

# Downey PTO Meeting



**12.5.2017**

**7:00PM-9:00PM**

**Room 1– Downey School**

Type of meeting

Downey PTO December Meeting

Attendees

Todd Nicholson, Sarah Young-Hong, Annemarie McMurray, Liz Gauthier, Sue Saliba, Cynthia Knox, Maureen Sullivan, Pascale Kamel, Hillary Mosca, Sudha Sarma, Nayla Daly, Danielle Mason, Tara Billini, Jennifer Shea

## 1. Welcome and Positive Feedback (Todd Nicholson)

7:06pm-7:08pm

Discussion: Thanks from Downey Staff

- Todd shared an email from November 8: Thanks from the Downey Staff to Sue, the hospitality committee, and PTO written by Principal Gallagher for the dinner, flowers, decorations.
- Teacher reps informed the board that the Hospitality Committee's work is really appreciated.
- What's down the road for Hospitality? Administrative Assistant and Nurse's day? PTO conferences spring? What else can we do?

Action Items:

Hospitality committee to continue with, and maybe add more, future appreciation days (such as administrative assistant and nurse's day.) Hospitality committee will continue to make an effort to make Downey Staff feel valued.

## 2. Halloween Party Review (Todd Nicholson)

7:08pm-7:29pm

Discussion: Pros and Cons, Bins, and Event

- *PROS*: It was stated that the event well attended, a lot of young kids in costume, a lot newer families came, and the event was well organized, Liz Mullen and Lorri Warren did a great job planning and implementing the event.
- *CONS*: It was stated that bouncy house coverage was a problem, people running late, scrambling for coverage,
- A lot of items for sale in the lobby (too much?)
- The bouncy house line was too long.
- *QUESTIONS RAISED*: could we have a backup person or spare person floating around to fill gaps in coverage?
- Should we nix the bouncy houses? Add more games? Focus on games?
- Cost for pizza? Do we need to charge? Idea proposed to strongly suggest to 2018 committee not charging for anything except entry fee.
- Discussion moved to the idea of no charge for entry fee to Halloween event. With no bouncy houses, do we need to charge for Halloween party? Noted that Halloween party raised \$1500.
- *ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS RAISED*: How do you restrict event traffic with no entrance fee?
- Does the gala raise enough funds to provide all free community events? Does asking people to contribute all year impact the galas ability to raise more funds? (see below item 8).
- *Idea proposed* for a Halloween carnival style event with room-to-room activities.
- *BINS AND EVENT PLANNING*: Board was informed that Rachel Macy asked for and received PTO money for bins to hold haunted house items to be passed down to 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents.
- Board was informed that there were complaints about the "haunted psych ward" received by Principal Gallagher.
- New Downey School haunted house policy: 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents can generate idea, but they must run it by the principal before it is solidified.
- PTO to pass this information along to 5<sup>th</sup> grade event parents.

Action Items: Halloween committee will **eliminate bouncy houses** from future Halloween events and find a fun replacement. Committee will also run the Halloween Party for **no entry charge** to the community next year (2018). Future haunted house themes to be generated by 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents and then run by the principal.

## 3. Pre-Holiday Shopping Update (Todd Nicholson)

7:29pm-7:30pm

Discussion: How did the event go?

- PTO board members stated that Pre-Holiday Shopping event went well, "It was fun"
- Tammy McGowan shared via email that many moms appreciated the "adult socialization time"

## 4. Holiday Fair Update (Todd Nicholson)

7:30pm-7:37pm

Discussion: Sign up genius, lack of community volunteers

- Event is currently short on volunteers, only 5 of 8 slots filled for set up 4:00pm-5:15pm, only 9 of 12 slots for 5:15pm-7pm for sale and breakdown filled in.
- Question raised: If PTO board fills up slots, who else will fill slots? How do we encourage more people from the committee to volunteer and get involved?
- Current status: 2 emails sent out with sign-up genius information, not enough of a response
- Event will also have the help of 11 fifth grade volunteer “elves”
- It was stated that there is a lot of good merchandise for sale this year.

Action Items: Grade level reps will send out one more email with sign-up genius link and shopping list for kids. This will serve as a final request for help and a reminder to community. PTO board members will sign up if they can. Sarah will add more slots to sign up genius to help fill gaps of volunteers who can't commit to a full timeslot.

### 5. Downey Play Update (Sarah Young-Hong)

7:37pm- 7:44pm | Discussion: We are doing the play!

- UPDATE: Catherine Starsiak to direct play, Erin MacManus to work as assistant director.
- Rehearsals for grades 3-5 to take place in December 2017 - cast A on Tuesdays, cast B on Thursdays
- Upper grades will have time to “workshop” and enhance acting skills during their rehearsal time.
- K-2 begins in January 2018, and they will have full involvement in the rehearsals.
- Play was switched to “The Fairy Tale Network” because it will be more manageable for the smaller than expected 3-5 cast.
- Catherine to arrive between 3:30 and 3:45, Erin to handle snack and direction to cafeteria, will run lines while waiting for Ms. Starsiak to arrive.
- For January and February, committee to solicit help from parents and high schoolers to help with management of the younger grades.
- There will be no in-school performance as the logistics with two casts and classroom interruptions are too hard.
- Dress rehearsal will take place the Thursday before the show (February 8, 2018).
- Friday before the play will be Downey School spirit day in place of in school performance.
- Cast party TBD after the final performance
- Play will be February 9 -11, 2018

Action Items: Play committee to solicit volunteers for rehearsals in January and February, sign up genius to be sent out.

