



the Hawk Talk



Stillwater Elementary

www.stillwaterptsa.org

Unit 2.16.24

November 2013

Volume 9 Issue 3

Enrichment Update

A Message from your PTSA President

HAVE YOU HEARD THE GREAT NEWS? The Northshore YMCA is coming to Stillwater! The PTSA Board of Directors voted on October 10th to terminate PTSA's enrichment program, opening the door for the Y to provide after school programs for Stillwater students. But "WHY" you ask? As PTSA members, you are entitled to an explanation. I want to assure you that the PTSA Board gave its decision a lot of thought and discussion.

For many years Stillwater PTSA has worked with independent contractors to bring after school classes to our students. We have primarily used local providers, including local organizations and many talented Stillwater parents and community members. Although PTSA Board members had good intentions over the years, PTSA has not always been in compliance with our insurance company, nor National and Washington State PTA, requirements relative to contracting for after school classes. Those requirements are, at a minimum, only contracting with individuals or companies that have a valid business license for what they will teach, have liability insurance that covers themselves and names SW PTSA as an insured, and having two SW PTSA member volunteers monitoring each class for the entire period of the class. Being a small community, we like to believe that we are all friends and would have no reason to make claims against or sue each other. But I heard recently from Washington State PTA that there have been some lawsuits brought against PTA local units because of issues that happened during PTA-sponsored after school classes. This news concerns us because, as officers and members of the PTSA Board of Directors, we have a duty to protect the assets of our PTSA. Our insurance may be invalidated if we are knowingly doing something that puts our PTSA at risk.

Last spring Mr. Madigan became concerned about some negative things he heard about one or more teachers an independent contractor sent to SW. He approached PTSA about these concerns and the lack of monitoring by PTSA of the classes it was offering. He suggested that PTSA consider bringing in the Northshore YMCA to provide all after school programs. At the time, we put that suggestion on our back burner.

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Fill out your forms online!
Stillwater PTSA now offers parents the convenience of event, membership forms etc. all in one place:
www.stillwaterptsa.org

Save the Date

November

Friday, Nov. 08
Veteran's Assembly

Monday, Nov. 11
Veteran's Day No School

Friday, Nov. 22:
Book Fair Family Fun Night
BINGO for Books
General Meeting

November 22-27:
Conferences release at 12:30

November 28 & 29:
Thanksgiving Break

**2013—2014
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Enrichment Update (continued)

Mr. Madigan told us that, now that he is aware of the requirements, he will not permit independent contractors to provide classes at Stillwater if they do not have a business license or insurance. It became clear that PTSA would not be able to offer much in the way of after school classes at the same low cost if we comply with all requirements. Mr. Madigan and I met with Corey Lowell, the valley representative for the Northshore Y, to discuss what the Y can offer at Stillwater and whether or not SW PTSA fits into that plan. The PTSA officers, along with Past President, Wendy Bradley, and Enrichment Chair, Amy Pitt, met and discussed the various options at length. Corey then made a presentation to the PTSA Board members and answered all our questions. The Board members then discussed the proposal and weighed the pros, cons and other options. In the end, all the Board members believe that, under the circumstances, it is in the best interest of PTSA to terminate its after school Enrichment program to protect our PTSA.

However, PTSA is not contracting with the YMCA to provide after school programs. The Board only voted to terminate our own PTSA after school programs. The choice of the Y as the organization to provide after school programs for SW is Mr. Madigan's decision. Because PTSA is concerned with the well-being of Stillwater students, we were part of the discussions with the Y. After listening to Corey Lowell's proposal and being assured that the Y's intention is to bring in Y staff AND work with local businesses and organizations, PTSA supports Mr. Madigan's decision. Corey lives out here in the valley, his children attend Cherry Valley Elementary, and he understands the importance of trying to use local talent before bringing in contractors from surrounding areas. As a young father, he understands the importance of offering quality, low-cost programs for our kids. PTSA agreed to provide the Y with contact information for the people we have used for after school classes over the past few years, help with a survey the Y will be sending to parents, and help advertise classes the Y will offer. Other than that, PTSA is not associated with the Y.



We hope that you will help the Y get started by completing the survey it sends out. Corey is really excited about starting a Y program at SW and wants to offer classes YOU want for your kids. He is open to suggestions and would like to know about people who would like to offer classes or clubs. The Y is a national non-profit organization with local branches. It has the ability to offer many more programs than PTSA was able to provide. Look for the survey and more information in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Pam Deming
President

Stillwater PTSA 2013-14

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated!

