

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
Open PTA Meeting
May 12, 2009**

1. Call To Order

President Laura Campobasso called the Open Meeting of the Paradise Canyon Elementary School PTA to order at 9:17 am in the cafeteria. A quorum was present.

Lisa Dick led the Pledge of Allegiance. Laura welcomed those in attendance. She talked about Earth Week, thanking Wendy Nussbaum, her co-chair, as well as all of the teachers and staff who worked hard to make the week such a success.

Laura thanked the many volunteers who worked over the past few months on PTA activities. She gave special thanks to Mary Beth Eckerle for her work on the Notecard fundraiser. Mary Beth worked with Mr. Mike, the Art teacher to send home sample notecards to each family with their childrens' art printed on them. This resulted in 210 families ordering 300 sets, triple the amount from last year.

2. Business

Secretary Paige Hulseley **moved** to approve the minutes of the March 24th Open Meeting, and Lisa Dick seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Treasurer Susan Marki gave the Treasurer's Report. According to Susan, our beginning cash balance as of February 28, 2009 was \$60,731.16, and our ending cash balance as of the end of April was \$95,412.06. During this period 73 checks were written totaling \$20,383.05.

Susan Marki referred to the Cash Report and the Warrants Report, copies of which were being passed around the room.

According to Susan, the jump in our cash balance is due to:

- Notecard Sales
- Passive Fundraising
- Medieval Faire One Check

Notecard sales went well this year. After May expenses, Mary Beth Eckerle looks to net \$1,520, which is up almost \$1,000 from last year. Passive Fundraising is fun to look at again. We are currently at \$42,027 for the year, thanks to Lori Moody and everyone else who has contributed. The Medieval Faire One Check receipts were recorded WITHOUT very many of the expenses for the Faire. So, already in

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May we have had outflows greater than \$11,000 related to the Faire, among other things.

Susan announced that the big jump in our cash balances is not for real yet. However, for those Medieval Faire figures that we can compare to last year at this stage, so far we are doing very much the same.

Susan explained that she had made minor adjustments to the budget, which she had highlighted in yellow. She increased the budget for the minor interest income we received. In addition she reallocated an expense to the Harvest Festival, which had had been taken from Disaster Preparedness.

Susan announced that the budget meeting is scheduled for next week, and encouraged everyone to email her with questions or suggestions for next year's budget.

Susan Marki **moved** to approve the adjustments, which had been made to the budget. Connie Becker seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Susan Marki **moved** to approve the April 2009 Cash Balance report. Connie Becker seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Susan Marki **moved** to approve the April 2009 Warrants Report. Connie Becker seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Laura Campobasso added that we are actually ahead of last year with regard to the Medieval Faire. Caren Colburn announced that wristband sales, class basket donations, and family underwriting are up this year!

Laura thanked Susan Marki for all of her hard work this year.

3. Program

Laura Campobasso introduced Joel Peterson, President of the La Canada Governing Board, who stopped by to talk to PCY parents about Measure LC.

Mr. Peterson announced that the La Canada Unified School District, which is one of the best in California, is being jeopardized by \$16 million in projected cuts over the next 5 years. These cuts are cascading from the \$42 million shortfall in the state budget. We have

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already faced \$1-2 million in cuts this year and are looking at \$15 million cumulatively over the next four years.

So far these cuts have resulted in salary cuts, takeaways (a 5% cost of living increase was for 2008-09 was taken away) and significant expense reduction.

How do we continue to make up for the projected cuts? We do it by saving, adding revenues, and cutting expenses. Mr. Peterson announced that La Canada schools already operate on a very lean budget, and he stressed that they are very well managed. The State requires a general reserve of 3% of operating expenses (about \$1.3 million). By using conservative fiscal policies, we have actually accumulated a reserve that is 15%. Without this reserve we would not be as prepared to face the projected cuts, but this will only go about 1/3 of the way to covering our shortfall.

We have also tried to find ways to expand non-traditional revenue sources by renegotiating leases, bringing rates up to market, and marketing our properties more aggressively.

Mr. Peterson shared ways in which the district continues to make meaningful expense cuts, such as making temporary cuts in the maintenance fund and carrying less workman's comp insurance (prudent is 50% coverage, and we have been carrying 90%, so we cut it to 70%). These cuts have reduced our expenses by around \$800,000. This also included eliminating some positions. He stressed that many of the eliminated positions were administrative, as the district is trying to avoid eliminating teachers.

According to Mr. Peterson, these measures will help, but they will only cover 2/3 to 3/4 of the shortfall. So the district chose to ask the community for new revenue, which is what Measure LC is for. In considering how much to ask for, they did a number of studies testing support for various amounts. By law we need 66.7 % support for the amount of the tax. It was determined through these studies that \$150 per parcel would obtain 68% support.

Measure LC will last for five years only and costs \$150 per parcel, or 41 cents a day, less than the cost of a postage stamp. Seniors are allowed to vote on the package, but they are also allowed an optional exemption, which will ensure that the cost is not a burden to those on a fixed income.

