

## Devon Elementary School PTO Meeting Minutes

**January 20, 2010**

**In attendance:** Kelly Lee, Dr. Tobin, Cathy Rains, Tricia Jennings, Audrey Kese, Coleen Hillman, Lori Piccone, Elaine Whiteman Klinger, Mary Kay “Sam” Elsen, Sheila Czepiel, Valinda Latoff, Evelyn Shreve, Cindi Overton

### **Welcome: Kelly Lee**

The November PTO minutes were approved via email.

### **Faculty Update: Kelly Lee for Nicole Lohmeyer**

- The PTO Board approved the motion to administer the Devon Dragons Fun Camp again this summer. The PTO will handle the registration forms and fee collection for Nicole.

### **Principal’s Update: Dr. Tom Tobin**

#### ***Staffing updates:***

- This is Mrs. Barnathan’s final week. Miss Hernandez will be filling her position. Miss Hernandez was a part-time FLES teacher at VFMS.
- Shawn Hale (head custodian) will be leaving in February; he accepted a job in the Lower Merion School District.
- Ms. Sherri Criss is a long-term substitute for Gina Fredericks who is on maternity leave.

***Staff hiring process:*** Rest assured that the process to hire teachers and other staff is very thorough. Once the candidate meets the criteria (certifications, etc.), they go through a screening process that consists of: 1)an interview at the District office, 2)a personality questionnaire that indicates their ability to teach, work with others, etc., 3)completing an on-the-spot essay, 4)a group interview with several district principals, 5)giving a demonstration lesson as a guest teacher in a classroom or for administrators if hired during the summer, and 6)reference checks.

- An announcement regarding a teacher’s leave and the substitute who will take the position is usually made a few weeks prior to his/her leave. The new teacher may come in to co-teach as a transition.
- Teachers and other staff are permitted to return after their leave.
- The teachers and administration do a lot to make the transition smooth for the students; often the substitute will continue the same classroom routines, etc.
- Mrs. Scargill will be on maternity leave during regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences so she is conducting them before her leave begins.
- When a new teacher comes during the year, a morning coffee may be held so that parents and the new teacher can meet.
- Several teachers in the school are long-term substitutes on one-year contracts.

- The Principal is the chief “rater” of teachers, so if the teacher is not a good fit, he will take appropriate action. This doesn’t happen often because of the thorough screening process.

***Miscellaneous:***

- Dr. Tobin laid out 10 different proposed designs (by Cindi Overton) for the flags that will hang on the poles outside the school. The PTO Board members and meeting attendees had a chance to vote for their favorites.

**President’s Report: Kelly Lee**

***PTO President’s Meeting:***

- The District budget has a \$9.25 million deficit. There will be an article in the Devon Dispatch and on the website encouraging parents to get involved and learn more by going to school board meetings, etc. There are several tax increase options on the table. Unfortunately, the deficit means that there will be cuts across the District.
- The District has requested that all PTO communications be online by next year. In the spring we will get emails together and discuss the frequency of the Devon Dispatch as well as the possibility of email news blasts.
- There has been discussion about implementing foreign language clubs in the schools. The PTO Presidents all agreed that the PTO should not sponsor these clubs; however, if they do get implemented, the PTO will help with the administration (registration, fee collection, etc.)

***Other PTO News:***

- Katrina Wester did a great job on the Devon PTO website.
- The Playground Committee (Dr. Tobin, Sean Axel, Nicole Lohmeyer, Jane Fisher, Mark Inserra, Kathleen Bouhdary, and Kelly Lee) did a student survey and recommended playground improvements to the PTO. The PTO already set aside \$5,000 for the Playground Fund at the beginning of the year. The motion was approved to spend \$1,500 for the following playground items: 1) six safety pads on the basketball poles, 2) two new trashcans with snap-back lids to keep the bees out and the trash in, 3) new basketball nets, and 4) the maintenance department will paint the basketball backboards.
- A motion was approved to run the Innisbrook fundraiser again next year. Cathy Rains will talk to Claire Kennedy about the financial details of the internet sales.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum includes a unit on Native Americans. Devon parent Sam Elsen has a connection with the Allegheny River Rain Dancers. The Elsen family together with Microsoft has generously offered to fund the performance for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The PTO will be responsible for the dance troupe’s travel, entertainment, and food. We will talk about this more at the next PTO meeting.
- The March PTO meeting will be held on March 24 (instead of the 17<sup>th</sup>) at 9:30.

**Treasurer’s Report: Cathy Rains**

- Acme Receipts—deposited \$334.48 on 12/26/09. More will be coming; there was a mix-up on Acme’s end with some of the totals.
- Box Tops—earned \$980.48 during the contest period; we budgeted to earn only \$650!
- Book Fair—earned \$2,780; we budgeted to earn only \$1,850!
- Spiritwear—very close to hitting the budget of \$400.
- Fall Festival—earned \$560; we budget an *expense* of \$450.
- Cathy filed the 990 last month.
- Cathy will send a reminder to each grade chairperson to get their wish lists. The PTO gives each grade \$400 annually.
- We are waiting on the receipts for the indoor recess games in the cafeteria.
- Cathy will complete the 1099 by the end of the month.
- We need to add a line to the budget for the new PTO website.
- Devon parent (and tax attorney) Valinda Latoff generously offered to conduct the PTO audit this year.

