair Updates/Available Positions - Angela Sidebottom will chair Restaurant Nights, Wendy Dorn and Jessica Gonzalez will chair Cultural Events, and Sue Kaloti will co-chair Blizzard Ball with Julie Carpenter. Thank you to our new chairs! We

are still in need of co-chairs for our SCRIP fundraiser. Lisa Fanning and Jen Petersen, co-chairs for the past 3 years, will train the new chairs. Please email Lynne if you are interested in volunteering or for additional information.

- 5) Reminder re Extracurricular Enrichment Fund - The PTO has set aside funds to support parent-run clubs. \$1500 will be used for Monday Morning Mindfulness, Battle of the Books and Swanson Striders. An additional \$1500 is still available for new extracurricular clubs. For parents interested in starting a new club at Swanson, there is a white box on the black table in the lobby with information on various clubs (ie. Odyssey of the Mind, Geography Club, and much more!).
- 6) Reminder re Mandatory Volunteer Screening - The District has implemented mandatory screening for all volunteers that may have unsupervised contact with students. This brief form must be filled out, and approval must be granted, prior to volunteering for some events (including some PTO events). The Google form is available on the Swanson website and PTO webpage. Auto calls have been going out to confirm application approval. Please contact Kristin Gifford or Stacy Babl at the Central Administration Office with any questions.

#### **E. Treasurer's Report (Meder)**

- 1) The end of the year budget for 2014-2015 was shared since several expenses came in following the May 2015 PTO meeting. Approximately \$10,000 was used to fund furniture for the learning lab. Remaining PBIS/PEACE funds were used to purchase student incentives for this school year.
- 2) The 2015-16 school year started with a balance of \$22,194. To date, \$5,600 was used for back-to-school teacher gifts, and \$1,000 was paid to Boosterthon. The \$1,000 deposit for SwansonFest came from one of last year's sponsors and was not received until late July. We have not received the final check from Stir Crazy for Restaurant Night, but this may have been lost in the mail during Swanson's summer closing. Dries will check with Stir Crazy and Rusty.

#### **F. Director of Fundraising (Dries)**

##### 1) Committee Chair Reports

- a) Spiritwear (Thomas for Nicki Wolosek) - Order forms were sent home with students the week of September 7th. Order forms are also available on the PTO webpage. All orders are due back to school by September, 30th. This will be Swanson's only spiritwear sale this school year.
- b) "Be Your Best" program (Balfany) - The "Be Your Best" martial arts program is an after-school program at Swanson, available to students grades KG - 5th. The program will consist of four classes beginning November 2nd, and will focus on confidence, character and advocating for yourself. JK Lee, the hosting company, is donating all proceeds from this program to the Swanson PTO.
- c) Swanson Fun Run (Rubenstein) - This year, the Swanson PTO is partnering with Boosterthon to host the Swanson Fun Run. This fundraiser will replace the Chip Shoppe product sale. The fundraiser will kick off with a Pep Rally on October 26th, and the Fun Run will take place on November 4th during the school day. All students will participate in the run. In the days between the pep rally and the run, students will learn about young athletes from around the world, with a focus on a different character theme each day. Students will be encouraged to obtain pledges for the Fun Run, with a school goal of raising \$25,000 to be used for student enrichment.

#### **G. Co-Directors of Hospitality and Outreach (Budde & Gauntt)**

##### 1) Committee Chair Reports

- a) Back to School Luncheon (Thomas) - Each year, the PTO provides lunch for the staff prior to the start of the school year. However, due to construction and the lack of available space, this luncheon was cancelled. Instead, the PTO will provide dinner to the staff during the fall conferences, on either November 11th or 18th. Volunteers will be needed for setup and cleanup. The dinner will be catered.
- b) Back to School Parent Coffee (Budde) - The Back to School Parent Coffee was held on the morning of September 1st. The PTO provided Einstein bagels and coffee. The event was not very well attended this year, perhaps due to Meet & Greet occurring the previous day.

- c) Sunshine (Budde & Gauntt for Aparna Barde & Jamie Crayne) - Barde and Crayne are working on back-to-school goody bags for the staff. They will likely also provide staff with birthday gifts, as has been done in the past.

