

**Lyndale Community School
PTO Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 2014**

PTO UPDATES

International Night Preparations

International Night is coming up on March 27. On occasion there is difficulty ordering food because restaurants like to be paid before delivery but schools prefer to pay after goods are received. The PTO discussed possibly purchasing the food for the event and then being reimbursed by the school but Assistant Principal Arredondo said that the school had found a way to pay the restaurants when the food is picked up. **Don't forget that we will be collecting gently used youth clothing and books at International Night!**

Bucket Donations

In an effort to offset the price of events, the PTO usually has a bucket for on-the-spot, cash donations. It was suggested that more money might be raised if we stated what the money was supporting and listed a specific suggested donation. It was also suggested that the PTO invest in some containers with a slot at the top to discourage kids from rummaging through the donation which happened recently. If extra money is generated, beyond the expense of the event, the PTO should disclose where those funds went in their newsletter or meeting notes

*** Parking Lot Cleared, Garden Concerns**

The parking lot snow was cleared and placed on the Youth Farm garden. The contaminants in the snow will harm the garden and require the top few inches of soil to be replaced if the snow is not removed prior to melting. Assistant Principal Arredondo said that a work order to remove the snow has been placed but does not know when it will be filled or if the snow will melt beforehand. If the snow is not removed Bridget Gerander has a connection to a landscaper who may be able to assist with moving the old soil and spreading new soil. The PTO might pay for the replacement soil and disposal of contaminated soil.

*** Box tops**

Lyndale earned \$1115 from Box Top donations in the past 12 months. This is the highest ever and \$300 more than last year. There are some friendly competitions between the 3rd box tops and another competition among the 5th box tops as well as doing their online shopping through www.btfe.com or www.schoolmall.com. Lyndale recently started working with School Mall and Adrienne reported that they have been great to work with and sent extra prizes to be raffled among teachers.

*** Thank Great Neighbors**

The home on the corner of Pleasant and 34th Street Street (with the driveway facing the school) has done a great job keeping their walk shoveled and safe for students coming and going from school. The PTO suggested that we send a thank-you note. Everyone agreed that this is a good idea and a brief discussion followed regarding sending a small gift, but no final decisions were made.

*** T-Shirts for Kindergartners**

A motion was made to purchase T-Shirts for kindergartners to wear on field trips. While this could promote the school it also helps teachers quickly identify where kids are. Everyone was supportive and the PTO will follow-up with the Kindergarten teachers to ask what they have, what they need, and how we can help.

*** Social Gatherings**

A Proposed Social Gathering Activity form has been created and will be available online and at the PTO table on International Night. If you have ideas please submit them - it would be great to have activities being promoted on International Night. Send the following information to Kendra Popov at kallenpopov@yahoo.com:

β Name, phone, and email of host

β Expected cost of hosting event (to determine your donation value for tax purposes)

β Approximate number of people that can be accommodated

Kendra Popov will work with interested hosts to help them develop a fitting parent or parent/child activity that highlights his or her skills and interests.

BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Stacy Edwards, Mom to Delaney (2nd Grader) had been working with Principal James and Lyndale Social Worker, Helen Struther, to bring Blessings in a Backpack to Lyndale.

Blessings in a Backpack is a non-profit organization that provides elementary school children who are on the federal Free and Reduced Price Meal program with a backpack of food to take home each Friday for 38 weekends during the school year.

The national organization, funded by private sector contributions and public partnerships, currently feeds over 63,000 kids in 583 schools in 45 states. With the generous support of Lake Harriet Methodist Church, Lyndale will be offering this program starting Fall 2014. All food sent home is kid-friendly and with minimal preparation required (apples, granola bars, raisins, canned soup, etc.) The cost is roughly \$100 per student per year. While the church is a major contributor and will supply the volunteers to put the backpacks together, additional donations will be sought - all families are welcome to help out financially! Every dollar donated goes directly and completely to the purchase of food.

At this time Lyndale has over 400 students eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Meal program. Since funding to provide every child with a backpack is not available at this time, we will start with providing the service to the youngest grades first. Hopefully we can expand it to all students who are eligible and want it as funding increases.

In addition to food, the PTO is hoping that a book can be included each week (remember to bring gently used books to International Night!). There was a discussion about how having the students involved in the program could build their capacity for empathy, but it was also noted that who receive backpacks should as private as possible.

For information about the national Blessings in a Backpack program visit: <http://www.blessingsinabackpack.org/>
For information about this effort in Minnesota see: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Blessings-in-a-Backpack-Minnesota/115869075262295>

HEALTHY KIDS FOCUSED STUDENTS

Lyndale parent Julie Danzl, who is a Program Coordinator with the Minneapolis Public Schools, brought to the PTO's attention the Spring 2014 Student Wellness Mini-grant:

Schools can apply for up to \$750 to assist in the implementation of school level policies and practices that promote and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Funding for these grants is made possible by the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

The application deadline is March 26, 2014. To learn more about this program see <http://sss.mpls.k12.mn.us/hkfs>

MARKETING

The PTO learned that the school choice website, for registering new students, did not show Lyndale as the community school for our area. Bridgett Gerander will look into how and why it happened. Others brought up situations where neighbors had not heard of Lyndale or had written it off as an option for their children prior to knowing anything about it. The PTO recognizes the need for ongoing promotion to build visibility. Suggestions included increased outreach to neighborhood associations and requests for news coverage or ads in neighborhood papers; T-shirts to be worn on field trips with 'Lyndale Community School' on them; and the lastminute suggestion of car decals.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: The PTO would be delighted to have someone with marketing or advertising skills or knowledge to help with this effort.

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY WONDER NUMBER!

Last week was the first Weekly Wednesday Wonder Number competition. 150 submissions were received and one winner from each grade was selected to win the cash prize (there was a tie in 4th Winners receive \$1. Each Wednesday a slip of paper will be sent home with a number on it. Students can write their own math problem that incorporates the number on the slip and turn it in for a chance to win. Entries do not need to be a word problem but it is encouraged. The goal of this is to help students prepare for word problems on standardized tests.

Next PTO Meeting: 2nd Tuesday in April, 6:00 PM

Prepared by Christine Daves, PTO Secretary and mom to Elliot (2nd grade).