

Terraset PTA Meeting Minutes 7pm Tuesday November 10, 2009

Meeting opened at 7:03pm.

Present: Ellen Cury, Amy Davidson, Annette Bobby (Secretary), Heather Thomas (Vice President), Scott Logan, Liz Falcone (Secretary), Stephanie Randall (President), Dianne Rose, Joan Carter, Rebecca Estrada.

Apologies: Leslie Sogandares, Suzanne Veter, Suzanne White, Renee Gilanshah.

1. Stephanie Randall opened the meeting and welcomed all present.
2. *The Previous Minutes* from October 6, 2009 were presented. Scott Logan moved that they were an accurate record of the meeting. Annette Bobby seconded. Agreed.
3. *Matters arising from minutes:*
 - 3.1. Stephanie asked if the school had given further thought to how to use the money from Wholefoods Markets (4.2 of October minutes). Mrs. Cury advised that only 4th grades remained interested in purchasing Reader Response Journals. She suggested there might be a need to provide snacks at a by-invitation-only after school program the school hoped to be able to offer to students struggling to prepare adequately for SOLs. It was agreed that we should send a thank you note to Wholefoods Markets indicating that the funds will be used to further enhance our educational enrichment programs.
 - 3.2. Stephanie advised that the Spelling Bee membership fees have been paid.
4. *President's Report:* Stephanie advised that the PTA will have a presense at Math Night on Monday, November 16th. A follow-up drive for membership was distributed today.
5. *Treasurer's Report:*
 - 5.1. Annette Bobby advised that all PTA bank accounts with Wachovia have been closed. All accounts are now held with BB&T.
 - 5.2. Innisbrook Gift Wrap receipts to date total \$13,369, but the total is expected to be about \$15,700.
 - 5.3. Some discussion ensued regarding the PTA's need to have receipts for all check payments. Mrs. Cury expressed concern about the difficulty this presented Terraset administrators in providing receipts for detailed expenditure. Dianne Rose suggested that Stephanie Randall prepare a letter that describes a contribution of \$3,000 to Terraset ES for additional educational support funds. This recommendation was supported.
 - 5.4. Annette Bobby suggested the need for a Returned Check Policy. She recommended that writers of returned checks should be responsible for all associated fees and that when more than one check from an individual bounces, and payment is not resolved within a reasobable period of time, that individual should be added to a "Cash Only" list. Rebecca Estrada moved that Annette draft a policy to this effect and that payment instruction on PTA forms be adjusted to reflect this new policy. Seconded Dianne Rose. Agreed.

