

Lyon/Pleasant Ridge PTA Minutes

February 12, 2008

President Liz Price opened the meeting at 9:15a.m. in the Pleasant Ridge Library.

In Attendance: Kevin Dorken, Matthew Rich, Liz Price, Kristen Borth, Robin Hinrichs, Miriam Biales, Laura Olsen, Jen Farber, Ana Cassorla, Susie Feldstein, Sabrina Briggs, Sandy Brennan, Eva Ginis, Sue Raben, Susan Desmond, Karen Freidman, Lisa Zingler, Chris Northwick

I. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the January 15, 2008 meeting were approved.

II. Officer's Reports

President—Liz Price said “Thank you” to Jen Farber and everyone who worked on the benefit. Liz announced that it was of the most fun events ever. The attendance was smaller than some years, but everyone who attended had a great time.

Liz announced that the School Board will be meeting on February 25th to discuss class size reductions for grades 3-5. She encouraged all interested parents to attend. At the February 4th Board meeting, the Citizens Advisory Committee made recommendations for facilities and for class size reductions. They recommended that the District reduce class sizes to 24 students for grades 3-5. The maximum class size is now 26 students for grades 3 and 4 and 28 students for grade 5. The Board is interested in reducing class size and there is now a new influx of revenue from some of the state and federal agencies that has made class size reduction an easier option for the District at this time. The Board did seem to have some questions as to whether this was the most important priority for the schools at this time. Parent input will be important to their decision. The intermediate school principals, the District PTA Council, and the Education committee will also be presenting their recommendations. The Board will probably vote on the recommendation at the February 25th meeting.

Liz Price also announced that PTA was beginning to develop a slate of officers for next year. Liz will be heading the nominating committee. She sent around a sign up sheet for people interested in helping. Liz particularly asked for parents of Lyon School students to sign-up in hopes of recruiting more Lyon parents who may not yet be involved in PTA.

Treasurer—Miriam Biales reported on the financial statements for PTA. She reported that the big change on the Net Worth statement from December to January is the rollover of the 3 month CD. This CD will mature in April. At that time, PTA will determine whether the money is necessary for the budget or will continue to be invested. The big difference in this month's revenue/expense sheet and last month's is that bills were paid out for the benefit, for PTA grants, and for cultural enrichment programs. In the next couple of weeks, the executive committee will go over the budget, the benefit receipts, and the PTA expenses to determine how much money we have for PTA grants this spring. All committee chairs please get your expenses in quickly, so we can do an accurate assessment of the finances.

1st Vice President—Kristin Borth asked all committee chairs to please check the mailbox. In addition, Kristin reported that Mr. Gary Wendt, the music teacher at Lyon, is interested in finding a parent to help him develop student digital music portfolios. Tell Kristin if you are interested. Sandy Brennan also stated that she will send a list of possible volunteers from the database.

III. Teachers' Representative Reports

Pleasant Ridge-- Eva Ginis, the social worker at Pleasant Ridge, reported that that the teachers thanked PTA for the grants. The grants, including the FISH program have provided a lot of great programs for the students. The teachers also enjoyed the benefit and were delighted with the free tickets that they received. Mrs. Ginis also stated that Pleasant Ridge is being very flexible with her role as a social worker. Most school social spend most to their time do one-to-one or small group pull-outs with students; however, Mrs. Ginis now goes into 11 classrooms to deal with help lead class meetings and do other programs to teach social emotional skills and prevent bullying and other problems. For example, with the upcoming middle school orientation field trips, Mrs. Ginis is working with all the 5th grade classrooms about the transition to middle school.

Sue Raben, the librarian at Lyon School, reported that next Thursday February 25th, Lyon will be doing Monarch Award voting. This is an award that all Illinois K-3 students can vote for. It includes a wide range of books, fiction, picture books, poetry and nonfiction. The students have to read (or have read to them) at least 5 of the 20 books. The Lyon School staff encourage the kids to pick the books that the authors' use the best words to tell their stories. This year Lyon is also using this as a time to discuss elections. The children will be doing confidential balloting and choosing their books individually. The other upcoming event is Margaret Read MacDonald's author visit. Ms. MacDonald is a world renowned storyteller. She spends most of the

year traveling telling stories. She will be coming to Lyon with Richard Schultz who plays Appalachian folk instruments. He will be accompanying her stories. Mr. Wendt will also be working with Mr. Schultz to write some music with the kids. This year in addition to the day time school performance, Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Schultz will give an evening performance for families at Springman. Both performances will be on April 22nd. Mrs. Raben thanked PTA for funding these performances.

