Swanson Elementary PTO Meeting - October 13th, 2015

In attendance: Lynne Thomas (President), Lisa Meder (Treasurer), Shelly Budde (Co-Director of Hospitality and Outreach), Wendy Dorn (Director of Programming), Jen Beug, Sarah Rykwalder, Angela Sidebottom, Erika Slager, Heather Anderson, Laura Gundlach, Lisa Bigler, Kimberli Potteiger

A. Opening (Thomas)

Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

B. Review and Approval of September Minutes

After review, Anderson motioned to approve; Bigler seconded. Minutes approved.

C. President’s Report (Thomas)

1) PTO-Sponsored Event Calendar for 2015-16 – The calendar of all scheduled PTO-sponsored events for the 2015-16 school year was distributed to families last week on the back of the PTO Post. All event dates have been scheduled, with the exception of Family Splash and future Restaurant Nights. A PDF of this calendar can also be found on the Swanson PTO website.

2) PTO Email Blast update and request for feedback – The last paper PTO Post was distributed last week. Future Posts will be delivered every other Monday as a bi-weekly PTO email blast. Those families who submitted an email at registration for publication in the directory will receive the email blast. We will post a notice on the website with a link where families can sign up to receive these emails. Families can also unsubscribe to the email blasts.

D. Treasurer’s Report (Meder)

1) 2015-16 Budget Review – The Ice Cream Social was slightly over budget due to decreased attendance from last year. Left over ice cream will be used as incentives for the Swanson Fun Run. Family Fun Night has a positive balance of $51.00. Some of the families that purchased tickets to last year’s cancelled Family Fun Night donated the price of their tickets, resulting in the positive balance. The $120 expense for PTO Operations was for the PTO brochures handed out to families at the beginning of the year.

2) Current Status – Total cash as of October 7th was $19,229.31, with a checking register balance as of October 11th of $16,309.23. This difference is mostly due to $100 teacher gift checks that have not yet been cashed.

3) Target will suspend their Red Card program as of May 14, 2016. They will be sending two final payments, one in February and another in May or June. Target will also send an unrestricted grant in February 2016. This fundraiser typically brings in nearly $2000 per year.

E. Director of Fundraising (Thomas for Cindy Dries)

1) J.K. Lee “Be Your Best” program (Thomas) – The J.K. Lee “Be Your Best” program is an after school, martial arts program held at Swanson. The program will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:45-4:45 PM, and runs from November 2nd through November 11th. The cost is $29 for the first child, and $25 for each additional child. J.K. Less will generously donate 100% of proceeds to the Swanson PTO.

2) Directory (Thomas for Gauntt) – Information for the directory was provided by the District to the PTO last week. The wording for opt outs during the registration process were confusing, and it is
unclear if families were aware that opting out of sharing certain information would result in their omission from the directory. Directories will likely be printed by late October. According to a preliminary report from October 2nd, we sold $4,150 in directories, and raised $435 in donations. Last year’s net budget was $2,400 for directories.

3) Scrip (Bigler) – Only three Scrip orders have been placed so far, perhaps due to the transition to paperless ordering. Friday, October 16th is the last day to place a fall Scrip order. Orders will be delivered on October 26th.

4) Restaurant Nights (Sidebottom) – The first Restaurant Night of the year will be at Blaze Pizza on October 29th from 4-7 PM. The Swanson PTO will receive 20% of proceeds. Families can bring a printed flyer or show the flyer on their smartphone.

5) Fun Run (Rubenstein) – The Swanson Fun Run will kick off with a Pep Rally on Monday, October 26th. Students will go home with a pledge book and instructions on how to register at FunRun.com to begin entering pledges. The Fun Run will take place during the school day on Wednesday, November 4th. Our goal is to raise $30,000 in pledges ($40 per student) to support PTO-sponsored enrichment programs, family events and improved learning environments.