You know the old adage that time is money, right? Well, you should also know that time is an investment, and volunteering in your child's school is an investment in his or her education. It is also a great opportunity to meet with other invested parents and build a supportive school community.



The Stillwater PTSA has many activities to volunteer for. From Popcorn Wednesdays to Library Volunteers to helping in the garden, we always need more help to enrich our students' educational experience!

If you've already volunteered for an upcoming event, but haven't been contacted, please be patient. The chair of the event or project you volunteered for will contact you as the event draws near. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers that have helped thus far in the library, for picture day, speech and hearing. Help makes all the difference!

There are several areas where we need help now. If you would like to be involved a bit more, we are still in need of a co-chair for Elf Workshop and a chair for Legislative Advocacy.

You may sign up on our handy new volunteer sign-up site <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4FA8A92EA13-ptsa/9154784>. This is a very easy way to sign-up for all the fun volunteer opportunities! Or visit our website www.Stillwaterptsa.org

Please note that the Riverview School District has volunteer application packets, which need to be completed before any volunteering can take place. This is needed, whether you are volunteering for a PTSA event or in your child's classroom.

If you have any questions, you can email one of us VP's, Jae Holt at jae_holt@hotmail.com, Julie Logan at juliemlo@hotmail.com or Gayle Saunders at gaylemaries@gmail.com.

Many thanks from your veeps,

Jae Holt

Julie Logan

Gayle Saunders

WSPTA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RECAP

Pam Deming, Advocacy Chair

Over 250 PTA advocates from around Washington State came together October 18th and 19th for the Washington State PTA Legislative Assembly. Sadly, Riverview School District had a very poor showing at the Assembly. Stillwater was the only Riverview school to send a delegate to represent its priorities.

Since we are currently in the second year of a two year cycle, the WSPTA top 5 priorities were not changed. Those priorities are:

1. Advance Basic Education Reforms:
2. Fund Education First
3. Closing the Opportunity Gaps
4. Revenue for Kids
5. Access to Highly Effective Teachers

Four Washington State Legislators joined us for the two-day Assembly – Marcie Maxwell, the Governor’s Senior Policy Advisor on Education, Senator Bruce Dammeier, Representative Pat Sullivan, and our own 5th District Representative, Chad Magendanz. All four are friends of PTA and are committed to advancing education, education funding and serve on the Washington State Pathways to 21st Century Education Committee. Representatives from OSPI, Office of the Education Ombudsman, Professional Education Standards Board, University of Washington, League of Education Voters and many others provided classes and advocacy training for the delegates.

Also attending was Tom Ahearne, attorney for the plaintiffs’ in the McCleary, et al. vs. State of Washington case, which is currently pending before the Washington State Supreme Court. If you are not familiar with that case, it is the case that is enforcing the Washington State Constitution, which states that it is the “paramount duty” of the State to fully fund education. The Supreme Court has ordered the State of Washington to fully fund education first by the year 2018. The Court’s order basically tells the State that it must FULLY fund education before it can fund anything else in the State budget. The State is supposed to show the Court its progress each year, and show how it will get to the goal by 2018. Mr. Ahearne gave a very entertaining power point talk showing how the State is NOT complying with the Supreme Court’s order, and what action the Court may take as the case moves forward.

The delegates reconfirmed PTA’s Legislative Principles, considered new Resolutions, attended caucuses, debated and voted on new issues being considered for PTA support, attended advocacy training sessions, and built Action Teams and Action Plans. Over 5,000 PTA members took the Legislative Survey, and we thank those of you from Stillwater who participated. The survey results were used by the delegates as they considered each issue and resolution. The following Legislative Principles were adopted:

**Public Education Policies and Funding, adding “Ensuring the provision of high quality special education services and accommodations to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities and special needs.”*

**Safe and Nurturing Environments for Children and Youth, adding “Social Emotional Learning” and “Prevention of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse of minors”.*

Mark your Calendar



Focus Day

February 4, 2014

Olympia, WA

Keep kids front and center

Legislative Corner (continued)

Short-term issue amendments were adopted relating to access, opportunity and equity for special education; background checks on gun purchases; English language learner students; and sufficient and equitable funding for highly capable programming. Resolutions relating to access to general education for students with disabilities, allergies and asthma, and funding basic education were also adopted.

