

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

December 8, 2020 | 8:00pm | Meeting called to order by Christina Grillo

In Attendance

Board Members in Attendance: Christina Grillo (President); Alison Madrigal (PTA Co-Vice President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP Website, 1st & 2nd Grade); Christina Papadopolous (VP 1st Grade); Elissa Smith (VP 3rd Grade); Lauren McBride (VP Fundraising, VP 2nd Grade & 4th Grade); Juliana Aloia (VP 4th Grade); Neelima Reddy (Spiritwear Coordinator); Mitch Sylves-Berry (Rivertown Parents); Beth Provencher (Spiritwear); Leanne Bloom (Heads Up); Mechtild Steinert (VP 8th Grade); Daphne Uviller (VP 7th Grade); Katy Lough (VP K)

Fay Serafica (Guest, member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee)

General Hello's and Introductions

Christina welcomed board members as they joined, and formally kicked off at 8:03 noting this will be our last meeting of 2020! She noted today's agenda covers a few quick event recaps to start, followed by a couple of current topics, then the standing school and committee updates.

Gingerbread Scavenger Hunt

The scavenger hunt is underway through December 13th. Christina has received roughly 12 checklists thus far, along with positive feedback, and lots of families spotted walking through neighborhoods. If we do this type of event again, Christina would suggest stronger lamination, as the gingerbread people have been ruined with rain, leaf blowers, etc. Christina asked for pictures from others to showcase the event.

Food Truck Event

Christina received the last food truck cheque last weekend. We raised \$843 from the food trucks, plus a \$60 donation from one kind and generous donor at the event. We had ~203 sign-up's and probably 150 attendees. The cold weather likely deterred many people, but overall the feedback was positive on the event, and we were able to raise money in one night fairly easily. Alison noted she had heard from a teacher that they loved the event and want us to do another one soon! The truck vendors also were happy with the turnout. The signup had 40 slots per hour; Christina thought we could handle up to 50 per hour at a future event - particularly if the weather is nicer -- and people can eat together! Another suggestion is to have menus handy, or even QC scanning codes for people to pull up menus on their phones when they arrive.

Teacher Mood Boost Feedback

Christina asked the school VP's how the staff liked the pretzel mood boosters. Daphne noted the Middle School staff loved them, that teachers were very excited to find them in their mailboxes. Mrs. O'Grady went

around WI, taking pictures of staff receiving them, which were sent to Lauren. Lauren noted that it would be nice to do a similar mood booster for teachers and staff, perhaps after the winter break.

Spirit Wear Recap

Beth shared that there were 85 orders and 208 items sold, which is comparable and slightly less vs last year. There were 31 mask orders, with the bulk being clothing items. Printing should be completed this week, with shipping by next week. The plan is to offer two different pick-up times; one at a school and one at a home.

Rivertown Parents - Resilience & Brain Science Online Presentation

Leanne noted that the dates for the online Zoom event will be January 12th and January 19th. The main topics will be Brain Science on the 12th, followed by a focus on Resilience during the 19th session. The presentation will be applicable to children of any age and grade. Leanne and Mitch are working now on developing the flyers with the details, including translation. The first registration will go out before the holidays, with reminders to follow in January. We will owe \$500 to the speaker for the event, due the night of the presentation. Leanne also noted that Rivertown Parents is facilitating PTA Diversity groups to meet with each other and learn what others are doing in their respective districts. Brianna shared the email address for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion committee and asked for the help of Leanne and Mitch in making the connection with the Rivertown Parents group.

Mitch also noted via Chat, due to computer audio issues, that other districts in Rivertown Parents will be hosting Katie Greer this year - the speaker that we had wanted to host last year to speak on cyber security. Our district will be able to join the presentation, which is planned for January or February.

Holiday Helpers / Potential January Clothing Drive

Every slot has now been filled from this year's Holiday Helpers donation list. Elissa noted that there is a shift in drop-off location to Elissa or Juliana's house vs the school. Elissa also spoke to Mrs. Camaj about hosting a clothing drive across schools, given a significant need for clothing observed in multiple schools. One idea could be a pop-up shop that would let people come into the location and explore in a dignified way.

Donation Storefront and Community Needs Coordinator

Brianna noted that there are other PTA's that have a clothes closet - an issue for TUFSD schools given they are quite space-constrained. Daphne thought given the number of open storefronts in town, perhaps someone would be willing to donate space to house the clothing closet. She also thought it would be helpful to have a PTA position specifically to act as the Community Liaison, that could be the Social Workers key point of contact across each of the schools. Christina asked if Elissa could take on this role for the remainder of this year, which Elissa accepted. Elissa is aiming to have a meeting with all of the social workers mid-January to see if we can organize a cross-school clothing drive.

School Updates

JP: The VP's haven't been able to meet with Mrs. Barnett or get an email update. Katy noted they were hoping to get an update on how teacher morale was, following the discussion during our last PTA meeting.

Morse: Mr. Walley shared input on how the Covid testing went from last week, looking for best practices if it needs to be conducted again this year. The VP's asked Mr. Walley to remind teachers of upcoming mini-grants. Elementary schools will start giving all students a bag of food with a given number of breakfasts and lunches. Students can decline the food, but it will be offered to all. Classrooms continue to keep windows open, to improve ventilation, so students are asked to wear sweaters and warm clothes. Brianna noted that 20 students moved from hybrid to remote, and 6 moved from remote to hybrid for the second term.

WI: The next meeting is tomorrow, so no update for tonight's meeting.

MS: Mechtid and Daphne noted the meeting was a few weeks ago. There was a lot of discussion regarding the impacts of becoming a yellow zone, and trying to help with a last-minute communication that Regeneron won't be doing a Thanksgiving turkey donation this year. Daphne asked more broadly if there was any holiday-themed donation this year led by the PTA. Christina thought with the Gingerbread Scavenger Hunt, Holiday Helpers, and other activities and events being sponsored in the town from various associations, that people that want to help the community have several outlets to do so.

Committee Updates

Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Committee: Brianna shared that the efforts under the \$1,500 National PTA grant that was discussed in our last meeting is progressing. The team completed a diversity profile of our community. The committee met yesterday to begin planning for the 15 interviews that are to be conducted in the neighborhood. The committee is looking to identify the 15 interviewees that represent our Hispanic Community. Fay noted that the committee is small and still getting off the ground and would welcome new input if anyone else is interested. Mitch suggested that dual language parents be contacted as they are usually quite involved and willing to help. Christina P will help with this outreach.

Heads Up: Leanne spoke to concerns about the impact of the excess of screen time children have had during the pandemic. She noted that research is just starting to come out, with much more expected over time, a notable finding for this group that is focused on smart use of technology. The "gratitude" event that was contemplated at Morse during our last meeting was pushed out to January to not conflict with the PTA's Gingerbread Scavenger Hunt and Foodtruck events. Instead of Gratitude, the plan is to drive and inspire kids to get outside for exercise, which can be limited for a lot of children when the weather cools.

Meeting Adjourned

Christina closed the meeting at 9:18. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 13th at 8:00pm.