

Coventry Grammar School PTO Meeting Minutes **Monday, October 15, 2007**

Co-president Maria Tata called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. She welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. Maria mentioned that co-president Karen Bohr was unable to be at the meeting due to illness, and that she would try to keep the business brief because of the special guest speaker, Superintendent Dr. Donna Bernard.

Principal's Report: Mr. Ray Grasso

Mr. Grasso thanked everyone for coming and supporting the school. The school is in the midst of "Friendship month." Every month from October to June, there will be a different theme that will be the focus for the month. Social worker Ronnie Kim is visiting all of the classrooms and talking to the children about friendship. The first Cultural Arts presentation, Sir George and The Dragon, blended nicely with this month's theme, as it was the story of a friendship between the princess and the dragon.

The Coventry firefighters visited the school on Friday, for the culmination of Fire Prevention Week. The firefighters were referred to as "our special friends" who help keep us safe. The firefighters showed children what they looked like when dressed in full gear so that the children would not be afraid if they saw them that way.

The new librarian, Mr. Brett Lowman, is "an exceptional man with a love for children." He will be reading stories related to the theme of the month. He created a "friendship train" in the library, in order to highlight kindnesses shown by the children. The child's name and the kindness shown is noted on the train. Next month's theme will be giving.

Teacher's Report: Ms. Terry Bitwinski

Ms. Bitwinski thanked the PTO for their support of Cultural Arts and for the wonderful puppet performance by Pumpernickel Puppets. In addition to the month's friendship theme, the puppets also talked to the children about the importance of reading. The puppeteer told the children that when he was younger and interested in finding out about puppets, he went to the library for more information.

Next month, there will be a special presentation from Firefighter Phil on November 8. Firefighter Phil will talk not only about fire safety, but also about other emergencies at home. This visit is made possible through a grant from the local fire department.

Ms. Bitwinski took a moment to reiterate the importance of the school's website, coventryps.org. Much information goes on the school's website. There are photos of events, teacher newsletters, and field trip permission slips in case the original is misplaced. The site is a good tool for those with internet access and is a nice way for extended family members who live far away to see what is happening at the school.

Mr. Grasso added that there are links to photos and a synopsis of the recent grade 1 and 2 curriculum nights, as well as to photos from the Cultural Arts presentation on the school's main page.

Mr. Grasso also said that a reminder will be sent home about the school's expectations for the October 31 Storybook Character Day. He said that the staff is pleased that the Halloween celebration has evolved into a celebration of books and literature.

Acceptance of September 2007 Minutes: Sue Owens

Crissy Stinson made a motion to accept the September 2007 minutes. Doreen Hurley seconded the motion, and it passed.

Treasurer's Report: Megan Nolan

The big change to the treasurer's report is the profit from the fall fundraiser. The school did very well. Committed funds have been updated.

Committee Reports

Teacher Appreciation: Crissy Stinson

Crissy thanked everyone who offered to help on the Teacher Appreciation Committee. On October 24th, Crissy will provide apples and candy for the teachers. During conference week, on November 13, 14, and 15, the Teacher Appreciation Committee will provide soup, salad, and bread each day for lunch for the staff. The teachers are very busy during this time, Crissy remarked, and it is helpful for them to have a nice lunch. Crissy passed a list around for volunteers to sign up to make soup, salad, or bread. She is also looking for donations of napkins and utensils.

Family Fun Night: Dave DiGiovanni

On Friday October 19, the movie "Monsters, Inc." will be shown in the gym. Popcorn will be served and children can dress in pajamas and bring sleeping bags or blankets to sit on. One winner will be selected for the door prize, a \$20. Wal-Mart gift card for the purchase of "Ratatouille" or another movie of the winner's choice. Donations of canned goods for the Coventry food pantry will be collected as admission to the movie.

Old Business

Fall Fund Raiser: Kim Power

The fall fundraiser was a huge success, with a profit of about \$8,000. Kim is waiting to hear back about the citrus delivery. It should be sometime between November 11th and 16th.

New Business

Apples For Teachers: Doreen Hurley

During conference week, there will be apple trees decorating the walls. The teachers will fill out the apples with wishes for items they'd like to have in the classroom. When parents come to conferences, they can pick an apple and then donate that item to the teacher. The trees will be up for about two weeks, until Thanksgiving.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Donna Bernard

Dr. Bernard expressed her thanks to the parents for being at the meeting. She remarked that the themes of friendship and giving are a nice balance for her topic: the partnership between home and school. Dr. Bernard talked about the importance of school and home supporting each other in their work. She passed out a sheet outlining the district's long-term goals and objectives, a copy of which is available on the website.

Dr. Bernard also showed a twenty-minute video, which contained interviews of students talking about their families and their school experience. Dr. Bernard remarked that it is a complex balance between the families and the school system that assists in the development of the child. How we develop young

people: “what we do with them, how we are with them, and how they feel supported by us” is important to their emotional system, she said. After the video there was a short discussion, with a time of questions and answers.

Crissy Stinson drew a name for the door prize, and Linda Picard won a gumball machine. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM. The next PTO meeting is Tuesday, November 13.