## **H. Director of Programming (Dorn)**

### 1) Committee Chair Reports

- a) Fine Arts/Cultural Programs (Dorn & Gonzalez) - Dorn and Gonzalez have compiled a list of ideas for programs this year. They will be meeting with Hartman and Balfany this week to discuss their ideas.
- b) Library Aides (Benslimane) - The library is currently staffed with volunteers, but substitutes are always needed. Library volunteers help with checking out and reshelving books. Library volunteers are also able to check out five books. Email the PTO or Andrea Benslimane, if interested.
- c) G & T (Beug) - The former Gifted and Talented Parent Advisory Board (GT PAB) is now called the Gifted and Talented Parent Advisory Organization (GT PAO). The GT PAO acts as a liaison between parents and the School Board. They also put on events and host in-school activities. The first meeting of the GT PAO will be on September 16th from 9-11 AM at the Central Administration Office. The meeting will consist of an overview of GT programming in Elmbrook. Hartman informed the PTO that Teaching and Learning Specialists monitor scores on MAP tests and other assessments such as CoGAT. Scores of 97% or above on these exams flag a student for further examination. The District's approach to identification has changed to be less of a gatekeeping method.
- d) Monday Morning Mindfulness (Beug) - Monday Morning Mindfulness is a club at Swanson that teaches students to self-calm and self-sooth. There will be three sessions this year (fall, winter and spring). The fall session will begin on October 5th. A registration email was sent by Balfany this week.

## **I. Director of Special Events (Benslimane)**

### 1) Committee Chair Reports

- a) Ice Cream Social (Benslimane & Connie Shaikh) - The ice cream social will take place on Wednesday, September 23 for grades KG-2nd, and Thursday, September 24th for grades 3rd-5th from 5-7 PM. We are still in need of volunteers. If you are able to help, please sign up using the link on the PTO webpage or Facebook.
- b) Skate Party (Fanning & Peterson) - The 3rd annual Skate Party will take place on the half-day, Thursday, October 22nd from 1-3 PM at Skateland in Waukesha. An online form will be sent to families within the next couple of weeks. The cost is \$5 per skater.

## **H. New Business/Open Forum**

- 1) Changes to PTO Communications for 2015-16 (Thomas) - To conform to the District's push for online communication, the PTO plans to communicate with families primarily using the PTO website, the PTO Facebook page and a bi-weekly email blast. The email blast will be sent to all parents, with an option to opt in or out, and will take the place of including PTO announcements in the weekly Parentlink email. The PTO has also been granted permission to use a portion of the bulletin board in the lobby to display PTO information. For Swanson events, such as the Swanson Auction, Blizzard Ball and Family Fun Night, Thomas hopes to process payments using MyPaymentsPlus, and will speak with Chris Thompson regarding an online form for event registration. MyPaymentsPlus is preferable to the PTO PayPal account because the District has agreed to pay the credit card fee, and families are familiar with this interface.
- 2) Room Parents and PTO (Budde) - The Board discussed assigning a parent volunteer as room parent to each class to help organize classroom volunteers and aid in communication. However, with the additional of the bi-weekly PTO email blast, we a room parent may not be needed for communication. The room parent idea will be tabled for now.
- 3) Parent Pick up Procedure - Fanning requested that Hartman email families regarding the proper procedure for parent pick-up and drop-off to aid in congestion and ensure student safety.

4) All 5th grade parents will soon be receiving information regarding the 5th grade recognition committee. This information will likely be distributed through emails from the 5th grade teachers. This committee will be co-chaired by Sarah Delgadillo and Mary Beth Bartels. The 5th grade recognition committee raises funds throughout the year, through various fundraisers, such as ice cream sales and Family Splash night, to fund the 5th grade recognition ceremony at the end of the year. Thomas will send an email to Delgadillo and Bartels to let them know that parents are interested in volunteering.

**I. Adjournment (Thomas)**

- 1) Fanning motioned to adjourn at 8:11 PM; Gauntt seconded. Meeting adjourned.
- 2) The next meeting of the Swanson PTO will take place on Tuesday, October 13th at 6:30 PM in the Swanson library.