

## **Roberts Elementary PTO Board Meeting**

**Friday, September 7, 2012**

**8:15 a.m. Roberts Cafe**

In attendance: Ali Pilcher, Alyson Rooney, An'jum Khan, Anna Kaplan, Cheryl Sorak, Courtney Tardy, Dana Walker, Elizabeth Singleton, Emanuela Corradino, Esther Pastore, Jennifer Thornton, John Thornton, Kara Niles, Kelly Wehrer, Lana Boutwell, Laura Weiss, Natalie Smith, Paula Zurcher, Renae Holman Murti, Sherri Walsh, Sheryl Barrett, Stephanie Walton, Susie Wormser, Kristen Hawkins, Ann Heikkmem, David Heikkmen, Danny Corman, Liying Yang, Huda Sayyid, Salihe Saeed, Xiaochuan Yang, Divina Enahan, Bijal Vora, Hollister Herhold, Kelly Bui, Neeraja Dharmaraj, Sushil Kakkera, Kun Zhau, Yvonne Segal, Mahssa Clark, Julia Goff, Angelica Castillo, Gavino Zarate, Layla Unger, Hadia Mawlawi, Kelly Mayerfeld, Martha Gau, Kirsty McCormack, Rhiannon Menlove, Baimdding, Hsylvia, Virginia Camerlo, Isebella Hawkins, Heather Byrnes, Margaret Henry, Tom Fowler, Lida Meisami, Michiko Kedama, Kaoru Takenchi, Laura Weiss (60 People)

Jennifer Thornton, President, called the PTO meeting to order at 8:16 am.

**Approval of Minutes by Lana Boutwell** - Lana Boutwell, Recording Secretary, presented three sets of minutes for approval. Minutes were from the March, April and May 2012 board meetings. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Sheryl Barrett and seconded by Courtney Tardy. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

**Goals and Plans for this Year by Jennifer Thornton** – We have made some changes this year to help us be more welcoming to new families. The first thing we changed was adding the ice cream social/PTO volunteer sign up event. The “In The Know” book was completely rewrote this summer and we have not had any negative feedback from that challenge. Please take time to go through it. The Roberts website has been completely revamped and should be the first place you go to find something. The next thing to change will be our e-blast with our Tuesday folder information. Also, in the next few weeks, you will have the option to go “Tuesday folder green”, which means that you will not received hard copies of fliers each week. One of our major goals this year will be for our committee chairs to write detailed job descriptions of their positions to help the next generation of volunteers.

**Treasurer’s Report by John Thornton** – At each meeting we will recap the major expenses and budget items. Since this is our first meeting, we don’t really have anything to report.

**School Report by Rita Graves** – We have updated our Everyday Math curriculum to the new edition. Teachers received training for over the summer. The new curriculum has brought us in-line with national core curriculum. Math experts from the University of Chicago wrote Everyday Math. The idea is that is doesn't focus on rote learning and processes but instead helps our students understand the number concept and begins algebraic thinking very early, which will help them in advanced math classes in middle and high school. It's a program that advances math thinking. We will have a discussion explaining all of this on Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> here in the café. The other math program we are using is Envision. Envision is not rigorous enough for most for our students, but will be used for some concepts as primary instruction, as well as practice and intervention. You will see lessons from both math programs coming home, as you should. I want to make sure that you are all aware of the upcoming bond election ballot. On the ballot, you will find it at bottom, so if you vote straight ticket, please be sure to look for it. I am not suggesting you vote for or against the bond, but I want you to have as much information as possible so you can make an informed decision. We will host an information meeting in the coming weeks.

If you did not get my email about my blog, please check with the front office to make sure we have your correct email address or check your spam/junk mail folder. I will use that as a primary way of communication this year.

Addressing a question from parents, we have decided to remove the small gate by the playground. We will have someone working on that within the next few days. This is not the main gate at the tiled columns, but the small gate further down Greenbriar on the southwest corner of the playground.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Auction by Paula Zurcher** – The auction is our big fundraising gala. We will be going back to the Rice University Student Center. The date is set for Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, it was originally incorrect on the school calendar, so please verify you have the correct date in your personal schedule. Our theme this year is country western, “Boots and Bids”. We are looking for volunteers for our different committees: decorations, data entry, acquisitions, and set up/tear down. Another thing we are going back to are class projects. This is where each class will decorate a small cow, like our calico, and it will be available for sale the night of auction. Each classroom cow will be decorated with a different theme, the themes will be chosen by the classes. We are having the cows made and the total cost per class should be no more than \$50.00. Our acquisitions team will start collecting donations next week, so if you would like to make a donation or know of a business we could ask, please see Sherry Walsh. New this year, Lola catering, will be doing our food. Lola is a Roberts family owned catering company. Once again, Courtney Tardy and her husband will donate the wine.

