



## Capitol Hill Cluster School

*Where Every Child Achieves*

### **Monthly PTA meeting August 30, 2011 6:30pm-8:00p**

**Over 60 people attended this meeting. We had 4 wonderful people watching 20 plus kids in the other library room across the hall - 1.00 a slice cheese pizza was served.**

### **Work Groups meeting deferred for a larger room and next meeting**

Working groups will be Communications, Fundraising and Parent Outreach

### **Welcome**

Caryn Ernst, PTA President gave an overview of meeting plan. She shared that this year PTA is hoping for 100% parent participation either by way of donation, in kind (raising money from others) or volunteer time.

**All families with access to email are encouraged to sign up for the PTA list serv.** Send an email to [CHCSPTA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:CHCSPTA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) to join. This listserv has PTA message posting only. It is not interactive. It has been a primary point of contact for many school communications in past.

### **Update from Fundraising Chair - Becky Richards Gorham**

- We are looking to get 100% participation in PTA both through contributions and volunteer time. We need to raise 25K from parents - that is \$50/family and those who can give more should consider and those who can't a basic donation of \$10 to show you are invested in your child's school.
- Mabel's Labels continues through December 16 as a CHCS fundraiser
- CHCS Merchandise is on sale and will be available at Back to School Nights and soon online
- Nat's Game is September 25 against the Braves. Cost is \$15 and Ms. Clemens is joining us. Tickets are available online and Danielle Keemer is the contact.
- September 26 will be the beginning of our big fundraising sale – Greenraising. Purchases will end mid October and delivered in November
- At the same time we will be selling fall bulbs - both of these directly benefit the school. Mandy Bassow is contact
- The Renovators House Tour is October 15<sup>th</sup>. This is the Clusters largest fundraiser and supports our grant program. Families are encouraged to participate in the tour and to volunteer as docents. Thonya Nelson is the contact.
- November 17 is the wine raffle/parent night
- Winter/Spring activities will include a winter event (to replace Casino night), seed sales, Nats Game, and the Capitol Hill Classic 10K.

### **Suggestions and Answers to questions from parents and teachers regarding fundraising and volunteer activities-**

- The website needs to be updated with volunteer opportunities, PTA calendar and other important information. As the website regularly needs to be updated, all families are encouraged to sign up on the PTA listserv to ensure that they're getting the most up to date information and notices.
- Families were strongly encouraged by Dr. Clemmons to participate in many of the "low-effort" fundraisers that offer benefits to the school, as well as participants, like the restaurant night out, the grocery programs and the Nats Game out.
- The recommendation was made for the Reading and Math Buddy program to be structured so that SH kids can earn public service credit by tutoring and reading with Watkins students.
- The recommendation was made to find more ways to build mentor relationships for the kids, particularly with men. The Reading and Math Buddy Program at Watkins is seen as one way to potentially do this.
- Parents were reminded that in order to volunteer in the classrooms and work with kids at the school, they need to complete a volunteer approval process, which includes fingerprinting, TB test

and background check. The volunteer clearance process can be completed through DCPS at <http://www.dc.gov/DCPS/Parents+and+Community/Volunteer+in+Our+Schools>

### **Parent and Family Nights**

The PTA has decided to host a series of 4 Parent/Family Nights during the school year as a way to engage parents around topics that are of interest to them. Pam Costner and Caryn Ernst will be working with the Cluster Administration and a group of volunteers to plan these events. Some of the topics or themes currently being considered include a forum to address new testing and standards around the Common Core system DCPS has undertaken this year. How it will guide our children's curricula and activities in the classroom will be addressed. This may take place at September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. *Committee volunteers needed.*

Diversity Night – The Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum is hosting Families are talking about Race at the Smithsonian: Who Am I? (audience 5-12) and I've Got To Be Me (audience 3 to 12) on Saturday October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (incorrectly stated to be at Anacostia Museum). <http://www.mnh.si.edu/race/calendar.cfm#/?i=20>

Our current plan is to encourage students and their parents to attend and then share those experiences at the November PTA meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. This will hopefully be a precursor to a forum or panel discussion yet to be developed. Hopefuls for the panel are being invited as this develops.

Lead Pam Costner

### **Suggestions for other topics or themes:**

- For middle school scholars, particularly 8<sup>th</sup> graders, it would be helpful to have a forum focused on preparing for HS, which might include HS applications and discussions about what to expect, etc.
- Discipline policies philosophy at the Cluster and how it differs between campuses
- Panel discussion with new administrators
- Opportunities for including and enhancing foreign language in our schools

### **Suggestions for family engagement events**

- Guest speakers, like an astronaut
- Math and science literacy night with games for the kids and sale of games as a fundraiser
- Reading and Book exchange and potluck dinner – possibly to kick off reading program?
- Family reading night with a story teller
- Parent or family nights with cooking demonstrations
- Packing a school lunch box night
- Orchestra night – petting zoo
- SH band night to introduce instruments to Watkins kids
- Summer camps expo in January
- And other local group nights mini expo, local university programs > suggested this could possibly be in collaboration with CHPSPO Capitol Hill Public School Parents Organization.
- Diversity forum and family night
- Spring Recognition event of student projects/ awards/showcase. This was done last year for PTA grant supported projects. Parent suggested broader inclusion of student accomplishments.

