

Terraset PTA Meeting Minutes

Tuesday October 7, 2008

The meeting opened at 7:05pm

Members Present: Renee Gilanshah (President), Stephanie Randall (Vice-President), Marsha White (Treasurer), Liz Falcone (Secretary), Ellen Cury, Joan Carter, Leslie Sogandares, Pam Sipher, Dianne Rose, Scott Logan, Tammy French, Kathy Somer, Suzanne White, Gary Powell

In attendance: Christina Krieg (prospective parent 2009)

Apologies: Annette Bobby, Gladelle Hardenbergh

1. Renee Gilanshah welcomed all present, promising to move quickly through the long agenda.
2. The previous meeting minutes of September 15, 2008 were presented. Marsha White moved to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting. Seconded Leslie Sogandares.
Accepted.
3. *Matters Arising from Minutes:* Scott Logan will now be Teacher Liaison.
4. *IRS Update:* Renee Gilanshah reported that Terraset PTA has received a letter indicating that our case is still under review. We will be notified in another 45 days of the IRS' final decision.
5. *Principal's Report:* (Mrs. Cury)
 - 5.1. The school year is up and running and all is going well!
 - 5.2. Mrs. Cury plans to review field trip expenditures to ensure equity amongst teachers.
Given rising cost of fuel, buses are more expensive to run so it is increasingly difficult to fund all the field trips proposed.
 - 5.3. Need at least three to four volunteers to assemble new basketball hoops Kurt Rose was volunteered. The County has reneged on erecting and supplying locks indicating the new hoops are not an approved style (although they were at time of purchase). The County did complete re-surfacing of black top as promised. The first hoop has been assembled and once the second is put together, County will paint basketball court lines.

6. *Update from Teacher Liaison:* Scott Logan has been seeking input from other teachers and staff. Particularly encouraging return of staff surveys. Ten have been returned to date.
7. *Officer and Committee Reports*
 - 7.1. *Treasurer:* (Marsh White)
 - 7.1.1. *Income:* Membership drive returned \$922 in dues in September. Additional contributions of \$740 were allocated as follows: \$284 to After School Programs; \$67 to Grounds; \$20 to Capital Projects; \$369 to General PTA funds. Car magnet sales totaled \$8.
 - 7.1.2. *Expenses:* Innisbrook school supplies expenses totaled \$835.29 returning net of \$48.71. Dianne Rose questioned whether a check for Internet sales had been received. She estimated there was over \$2000 in gross sales. PTA gets 5% plus. Dianne to follow up.
 - 7.1.3. Friends of Terraset scholarship funds should be used as directed by contributors.
 - 7.1.4. Pam Sipher asked how income from Box Tops distributed. BoxTops money goes to general PTA funds for distribution as needed. No checks from BoxTops received since June. \$236.94 received in May. Pam believes that between October '07 and July '08 PTA raised \$578. Need a better process for keeping track. Pam to report to Marsha what she sends in. Budgeted expenses of \$40 based on previous year's claims. Pam was advised to claim expenses by submitting a Check Request form available on the web site.
 - 7.1.5. Dianne Rose suggested that financial report should reflect full distribution of scholarship funds by "zeroing-out" expenses. Should be explicit that contributions are being used as directed.
 - 7.2. *Membership:* (Stephanie Randall)
 - 7.2.1. Recent drive delivered 90 parent members and 12 staff members.
 - 7.2.2. New members in October deliver over \$2000 in membership dues. Likely to get more members.
 - 7.2.3. It was "guesstimated" that there might be 200 families in the school– 85 families are represented in membership. This was considered a good result.
 - 7.2.4. Need to identify how the additional contribution funds will be allocated. Because of school budget cuts, school will have many more expenses, this money can be drawn on. General fund can be directed to school.
 - 7.2.5. Will have another membership campaign at end of '08 and in new year.

- 7.3. *School Supplies Sale*: (Dianne Rose). Anticipate making about \$250. Quality of supplies seems to be fine. Teachers do need to make a decision early in the year so they have time to review the items selected for the supplies list. Provide brand names if specifically desired.
- 7.4. *Gift Wrap Fundraiser*: (Renee Gilanshah for Laurie Hodge) Over \$19, 400 in gross sales. Sale has been extended to very last minute – 10/17. Catalogs in Langston Hughes and South Lakes teacher lounges.
- 7.5. *After Schools Program*: Leslie Sogandares tabled her report. PTA Friends of Terraset funds subsidize 12-13% of registration fees where program cost exceeds \$80. Subsidy to bring program cost in line with Reston Association programs. 20% of registrations in Tennis, Lego, and Nature clubs are supported through scholarships. Loosing about \$300 on Creative Kids Program, as we did not reach minimum enrolment numbers. Reston Tennis very generous and covers cost of under enrolment.
- 7.6. *Assemblies*: (Leslie Sogandares on behalf of Joyce Carr). Storyteller, Gary Lloyd, booked for October. Writers Workshop booked for Nov 12. Tentatively have “Theatre Four” in Feb; Andrew Young, a Mediaeval Knight, planned for 5th grade in Spring.
- 7.7. *Teacher Mini-grants*: (Suzanne White) Mini-grants are intended as a mechanism to get money to kids via teachers. Applications that have potential to reach most number of children viewed favorably. Two applications received.
- 7.7.1. Julie Damon and Tony Bland applying for 6th grade field trip funds. Twenty-two children in 6th grade are on free or reduced lunch program. Application for \$204 to attend Interquest—an outward-bound type experience. Kathy Somer moved to approve, seconded by Scott Logan. Approved.
- 7.7.2. Eugenia Sozzi, the Spanish teacher requested, \$60 to attend a State wide foreign language conference. This is the third year she has been invited to present. Her attendance promotes Terraset and provides feedback to the school on our program success. Kathy Somer moved to approve, seconded Leslie Sogandares. Approved.
- 7.7.3. Mrs. Cury noted that no student is ever excluded from a field trip because of cost.
- 7.8. *GRACE Art Update*: (Dianne Rose) GRACE Art is off to an excellent start. Twenty-two docents covering 18 classes. Nine of docents are new, eight of whom attended the volunteer orientation session.