**General information on fundraiser by Jennifer Thornton** – Here at Roberts we have three main fundraisers: 100% membership, auction (adult only), and carnival. One fundraiser we took out was Sally Foster and Entertainment Books. Since our auction is adults only, we try to keep the cost down so that our return is very high. This is different from carnival, our grand finale of the year, where we go all out for the sake of the kids while still generating income for the school

**International Festival Update by Ana Kaplan** – Our date this year will be Oct 19<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 6:00, we have dismissal at 12:30 that day. If you are a new parent I will stay late to explain what the International Festival is. So far we have about 20 countries represented. We would like to have about 30 countries in total. We are looking for sponsors to help offset the cost. Local businesses can donate – \$250.00 will get their logo on the back of the t-shirt. All forms are available online. This year we will not have a market since we will be using the covered area and field for international games. We are looking for parent volunteers to help with that. We have meetings every Friday at 8:00 am here in the café or after a PTO meeting. Class presentations are being scheduled for the week leading up to the festival. We are looking for more parents to sign up as volunteers and we will be asking for volunteers at curriculum night. We would like to have two to three from each class. Per Rita we have over 25 home languages spoken in our community and students from 42 different countries at our school. Our festival is just as good as the Houston International Festival. We have between 200 - 300 people come through in the past years. There are not many other HISD students who learn about the world like our kids do.

**100% Membership by Ally Pilcher** – So far, our start has been amazing, thank you to those of you who have already contributed. At the latest count, we have 150 families donating \$23,893.00 or 25% participation. We are hoping to reach our 100% goal this year. We have one class, Ms. Huynh, who has made it to 100% participation already so she will get \$100.00 to use for her class. The next two classes to reach 100% participate will also get \$100.00. We will have a booth at curriculum night to answer any questions. Since we have cut our Sally Foster and Entertainment Book campaigns, we have to make that money up. Our goal this year is \$38,000.00. The last day to donate is Friday, September 21st.

**Room Parent by Kelly Weher** – We still have many classes without room parents, such as Barnes, Vanunu, Hernandez, Silverman, O’Reilly, Whitehouse, and Cartes. If you can sign up please do or if you know of someone who can, please encourage them to. Emails to all head room parents will go out this week with forms and we will send reminders throughout the year. On Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup> we will have a brief meeting to go over the years events.

**Welcome by Kelly Weher** – As the Welcome Committee, we want to be especially welcoming to those who come into Roberts in the middle of the year. Some of these families come for medical procedures

and some are international families coming to work in the medical center. We have a group of people who are multi-lingual who can help translate. Please see the website if you are interested in signing up. We are going to offer tutoring for kids during the day, so if you can help, please let me know. Helping with reading or setting up a play date or making a meal can really help with this effort. We are also contacting room parents when a new child has arrived in class so they can help the new family get adjusted.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade by Stephanie Walton** - Our committee consists of 11 chair people who are going to try to make this 5<sup>th</sup> grade year very special. To do that it takes money and time/organization. Some of the specific events we need to fund include the promotion ceremony at the end of the year, fun day in June and a trip to Regal Ranch. We are working on special class t-shirts, a DVD which will show during the promotion ceremony and will include pictures from our 5<sup>th</sup> graders entire time at Roberts. We will be giving a gift to the school, to be determined as we get closer to June. So to do this our major fundraiser is KNO and our first one is coming up soon. For our new parents, KNO is an evening where your Roberts students can come and hang out with friends, play games and watch a movie while you go out or get together with friends or just nothing at all for the low price of \$20.00 per child. We will have 4 KNO throughout the year and the dates are on the calendar. If you are a 5<sup>th</sup> grade parent, please be looking for the sign up sheet. Another fundraiser activity will happen during the World Wide Day of Play, which is October 6<sup>th</sup>. Last year we have about 300 people attend. We will have more information come home as the date gets closer. On November 10<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting a Community Garage Sale. Emily & Gunther Kemper and Andrea Campbell will be sending more information about that soon. We also have our Election Day Bake Sale coming back and during our two Community Nights we will be selling concessions, the PTO will provide nachos, water and popcorn. We will not have any profit at the end of the year we are just trying to break even.

Gunther Kemper is already collecting items for the garage sale and in addition to being able to rent a spot to hold your own sale, there will be spaces available for craft sales.

**Open Positions by Jennifer Thornton** – We still have PTO positions open. Our Garden Committee lost both chair people. This position manages the two garden areas, works with the classes and science teacher to include working in the garden in our curriculum. The second position open is the Outdoor Classroom Liaison. This person will work directly with our science teacher on how she would like to use that area. The outdoor classroom is also available for use during class library time.

**Directory by Jennifer Thornton** – There are two more weeks to get your family information correct on the Roberts website to be included in the directory. In the past we had waited for families to get their information in thus delaying the delivery of the directory, this year we will not wait for parents to get their information in. September 15<sup>th</sup> is the cutoff date.

At 9:04 President Jennifer Thornton announced that the next PTO Board meeting would be Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 in the Roberts Café. She then adjourned the meeting.