6. *Principal's Report:*
 - 6.1. Mrs. Cury was happy to advise that the school is finally staffed through to the end of the year with the recent appointment of a music teacher, Jonathan Andert, and a FLES teacher, Marisol Calvache-Vu.
 - 6.2. Debbie Banko has returned to parttime status and Angela Peterson will join the school as an Instructional Assistant.
 - 6.3. Kathy Maly, a certified teacher, will substitute for Caryn Zambrano in first grade. She will overlap with Caryn for one week to ensure a streamlined transition.
 - 6.4. The Honor Role was announced in today's edition of Terragram.
 - 6.5. Five Terraset students were selected to participate in the K3 art competition, a Thanksgiving Card Challenge. Two were placed in the top three of all entries across Reston.
 - 6.6. Dr Fabio Zuluaga, Assistant Superintendent for Cluster XII, has been to Terraset two times. He is very student oriented and directed. He is expected to visit again Wednesday, December 16th.
7. *Bylaws Revision:* Liz Falcone moved that the proposed bylaws revisions be accepted. Seconded Dianne Rose. Agreed. The new bylaws will be submitted to FCCPTA.
8. *Reflections Update:* A total of 21 entries, from 2 grade divisions, in 5 different media were received
 - 8.1. Six entries were judged as Outstanding Interpretations and will move on to Council Level judging. Renee Gilanshah is submitting these works this evening.
 - 8.2. Terraset Reflections Exhibition will piggy-back Math Night. All submissions will be on display including copies (where possible) of the absent work
 - 8.3. All entries will have ribbon placement.
 - 8.4. A gift card drawing for all entrants will also be held on Math night.
 - 8.5. Terraset Reflections will come in at or below budget.
9. *Innisbrook update:*
 - 9.1. The prize machine was wild today. Kids really enjoyed the follow up of the event.
 - 9.2. \$15,700 in sales was considered a very good outcome.
10. *Tigers on the Town Update:* Tigers on the Town is a community building program that provides opportunities for Terraset families to get together at local restaurants. In addition, it provides a modest fundraising opportunity as the restaurants give a percentage of their takings back to the PTA. The first event will be December 7th at Chick-fil-a. There may be another night in May. In January we will probably have a take-out event with Domino's Pizza. Then in March we are planning a night at Potbelly.
11. *Constant Contact Pricing:* Constant Contact is the service used to distribute our eNewsletter and Announcements. While the distribution list is less than 500, our monthly costs as a non-profit were \$10.50 per month. However, last month our membership jumped to over 500, doubling the monthly payment to \$21. In order to secure the non-profit pricing, it is necessary to pay 12 months in advance. As a result, it was necessary to pay a \$252 subscription when we had budgeted for only \$120. Monthly sponsorship offsets some of the cost, but full recovery will not occur until next year when we can raise the sponsorship fee. The Board will adjust the budget.
12. *Booster Fund Run* – a fundraising idea from Tatiana Greenwood, a new parent to the school. The Booster Fund Run service helps to organize, promote and gather pledges for sponsorship of students who run in the event. Sponsorship might be \$1 per lap of a track. This idea came about because of concern that the Gift Wrap event is getting harder to promote... it competes with every other school at the same time of the year and is considered expensive. To counter that, the kids enjoy working for their prizes and buyers appreciate getting something for their donation. There

was concern expressed about dropping an event that is known to work for an unknown opportunity. Further, should we opt for a pledge based fundraiser, we would need to be careful not to clash with other events like the “Jump Rope for Heart”. Annette Bobby offered to look into this suggestion and report back at the next meeting.

13. *Budget Cuts*: PTA’s priorities – see attached list from FCPS for a list of programs and services that are under consideration for elimination <http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2011/possiblecuts2011.pdf>.

Discussion points on this issue included:

- Each program proposed for elimination has an action group working to preserve it. How can the PTA prioritise when each program is so valuable?
- All the programs contribute to the quality of education offered in Fairfax County, we need to promote options that secure the system as is.
- Each parent will need to form their opinion based on what is best for their child
- The most important thing is to preserve the things that support quality education. The Principals Association has identified the following:
 - Staffing drives what happens in a school. Employees have had no raise or cost of living increase for three years, but they prefer to keep positions at that cost rather than increase class sizes.
 - Important to keep 194-day contracts. Longer contracts should be reviewed.
 - Full-day kindergarten is the foundation of successful learning.
 - Assistant Principals ensure a school, particularly a small school, can function. With only one senior administrator, it is impossible to attend to all that needs to be done including meetings, parent consultations, staffing matters, etc.
 - Guidance Counsellors are a critical resource in a school where families struggle with financial concerns, language barriers, bahavioral problems, etc.
 - Schools with special needs currently have caps on class sizes. The elimination of this would seriously impact the performance of all kids in the system.
 - School Based Technology Specialists maintain the technology, train teachers in its use, and promote opportunities for students to develop their technical skills. The school could be forced to restrict its use of technology without this type of expertise.
 - Transportation services do not need to be so extensive. Where families elect to attend schools outside their district, they should be responsible for funding their children’s transport.
 - Non school-based administrative needs should be reviewed.
 - A small school like Terraset has no economies of scale – reductions hit hard.
 - With a 42% poverty rate, our families struggle to provide educational enrichment to their children – cuts to programs hit these families first.
- The school system needs funding to meet its required budget rather than being forced to cut. Many parents are saying “Tax me if that’s what it takes!”

14. Other Business

- 14.1. Problems with Flag-football continue. Instructor late again. Leslie in contact.
14.2. The Trout fish tank going well. www.terrasetaclubs.blogspot.com active.

The meeting closed at 8:43pm.

Next meeting: **7pm, Tuesday, December 1st**