If you would like more information on any of the issues or resolutions adopted, that information will become available on the Washington State PTA website in the near future.

Past Washington State PTA President, Linda Hanson, was awarded the PTA Outstanding Advocate award for her work with “NEWS” (Network for Excellence in Washington Schools), which is one of the plaintiffs in the McCleary lawsuit.

PTA has always been a grassroots advocacy organization. Advocacy takes many forms, from meeting with your child’s teacher on behalf of your child, to visiting with your legislators in Olympia on behalf of all children. Washington State PTA has a Grassroots Connection, which you can sign up for at www.wastatepta.org. You can sign up to receive Action Alerts when a PTA priority issue is coming up for discussion or vote in the legislature. The Action Alert asks that you e-mail or call your Senator and Representatives and ask them to vote for or against an issue. PTA members have made BIG differences over the years with their advocacy efforts.

Mark your calendars for PTA Focus Day - February 4, 2014. That day PTA members from across the state will gather at our State Capitol to rally, meet with legislators and deliver personal messages to our 5th Legislative District Senator and Representatives. This is a great opportunity to take our children to Olympia for a civics lesson. I take my children every year and each year they learn more and more about how our government works. They have met and talked with Governors, Lieutenant Governors, Senators, Representatives, and even the State Treasurer and Secretary of State. They have delivered letters and posters from their classmates. These elected officials are ALWAYS thrilled to meet with children. The trip is well worth taking them out of school for one day (don’t tell Mr. Madigan I said that). I will be organizing a group from Riverview to go to Focus Day. Carpooling will be an option. Look for more information about Focus Day after the first of the year.

In the meantime, if you do not know our 5th District legislators, this is a good time to introduce yourself, while they are not in session. They want to meet their constituents and hear what is important to them. You can e-mail Senator Mark Mullet, Representative Chad Magendanz, and Representative Jay Rodne by visiting the Washington State Legislators’ page at www.leg.wa.gov and clicking on the “Find Your Legislators” tab. There is an e-mail form to fill out. They will respond. You can also find their phone numbers and street addresses on that page.

I would love to see more Riverview parents involved in State-level advocacy. I know it seems intimidating, but once you understand the basics, it’s really quite interesting and exciting. Please give serious consideration to attending Focus Day on February 4th.

Reflections

The entries are in and we have over 30 pieces of original artwork—including film, photography, literature, and visual arts—that are now being prepped for judging. We hope you will join us for our Reflections Ceremony and Gallery Night on Thursday, November 14th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. at Stillwater. We will have a chance to celebrate all the young artists who participated, distribute awards, and view all the creative and inspired entries while enjoying light refreshments and music from Valley of the Moon fiddlers. Please join us! These Stillwater Hawk artists deserve an audience.

Art Docent

My name is Ruby Childs, and I'm in charge of the PTSA Art Education programs at Stillwater Elementary.

One of my biggest responsibilities is the Art Docent Program. For those not familiar with the program, it is parent led art class that occurs once a month using the provided curriculum.

The Art Docent program at Stillwater Elementary has been a fun and educating way to offer an enrichment opportunity to the students. We have been following the same model for running the program for a number of years, and we have had some great times and great learning experiences using this process. This past year, it was decided the program could be taken to the next level by partnering with the teachers to further enhance the program. To meet this goal, a committee of teachers and I are coming up with a new process for the Art Docent program. Some details are still being ironed out, but we're excited about the possibilities.



I've heard some questions from returning parents, so I did want to reassure you that yes our Art Docent program is still happening. We are looking to set-up an orientation in November with the lessons starting in December or January.

At this time a volunteer list is being put together. Please let me know if you are still interested in helping out. Be sure to include the class you would like to help in, e-mail address, and a contact number.

Thanks,
Ruby Childs | rubyjchilds@gmail.com

Membership Contest Results

Thank you to everyone who worked hard to gain a class party and a trophy for the most PTSA members per classroom! The results are in and the big winner is....Ms. Tobin! Congratulations! We will be coordinating with her a date to hold the ice cream party. Best of all, the class also wins a trophy! The top three classes are as follows:



Tobin	79.17%
Heinson	62.50%
Friedenvalds	58.33%



Join the PTSA today
www.stillwaterptsa.org