

Ross PTA Executive Board
Monthly Meeting
Oct 26, 2021
8-9 pm

In attendance: Amanda, Brian, Melissa, Kristen, Alison, Kate, Jenny, Debbie (notetaker)

- Regrets: Liz, Holly

- **2nd General Body meeting**

- Amanda received positive feedback

- **Fundraising**

- Brian was a little concerned about fall fundraising.
 - He showed us a screen from the Quickbooks program with revenue totals from membership drives from prior years.
 - Comparing the end of the year numbers from 2017 to 2021, the first three of these years, the PTA had about 50K in the bank.
 - The volume of donors in those past years was higher (looking at column D, Family Donors, the first three years had over 100 families joining and donating, which was necessary to raise around 50K, which comprised 80 to 90% of families at school). The Average (\$473) and median (\$300) amounts were noted.
 - Last year, we raised about 15K less. Fewer families donated overall (78 families total, which was down about 30 from prior years, and the % of families that donated was down to 59%).
 - This year's Fall for Ross, shows only 21 families have donated (17%).
 - Where were other PTAs around 5 weeks into the school year? Column M showed all years were higher in prior years (we are still lower).
- Amanda noted we have a communication challenge that everyone is a member of PTA and we introduced the "Fall for Ross." Everyone seems happy now and there may be a communication issue and information lag.
- Melissa agrees there is a communication issue since people were used to paying for membership. Per her discussion with parents, we may need additional communication and reminders such as more flyers in backpacks, or telling people that we need money.
- Kate agreed with Melissa that it may not be on people's minds, once we get the reminders out. In the past, reminders were through room parents or teachers, as well as a class participation contest. We previously ran these campaigns through November.
- Amanda thought of doing the "Fall for Ross" campaign through December, and is comfortable with the campaign ongoing until we reach our goal. An 80% family participation goal is reasonable, based on prior years. Early givers are giving more than in prior years noting that average donations stood out.
- Brian noted the 9 folks who gave or pledged larger amounts were among the same 10 from last year's large donors. Since the participation rate was based on people who donated, and if we redefined participation to include other things, it may help with our revenue target.

- Jenny noted a parent on the playground (Mateo's dad, Jesus) noted that they used to have monthly payments to Ross. Suggested more of a direct ask like Kate has in the past, at our "t-shirt" events.
- Amanda noted we could do this at the Spooktacular.
- Alison noted that last year, we got higher numbers than expected considering we weren't in school. The PTA pushed for donations during the Halloween event. This was good because there is an end date to the campaign, but they also extended the end date. We need to clarify what the PTA money goes for.
- Debbie noted that we should have highlights of where \$ goes to and we have talking points when asked. While there is an increase in feel good events, people may not be enthusiastic to donate without more info of where the money goes.
- Amanda showed a graphic with where money goes.
- Melissa noted maybe a flyer to have at Spooktacular would be helpful.
- Brian asked about events to solicit membership.
- Kate noted that they used to do coffees and asked to join the PTA.
- Amanda stated we have sold a lot of merchandise on Fridays.
- Alison noted the coffees during past years were focused more on joining the PTA.
- Kate asked if we should push the Fall for Ross drive. She can help with flyers on Thursday. She used to do a gratitude tree with names of families who have donated, which would make people more aware. Suggested more signage, emails, and for more of a push.
- Jenny said it may be easier to do it during drop off instead of waiting until 8:45am. Instead, have PTA flyers with coffee.
- Amanda noted instead of including their family name on the tree, people can include a note, in response to Alison's concern of discomfort having the family's who donated named. Amanda thought this could be a reminder to donate.
- Alison and Brian supported this idea.
- Amanda noted that people like having our card reader available.
- Jenny noted Ms. Lee used the tree out front for projects - e.g., peanut butter (bird feeder).
- Kristen - we may need to have a new session for new families on how to navigate PTA. She noted in the past, there was a library event. Showing the screen and walking through step-by-step how to donate money may be helpful.
- Debbie expressed it might be helpful to see the specific financial info Brian showed us, as it adds the peer pressure, but acknowledged that people may not feel comfortable with this.
- Amanda thought it might be helpful in a few weeks, from a psychological standpoint, as we want the numbers to be higher. We may want to have a "Giving Tuesday" campaign and make this the last date for the campaign. She noted using Social Media might be helpful.
- Melissa thought having a graphic showing progress toward goal.
- Kate noted we used to have an arrow.
- Amanda said we can have a dollar amount as well as participation. She wanted to take this offline with the smaller Fall for Ross Committee.
- Kate will put together a flyer for Thursday that will include giving levels. Melissa and Amanda offered to make some copies.
- Amanda noted we will have our cash box with square devices, and we can talk up membership, and come back with Friday tabling.

