

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
Open PTA Meeting
October 11, 2011**

1. Call To Order

President Lisa Fungo called the open meeting of the Paradise Canyon Elementary School PTA to order at 9:15 am in the cafeteria. A quorum was present.

President Lisa Fungo welcomed those in attendance and welcomed everyone. Yanick Henry-Edwards led the Pledge of Allegiance. Lisa reminded everyone to sign in and told everyone that the budget, audit, minutes and sign in sheets were all being circulated.

Lisa announced that the new Paradise Canyon website is now up and running! It looks fabulous and is very user friendly. If there are any corrections, please let Lisa know.

2. Business

Christa Evans asked if everyone had had a chance to look at the minutes that were being circulated. David Haxton pointed out that the approved fundraisers were not listed in the minutes. Christa and Lisa Fungo agreed to add them to the August 29th minutes. Lisa Dick **moved** to approve the minutes of the August 29th open meeting with the addition of the correction. Doreen Aitelli seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Treasurer Jennifer Burke gave the treasurer's report. Jennifer apologized for her long list of thank yous, but feels so grateful for all the support we receive at PCY. In September alone, we brought in \$103,727 in revenue! These funds came in through the Back to School Picnic (thank you Kristie Goodstein), Cougarwear (thank you Jenny Swanson and Nancy Erickson), Passive Fundraising (thank you Lori Moody and David Haxton) and Pizza Night (thank you Serena Tu). We also raised a lot of money through the one-check order form. This year, we raised \$11,139 for teacher classroom funds, which is a 60% increase over last year's contributions. Jennifer reminded everyone to please participate in the gift wrap fundraiser, which typically brings in over \$20,000. Jennifer also wanted to thank Yanick Edwards, who prepared our audit for today's meeting.

Our cash balance at the end of June totaled \$99,843 and at the end of September, totaled \$121,158. During July through September, we wrote 58 checks totaling \$82,433 and collected a record breaking \$103, 727 in deposits, for a net gain of \$21,294.

Doreen Aitelli **moved** to approve the cash balance report for July through September. Sharon Grey seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

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Yanick Henry-Edwards **moved** to approve the warrants for July through September. Lisa Dick seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

After everyone had a chance to look over the audit for 2010-2011, Christa Evans **moved** to approve the audit. Lori Moody seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Lori Moody asked if the Back to School Picnic is officially a fundraiser. We did not have the list of fundraisers with us, so we decided to table the motion until the next meeting. Next month we will vote if necessary.

3. Program

Lisa introduced Susan Boyd, president of the LCUSD School Board. She gave an update of what is going on in the district. She started by telling us that state testing went really well. We are still number two in the state, but we moved up in scores and are getting closer to San Marino. All schools scored really well. The one glaring discrepancy is the math department at the high school. The math department needs some special attention to make the teachers more effective. The superintendent is really focused on that as well. That being said, the high school still improved by thirteen points.

Mrs. Boyd also addressed the issue of the permit students. She argues that the permit students are necessary to maintain the quality and breadth of our programs. Some people are worried that the performance of the permit students will affect our scores and reputation. The permit students almost universally met or exceeded our local students in kindergarten through sixth grade. However, in the seventh through twelfth grades, the scores were spotty. This reinforced the board's position that the sooner kids get into our schools, the better. Mrs. Boyd also feels that parents who are willing to drive their kids all the way to La Canada, then they are involved parents who are invested in their kids' education. Permit families are also donating on similar levels as La Canada families. David Haxton brought up the point that La Canada homeowners have to pay a bond and a parcel tax. Are the permit families required to do this as well? Mrs. Boyd responded that permit families cannot be required to do so, but are asked to donate the equivalent amount. Jim Stratton has said that every family that he asked to pay that amount of money did so. However, Mrs. Boyd pointed out, that whether or not families donate any money, we receive over \$4000 per student just for them being here.

Mrs. Boyd also discussed teacher evaluations. She reported that there has been some misreporting about the amount of teacher evaluations done each year. The actual number of evaluations done last year was 65

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out of 170 teachers, plus an additional twenty evaluations of certificated staff such as counselors and librarians. They found that there is a clause in the contract that stated that if teachers received a certain level of evaluation over time, then they qualified to be evaluated only once every four years. This year, the board decided to change that policy. Now every teacher will be evaluated once every other year. There is simply not enough time to evaluate every teacher every year. In addition to this, the teachers who have been identified as needing help are on a much more rigorous program. The schools are working very hard to improve the work of these teachers.

