

Highcrest Middle School PTO
General Board Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2010

Margaret Tilson and Anne Williams, PTO Co-Presidents called the meeting to order at 9:19 am and welcomed everyone.

Report from Co-Presidents – Great start to the year. Lyn Flannery and her committee delivered over 400 school supply kits and donated 5 to families in need. This raised over \$3000 for the PTO. Next year they hope to increase participation and streamline the program: posting the list of families who ordered on the website, using PayPal and auctioning kits on eBay for last minute orders. Kids are Key is going strong. You can still contribute online or by printing the one payment form and sending in.

PTO Website has everything you need to know about Highcrest PTO activities and contacts. You can volunteer online, purchase yearbooks, birthday books, PTO membership and contribute to Kids are Key.

Our budget is posted online. Our treasurer will be at the November meeting to answer any questions and we will vote on the budget at that time.

Make A Difference Day is scheduled for October 22nd. Amy Wilkin asked that we share that she can use help sorting the donations on that Friday, and transporting the donations to Indian Hill Train station on Saturday morning, October 23rd.

And October 22nd is also the date for Freaky Friday, a school wide event that follows a Halloween theme. It takes place at Highcrest from 7:30-9:00 pm. The kids dress up in costumes (adults helping can as well!). There are games, a DJ and snacks. Tickets will go on sale the week of the event during lunch. It is a highly attended event with over 600 kids. Only Highcrest students can attend. Over 160 parent volunteers are needed to run this fun evening. Toni Stapel is the chair of the event and you can email her at tstapel.comcast.net or volunteer online at our Highcrest PTO website!

Approval of Minutes – The meeting minutes from the May 5, 2010 General Board Meeting were approved.

Principal's Report – Luke welcomed everyone to our first PTO meeting. He is very excited about the start of the school year. This summer they hosted the summer enrichment program so it was very busy. \$225,000 in new technology was installed over the summer thanks to stimulus funding. Prior to this summer Highcrest had 10-11 smart boards and now every classroom but 2 have them. They are working on getting the last two. A couple of the classrooms have

received student response systems where kids can interact from their desks in conjunction with the smart boards. They updated existing computers as well.

We need volunteers for the cafeteria. The lunch period has been shortened to 4th and 5th periods. You can sign up for an hour shift. He sent a link for online volunteering.

This Friday is 5th grade Connections giving the kids an opportunity to bond with their teachers and fellow classmates. We need parent volunteers from 1:50 to 3:20.

Safety issues: Between the hours of Saturday, August 21 11 pm and Sunday, August 22 6 am, students accessed the roof and entered the building through the outdoor classroom doors. They wrote "White Power" in marker on the walls and some art paper was strewn across the floor. Luke took pictures of where he thinks they are gaining access and the district is looking at installing fencing to protect these areas. They are considering an audible alarm to notify the police when the interior doors have been opened. It is a violation of the fire safety code to lock the doors at anytime to the outdoor classroom. One parent voiced a concern that the subject of the vandalism should be addressed in an assembly. He has spoken to various speakers for students and parents to address this topic. There will be something in his Friday communication about this. He was asked not to report anything while it was being investigated.

All schools are supposed to be getting surveillance cameras. Not sure from a budget point of view where that initiative stands.

Another safety concern, this week in the south parking lot, a vehicle hit a student on a bike. The car was just starting to back up so the student wasn't seriously injured. The driver was not aware that he/she hit the cyclist. He will communicate the need for safety and care when driving near the school and for the children to ride their bikes with care. Wear helmets, cross at corners, stay on sidewalks. A reminder will also be given for the intersection near the school, that when there is no crossing guard you cannot cross on the diagonal.

A parent reported that last Friday a frustrated driver drove on the sidewalk and across three lawns on Hunter to get around the car pickup line at dismissal time. We need increased Wilmette Police coverage at this intersection. Luke will talk to his police liaison.

Another parent relayed that a WJHS student was hit on his bike on the way to school and requested that this information be shared across all schools in District 39 so that parents and students become more aware of these risks.

A parent voiced the concern about the Hunter Southbound pickup line that causes extreme congestion on Hunter. Luke suggested another exit onto Hunter should be made from the South Parking Lot so that it has a horseshoe drop off versus the congested parking lot. This has been an ongoing issue and should be brought up at the village-wide PTO meeting.

Estella Kiser (ekiser@kisergroup.com), Civics and Safety PTO representative, encouraged parents to contact her if they have concerns and she will address them. She asked for increased communication between the school and her so she is aware of any issues. Civics and Safety also meets village-wide and she will ask if there is a way to share information across schools.

