

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008**

1. Call To Order

President Laura Campobasso called the Open Meeting of the Paradise Canyon Elementary School PTA to order at 9:20 am in the cafeteria. A quorum was present.

Maureen Borland led the Pledge of Allegiance. Laura welcomed everyone and thanked all of the volunteers who have worked tirelessly during the month of October. She specifically mentioned One Check Order forms under Susie Gray and Toshiko Mor, Gift Wrap under Donna Dohi and Laura Buchanan, Room Reps under Janice Shue, and 6th Grade under Ashley Gish.

Laura talked about the Reflections contest led by Christine Chant and Beverly Hickman, mentioning that it is a great opportunity for the kids to express their creativity. She gave a big "Wow" to the Harvest Festival Chairs led by Kris Meuller. She thanked Lori Moody and David Haxton, announcing that our passive fundraising effort is the best in La Canada. Laura praised the Spirit Rally led by Paige Dunbar and Sandra Smith. She mentioned that Paige has made a special CD of the songs that were sung. She ended by thanking Lori Moody and Doreen Aitelli for their wonderful job in email administration.

2. Business

Secretary Paige Hulseley **moved** to approve the minutes of the September 2008 Open Meeting, and Mikaho Hara seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

Treasurer Susan Marki gave the Treasurer's Report, stating that the Total Contributed Support to date is \$49,595. This number includes different items from last year, but is generally slightly better in many of the same categories as last year. The Back to School picnic earned \$4,522. This too was slightly better than last year's result.

Susan announced that she wrote 60 checks from September 1st – October 4th. These totaled \$51,882. A large part of this amount was spent on technology. We bought four mimios and seven overhead projectors. We also completed the library lighting makeover.

On the administrative side, Susan stated that we have sent our annual form 990 to the government and have informed all the teachers of their

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008**

classroom awards - \$25 per student with an additional \$300 for new teachers or classrooms.

President Laura Campobasso added that last year we had one mimio per class grade. With the addition of these new mimios, the teachers, as well as anyone else who is interested, will go through a mimio training class. Laura also mentioned that we purchased one special overhead projector, which is technologically upgraded. If this new overhead projector is significantly better and makes a difference, we will consider purchasing additional ones.

Treasurer Susan Marki **moved** to approve the October 2008 Cash Flow Report. The motion was seconded by Lisa Dick. **The motion passed.**

Susan Marki **moved** to approve the October 2008 Warrants Report. The motion was seconded by Connie Becker. **The motion passed.**

Susan Marki **moved** to approve the October 2008 Adjusted Slated Budget.

David Haxton asked what had been adjusted. Laura Campobasso replied that the budget is a guess based on what we are projected to make. Then we adjust it based on what actually came in. Laura Campobasso seconded the motion. **The motion passed.**

3. Principal's Report

Principal Donna Robinson announced that the native plant garden has been renovated. Georgie McAdams and her son, who is working toward being an Eagle Scout, were in charge of the renovation. Donna praised the garden and encouraged everyone to go by and have a look.

Donna mentioned that the Spanish program has started off quite nicely. It is being taught in Room 33, and we have about 115 or so students in grades 3-6. Other students are going after school in order to get ready for testing at the end of the year.

Reading Intervention started the last week in September with about 50-55 students. One of the reasons why our API scores are up is that we focus on children who are struggling in this area. Our scores were around 950, up six points from last year. In several areas, 90-95% of the scores were in the proficient to advanced range.

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008**

Donna announced that the Drama Specialist, Thom Vacca, is going to come in to talk about the work he is doing with the 4th, 5th and 6th grade. She mentioned that the date of the Lanterman Walk has been moved back a week to allow the 6th grade students extra time to practice their play, "Charlie Brown."

Donna stated that construction is going along smoothly. Currently they are digging and grading to get the land the way it should be. They are getting the rebar to start the foundation. Hopefully everything will continue to go smoothly.

