

**Roberts Elementary PTO Board Meeting**  
**Friday, February 1, 2013**  
**8:15 a.m. Roberts Café**

**In attendance:** Ali Pilcher, Alyson Rooney, Anna Kaplan, Courtney Tardy, Elizabeth Singleton, Emanuela Corradino, Esther Pastore, Jennifer Thornton, John Thornton, Kara Niles, Kelly Wehrer, Lana Boutwell, Lara Frazier, Laura Weiss, Natalie Smith, Paula Zurcher, Renae Holman Murti, Kirsty McCormack, Jacque Corman, Danny Corman, Karen Brisch, Debra Balthazar, Vera Peneva (23 People)

President, Jennifer Thornton, called the meeting at 8:10 am.

**Approval of Minutes by Lana Boutwell** - Lana Boutwell, Recording Secretary, presented the minutes from the January meeting for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Alyson Rooney and seconded by Kelly Wehrer. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

**School Report by Rita Graves** - The open registration period for our neighborhood families, those living in the 77030 zip code, to enroll for the 2013-2014 school year is coming up. We are making a greater effort to attract our neighborhood students by having neighborhood tours. If you would like to participate in any of the scheduled tours, please contact Jennifer Thornton. We will have three daytime tours and one Saturday open house/play date for our neighborhood families. We need volunteers who love this school and can share their experiences with these visiting families. There are a lot of people who choose private school without even giving Roberts a look and I would like for them to come and see what we have to offer.

Our 5th graders are going to the HISD Outdoor Education Center at Camp Forest Glenn. They will be attending with ½ of the 5th graders from Horn Elementary. The program is a three-day, two-night outdoor education experience for HISD fifth graders. The OEC is designed to provide a unique educational opportunity for Houston ISD students that emphasize the use of natural settings. The camp instructors utilize the lake, the forest, the stream, the farm, and the quiet East Texas nights to provide hands-on, experiential, multi-disciplinary activities that guide students through discovery and exploration. Students are taught inquiry-based science lessons, as well as language arts, math and social studies concepts that support HISD's fifth grade curriculum and Texas State Standards. The OEC program teaches children appreciation, awareness, expression, knowledge, and skills, which act as an extension of HISD classrooms.

Houston ISD Superintendent Terry Grier will give his fourth State of the Schools address today at a luncheon in the Hilton Americas Hotel. Be looking for tweets from HISD and myself. As we move into budget season, I don't anticipate any significant cuts this year provided we keep our enrollment numbers consistent.

We should have our STAAR student reports from last years test. I am starting to get good feedback and as soon as I have all of the pieces, we will have a parent meeting to explain them. How they will determine our accountability by the state will change and there will be a matrix to determine our accountability.

In case you haven't noticed, we are having murals painted in the spaces above the doors to the 1st grade and 3rd grade halls. We hired artist, Ron Gordon who has just about finished with three of the four murals. He should be finished with all four in the coming weeks.

**Treasurer's Report by Alyson Rooney** – Since last month we do have anything significant to report. One interesting item is that the lemon sale did well, which gives the garden a positive balance for the first time. I have reallocated some items so if you think it looks different that would be why. Also if you would like more information please see me after the meeting.

**Neighborhood Incoming Kinder Families by Jennifer Thornton** – On Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup> we will be having a neighborhood play date/open house. We encourage everyone come and play. Our kindergarten teacher will be in attendance and have their classroom opens for tours. Julie McFarland is getting bounce houses and fun stuff for the kids.

**Auction by Paula Zurcher** – The invitations were sent out last week, if you lost your response card, you can find it on-line or extra copies are at the registration desk. The due date for advance purchases is February 8<sup>th</sup>. The catalog is online and being edited everyday, please check back frequently. Please be aware the some of the party dates may change. If you seen something that is not correct, please let us know so we can get it fixed. We are hoping to get all the cows completed and turned in as soon as possible, so if you have one please send it to me, or at the very least, send me a picture so we can get it in the catalog. We are still looking for people to host adult parties. Today was the due date for party forms but I will extend to as much as necessary to get more donated.

This year we have to decorate the morning of the auction. We will begin moving items to the Rice campus at 8:00am. This is also the time that we will begin putting up the decorations. We also need a lot of help cleaning up after the event, please plan to stay and help out. We want everyone to enjoy the event, and I am not asking for everyone to do both, but please consider helping out. Debra Balthazar, thank you again for managing the desert table once again. Please be looking for ways to help out and if you have a special desert you like to make, please e-mail here. We would like to have homemade items but will take purchased baked goods as well. Another thing you might consider is loaning us serving pieces and platters. Usually 70-80 percent of our teachers attend, so if you would like to donate a ticket to offset the cost please complete the response card. We have a band! "Nobody's Fool" will be playing a variety of music,

not just country/western. We are still looking for dance instructors; so if you know of anyone, please let me know. Mr. Campbell will be our Master of Ceremonies and help with our big board items.

We are still collecting wine and booze donations for the auction, if you haven't made your donation, please do so no later than Sunday.

**Positive Works by Karen Brisch** – Now that we are in the second year, of our three year commitment, this year will be more student lead. But what we found we are missing is a huge chunk of the parent piece. Basically we need to learn to use the language of +Works so we can be connected with the administration and students. +works gives us a lot of positive talks, one about every 8 weeks, which we have had good attendance at when it is at Roberts, but not so much when they are at other locations. Please consider attending our next meeting, which will be next Wednesday from 7:00 – 8:30 at St. Paul's, the topic is cyber safety.

From a schools standpoint, our student collation is planning our annual rally and we have implemented being an up-stander into our IB curriculum. We felt that mid year would be a good time to remind each other that we want to be kind to one another. One thing we emphasized is our "peace bench", a place where students can sit if they are feeling left out or are looking for a friend to play with. Next week we will be selling no place for hate bracelets for \$1.00 and +Works bumper stickers for \$2.00, with all the proceeds going to the Anti-Defamation League.

**Nominating committee by Jennifer Thornton** – The nominee for each elected office shall be found by a committee consisting of five members, three from the current Board and two from the general PTO membership ("the Nominating Committee"). The President, the President-Elect and School Principal shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Nominating Committee, without a vote. The open positions, for the 2013-2014 school year, are President-elect and Recording Secretary. This years nominating committee members are Renae Holman Murti, Ali Pilcher, Julie McFarland, Meredith Beebe and Denise Metry. They will be meeting at the end of February to discuss possible nominations, so you are interested in either of these position or know of someone who might be, please let us know. The PTO board will be voting on the nominees in May.

Jennifer Thornton, President, adjourned the meeting at 8:46. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:15 am in the Roberts Café.