Luke announced that the demerit system will be enforced at Highcrest as it is stated. It is about knowing the rules and following them. A parent asked that guidelines regarding the dress code be conveyed earlier in the summer before back to school shopping occurs so that the appropriate attire can be purchased.

Margaret Tilson –Communication to the parent body about PTO committee activities and events should be announced in the Headlines and the web site. Katie Hauser is the VP Communication. Contact Ellen Dabrowski, Headlines Editor at ellendabrowski@mac.com or Sarah Jacobs, website manager at sbjacobs336@mac.com for submissions.

Faculty Report- Melanie Briggs had no news.

District 39 Educational Foundation - Leslie Weyhrich introduced ME Girgenti who is the Highcrest liaison to the Foundation. The Foundation raises money and gives it away through Gripp Grants. At Highcrest they funded grow lights to get the plants to maturity for planting in the outdoor classroom. They also funded the mosaic. They funded an architectural grant through the Frank Lloyd Wright foundation that applied math to architecture in designing a classroom. They look for pilot projects that could be launched district wide. A great example is smartboards that started a few years ago with 2 in the WJHS. The garden is another example. Now each District 39 school has an outdoor classroom. They raise money through the Kelly Miller Circus (Sept. 25), direct solicitations, and a dinner honoring a Wilmette citizen. October 15 is the next Gripp Grant request deadline.

FAN – Suzie Rubin reported that the next FAN presentation will be on Tuesday, Oct. 5 at 7 pm and the topic will be Youth Safety on a Living Internet presented by Anne Collier. They have partnered with the WJHS for this event and it will be held at the Jr. High auditorium.

Youth Connection – Bill Perkins reported that he is a Wilmette parent who volunteers with Youth Connection working in conjunction with the schools

focusing on middle-school and junior high students who might be at risk. Amy Denes, Executive Director, has a master's degree in social work and grew up in Wilmette. She will run RAD at Highcrest and the Den at the Junior High. In February they will have a mardi gras party called TGIF as a fundraiser and could use parent volunteers. They offer activities and homework assistance after school in the schools and for free. They are looking for donations and parents who want to volunteer. Visit www.youthconnection.org. They will be doing a fall play as well with 5th and 6th graders producing Alice and Wonderland.

Pass 39 – Nancy Hoying reported that she is the coordinator for parents with children with special needs as the liaison between education staff. She helps those parents new to the district with children requiring special assistance.

Cafeteria- Michelle Paul and Verena Phillips are organizing volunteers. We are almost covered through November. We are trying a new online system. Luke sent a link out to parents. Please find your own substitute and email them about the change. They will post a link to the sign-up forms and substitute list on the website.

Gift Wrap – Michelle Paul asked that we check out her display in the lobby. Packets will go home with students on September 17. There are student incentives for sales. All ordering will be done online. This is a fundraiser for the PTO that last year raised \$7,500.

Volunteers-Pam Levy reported that room parents are in place for most of the classrooms with the exception of a couple of 6th grade classrooms. Look online for volunteer opportunities at www.highcrestpto.org.

Kids are Key –Ami Campbell reported that we are almost at \$15,000 and we are ahead of where we were at this point in the calendar year last year. We are encouraging participation at any level. Please talk it up. We will be mailing and reminding those to give. She reviewed the gifts that would be awarded at the Parent Party (winner need not be present).

Parent Party – Gayle McCormick reported that the party is on November 10. They want everyone to come. It is a low-key event. Ticket price will be \$20 or less. Venue holds about 300 people, at the Wilmette Golf Club. It is not a fundraiser, just a way to meet other parents. Come have some fun!

Box Tops for Education – Arpi Yazijian, a Romona parent wants to start collecting at Highcrest. She wants to create incentives for the kids to participate with tiered prizes. They raised \$1,200 at Romona and she hopes to raise twice as much at Highcrest.. Luke approved this.. She is asking for \$200 for a budget for prizes,

parties, etc. The HMS executive committee will review her proposal. Please start saving your box tops.

Anne Williams - The logo wear that did not sell at Meet and Greet will be available at Curriculum Nights as well along with school magnets.

Upcoming Dates –

- September 1 – 5th Grade Curriculum Night, 6:30 pm
- September 3 – 5th Grade Connections, 2:00 pm
- September 13 – 6th Grade Curriculum Night, 6:30 pm
- September 17 – Gift Wrap Sale begins (ends October 8th)
- October 22 - Make A Difference Day
- October 22 - Freaky Friday Halloween Party, 7:30 pm
- November 3 - HMS PTO Meeting, 9:15 am

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.