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Mr. Peterson mentioned that many senior homes are valued at less than \$100,000. Many seniors are on a fixed income, but they don't have to opt out – many want to pay the tax. Seniors tend to be very conservative and don't want to vote on a tax that others will have to pay.

Many business owners have more than one parcel that they pay for. Mr. Peterson explained that if someone owns two or more adjacent parcels, they will only have to pay one tax.

Mr. Peterson announced that the Parcel Tax would generate about \$900,000, covering a portion of the shortfall. The balance will be covered by cuts and reserves.

Who decides what type of cuts will be made? The Board. The Board looks to minimize the negative impact to students. We are looking to maintain a 20:1 class size ratio in K-3 and a 20:1 ratio in key subjects like Math and English through the 9th grade. We want to keep class size as small as possible because we believe that small class size matters.

Mr. Peterson reminded the group that La Canada schools are ranked 4th in API test scores. Our teacher, principals, and administrative staff are among the best qualified in the state. Our teacher compensation is ranked in the top third of California schools, so we provide good compensation but are not ranked at the top. Compensation for our administrators is ranked in the bottom quarter among the 46 districts in LA County.

Mr. Peterson summarized by saying that the district is managing, and the fact that we have the reserves that we have is attributed to how prudent we have been. We hope that you will be able to support Measure LC.

Mr. Peterson answered questions from the parents about who would oversee the collecting of funds from Measure LC. He explained that a Public Oversight Committee made up of people from all age groups, gender, religious and economic backgrounds would make sure that the monies collected are in compliance with the language of the Measure. All expenditures would be monitored, there would be no pay increases for the next four years and there would be a separate audit conducted.

He explained that the measure would be voted on in a mail-only ballot election this June. All ballots must be cast by mail. No polling places

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will be open for this election. The ballot will be mailed on June 1st and must be received by June 30th to be counted.

Maureen Borland reminded everyone that San Marino pays over \$1,000 per year without exemptions. This parcel tax was passed by 70%. According to Maureen, we are the only district without a parcel tax.

Mr. Peterson added that historically, the first time a city votes on a parcel tax, there is a 20% pass rate, and the second time there is a 90% pass rate so there was a need to get this in place. Maureen added that the National PTA is trying to get from 66.7% approval to 50% in order for a tax to pass.

Lori Moody asked about the biggest hurdle for passage of the tax. Mr. Peterson said that in the surveys conducted, 30% of the people do not want a tax. But the survey has a 6% margin of error – that is why we have to educate the public.

Many parents expressed surprise at these numbers considering that so many families move here for the quality of our schools. According to Mr. Peterson, 8 out of 10 homes have been purchased by families with school children. This demand has helped prevent the dramatic decrease in property values seen elsewhere.

As a show of support for Measure LC, families and district schools are being asked to donate funds to support the Measure LC campaign. Maureen Borland **moved** that the PCY PTA donate \$999.99 (must be less than \$1,000) to the Measure LC campaign. Diane Cwik seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Jennifer Rubendall, Palm Crest Elementary PTA President was in attendance. Jennifer praised the Board for its strategic planning and use of a very thorough consulting group

4. Principal's Report

Donna Robinson had very exciting news regarding the multi-purpose room. She announced that according to Dr. Leininger, they will be able to put in basketball hoops for us. Evidently, there was some money left over after the high school got the bid for construction.

So Landscaping and hoops are back in. Donna is not sure of the cost because they are currently working on a grant to alleviate the cost of the speakers and projector.

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Donna announced that the students are currently taking their tests and are expected to do very nicely. There will not be a lot of make-up tests because very few students have been absent. The district purchased new antibacterial lotion so illness is down.

Donna thanked the Board for being so prudent.

Laura Campobasso thanked Mary Beth Eckerle and Christine Chant for the snacks.

5. Chairperson's Reports

Medieval Faire: Caren Colburn reminded everyone about the Medieval Faire on Saturday, May 16. She announced that everything is going well and reminded everyone to look at teacher experiences in the silent auction. She also urged 5th grade parents to look at purchasing tickets for next year's 6th grade play.

Teacher Appreciation: Laura spoke for Lynda Grigg and Ashley Gish, saying that Teacher Appreciation Week went well. Teachers love Los Gringos!

6. Announcements

- Star Testing – grades 2-6, May 11-22
- Medieval Faire & Fun Run – Saturday, May 16
- PCY Open House – Thursday, May 28, 6:30-8:00 pm
- Spirit Rally – Have Lunch With Your Child – Friday, May 29
- Memorial Day – NO SCHOOL – Monday, May 25
- PTA Installation, District Office – Monday, June 1
- Executive Board Meeting – June 12 @ 9:15
- Next PTA meeting is Tuesday, June 9 @ 9:15 am

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.

Submitted by:

Paige Hulsey
Recording Secretary