#### **Vice President’s Report: Audrey Kese**

- Audrey and Kelly will be chairing the Spring Fair.
- The “Got-a-Minute” forms will be sent home again soon to get volunteers for spring events.

#### **Cultural Arts: Lorann Wood**

- *Arts Express Week*—the Walnut Street Theater program is getting mapped out thanks to Sheila Czepiel and Kristin Schappell. Next year’s theme will be “Circus.”
- The Writer’s Workshop went well; the kids loved it.
- Upcoming assemblies include: 2<sup>nd</sup> grade—Chinese paper cutter; 4<sup>th</sup> grade—a Day in the Life of a Soldier; all grades—Shadow Ball History of Black Baseball.
- Lorann and Linda Murray are working with Dr. Tobin to discuss programs for next year.
- Devon Elementary was selected to showcase potential performing artists in March for upcoming assemblies, etc. This is thanks to the Young Audiences of Eastern PA (see [www.devonpto.org](http://www.devonpto.org) under “News” for more information.) The free showcase will take place in the Large Group Room and will be open to students, faculty, and parents.
- We are expecting a \$500 District grant for cultural arts programs. Lorann and Linda will submit a letter.

#### **Issues, Affairs, and Programs: Stephanie Thibault**

- *MLK Day Service Project*—Tricia Jennings reported that the “Cradles to Crayons” project was a huge success. Devon families were extremely generous. The kids enjoyed making the wrapping paper and birthday cards too.
- “Go for the Green” Month is coming up. Ruthy Christner, who is studying for her Registered Dietician degree, will be conducting an assembly and an “I tried it, I liked it” booth in the cafeteria during the month. Each week will feature a

different color--red (apples, red peppers), green (green beans, broccoli), etc. She is working with Dave Preston to feature these healthy choices on the school lunch menu during the appropriate week.

- Dr. Tobin reported that there is a Haiti earthquake relief box at the receptionist's desk in the lobby. The kids have really chipped in.
- Audrey mentioned that her friend is collecting shoes for Haiti via the "Soles for Souls" program. She will be glad to take any donated shoes.

### **Fundraising: Elaine Whiteman Klinger**

#### ***Camp Fair—Wed. January 27:***

- We need to advertise and get as many people to attend the fair as possible. The vendors count on high traffic to make it worth their while.
- This year's fair will feature preschool camps for the first time.
- This is a phenomenal fundraiser—we could stand to raise \$18,000.
- Diane Pancoast is gathering supplies for refreshments for the vendors.

#### ***Friendraiser:***

- Cindi Overton reported that they are in the process of soliciting businesses and individuals for silent auction items. It's been tough so far because many other schools and organizations are soliciting the same businesses.
- We need to focus on Devon families who can offer services, event tickets, vacation homes, etc. For example, Cathy Rains's brother is a Congressman who is generously donating a Capitol tour.

### **Social Functions: Coleen Hillman**

#### ***Pizza Bingo:***

- Valinda Latoff will be chairing the event this year with help from Kathleen Weiss.
- They need prizes—there is a bin in the lobby for Devon families to donate small, gently used toys.
- Valinda will order 70 pizzas, charging \$1.50/slice.
- Valinda will contact Sue Drennan to see if the PTO will hold a bake sale at Pizza Bingo.
- Valinda will take care of the Friday folder fliers. A homeroom parent email would be helpful too.

#### ***4<sup>th</sup> Grade Party:***

Karen Friedman is working with Devon Elementary's insurance company to talk about locations, such as Arnold's Go-Karts. Other ideas are Jungle Wonder and having Waynesborough Country Club set up a miniature golf course in the school itself.

### **Recognition of Mrs. Barnathan and Shawn Hale**

Dr. Tobin, the PTO Board, and meeting attendees paid tribute to FLES teacher Shelly Barnathan and Head Custodian Shawn Hale for their dedicated service. Flowers and gift certificates were presented and received with mixed emotions. They will both be missed dearly, but we wish them well in their future endeavors.

## **Upcoming PTO Events**

### ***January***

27<sup>th</sup>--Camp Fair

28<sup>th</sup>--2<sup>nd</sup> grade CA presentation—Master Paper Cutter

29<sup>th</sup>--4<sup>th</sup> grade Day in the Life of a Soldier

### ***February***

3<sup>rd</sup>--Snow date for Camp Fair

4<sup>th</sup>--Rochelle Coleman—Shadow Ball, History of Black Baseball

5<sup>th</sup>--Pizza Bingo

12<sup>th</sup>--Valentine's Parties

17<sup>th</sup>--PTO Meeting