

## **Westlake PTA Meeting**

**February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

### **Board members and Teachers Present**

Jen Fritzsche, PTA President

Mel Sweet, PTA Treasurer

Anna Turner, PTA Secretary

Papaya Van Dyke, PTA Parliamentarian

Terry McInerney, PTA Arts Co-Chair

Kristen Lenz, Teacher

Adrienne Cramer, Teacher

Jane Forbes, Life Lab Coordinator

Approximate attendance: 15 people

Meeting called to order at 6:40pm

President, Jen Fritzsche, opened the meeting and called for order.

### **Review of Last Meeting's Minutes by Anna Turner**

Secretary, Anna Turner, reviewed the minutes of the last PTA meeting, which was held on January 15, 2015.

#### **\*\*\*MOTION**

Motion to approve the minutes was brought by Krista Holt

Motion was seconded by Terry McInerney

Minutes were approved as presented unanimously

## **Treasurer's Report by Mel Sweet**

Mel started the report by providing the current PTA bank balance (\$74k). She also reported on recent incomes: January's Movie Night made \$400, and the most recent Dining for Dollars (at Surfrider Café) made \$390.

Mel then focused on the state of the Direct Appeal; a handout was provided to describe the current outlook on fundraising. Sadly, fundraising is way down at this point in the year, and some programs could be in danger of going away if more funds can't be raised. Mel reported that the PTA is currently getting posters made to raise awareness in community about the state of our fundraising attempts (they will show a large thermometer and indicate how far we have to go to fund many programs). There was then an in-depth discussion about why fundraising attempts have been less successful this year, and what to do about it. Some specific concerns:

-Less than 1/3 of Westlake families have donated to the Direct Appeal. How can the PTA encourage more parents to donate (without alienating families)? Should the language in the Direct Appeal letter be changed to indicate a lower suggested donation amount, and how can the monthly donation option be better highlighted?

-Many families assume that certain programs/materials at Westlake are being paid for by the city school district, and therefore do not need to be funded by our school community. How can the PTA better educate the Westlake community about what is/is not funded by the district?

-There could be a better presence by PTA members on campus. Information/donation tables should be present at upcoming events such as Wildcats and the Arts and Day of Dance.

-How best can information get from the PTA to Westlake parents (especially urgent info about the funding forecast)? Should we look into going back to a paper copy of the Westlake Waves newsletter? Would a PTA bulletin board be useful somewhere on the lower campus (such as on the wall outside of the doorway to the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms)?

-Right now, the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade families are contributing more/more frequently than K-3 families (most likely because 4/5 students are able to take advantage of most PTA-funded programs). How can we "spread the wealth" to make sure the K-3 families feel included and comfortable in making donations?

-How can the PTA make an impact with parents regarding the funding crisis? Suggestions included making more of a "splash" at Back-to-School night in the Fall with a clearer PTA presentation; creating an "Endangered Wildcats at Westlake" marketing program, where paw prints are posted around the school, each paw indicating a program that must be funded by the PTA in order to continue; sending flyers with the thermometer image more frequently, so that parents know where our funding stands at all times.

Mel reported that last year's financial reserves were cleaned out, and at this point, we're stretched very thin. Flyers will be made to do another Direct Appeal push between the arts auction and the walk-a-thon, but this year it doesn't look like we'll make up the difference needed to cover existing expenses.

Mel also reviewed the check register covering the period from January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 through February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015. SCCS received the biggest reimbursement from the PTA, and this check was for the chess enrichment program (which is offered to students from all grades at lunchtime).

**\*\*\*MOTION**

Motion to approve the budget report and check register was brought by Jen Fritzsche

Motion was seconded by Anna Turner

Motion approved unanimously

**Camp Kesem**

Michelle Daher provided information about Camp Kesem, a UCSC student-run, free week-long summer camp for kids whose families have experienced with cancer (there are also year-round support offerings associated with this program). The goal is to register 60 campers, ages 6-16. There is also a CIT program for 17/18 year olds. 35 campers have been signed up as of today. Camp Kesem is trying to reach out to area schools and hospitals, but also ask for Westlake's support in recruiting campers. Flyers are available for interested parties, and the website address is listed on the flyer. Camp takes place in June (6/15-20) near Yosemite. Buses take campers there. Campers don't have to be from SC County; Camp Kesem is a nationwide program. Santa Cruz camp often has spots available when other camps fill up.