Maureen Borland brought up the subject of an after-school art program. She mentioned that we have an after school choir for those children who want to sing. Would we be open to having the art teacher do extra classes? Donna mentioned that this would lead to a conflict of interest since he wants to set up his own business. David Haxton asked if the Choir teacher is paid extra. Donna said yes, he does get a stipend. There was continued discussion about the issues involved such as how many students to let in, different age groups to manage, material costs, etc.

Laura brought up the Science Club, announcing that they had 200 members. Laura asked who would be interested in an after school art program. Several parents raised their hands. It was agreed that we would look into it further.

Laura mentioned that Gayle Northrop is looking into Spanish for the 1st and 2nd grades. They are looking for two parents who will teach after school for a reasonable price. There will be 10-15 students involved. Spanish needs to be taught at an earlier age since this is the first class that Junior High students have trouble with.

4. Chairperson's Reports

Earth Week: Laura described Earth Week, which will be headed up by the Nussbaums. She talked about the events that will take place over the week. There will be an Earth Tree, and each class will deliver a letter to the tree with a wish for the earth. The choir will also sing in honor of the earth. There will be a contest among the grade levels for that week to see how much their recycling weighs.

Laura's description of Earth Week brought forth a discussion on PCY's recycling efforts. Principal Donna Robinson announced that the district

Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008

is involved in recycling. PCY gets two bins, and we fill those up. Each class has recycling boxes in the classrooms. Donna mentioned that we could request two more bins.

Lori Moody asked if we have designated recycling at all our events. Mikaho asked if we could buy more bins. Members suggested that we have bins in the lunchroom.

Donna replied that we did have these bins for the Medieval Faire, and that we do pay extra for them when they are marked as Recycling bins.

Mary Beth Eckerle asked further questions about the Spanish program based on Donna's earlier announcement. Mary Beth asked for clarification on the after school Spanish program for 6th graders. Who gets to take this class, what are the requirements, is there a special book, how does it roll into the Junior High?

Donna mentioned that the after school 6th grade Spanish is more intense. It is designed to get these kids ready to take a test for Spanish I.

Membership: Maureen Borland announced that Membership as of September 17 is at 81%. At the end of last year we finished at 83%. The teachers are all signed up – Donna put a note in their boxes encouraging them. And all of the staff is on board. So everything is great, and we are right on target.

5. Program

Laura introduced Jim Stratton, La Canada School Superintendent. Mr. Stratton discussed the budget, stating that nothing has been settled this year, although there was supposed to be a slight cost of living increase for staff. School improvement money is being given to those schools in lower performance areas. However revenue has not been coming in at the expected rate, and it looks like there will be a \$15-\$18 billion budget shortfall. The outlook is grim.

Enrollment for La Canada schools did not go down as much as was expected, and PCY is up by eight students. The average class size is as follows: K-3 = 20, 4th =29, 5th = 30, 6th =28.

PCY has hired four new teachers, and since 2002, 51% of the staff is new. This amazing turnover will continue to happen in the years to come. Mr. Stratton discussed BETSA training standards for teachers,

Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008

which will require more hands-on training and paperwork. He announced that our API score went up six points from a base of 944.

He discussed the construction of the new multi-purpose area, mentioning that the actual bid came in at \$2.3 million, which was lower than expected. He announced that it should be completed by summer and ready to go by fall.

Mr. Stratton stated that there are going to be mid-year budget cuts, and mentioned that there is a big push, in the form of a petition, for programs and funding to get redirected to the lowest performing schools. He has refused to sign the petition but mentioned other school districts that were on the verge of supporting it. He announced that the Governing Board is thinking of conducting a survey regarding increasing taxes in order to reduce class size. However, there is a concern that this might not be a good time because of economic uncertainty as well as the upcoming election. This survey is in the very early stages.

Laura Campobasso asked about the possibility of a full day Kindergarten. Mr. Stratton stated that a task force including several PCY teachers has met and researched the matter. According to the research, there really is no proof that full day leads to an increase in achievement. Research included looking at other districts, looking at preschools, and studying costs. Parents tend to like full day, but not just for educational purposes. Given limited funding and reduced class size, the task force decided that it is too expensive to go to a full day without proven achievement data.

