**Friends of Hawthorne PTA Minutes**

**October 1, 2014**

A general Friends of Hawthorne PTA meeting took place on 10/1/14. The purpose was to introduce the PTA Board, review the PTA’s budget, explain how the PTA works in conjunction with Hawthorne Elementary School, explain upcoming meetings and events, and to recruit both potential PTA members and volunteers for school enrichment and fundraising activities.

Meeting commenced in the cafeteria at 6:15PM.

37 people attended the meeting. A quorum was present.

Attending: (See attached sign-in sheet)

Mary Murray, PTA president, introduced herself and explained the agenda (see attached). All present members of the PTA introduced themselves and their roles.

Mary explained PTA purpose/values: creating community, leadership in action, big and small.

Sandra Scott, Hawthorne Principal, was introduced. Ms. Scott explained in her words why PTA is important: building community, having all voices heard that are representative of all students, involvement in community. She said that PTA gives you a voice regarding which programs Hawthorne has. She mentioned that fundraisers, auction, volunteering, and many field trips are PTA sponsored. She invited everyone to continue coming to meetings and get involved.

Bruce Toomey, Hawthorne Librarian, was introduced. Passed out paper about how having a full-time librarian grows library check-out circulation (See attached). Books that don’t get checked out have been taken out of circulation. Gave out another sheet (see attached) explaining the average age of Hawthorne’s book collection. In 2009, the average publication/copyright age was 1986, so books were 23 years old. 2014 analysis shows the book age is now averaging 10 years old. The upcoming Target renovation will further decrease the average book age. Mr. Toomey asked that people continue to support the library.

Mr. Toomey also explained the upcoming library renovation, which includes over 2100 new books. 900 non-fiction, 500 fiction, 500 “everybody,” as well as books he gets to choose himself. Renovation will also include new iPads, a new projection system with an integrated smart board, new furniture, carpet, bookcases, paint. The library office will be turned into a parent resource center with books. Next Thursday, books will be boxed up and removed; Friday (no school in session) noisy work begins. Library work will be finished at the end of October, reopening/dedication will be November 14th. Questions were posed about cost of renovation/grant and how library will function during renovation. Mr. Toomey said he’ll work directly with classrooms during the renovation. Question was asked about library collection vs. classroom books; Mr. Toomey explained they are separate entities, but that teachers have total access to anything in the library.

Molly Laster, VP, asked people to join the PTA. Mary seconded this. They mentioned we won an award in the past for increased membership.

Discussion/starter question table conversations began (see attached “Building Community” sheet”).

Lindsay Zaccara, member-at-large, went table-to-table and collected 14 different ways we could say “school” in various languages (see attached). She also passed around the sign in sheet and asked for email addresses.

Chrystal Williams, Hawthorne’s Walkathon Chair, called for volunteers for the Walkathon, requested folks fill out the volunteer form and explained sponsorship is calculated by distance, not laps, and the event will take place rain or shine. Jen Ayers explained there’s a classroom page where people can donate online to students’ classes (particularly for relatives who live elsewhere), that awards will be given for fundraising by class, and asked for people to spread the word via social media/FB, etc. She mentioned that if people ask for very small amounts on social media, it can amount to a lot. Chrysal said parents should ask about Captain Lazy Pants, mentioned at an assembly in relation to the Walkathon. Walkathon Volunteer Coordinator David Sorenson mentioned that the Walkathon is a new fundraising event, that we need volunteers, and that the children’s walk times will be staggered by class.

Derek Butcher, Auction Chair, spoke about the spring auction, which raised approximately $50K in 2014. 5th annual auction is coming up March 28th, 2015. Derek asked for attendance, donations, time, volunteerism. He explained that there need to be volunteers who gather monthly for prep/planning, as well as people for night-of volunteering. Current options are silent and live auction procurement (we have a database of past gifts); communications, signage, website; database management; general volunteerism. Passed around a sheet and asked for people to sign up with their info and area of volunteer interest. Suggested that there will be fewer silent auction items this year and more live auction.

Iain Mourer, Treasurer, passed out the 2013-2014 budget (see attached) and went over what funds were approved for last year vs. actual spending. Excess technology funds have been rolled over into this year’s budget to augment the library grant. Mary explained that we currently spend closer to $50K a year, not $100K as the budget reflects. The $100K spent on the budget is because of the timing of payouts from the past two years. Iain explained that the PTA budgets are based on previous year’s fundraising, not projections for what is likely to be raised. Question from Hawthorne’s new art teacher, Elaine Simons, was asked about whether or not the PTA is a separate, nonprofit entity (answer: it is), and who our fiscal agent is. Answer is Alliance for Education, which helps us with nonprofit status (but Hawthorne also has its own bank account). Ms. Simons is also a grant writer and volunteered her services. Question was asked about whether or not the PTA has a say in how Title 1 funds are spent. Answer was that the PTA has not influenced this to date, and is not sure if it has any say. Nina Bowman, new Family Support person, was introduced.

Mary Murray reiterated our meeting agenda, to go over the PTA Standing Rules and also to get feedback from attendees via a “Tell us what you think” form that was passed around (see attached, also responses are compiled in a separate document).

Participants generated the following list of Ground Rules and Meeting Best Practices:

* Assume good intentions, in person and emails. (The FOH list serve is an email forum used for the PTA and its members to communicate with one another.)
* Speakers should always introduce themselves by full name and, if relevant, position.
* Speakers should provide the backstory/context before speaking, as often the meeting includes first time participants.
* Include 10-15 minutes for open Q&A at each meeting.
* Mark if potluck food has nuts, for those with allergies.

Question was asked about how the PTA can make the meetings more diverse and include more people. Mary explained some of the strategies the PTA has tried, including different times of day, robo calls in different languages, providing translators etc. She mentioned that we have two native Spanish-speaking people on the board. It was suggested that the PTA emphasize that childcare is provided at all meetings. It was mentioned that there are daytime coffee chats w/ some officer attendance. It was mentioned that special topics at upcoming meetings can help attendance, e.g., the next meeting will focus on Special Education at Hawthorne.

Tim Lohroff, member-at-large focusing on legal compliance, introduced the legal requirement that we update and approve our Standing Rules. Those proposed Standing Rules were distributed and discussed. Liz Gillespie made a motion to approve the standing rules as distributed. Josey Blair seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions or “no” votes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27PM.

Minutes submitted by Lindsay Zaccara, Board Member-at-Large