**Global Citizens Committee**

Victoria Sanchez-Toledo provided the group with an update on preparations for International Night. The event will take place on April 15<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm, and will be similar in content and organization to last year's. Most performers are lined up, including Watsonville Taiko. Event chairs are looking for additional "world market" vendors; cost is \$25 to rent table. Food: Zameen food truck is returning, Café Campesino will sell street tacos; one other "snacky" type food item is being searched out (maybe Mortal Dumpling?). Global Citizens Club has been going on for a few months, and is targeted to 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders. Club members will be helping with

announcements at International Night, and there is some consideration for putting out a newsletter written by students.

### **Wildcats and the Arts**

Krista Holt provided an update on this event. Classroom art projects (available for purchase at the arts auction) will be on display. In the MUR, there will be hands-on art projects, starting with kindergarten early in day, and continuing later on. Jamba Juice will be on hand (some funds will go to Westlake) to sell smoothies. Volunteers are still needed to help monitor hands-on projects.

### **Art Auction**

Julie Graff, auction chair, reported on the status of auction planning. The auction team went through a dry run of the night's events at their meeting this past week. Classroom art projects are coming in and are amazing. Lots more volunteers have taken on key positions this year, which has helped. The auction committee would like to drum up more excitement about the classroom art projects, as well as interest in donating/contributing. Can room parents help with getting the message out? Julie gave a brief overview of what auction items are available, as well as the procedures for bidding online and at the event.

### **Arts Committee Update**

Terry McInerney reported on some upcoming arts-related events and news:

CATS ambassadors will be helping at Wildcats and the Arts.

5<sup>th</sup> grade culminating art project is ongoing with Julie Nolte. Students will be firing their own pieces this year.

4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> graders are going to a symphony performance on Monday (they will be walking down to Civic Auditorium). Symphony musicians came to an assembly today to talk about instruments, the symphony.

26 students have art hanging at Agile Monkey Pilates Studio through April/May. March 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a reception. 40-50 pieces will be hanging in the downtown library in April/May, too.

Carrie Haber and Lara McQuade are still working on scanning additional art for each student to be available for purchase at Artsonia online. Another push for art card purchases will be made prior to Mother's Day.

## **Technology Meeting Update**

Jen Fritzsche stood in for Tim Madsen, who couldn't be there to discuss a recent meeting. Basic summary: SCCS is working on building a new, more consistent website design across all campuses (high schools will be done first). Carrie Haber, the current Westlake webmaster, clarified that it will be two years until Westlake's website is changed by district, and SCCS said that it is ok to launch our new website (Carrie has been working on it) before then, then will help migrate.

## **Life Lab Update**

Jane Forbes reported on recent/upcoming Life Lab News. A Whole Foods grant (written by two Westlake parents) will be used to help put in new irrigation and composting systems.

The Environmental Club has been building scarecrows/sunflowers out of milk cartons, then planting plants in them, making them into living gardens. Pictures will be taken, submitted for a \$1000 prize.

A Life Lab Work Day will take place the first weekend in May (same weekend as Goodwill truck), to build new planting beds.

A Plant Sale to help raise money for the Life Lab will be in April; maybe a Friday and Saturday after spring break. Volunteers will be recruited/contacted soon, and Jane will need help with getting the word out. Any ideas for sale plants are welcome.

Warm weather has allowed for early salad parties, which students are really enjoying.

## **New Business/Program Updates**

Jen Fritzsche provided updates on various programs/events. The next Dining for Dollars will take place on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Pizzeria Avanti; it will happen in the evening only, and there will be no need to bring the flyer along.

The next Movie Night will take place on February 27<sup>th</sup> after Wildcats and the Arts.

An event chair for the Teacher Luncheon has been found, and planning is beginning for this year-end party.

A chair for the Box Tops program has also been found.

Volunteer Needs: Goodwill Truck, eScrip, Enrichment Programs

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.