

Grace Abbott Elementary PTO Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2017

Board Members: Alyssa Mason, President; Josh Kitchen, Treasurer; Christy Kleffman, Secretary; Matt Liston, President Elect

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Alyssa Mason.

Welcome/Introduction of Board Members and meeting attendees

Guest Presenter: Mari Anne Hartmann presented information from the Arts and Motion nonprofit organization, which coordinates the Dancing Classrooms program. Dancing Classrooms was started in New York City in 1994 by a Broadway dancer who began teaching dancing to students in elementary schools. They found that teaching dance also taught students manners and social skills. Omaha was the first site outside of New York to bring the program to elementary schools. Ballroom dance is taught to 5th grade students during the school day so that all students have a chance to be involved. Kindness, respect, and teamwork is taught through the dance instruction. The program begins with an orientation meeting for the students. The class is twice a week for 10 weeks, and often held in PE and music class. The 20th lesson is a special event where parents and guardians are invited to watch the students perform what they have learned. Some elementary schools even choose to take their students to community organizations such as nursing homes to showcase their new dance steps. The fee per class is split between the school and the Arts in Motion foundation. The Grace Abbott PTO would contribute to the school's portion of the fee; approximately \$2,000 total. More discussion and a possible vote about this program will take place at the November PTO meeting.

Committee Update: Walk-a-thon (Julie Shaner and Erika Rooney)

- THANK YOU to everyone who helped! We had a great turn out!
- The three classroom party winners are: Mrs. Dolezal (\$2441) Mrs. Doblal (1,815.10), and Mrs. Sweetman (\$1,777) All three classrooms will receive a Kona Ice Party, and Mrs. Dolezal's class will also receive a pizza party for achieving first place.
- Donations are at \$19,050 at last count, but more came in on Friday and we will probably get a bit more in this week. This is about \$500 shy of last year, but the net total will probably be higher due to more sponsor donations and lower cost for dinner and possibly a lower cost for prizes.
- We are still in need of people to help sort prizes on Monday, Oct. 16 from 10:30-3:20 – please contact committee chairs ASAP if you can help.
- As a guess, we may be netting close to \$24,000 which makes this a very successful event! There were more parents than ever at the walkathon to cheer on students. Dinner went very well. The committee was so helpful this year. Erika Rooney will be taking over as chair of the walk-a-thon in 2018. People who signed up for walk-a-thon this year will begin planning the 2018 event in the spring.
- A graphic designer is needed for next year to work on logos and graphics. Please let the PTO know if you are interested.

Review September Meeting Minutes: Carri Dyer motioned to approve the minutes and Jaime Diamond seconded. The minutes were approved.

President Note: Karl wanted to say thank you for the payment. He has so enjoyed getting to know the Grace Abbott Community.

Principal Report: Dr. Chaussee stated that Grace Abbott has 455 students this year, the most in 12 years. Dr. Chaussee appreciates everyone's extra work and time with this, as it does mean more time for teachers in the classroom. This year for the Halloween parties, only the parents organizing and helping with the party can come to classrooms at 1:45 to help with set up. The Halloween parties will be held on Oct. 27th. Dr. Chaussee and Julie Shaner met with a landscape architect last month to discuss future plans for the outdoor space and playground. One of the difficulties with the fitness circuit equipment are the ADA requirements. For the land that Abbott has, it would need to be built to the north of the wood chips. Concrete would need to be poured. The track could be built, with additional items installed near by. In the future, anything added to the playground needs concrete sidewalks leading up to it to comply with the ADA requirements. Dr. Chaussee said that the walking track would provide students with an additional place to play in rainy weather. There are 3-4 different plans available for the walking track, specific to Abbott's playground. The money must be available in hand before Millard will allow any plan to go forward. If the cost exceeds a certain amount, the PTO would not be committed to moving forward with the plan. Carri Dyer motioned for the walking track to be voted on tonight. Laura Hensley seconded the motion. Dr. Chaussee mentioned that a positive vote on this project would make this the priority as opposed to other projects. A vote was held and the motion passed.

