

MINUTES

Horsemen PTA Minutes

January 13, 2021 | 8:00pm | *Meeting called to order by* Christina Grillo

In Attendance

Board Members in Attendance: Christina Grillo (President); Andrea Williamson (Secretary); Brianna Staudt (VP Website, 1st & 2nd Grade); Christina Papadopolous (VP 1st Grade); Dana Tavano (VP Kindergarten); 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); Maribel Correa (Treasurer); Sophia Rana (VP 5th Grade); Krista Barron (VP pre-K and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion); Carla Garrido (VP 5th Grade); Jessica Lake (VP Membership)

General Hello's and Introductions

Christina welcomed board members as they joined, and formally kicked off at 8:03.

Rivertown Parents Resiliency & Brain Science Online Presentation

Mitch and Leanne provided an update following the first presentation last night. 180 parents had registered, of which 79 attended. This first presentation was focused on Brain Science, where the speaker focused on more of the “fundamentals”. Next weeks’ session will build on these fundamentals, and focus on how to build resilience. Mitch noted she was excited to get a translator last-minute, and is hopeful that going forward for future events that this may draw broader attendance across our community. The speakers were very happy to be able to offer translation services too. The event was recorded, which can be shared thereafter. The Rivertown Parents board was also happy with the turnout for the event. Christina congratulated Mitch and Leanne for a successful and well-attended event!

Mitch lastly shared a couple of future Rivertown Parent events hosted by the other participating PTA’s. In March, Michael Turner (NY State Higher Education Services Corp) will do a presentation on funding college. Dates and details to follow. Ardsley is also sponsoring the cyber-security speaker (Katy Greer) that Mitch had wanted to use last year for the Tarrytown-hosted event; as with all Rivertown Parent events, these sessions will be open to Tarrytown district parents.

Clothing Drive

Elissa was not able to attend the meeting, so Christina provided a brief update. Elissa has established a committee to develop the on-going clothes closet for families in need. There is a meeting with Mrs. Camaj scheduled for January 27th to discuss options, needs, and start planning. If anyone would like to join the committee, please contact Elissa.

Square One Art

Lauren shared an update on this fundraiser. This is a program for all K-5 students, and turns student art into keepsakes. The Art teacher is completing an art project with the kids as with years past, but can't collect the papers due to Covid related restrictions. This year, parents will need to take care of all of the ordering and uploading, requiring greater parent involvement. The open period for the PTA to earn a 33% profit is through February 15th. Thereafter, parents can still submit the art to Square One, but the PTA would just earn 5%.

Mini Grants

Christina has extended the deadline for Mini Grants to this Friday January 15th, due to low submissions by the original due date. As of today, there are 13 grants; 2 from JP, 2 from Morse, 8 from WI and 1 from the Middle School. Brianna noted that there should be another 2 coming from Morse. The administration has noted to Christina that teachers are feeling quite worn out and thus not able to focus on mini grants as much as in years past.

Maribel noted there are outstanding cheque payments cut to the schools for discretionary principal spending that the PTA sponsors that were issued in November, but have not yet been cashed. Christina asked Maribel to contact Joy at the District Business Office to confirm if the cheques were received, and determine next steps to ensure the schools receive these funds.

Future Community Building Events

Christina highlighted some of the new events the PTA has launched this year, including the Gingerbread Hunt and the Food Truck event, and asked for any new and fresh ideas for the remainder of the year.

Lauren suggested a March/April event focused on recycling, where students can make something out of recycling materials.

Leanne noted that Heads Up would like to still run the outdoor exercise contest that was mentioned in our December meeting, to help drive exercise and outdoor time for kids during the winter months. Christina asked if Leanne had a committee to help run this event.

Brianna mentioned that there is a NY State Advocacy meeting that is being held virtually this year (usually they are in Albany). Brianna thought it would be good if someone from our board could join.

School Updates

JP: Mrs. Barnett was in quarantine when school reopened on January 4th; since then the school has been closed from last Thursday into early this week due to a high number of Covid cases in the school, so no update from the Principal.

Morse: The VP's just met with Mr. Walley. They touched on Square One Art and the clothing drive that the PTA is launching. He loved the clothing closet idea but said he didn't have any space in the building he could think of. They discussed Valentines Day, and that celebrations will go forward but in a modified way; any valentine's that come in must be left untouched for 3 days, and no baked goods will be allowed to be distributed. They discussed Specials, specifically which teachers are crossing between JP and Morse and how that was being managed. The Trip Around the Community will still take place this year, but in a different format. Instead of providing backpacks for each of the students, the PTA has decided to allocate the funds for a different purpose. The PTA will donate an amount on behalf of each class to a local organization that helps the community (e.g. the food pantry, Phelps Hospital, Open Door, etc). This creates an opportunity for the

students to be part of a solution towards a community problem. Mr. Walley noted that the school would be watching the Inauguration as they have done in prior years; Brianna suggested they watch it on delay given the recent events at the Capital, which Mr. Walley thought was a good idea.

WI: There hasn't been a meeting yet this year. Lauren shared that WI still has more hybrid students vs remote, but they did get more kids switching to remote vs other schools in the district. The windows are still being kept open during the day to increase ventilation. The school would love to have some parent volunteers to help run lunch groups (e.g. book clubs) during the winter months, per grade and cohort. Sophia is looking into exactly what would be needed, and will reach out. There are many parents who have run book clubs in the past that would likely be happy to participate again this year.

MS: There was no December meeting, due to the snow day. That meeting has been postponed to later in January. Christina P noted that the MS just got its 3rd quarter notice for kids to switch between hybrid and remote, so provided a heads-up for Elementary school parents to keep an eye out for this in 3-4 weeks, and start thinking about their plans for their students.

Committee Updates

Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Committee: Krista noted that the committee is growing; their third meeting last week had 4 new members. They met with a member of the NYU Metro Tech center, which has also partnered with the District to provide advice on the BOE's Equity efforts. She shared details of what the BOE's Equity Committee has been focused on, and also helped the DEI Committee clarify its mission. We also had someone doing translation during the meeting organically as the meeting progressed. Going forward, this will continue in a smoother fashion. If this works well, it's something we could look to extend to other PTA meetings.

Mitch asked Krista if they had connected with the Rivertown Parents Inclusion Committees, which has happened. Krista thought it was interesting to see where different towns were doing. The plan moving forward is to regroup quarterly to continue to share updates, best practices, and learnings. Krista thanked Mitch for the introduction.

Brianna gave an update on the grant work related to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The 15 listening sessions with the Hispanic Community are currently being planned, and should take place in the coming weeks.

Heads Up: Leanne had been in contact with Lighthouse Ice Cream about doing an event as discussed during our last meeting, but unfortunately Lighthouse has closed.

Meeting Adjourned

Christina closed the meeting at 8:51 wishing everyone a Happy New Year. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 24th at 8:00pm.