### 6. Calendar Updates

7:44pm-7:46pm | Discussion: Downey Play (Feb 9-11), Bowling with Boys (March 24), King and His Princess (April 28)

- Play will be February 9 -11, 2018 (see item 5).
- Board was informed that Bowling was pushed back to March due to play date being moved, New Date: March 24, 2018
- Discussion: Should the King and princess dance be on either Saturday April 7<sup>th</sup> or Saturday April 28<sup>th</sup>?
- Board agreed on April 28<sup>th</sup> for the King and His Princess Dance.

Action Items: Committees will continue to plan and put on events on the dates chosen

### 8. Community Presence

7:46pm-8:20pm | Discussion: How are we doing?

- Discussion: Incoming students need to be welcomed by PTO into community. What is the best way to communicate with them and get their information?
- Tara Billini informed the board that she emails her new families first to check to see if it would be OK to forward the information to the Grade Level Reps.
- Question raised: Should teachers be the link to new families and PTO?
- Teacher protocol is to send out a new class list whenever a new student joins the classroom, this should help a Grade Level Rep figure out when to reach out to new families.
- New families receive PTO mailing folder from Mrs. Carde upon enrollment, should we include the Downey directory? We buy 150 copies; we have 25 left over, why not give the directories out to new families?
- Board agreed to include free copies of the directory in folders for new families who join the community after the school year starts.
- Board agreed that grade level rep information should be made more accessible in folders for new families, and we should update PTO contact information sheet with email addresses for Grade Level Reps so that new families are able to reach out to the PTO as well.

- *Discussion and questions raised:* What do we do with the money we raise for the PTO?
- What events should we charge for?
- Should we focus more on covering the expense more than turning a profit?
- Charge for play tickets? Board agreed, "Yes."
- How should we move forward with Kids Rule the School? Make sure it is accessible to everyone, \$1 a ticket, to begin being sold at the play.
- How does the community feel when we are always selling for the next event? Several board members voiced that parents are feeling they are often being "hit up" for money.
- Board agreed no selling flowers at the play. Concern raised to make sure community is aware of this change so they won't expect to be able to show up and buy flowers.
- PTO board members informed the group that they have been asked where the money we raise is going.
- Board agreed we would like to "Thin out the ask."
- Board agreed there is no need to charge money for events just for the sake of charging money.
- Motion to get rid of raffles, board agreed.
- Idea raised to waive dues of Gala Sponsors.
- *Outdoor Classroom Status:* Group was informed that the outdoor classroom still in conceptual stage.
- Concern raised that we need to quantify the money being spent from the last Gala. Committee needs to jump on outdoor classroom, should break ground in the spring, need a plan of action in place; people are waiting to feel impact of their donations toward the Downey community.
- Todd, Principal Gallagher, and a consultant met and discussed where to put the classroom, were told that the classroom needs a structure.
- PTO board concerned about proposed location for classroom, not safe, too close to the road.

Action Items: PTO and Mrs. Carde to add directory to PTO welcome folders and instruct new families to reach out to their Grade Level Rep(s). Sarah to include Grade Level Rep email addresses on the PTO information sheet. Teachers will be used as liaisons to connect new families to their Grade Level Reps. Board will cut back on what we ask for from the community for money next year. Board will no longer sponsor raffles, provide flowers for purchase at the play, or charge for the Halloween party. Board to ask for less money from the community in general. PTO will continue to charge for the Downey Play and Kids Rule the School. Outdoor classroom committee to continue research and development and begin breaking ground ASAP.

### 9. Gala Update (Nayla Daly and Anne McMurray)

8:20-8:26

Discussion: Update on status

- Gala Committee voiced their idea to have the silent auction table include baskets made per grade (not classroom) to promote student and class involvement in the gala, i.e. "class baskets."
- Idea for kids to make items in the basket
- Idea to make them "It's a Small World themed"
- Idea to ask for parent volunteers to make baskets multicultural.
- Teachers could coordinate baskets with grade level reps.

Action Items: Committee to find volunteers to help coordinate the grade level creation of these baskets. Committee to continue working on sponsorship and other gala related items in preparation for the March 10<sup>th</sup> event.

### 10. PTO Meeting Schedule for 2018 (Todd Nicholson)

8:26-8:32

Discussion: Proposals for setting up our calendar for Winter/Spring 2018

- Proposal by Todd for 2 more open meetings
- Proposed dates: January 16<sup>th</sup> closed meeting, February 13<sup>th</sup> open meeting, March 6<sup>th</sup> closed meeting, April 10<sup>th</sup> closed (board decisions to be discussed), May 8<sup>th</sup> open meeting, June 5<sup>th</sup> closed meeting (final meeting)
- Proposal to move time to 7:15, board decided to stick with 7pm
- Discussion: where should open meetings take place? Solarium? Library? Room 1?

Action Items: Board will attend meetings as scheduled, Downey community to be notified of open meetings by Board and Grade Level Reps. Meeting location for open meetings TBD.

### 11. Movie Night (Hillary Mosca and Liz Gauthier)

8:32pm-8:40pm

Discussion: What four movies should we pick for the kids to vote for?

- Discussion about which movie choices to offer students.
- Titles thrown out such as: Sing, Moana, Trolls, Despicable Me 3, Emoji Movie, Inside out, and Boss Baby.
- Board narrowed down to 4 choices: Sing, Moana, Trolls, and Boss Baby.

Action Items: Movie night committee to finalize the 4 choices and get the list to the school for kids to vote at the beginning of January. Popcorn request letter to Showcase Cinema in Dedham to be delivered in person by Liz Gauthier and Hillary Mosca at the beginning of January. Water and candy to be purchased in January by the committee.

**Next Meeting: January 16<sup>th</sup>**