Maureen Borland asked about the Spanish test which 6th graders would be required to take. Mr. Stratton talked about the new intensive program for 6th graders in which they would take a Spanish after school and then move on to a very intensive summer program. They would then take a test to determine if they could move on to Spanish II. There was continued discussion of how this would fit into the Junior High curriculum with several parents concerned about scheduling as well as other elective offerings.

Drama: The Drama Specialist, Thom Vacca, came in to discuss his plans for the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. He announced that the 4th and 5th graders would be putting on shows emphasizing teamwork, team building, listening, respect, and trust. The 4th grade is focusing on an "improv" show and the 5th grade is injecting some American History into their show.

**Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008**

Mr. Vacca is originally from Chicago and has spent the last few years working with inner city children. He commented on the enthusiasm of the children at PCY. He announced that he has just finished with 6th grade auditions for the production of "Charlie Brown" and is busy blocking for the big group numbers. He mentioned that everyone is really excited.

Chairperson's Reports continued:

PCY Beautiful: Laura Campobasso made several announcements for Caren Colburn who could not be at the meeting. According to Caren, the new chairs have been ordered. There is also extra money, which will be spent on other beautification projects.

Poker Social: The PCY Poker Social will be moved to February because of various conflicts that weekend including LCHS Homecoming and Halloween festivities.

David Haxton asked if the kids would be wearing Halloween costumes to the Spirit Rally on Halloween day. There was some discussion about Halloween costumes. Principal Donna Robinson stated that wearing costumes is disruptive to the school day. The kids are allowed to wear their PCY shirts.

Harvest Festival: The Harvest Festival revenues were equal to last year. The turnout was huge, and there was a great sense of community.

Directories: Janice Shue announced that the directories are on order, and we will have them at the end of October or in early November.

Gift Wrap: Gift wrap and cookie dough sales grossed a little over \$47,000, and we earned around 50% of that after tax. According to Chairs, Donna Dohi and Laura Buchanan, not as many people participated this year. Connie Becker added that Sally Foster sales in the private schools were down 30-40%. Lisa Dick announced that it was much easier to order online. There are not as many discrepancies. About 50% of the orders were online. Mary Beth explained that some people are uncomfortable ordering online due to security around credit card information. Donna Dohi said that even though they hand in paper copies of their orders, the orders are entered online. Laura Buchanan thanked everyone for their support and ended by saying that online orders offer a great opportunity.

Paradise Canyon Elementary School
PTA Open Meeting
October 14, 2008

Red Ribbon Week: Chair, Lisa Dick, explained that La Canada Schools do not follow the dates of National Red Ribbon Week. So Red Ribbon week will take place the week of October 20-24. The theme will be *Don't Be Tricked, Drugs are No Treat*. The winner of the door contest will be announced at the Spirit Rally. Everyone will get licorice.

Founder's Day: Chair, Mary Beth Eckerle, explained that the purpose of Founder's Day is to give a PTA award to those individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. She encouraged parents to send in nominations, as nobody can be honored without their name being submitted. The ceremony will be held on March 9.

Laura Campobasso added that Mary Beth had received some nice compliments for speaking her mind at the meeting for Founder's Day. Mary Beth had been responding to some discrepancies between the time and number of honorees allowed to each school last year.

Passive Fundraising: Lori Moody passed out Campell's soup recipe booklets and other handouts to the parents. She explained that if parents cut out the back coupon and put it in the basket up front, PCY would get bonus points.

6. Announcements

- 10/15 Picture Make-up
- 10/20 Re-shoot orders returned
- 10/20 Red Ribbon Week through 10/24
- 10/22 Round Table Pizza Night Grades 2 & 3
- 10/23 Reading Night Café, 7:00pm, Cafeteria
- 10/25 Parent – Teacher Poker Social date changed to February
- 10/29 NO SCHOOL
- 10/31 Spirit Rally at 10:15am

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35am.

Submitted by:

Paige Hulsey
Recording Secretary