Next Mrs. Boyd addressed the subject of the teacher collaboration days. Mrs. Boyd stated that the vast majority of our teachers want to improve their teaching. In order to do this, the teachers need feedback (in the form of test scores, evaluations, etc.). If there is a weakness, the teachers need to go to another teacher to ask for help. The teacher collaboration days provide an opportunity to do just that. The teachers are trying out a new program called "Illuminate." With this program, the teachers can narrow down by strand (specific subject area), by teacher and also by student. This program can help the teachers figure out where exactly they need the most work. They can also use the program to figure out where each student needs the most help. The teachers are so excited about this program and will be using their teacher collaboration days to analyze and reflect on the data and learn from each other. Mrs. Boyd also pointed out that it is not optional for teachers to attend teacher collaboration days. The teachers have to go. In addition, teachers need to report on what they plan to do during the day and get these plans approved. They also need to show results.

Mrs. Boyd then called up School Board member Jeanne Broberg to talk more about how the Board ended up with the four days of collaboration days. Mrs. Broberg pointed out that in other districts, schools have a late start or early dismissal day. In La Crescenta, for example, at Lincoln Elementary School, every Tuesday, students start an hour late. But at Rosemont Junior High, most Thursdays are a late start day. And at Crescenta Valley High School, some Tuesdays and some Thursdays are late start days, while some Fridays are early dismissal. Our board decided that four full days would be easiest for parents. She also pointed out that these four days are only on the calendar for this year. This year we will be forming a committee to decide what will be the best day to provide teacher collaboration time in future years. She also pointed out that the board requested the teacher collaboration days and not the teachers. She also wanted everyone to know that the board meetings are open to everyone. Doreen Aitelli asked, "Why was it decided to make the last day and the day of Open House minimum days, especially since there

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was so much push back on the four collaboration days?" Mrs. Boyd did not have an answer for this.

Next Mrs. Boyd discussed the subject of surveys. There has been a lot of discussion in the district regarding the subject of teacher surveys. Wendy Sinnette is creating a committee that will put together a survey for parents and students. The survey will be specific enough that the students and parents can evaluate specific subjects and classes so that the district can tell exactly what is going on. Last year we had a policy change in how parents can make a complaint about a teacher. Here is the current policy: If a parent has a complaint about something that only affects their specific student, they still need to talk to the teacher first. However, if there is a problem that is affecting the entire class (for example, if a teacher is sleeping during class, is not returning tests, is not being polite), then the parent can go directly to the principal to make the complaint. This allows the principal to go into the classroom and investigate immediately. It does not have to be a formal complaint. We cannot use surveys for evaluations, but the principals can use the information to go into the classroom and correct the situation. The district's goal is to have the surveys in and done and results in by the end of the year.

Finally Mrs. Boyd addressed the bond money. Due to the faltering economy, we have gotten a lot more out of our bond dollars than we expected. Usually, one would expect to get about half way down their wish list for spending bond dollars. However, due to contractors underbidding each other, we are down to the bottom of our list! The next projects to occur will be repaving the parking lots and access road at the high school and replacing the dirt under the high school's large oak tree with decomposed granite. At Palm Crest, the parking lot will be reconfigured to be safer for student drop off.

Lisa Fungo thanked Susan Boyd for coming. Cindy Wilcox introduced herself and encouraged everyone to look at her blog at: www.cindywilcox.net. She said she often disagrees with Susan and she will blog about that.

Susan Callahan asked Susan Boyd about the progress on figuring out where we are going in the next three years. Mrs. Boyd responded that financially, we are always looking four years out. They are figuring out the minimum enrollment we have to maintain at the high school in order to maintain all of our programs. When we figure out what this is, then we can figure out how much we need to ask for in a parcel tax, how many permit kids we need to take in and how much fundraising we will need to do. When this is all figured out, there will be a presentation. Jennifer

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Burke asked how often the School Board meets. Mrs. Boyd answered that they meet every three weeks.

4. Programs Report

Doreen Aitelli gave the programs report. She said that all school programs are up and running. In Spanish, we have 17 children enrolled on Mondays and 20 enrolled on Wednesdays. Elizabeth Ramirez, our new kindergarten teacher, is the Spanish teacher. This week we will have our first Family Reading Night. We will also have the Harvest Festival this Friday from 3:00 until 6:00. We are desperately in need of volunteers. If you are able to volunteer, email Camilla Hartman. She is going to ask room reps to send out a plea for volunteers. We especially need volunteers from 4:30 until 6:00.

