



## March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:33 pm

**Board Members Present for General Body Meeting:** Andrea Keenan – President, Christina Pharo- President, Jennifer Hodgson-Vice President, Amy Happ-Vice President, Disha Mahadevia – Treasurer, Ranjini Reddy – Secretary (AM), Cathy Gallinger – Secretary (PM), Padmini Narayan-Volunteer Coordinator, Loretta Crumlish – Teacher Representative, Mary Tsacoyeanes – Teacher Representative, Abigail Dressler – Assistant Principal.

**Chairpersons Present / Parents Present for General Body Meeting:** Beth Ali, Rashmi Muralidhar, Ezili Mayo-Joseph, Smitha Bharadwaj.

### Welcome

Andrea Keenan welcomed the group.

### Approval of January 2015 Minutes

The minutes of the January meeting were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – Amy Happ

Second motion to approve minutes – Beth Ali

### Treasurer's Report

Disha Mahadevia gave the treasurer's update. The annual appeal has raised about \$12,750 to date and represents 24% of the families. She also reported that matching donations are coming in. Andrea mentioned that some people do forget and as a reminder there will be a table at the ice cream social that highlights PTO functions and the direct appeal. Christina mentioned that another email will go out stating that now is a great time to donate as only 24% of families have given. Last year's direct appeal had a 32% participation and raised about \$16,000.

### Fundraising

#### Direct Appeal:

As reported above, annual appeal has raised \$12,750 and 24% families have given. There will be a PTO table at the ice cream social with pictures of classroom assistants and pictures of other areas that the PTO spends money on.

#### Craft Fair

Beth Ali spoke about a draft letter that will go to families asking for help next school year. We hope to form a team of people including day of coordinator, advertising, parking, and programs. Beth would still be involved and the team would learn while working this fall. The letter will be sent via paper and through teachers.

#### Festival of Cultures:

Ranjini reported the FOC is April 11, from 5:00-6:45pm. People will 'travel' to countries and the cultural performances will be from 6:45 to 8:00pm. There are 8 or 9 countries so far. Entrance charge will be \$3 a person or \$10 per family. Entrance to the auditorium will be first come, first serve with a maximum of 500 people. Rashmi reported that Douglas applied for and received a grant for \$200 from AB Cultural Council, which will help cover costs. This is the first year with a printed program with advertising space. They have usually tried to break even but last year the event made money and Conant received a check.

### **Grant Team Update:**

Ranjini reported (see also playground report below) that the grants team has 5 or 6 grants to submit towards playground, and are waiting on the deadlines.

### **Ice Cream Social**

Rashmi reported that 125 families had pre-bought tickets. The pizza will be purchased and delivered from Comillas in Concord. The committee is not sure how much pizza to buy but will test it out for the first year and note it for next year. Forty more cakes are needed. Emails keep being sent and people do bring cakes but do not always sign up which makes it difficult for planning. Mrs. Makris sent a note home for kids with allergies asking for them to bring special cake. Mrs. Tsacoyeanes spoke about how teachers speak to the kids about how fun the event is, whether or not they win a cake. Rashmi said it would help to list flavors and toppings on information being sent home. And she requested to have someone to take pictures. Ranjini mentioned to keep in mind the photo policy in school. Rashmi said that Mr. Sugrue said the buses will be moved for maximum parking.

### **Playground**

Andrea reported that Michelle has been working very hard on the upper playground. The committee is in the process of working with vendor, and the equipment has been picked out. The total comes to \$89,445. Mr. Sugrue has earmarked \$50,000 from funds generated through the extended day program, the PTO had already raised \$7,900, so the balance comes to about \$31,000. There are 5 or 6 grants to submit that we are waiting on deadlines to post that will hopefully cover the balance. Elise Calisi and the grant team have drafted a letter of intent which will be send out to potential grant makers. The grant team plans to have a table at ice cream social that will show the new playground plans and take donations. In addition, the grants team is hoping to have a raffle for big ticket items with items donated by companies that Conant parents work for (e.g. IRobot, Bose, and consultation services to start a new business). The date for the raffle is tentatively planned as follows - April 3 for donated items and May 1 for drawing winners. Christina mentioned that the Firetruck ride to school will be used for the raffle for playground not for ice cream social. The plans for the playground will however be moving forward with the funds raised so far. The PTO is responsible for the balance but we can do financing at no charge for at least a year and will do more fundraising in the fall. Ranjini asked Disha about raffle permit which the PTO did renew this year.

Christina reported that there is money set aside by the town for all the elementary schools in Acton to be getting a small nature playground. It is geared for younger grades (K-3) and will be located where the stone wall is right now. Mrs. Tsacoyeanes reported there will be a water play area, raised beds, areas for small group play or science, made out of all natural materials. Mrs. Crumlish added the walled area will become a leveled area and students will have more natural materials to play with. Mrs. Dressler added that the small nature playgrounds will have to be approved during the town meeting. The Acton Conservation Committee recommended a yes vote. If town meeting votes yes, the playground will be funded at \$120,000 for the 4 Natural Playgrounds.

### **Talent Night**

A first grade parent was interested in doing a student variety show as a fundraiser. Ranjini had asked her to come to the PTO meeting to talk about her idea. Ezili asked if there would be a staff variety show this year. Everyone liked the idea of another teacher variety show but felt that it would be another position to be filled and it was getting later in the school year. There were some concerns about a student variety show. Andrea suggested putting it on the agenda for the next meeting.

### **Movie Nights**

Ranjini reported they had planned for movie nights for April 10 and 17 but after discussion decided to move the movie nights to May or June. It was also discussed that since the parents of the K-2 children have to attend movie night also, the PTO could have a table to talk about volunteer opportunities.

### **Miscellaneous Items**

Andrea reported that Mrs. Olsen asked to remind people that CORI forms need to be done for everyone for next school year. Anyone who has not had it done since Feb. 15 and wants to volunteer during the next school year needs to have their CORI redone by the end of this school year. There was a discussion about the reason which is because the whole school renews CORI's at the same time and they are valid for 3 years. Amy also mentioned to put this information on the website.

Ranjini reported that the PTO will soon receive the email addresses of people who gave permission on Powerschool to receive PTO communications. This database may be valuable to use if information needs to go out to the school community quickly. Ranjini and Mrs. Dressler are following up with the person in charge at Acton school district.

Andrea reported that teachers would like some input into the process of getting room parents to best match teacher and parent style. There was a discussion about the process of choosing.

Smitha reported that she needs a shadow for the last family breakfast to learn the process as it is her last year at Conant. Ezili brought up the idea of having grades take turns to run the family breakfast and kids can help decorate.

Andrea reported that there will be a Boxtops contest in April or May. Disha reported that Boxtops has raised \$128 so far this year.

There are several open positions for next year such as V-P's, Craft Fair, Treasurer, Secretary, Ice Cream Social, Nature Walk Trainer, and Breakfast with Family.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:50pm

First Motion to Approve: Amy Happ

Second Motion to Approve: Disha Mahadevia

Minutes Typed By: Cathy Gallinger