- **HOLIDAY TREE SALE**

- Melissa noted one volunteer outside of the EB so far.
- We need to submit the school access form.
- We need to start communication a week or two before, so we need to put the team together.
- She noted there is stuff on the Drive relating to the sale.
- Amanda, Kate, Alison offered to be on the Committee.
- Kate offered to submit the form (Alison will remind her as she has done it before) to have enough time before Super Saturday, December 4th.

- **LIBRARY-BOOK SALE on Super Tuesday?**

- Jenny clarified that the book sale is out, because the company is not available.

- **VOLUNTEER PROJECT on Super Tuesday?**

- Martha's Table contact? Alison was the liaison with them in the past and offered to contact them to see what they're accepting (may not accept homemade sandwiches).
- Amanda spoke to Ms. Clark, who was interested in us doing a service activity or non-perishable food drive, so pairing this with Super Saturday or leading up this, may work.

- **AUCTION COMMITTEE**

- Amanda - no one has volunteered for the committee.
- We have to re-signed up for One Cause software access.
- Brian noted there was an email about this that we may want to ask for another quote.
- Alison noted the contract ended.
- Amanda noted they will try to strike the best deal with them. We know the product and have a history.
- Brian noted he can do the Committee again.

- **CHANGES TO BY-LAWS**

- Amanda noted there were 5 main issues:

1. Changing policy on dues and what it means to be a member in good standing.
2. Changing who are voting members on PTA Executive Boards. We have had interest in teachers and Principals be voting members.
3. Naming of Officers and Adjusting Numbers and Duties
4. Standing Committees
5. Finance

- She was hoping we can decide on changes in the December meeting and vote in the February meeting.
- Amanda will schedule a meeting where we only discuss By Laws. Not enough time to cover tonight.

- **LSAT Meeting Issue - Mandatory Vaccine?**

- David Alpert presented an issue raised by the Ward 2 Education Council.
- They want to know if they should testify and weigh in about a mandatory vaccine in schools.
- Melissa was concerned about having a PTA statement and being careful on how numbers are used. Concern a pro-vaccine statement will not bring people together as there's discussions on the playground about whether to vaccinate now or

later. There is an equity issue that may prohibit some students in the poorest communities from going to school.

- Amanda noted a vaccine mandate this school year would be unlikely but may be mandatory next year.
 - Melissa thought it would be a good idea for the EB to see the survey.
 - Amanda will reach out to David to ask if he is still interested in collecting this info, and if so, whether he can share the draft survey with the EB. Having an opportunity to provide feedback is a good thing. She noted the Community includes teachers and we should include them when taking stalk of the community.
- a. for a soccer game on Sat. May 21 at 4PM. A \$150 deposit would be required. We could select tickets at different prices. Jenny is recommending the cheapest tickets at \$27.
- i. It was suggested that the PTA could fund tickets for families that aren't able to afford them. It was decided that the PTA can send out communications about the tickets and let the community know that the PTA can fund tickets for families that aren't able to cover the costs.
2. Update on Ross Auction plans (Amanda/other committee members)
- a. Location will be the rooftop at St. Thomas Parish on 18th St.
 - b. We are actively in procurement for auction items and sponsors.
 - c. The theme is Spring Fling. Jen Adams will be helping with graphics.
 - d. Alison has asked Esther Ciammachilli, host of Morning Edition on WAMU, if she would like to host. Esther is interested, but will need supervisor approval.
 - e. We may cancel the auction committee meeting this week.
3. Finance Reports (Brian)
- a. February was a quiet month for revenues and expenditures
 - b. Saw a normal monthly increase in overhead expenditures, only about \$1700 in total spending.
 - c. Brian has learned from the Lawyers Committee that they have discontinued the School to School Initiative. The contact offered to connect Ross directly with another DC public school, likely Title 1.
 - d. Holly will check in with teachers and supervisors to see if the handwashing station is still be used and is still needed.
 - e. We did not have time to cover proposed bylaw changes from Brian. We will discuss at the next executive board meeting on March 22.