5. Principal's Report

Dr. Craddock gave the Principal's Report. She told us that the CST (California State Testing) calendar is a little different this year. Due to the schedule of AP testing, the high school will be testing a little earlier this year, from April 23rd through May fourth. The elementary schools will be testing from May first through May 18th.

October 20th will be the Great Shake Out. The Great Shake Out takes place across California and is a practice drill for what to do in an earthquake. The school will practice the check in and out procedure, evacuating buildings, children stuck in buildings, etc. Parents can volunteer to be a practice parent. Please contact the office if you would like to volunteer.

Also on October 20th will be an informational meeting about Valley Forge and Adventure Week for fifth grade parents. Permission slips will be handed out.

On the school website (not the PTA website), we will be highlighting one grade level per month. October is kindergarten's turn. You can access this website by going to the district website, at www.lcusd.net and clicking on Paradise Canyon.

6. CEC Report

Erinn Levin, one of two directors of the school age program of the CEC, came to speak a bit about the CEC program. She encouraged everyone to go to the CEC website at www.CECOnline.org. The CEC has been providing the before and after school care at the La Canada elementary

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school sites since 1997. They have bungalows on each of the school campuses, including three here at PCY. They are open from 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Their scheduling is as follows: They offer before kinder care, starting at 7:00 AM. They have two lead teachers there. The children do a lot of socializing, and participate in arts and crafts, science, building with blocks and dramatic play. The children have lunch (and can even eat in the cafeteria, if desired) and then are escorted to class by the teachers. The reverse is available for children with AM kindergarten. Late bird and early bird children are welcome to come from 8:00 until 9:10 or from 1:55 until 2:55, if parents want just that hour. At three o'clock, there is a transition time, with some kids going home and others just coming. After three, there is a K/1 room, a 2/3 room and a 4-6 room. The children relax and play and have a healthy snack. Then it is "club" time, where there are different themes, art and sports. Then it is homework time. There is a room specifically for homework for kids in grades one through three. (Kids are given about 30 minutes for homework. In grades four through six, kids are given at least an hour.) Families sign a homework agreement, and some families opt to have their children complete their homework at home. Christa Evans asked the question about how much time the kindergartners get to spend outdoors. Ms. Levin answered that they try to give the kids about an hour outside, but it depends on the site and the PE schedule. Ms. Levin announced that the CEC will be open for teacher collaboration days.

7. Chairperson's Report

Membership: We now have over 100% participation of our school families. This is an all time record!

PCY Beautiful: Michelle Urata gave the update on PCY Beautiful. Over the summer, some planting was done under the PCY sign at the corner of Gould and Knight Way as well as in front of the office. In the upcoming months, we are going to be sanding and painting the railing on the stairs by the kindergarten yard. We also will be patching up the tile in the cafeteria. The large door in front of the stage will be painted. Also, next to the Oliveta gate, sprinklers will be put in and the tree stump and ivy will be removed. The district is paying for the sprinklers and the stump removal. Then that area will be planted as well. The committee is hoping to have all this done in the next three to four months. Jennifer Burke made the suggestion that the school bathrooms be improved, specifically that the doors in the boys' bathroom are made able to be closed.

Reflections: The Reflections contest is underway. The due date for submissions is November fourth.

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Directories: Lisa Fungo thanked David Haxton for his hard work on our fabulous directories. The directories were delivered September 28th, which was much earlier than any other school. We printed 675 copies, at a cost of \$5 apiece.

8. New Business

Lori Moody discussed creating Shutterfly accounts for the different classes. This is being discussed because the sixth grade parents are looking for an easy way to collect pictures throughout the years to use for the sixth grade yearbooks. There was discussion about how we could make this happen. Someone suggested sending an email invitation to the class, and if someone accepted the invitation, they are then giving permission to use their email and pictures, etc. People are concerned about putting children's pictures on the web. Should it be up to classes to decide or up to the PTA? Lisa Fungo suggested that it should not be set up by the PTA. If the class is interested, then it should be up to the room rep and the teacher to decide if it's a good idea. We decided that we need to develop a policy through the next room rep meeting and include the sixth grade parents. We decided to table the idea for now until we have had a chance to develop a policy.

9. Announcements

Lisa reminded everyone to come to the Candidates Forum on September 17th from 7:00 – 8:30. The event was supposed to happen at the high school, but due to a scheduling conflict, it may now take place at Lanterman. We will be informed as to where it will be. Lisa Fungo mentioned that Jeanne Broberg (current board member as well as candidate) and Ellen Multari (School Board candidate) were in attendance at the meeting today.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 15th at 9:15 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Submitted by:

Christa Evans
Recording Secretary