Treasurer Report no report

Report from Addie Hollingsworth on the Levy Override:

- Levy info: On a \$150,000 house this would equal a \$135 a year increase (.09 cent levy); this money will only be accessed if necessary. It is also possible only a portion of this money will be used.
- The direct impact to Abbott without the levy would mean the loss of an interventionist, a custodian, a special ed teacher, and a social worker. Class sizes will also remain larger. The AP program and college readiness programs in the high schools could be lost, as well as HAL programs across the district.
- The ballot mailing is 10/23. Parents can bring their ballot to school at the Halloween party, or at AM drop off from 10/25-11/14. Ballots can also be dropped off at the Douglas County Election Commission (15505 W. Maple Rd.).
- Please talk with your neighbors and community members and encourage a vote of YES.
- Millard is already spending the least per student of the larger Omaha school districts.

Committee Updates:

Movie Nights (Maureen Kitchen): The first movie night is next month!

Youth Frontiers (Matt and Ashley Liston)

- This year's event will be held on Oct. 24th at Westside Church.
- Only 3 volunteers have been recruited so far...roughly 13 more volunteers needed!!! A note was put in the Gator Tales asking for volunteers for the day. Please let the PTO committee chairs know ASAP if you are available to help.

Yearbook (Suzie Hartman and Jaime Diamond)

- Yearbooks are still for sale: \$15 each.
- Yearbook Dedications: Fifth grade parents please turn in your Yearbook Dedication and baby picture for your fifth grader.
- Forms for both are available in the office.
- Yearbook Photos: If you have any photos of your students/classes you'd like to send in for consideration to the yearbook, watch for details soon on how to submit those.

Cash Rewards/Incentive Programs (Robin Matthes)

- The TAGG app is activated – there will be more information in this week's Gator Tales.

-Hy-Vee receipts are being collected from Sept. 1-Dec. 31; they are due to Hy-Vee by Jan. 15; we receive \$1.00 for every \$200 spent.

-The winter Box Top competition will run November through January.

Social/Welcome (Liz Guinn) – no report

Fifth Grade Farewell (Kristy Gotschall and Addie Hollingsworth)

-This year's event will be held on May 21st at Kiewit. Mark your calendars!

Hospitality (Becky Eichmann)-no report

Original Art Works Fundraiser (Debbie Smith) no report

Fun Nights (Cara Robbins and Cheri Shoup)

-First event was held yesterday. 1st grade played Left, Right, Center. About 45 kids participated.

-Upcoming fun nights will be held: 10/9 – 2nd and 3rd grade, 11/16 - 4th and 5th grade
12/7 - Kindergarten

Educational Grant Programs/Scholarships (Carri Dyer)

-Teachers will be sent the application form on the 10th; it is due back October 24th.

School Carnival (Kristy Gotschall)

-This year's carnival will be held on Fri., April 27. The committee will begin meeting after winter break to start planning.

Classroom Party Volunteer Coordinator (Carri Dyer)

-Classroom Parties - all classrooms have chairs, information was sent to them to help with planning.

-Halloween Parties will be held on Oct. 27, at 1:45.

Buzz Book (Laura Hensley and Jaime Diamond)

-We were able to be open online access to those who purchased a Buzz Book 3 weeks earlier than in past years. Buzz Books are still for sale. Print copies will be ordered from the printer in the next week.

Bricks (Erin Berry): no report

New Business

- Carri Dyer spoke about ways to increase volunteers at Abbott. One idea would be recognize a volunteer of the month in the Gator Tales so that more people are aware of volunteer opportunities available. This idea will be talked about again next month.

Questions: Will dancing classrooms be started this year? Yes, it would begin this school year. Dancing Classrooms will be discussed further next month at the November meeting.

Adjournment: Josh Kitchen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:12. Jessi Mann seconded the motion.