F. Director of Hospitality and Outreach (Budde)

1) Doughnuts with Dad (Budde) – Doughnuts with Dad will take place on December 3rd (Names A-M) and December 4th (Names N-Z) from 7:45-8:20 AM in the Swanson Cafeteria. A breakfast of Krispy Kreme doughnuts, oranges, juice, water and coffee will be served.

2) Fall Conference Staff Dinner (Thomas) – The PTO will sponsor a catered dinner for 60 staff members during fall conferences. This is in place of the Back-to-School luncheon that was cancelled due to the air conditioning installation. Maggiano’s and Mozzaluna were suggested as potential restaurants to use for catering.

3) Sunshine – Thomas will reach out to Aparna Barde for an update.

G. Director of Programming (Dorn)

1) Fifth Grade Recognition (Thomas for Mary Beth Bartels & Sarah Delgadillo) – The first meeting of the Fifth Grade Recognition Committee will be held on Wednesday, October 14th. The first Ice Cream Sale will be on Friday, October 16th.

2) Arts & Cultural Programs (Dorn) – In researching the cultural diversity at Swanson, Dorn and Jessica Gonzalez found that 14% of Swanson students receive ELL services. To highlight Swanson’s diversity, they would like to create Cultural Ambassador families. These families will share their culture with the Swanson community by helping to create a display case in the lobby with items from their culture and prepare a blurb for the morning announcement. They are hoping to send an invite email to several families soon. Dorn and Gonzalez are also considering holding periodic after-school culture shares that would be open to all Swanson families. Dorn and Gonzalez are also planning to hold two all-school assemblies this year. Ideas for these assemblies will be solidified in the next few weeks.

H. Director of Special Events (Thomas for Andrea Benslimane)

1) Ice Cream Social – review (Thomas for Andrea Benslimane & Connie Shaikh) – We saw decreased attendance at this year’s Ice Cream Social compared to last year, perhaps due to communication issues. The PTO will look into ways to increase attendance in the future. Some
suggestions include holding the Social on only one night, or scheduling before the start of the school year.

2) Skate Party (Thomas for Lisa Fanning & Jen Peterson) – The all-school Skate Party will take place on Thursday, October 22nd, the half-day of school. The cost is $5 per skater, cash only. The cost goes into renting out the facility. In the past, all funds raised have been rolled over to fund the following year’s Skate Party.

I. New Business/Open Forum

1) Project Strive fundraiser and request for donation (Thomas) – Project Strive is an adult transition service for 19-21 year-old young adults in the Elmbrook School District with cognitive disabilities and/or autism. The program focuses on teaching life and vocational skills to improve employment and independent living outcomes for students with challenging needs. Project Strive will be hosting the “Taste of Elegance” fundraising event on November 1st, and has asked all District PTOs to donate $35-50 for gift cards to be used at the fundraiser. Those present agreed that we should make a donation to Project Strive.

2) Liaison Reports (Beug) – The next meeting of the Gifted & Talented Parent Advisory Organization is on October 21st at 9 AM in Room 100 of the Central Administrative Office. There will also be an evening meeting on October 21st at 7 PM (same location) to accommodate working parents. The topic for this meeting will be Personalized Learning throughout all grade levels.

3) Beug also spoke of the club/activity box, which contains information on various student clubs and activities. Several of these are not currently being offered at Swanson, including Geography Bee, Destination Imagination, Word Masters, Club Invention and more! Any parent interested in starting a new club should check out this great resource. The PTO has set aside funding for new clubs, and there is currently $1,500 available.

4) Potteiger suggested hosting a Swanson Movie Night in January, and will look into rentals at the Marcus Majestic Theater.

5) Thomas gave an update on the last meeting of the Enrollment Analysis Committee. No decisions have been made so far, but the District seems interested in taking an extensive look at the Elmbrook School District as a whole, so as to avoid a temporary fix. There was discussion of waiting an additional year to gather more information prior to redistricting decisions.

J. Adjournment (Thomas)

1) Bigler motioned to adjourn at 8:10 PM; Beug seconded. Meeting adjourned.

2) The next meeting of the Swanson PTO will take place on Tuesday, January 19th at 6:30 PM in the Swanson library.