7.9. *BoxTops Update:* (Pam Sipher)

7.9.1. Collection sheets have been distributed to whole school population. Zip-lock collection bags will go to kids who have previously donated. Each child who submits a collection of BoxTops and/or labels will receive a treat bag. Six-seven volunteer helpers have stepped forward to assist with trimming. Mrs. Donovan's class is expected to help count the BoxTops into groups of 50. It was suggested that posters for box top week would help promote the program. Graph representing progress is also a great motivator for class competition. Calculation will be based on per capita number i.e. number of BoxTops/number in class. There is a lot of room to grow this program... 57/400 students participated last year. Other sources for collection include schools that do not participate; cluster boards with community mailing lists. Dinner Zen collects the tops for easy collection.

7.9.2. Pam enquired how the PTA decides to spend credit with Campbell's Labels—currently 6,840 points. Mrs. Cury suggested school senior team could advise. An online catalogue is available.

7.10. *Store Customer Card Registration:* (Annette Bobby) Report tabled

7.11. *Tigers on the Town:* (Renee Gilanshah) \$330 from McTeachers Night. \$150 worth of gift certificates donated by McDonalds will be used for PBS drawings on WETR. Next Tiger on the Town night on October 20th flyer required for 20% contribution at Chick-fil-A

7.12. *Grant Applications:* (Stephanie Randall) Dr Gary Powell will chair this new committee. Stephanie Powell, as the Board representative, and Vicki Green, a Terraset parent, will also be on the committee. Examples of grants available include Dominion Electric giving up to \$2k; Virginia Environment Endowment offering \$5k grants for environment and sciences; Character Development grants of up to \$2k (could support PBS); School usually gets grants from Target. Mrs. Cury expressed appreciation that PTA supporting this effort.

7.12.1. Target currently offering 5000, \$800 grants for field trips. Applications due by Nov 1. It was suggested that the 4th grade James Town field trip would be a good candidate. Committee advised to work with Robin Bentley and Katherine Stevens.

7.12.2. Gary Powell commented that the committee can take two approaches: apply only for grants that support the school's mission; chase the dollars and find funding where it is available. The second approach can burn you out. Need to sit with senior staff. Mrs Cury advised the school plan has been reviewed— new focus on life skills, and responsibility within community. Support of teachers will deliver best results as long as applications do not draw their focus from school's direction. Aiming for one application per month.

7.13. *Web Site and Newsletter Update:* (Liz Falcone)

7.13.1. The updated website was launched on September 15. The home page now has a News and Announcements section along with a Calendar of Events. These are updated on a weekly, if not daily basis. We do not have a mechanism for tracking access to the site. Liz Falcone hopes to implement this as a part of the next major update. Other proposed improvements include online membership registration using PayPal. Members were asked to advise of any errors or suggested updates.

7.13.2. Weekly e-Announcements are sent out on Monday mornings (or as needed). This is managed via Constant Contact, which appears to be a very reliable platform. The announcements received very positive feedback on first couple of bulletins. Liz Falcone expressed concern as to whether a weekly issue represents too much communication. The meeting did not consider this an issue. Teachers could encourage sign up at parent-teacher conference.

7.13.3. The first issue of the PTA Newsletter, TouchPoint, was distributed Monday, October 6 to 215 recipients. In the first 2 days it appears that 40% of recipients have read the newsletter. This is a conservative estimate as not all email tools provide link-back information on whether a message has been opened. To assess the number of readers actually reading the information, a random draw was included at the end of the newsletter. Over 20% of readers have entered this draw. The winner will be announced in next week's e-Announcement. The newsletter also called for expressions of interest in sponsoring the newsletter. We have one very interested party. The objective of sponsorship is to cover the cost of Constant Contact so that a maximum percentage of funds raised will be distributed to the school. Since the readership is relatively small and it represents a fairly restricted market, the Board suggests \$15 sponsorship per

newsletter would be appropriate. Just one sponsor per issue would receive approximately a 600px X 200px space that can include text, one image, and a link to the sponsors own web site.

7.14. *Student Directory Update*: Renee Gilanshah reported that there appears to be a high level of participation

7.15. *Skate Night Update*: Renee Gilanshah reported that Jessica Gordon has agreed to lead this effort. She has negotiated a joint skate night with Lake Anne and Sunrise Valley Elementary Schools. Skate Night will be held on Nov 8 at Skate Quest. The contract is yet to be signed.

7.16. *Bingo Night*: Kathy Somer queried whether the date of Nov 21 might be problematic—it is the same date as the Thanksgiving Luncheon. After extended discussion, it was agreed the date should stand.

7.17. *Spirit Wear*: Stephanie Randall reported that an order form would be going out in a couple of weeks with a deadline of Nov 10.

8. *Cookbook Fundraiser*: no discussion

9. *Other Business*:

9.1. Rachael Goldman in production of Sound of Music at local theater, F Scott Fitzgerald Theater: Oct 31-Nov 15.

9.2. Each year PTA has financial emphasis— e.g. support in building book room. Now the school needs to improve their Math resources. Mrs. Cury hopes the PTA may be able to allocate some money to support this effort. County is starting to train Math Resource Specialists and Terraset has demonstrated strength in this area in the past. She would like to retain this leading position. It was commented that GRACE Art has a focus on Math and Technology in December.

10. Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm

Next Meeting Wednesday Nov 5th, 2008