

Coventry Grammar School PTO Meeting March 11, 2008

Co-president Maria Tata called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. She thanked everyone for coming, and because there were new faces in the audience, she introduced the board. Maria also mentioned that teacher representative Terry Bitwinski was unable to be at the meeting.

Special Guest Speaker: Dr. Angela Moemeka

School nurse Paula Curtiss introduced the special guest speaker, Dr. Angela Moemeka. Dr. Moemeka is a pediatrician in Coventry as well as the medical advisor to the school district. She spoke about childhood obesity, exercise, and nutrition.

Principal's Report: Mr. Ray Grasso

Mr. Grasso began his report with an item for "show and tell." He lowered the new screen that was purchased with PTO funds. He thanked the PTO, saying it was a wonderful product and an unexpected expense that would not have been able to be purchased through the school budget.

Mr. Grasso thanked school nurse Paula Curtiss and Mr. Gale's student teacher, Stephanie Maldonado, for coming to the meeting. He then remarked that CGS has a wonderful relationship with Eastern Connecticut State University and their student teachers.

The past month has been very busy with lots of activities. The staff is thankful that, for now, Mastery Tests are not given in grades K-2.

Mr. Grasso thanked parents for their contributions to the successful food drive, which benefited Human Services.

Before February vacation, students were treated to another wonderful Cultural Arts presentation. Yarina, a family of performers, presented music, song, and dance of Ecuador. Pictures of the event are on the school's website.

The talent show at CGS was terrific, and many students participated.

Monday March 3 was Read Across America Day, which is always celebrated to commemorate Dr. Seuss' Birthday. There were many reading activities throughout the day, and guest readers made appearances at the school. Pictures of this special day can be seen on the website.

Kindergarten registration is going on this week at the school. Please let friends, neighbors, and relatives know, since registration is required if a child will attend kindergarten next year. Any child who will be five years old on or before December 31, 2008 is eligible for kindergarten.

There will be a public hearing on the budget tomorrow evening, March 12.

Next Thursday is a professional day for staff. Staff members will be completing the draft of the new science curriculum. This day off for students gives families an extra long weekend when combined with the Good Friday holiday.

On March 25 and 27, the kindergarten classes will be visiting Highland Park Market. Grade one is in the process of their field trips to Windham Hospital. Grade two participated in an in-house field trip about bees and bee keeping presented by a local nature society.

Five Grade Two classes are participating in Imagination Connections, a program provided through a Multicultural Grant with EASTCONN. Students from CGS are paired with students in other districts. The children meet together a few times a year and work on writing a book together. Each child who participates receives a copy of the book that was written with their partner class. A Balinese dancer and storyteller performed recently for the children involved in the program.

Next month Mr. Grasso plans to do a presentation on the school website. He will use the new screen to project the web pages and “walk people through the site,” which has many new pages under construction.

March is “Fairness” month at CGS. At a staff meeting, Mr. Grasso announced what many perceived as unfair: that he is retiring in June. Mr. Grasso has been in public education for 40 years; 12 of which have been in the district, with 7 of those being at CGS. He commented that he has stayed longer than originally planned, due in part to a wonderful PTO. He also said that his seven years at CGS have been his happiest years.

Acceptance of February 2008 Minutes: Sue Owens

Lisa Pease made a motion to accept the February 2008 PTO minutes. Crissy Stinson seconded the motion and it passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Megan Nolan

The income for the past month has been from the spring fundraiser and the February Dimitri’s Day. The expenses are for the collator that was purchased as well as expenses related to the Kids’ Fun Fair. Some money still needs to be paid out; about \$8000. in funds is needed for events in the spring.

New Business

Spring Book Fair

The spring book fair will be held on April 22, 23, and 24, in conjunction with parent conferences.

Elections

All positions on the PTO board need to be filled for next year. The leadership may consist of a president and vice president or two co-presidents. A secretary and treasurer are needed as well. If anyone has any questions about a position, feel free to speak with anyone on the board.

Committee Reports

Teacher Appreciation: Crissy Stinson

Teacher Appreciation events have been held every other month, so there is nothing planned for March. During April conferences, there will be three days planned for the teachers with a pot-luck type celebration. Anyone who would like to can sign up to provide a salad, sandwiches, or some type of pasta. Also, the first week in May is teacher appreciation week, so something will be planned for everyday.

Dimitri's Days: Michelle White

The profit from the last Dimitri's day was about \$30. It was suggested that next month a reminder notice be sent home the day before Dimitri's Day instead of that same day, in order to increase the likelihood of families purchasing from Dimitri's.

Kids' Fun Fair: Karen Bohr

The Kids' Fun Fair is a couple of weeks away (March 29), and many volunteers are still needed for that day. Jennifer Kanaitis and Kristen Tingey are in charge of volunteers. Please let friends or high school students who need community service hours know about this opportunity, because over 60 volunteers are needed for the fair.

The fair will be an enjoyable event for all. It will be held in both gyms at the high school and representatives from the town recreation teams will be there. There will be balloons, tattoos, and face painting, as well as performers from the Can Dance Studio, a magician, and the New Britain Rock Cat mascot. All of the games will be based on popular TV game shows. A notice will be sent home about buying bracelets for admission prior to the fair. Once the bracelets are purchased, all activities (except for the bake sale and Take-A-Chance baskets) are free.

Old Business

Talent Show: Amber Culp

Amber thanked everyone for helping with the talent show. It was a really cute event, and over 130 people attended. Karen Bohr commented that Amber was a great MC and it would be wonderful to have her coordinate the show again next year.

Jump Rope For Heart

This week-long event went very well. Due to a snow day, there was a make-up day after February vacation.

Daffodils: Doreen Hurley

\$800. was raised for the American Cancer Society during the daffodil sale. Daffodils will be delivered on Wednesday, March 19.

Spring Fundraiser: Kim Power

About \$9,000. worth of products were sold, which is about \$3,000. less than last year, but there were many things going on at the same time. CGS made about a \$3,500. profit. Food items need to be picked up tomorrow from 3-6. Maynard Farms plants will be available for pickup next Wednesday.

If the PTO signs up with a company in April for next fall's fundraiser, there will be a discount involved. Kim will bring fundraising ideas from three different companies to the next meeting and those present can vote on which one they like best.

Scrapbooking Event: Kim Power

Last Saturday was the scrapbooking event. It was a great day, with about 27 people in attendance. About \$730. was raised for the purchase of new folding chairs. Everyone had a great time, and Kim has gotten requests to organize another similar event.

President Comments and Awards: Karen Bohr

Karen commented that as part of kindergarten registration, the PTO put together folders to be handed out to the families who attend. The folders contain information about the PTO and include small “gifts” such as crayons, a ruler, and a magnet with important school numbers.

Karen presented gift bags to the following people for their efforts: Michelle White for stuffing the folders for Kindergarten registration, Doreen Hurley for the daffodil sale, Kim Power for the spring fundraiser, and Amber Culp for the talent show.

Denise Arisian won the door prize. Maria thanked everyone for coming and said she hoped to see them at the Kids’ Fun Fair. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM. The next PTO meeting will be held March 11.