### **Suggestions for topics for future PTA meetings – smaller scale than those above**

- Regular Updates on modernization and DCPS issues/
- Discuss how to re-invigorate Arts Integration particularly due to fact CHCS are a museum magnet school. A focus group was formed by Ms. Clemmons to discuss Arts Integration for CHCS

### **Announcements from Principal Clemmons**

- Public Oversight Roundtable by Committee of the Whole on Middle Grades Education, Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> 10 am, Wilson Bldg, Council Chamber, 1350 Penn Ave, NW

- Arrival and dismissal at Watkins current plan per Principal Clemmons will be update in Thursday flyers. Please check your child's backpack on Thursday evening. There are 500 kids moving in and out over a few minutes every morning and afternoon. The administration is working to find the best way to do this.
- Building open at 8:15 am – have kids bring a book for independent reading during the arrival to school and moving to classrooms

### **Communications Update**

Communication Co-Chair Christy Davis gave an update on communication strategies and challenges and encouraged people interested in helping to address these issues, to attend the communication meeting on Wed, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 at Peabody. She also reminded people to get signed up on the listserv and that the CHCS PTA communicates through Face book, twitter and the listservs for PTA and for each campus

### **Suggestions for improving communication at the Cluster**

- Add the face book address and twitter handle to letterhead
- Advertise more thoroughly through posters, flyers to parents
- Need a directory of all the different communication
- Email Christy with any more suggestions
- Christy invited everyone to come to the communications team meeting the next night at Peabody.
- She also reported a Student directory will be piloted at Peabody. Cheers were heard for this report.
- One parent suggested a paper directory perhaps sold at cost.

### **LSAT Update**

LSAT Liaison for PTA, Shahna Goonertne, gave an update on upcoming elections for LSAT. The Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at Stuart Hobson. The LSAT addresses many policies on budget and educational plans for the Capitol Hill Cluster schools. Most meetings are open to the public. Occasionally when sensitive personnel issues are discussed there will be a closed meeting. This is addressed in meeting reminders.

- Election for LSAT parent reps will be held at the next PTA meeting September 27<sup>th</sup>
- Parents were strongly encouraged to consider nominating themselves for LSAT. Instructions on how to participate on LSAT as a parent rep and as an attendee will be out on all communication tools soon. Keep your eyes out for this information. Nomination Deadline Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- LSAT meeting September 29<sup>th</sup> 6:00 pm at Stuart Hobson
- The approximate time commitment for being an LSAT rep is a few hours a month to read documents, as well as attending meetings monthly.

**Each campus has PTA mailbox. If you would like to communicate the old fashioned way with the PTA or LSAT please put a note in the PTA mailbox in the main office of your school.**

**Karla Witt just hired at CHCS *parent/teacher engagement!!! This role continues to grow.***

### **PTA Administrative items and Budget**

Parent Power Organizing Meeting (DCPTA) at Shaw Library 1630 7<sup>th</sup> St., NW, 5:30 to 7:30 Aug 31<sup>st</sup>

Barracks Row Fall Festival Table September 24<sup>th</sup>- Cluster School will have a table at the Festival, where we will do a kids activity and sell Renovators House tour tickets, bulbs, etc.

Need to fill teacher slots on PTA-

The following teachers announced their willingness to serve

Tina De Anna Watkins representative

Jere Lorenzen-Strait SWS representative

Ms. Dorsey Peabody representative  
Stuart Hobson representative as yet to be confirmed

Vote on creating Fundraising Co-Chair position to assist the Fundraising Chair  
10 votes in favor

Vote to approve Beautification Day expenses.  
10 votes in favor  
\$800 out of discretionary  
\$300 out of Watkins restricted  
\$400 from garden funds at Peabody and Watkins

Request for walkie-talkies for after-school programs  
After school programs have requested walkie-talkie  
Moni suggested each campus administration restricted account funds would be a more appropriate source of these funds. For future -parent comment an estimate of cost 30.00 dollars a pair (4 pair requested)  
In favor - 10 for use of campus restricted funds for this purchase.

Vote to approve purchasing SWAG merchandise  
Vote to pay 5000.00 for SWAG out of discretionary. If sell all will make 7800.00

Executive Board attendees-

Caryn Ernst  
Karen Wallace  
Shahna Gooneratne  
Christy Davis  
Laura Marks

LaVerne Tate  
Mark Soderman  
Kate Keith  
Pam Costner  
Frankie Thompson  
Jere Lorenzen-Strait

Mandy Bassow  
Karla Reid-Witt  
Bernetta Reese