IV. Committee Chair Reports

Benefit—Jen Farber reported that the benefit made just under \$39,500. She also announced that there will probably be more revenue from sales of the DVD “Are you smarter than a Pleasant Ridge 5th grader?” This is a DVD game that Mary Hershey made. It includes all of the 5th graders at Pleasant Ridge as well as Dr. Rich and a number of the teachers. The DVD is very interactive and will be fun for everyone. Information about how to order a DVD will be included in the Pleasant Ridge newsletter this week. There are also a few things from the Lyon School class baskets that are being duplicated for sale. In contrast to previous years the benefit was a very fun party. People were all dressed up; there was a band and dancing; and there were parent emcees. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. The committee will try to incorporate some of these ideas into next year’s benefit next year. The classroom gifts were very successful this year. The design was more flexible, and they had lower opening bids. Jen Farber thanked everyone on the committee for their hard work. She also announced that on February 27th the committee will be reviewing the benefit for new ideas for next year. If you have any ideas or information, let Jen know. Remember the benefit is what funds most of our programs.

Jump Rope for Heart—Sabrina Briggs announced that Jump Rope for Heart will be held on Feb 20th at Pleasant Ridge. Most things are in place, but Sabrina still needs more volunteers to help record contributions on Wednesday morning. If you are interested in helping, contact Sabrina.

International Night—Susie Feldstein reported that preparations have begun for International Night on May 2nd at Pleasant Ridge. Sue announced that within the next 2 weeks the flyers will go out looking for volunteers. They will also be looking for people who are interested in sponsoring a country. Send in the flyers or see Susie if you want to help.

Spring Book Fair—Liz Price announced that planning has begun for the Spring Book Fair which will be held on May 21st and 22nd at Pleasant Ridge. Breland and Liz went to book fair training last week with Anderson Books. This book fair is a bit different than the Scholastic Fall book Fair. It is all about kids and reading and what are the

best books for your kids to read at this time. This year the first night of the Book Fair will be before Literature Alive. On the second day Pleasant Ridge will host the Kevin O'Malley's author visit. Kevin is a writer and children's illustrator. He wrote "*Once upon a cool motorcycle Dude.*" The second night of the Book Fair will include Kevin O'Malley's book signing, and classroom Open House. Pleasant Ridge will be doing shuttles from Sunset Ridge and Lyon for Literature Alive and for International Night.

Cultural Enrichment—Cheryl Kasner announced that the next cultural event at Pleasant Ridge is an Urban Gateways performance called "BAM!" It is a tap dance and music program. The performances are at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on February 26th. Parents are welcome.

V. Guest Speaker—Dr. Matt Rich, principal of Pleasant Ridge, and Mrs. Eva Ginis, Social Worker at Pleasant Ridge, presented a program about the FISH curriculum that is being used at Pleasant Ridge.

VI. Principals' Reports

Pleasant Ridge--Dr. Matt Rich reported that there will be a curriculum night survey going out in the next few weeks. Please fill it out when it comes out. It will be seeking parent input about the content for curriculum. He also announced that at the end of the PTA meeting, Mrs. P will give a walk through tour of the new addition. Please stay if you want to see it.

Lyon School--Kevin Dorken reported that the District is experiencing shortages of salt and chemical to melt the snow. The salt that the District has will be used to make sure the sidewalks around the schools are safe. The parking lots will not be salted. He warned everyone to be careful walking through the parking lots.

Mr. Dorken also announced that Lyon school teachers have been participating in the Glenview University professional development program. A class in Writing for kindergarten is being held at Lyon. The teachers are working with Debbie Shefren and the reading specialist for the District. Another group of teachers at Lyon is working on the daily 5 program. It is a book designed to teach educators to balance the teaching of the various components of reading and writing each day to increase a student's ability in read and writing. The district also does periodic evaluations of components of the curriculum. Right now the District is evaluating the science curriculum. This spring the committee will pick teachers to pilot and evaluate a new science curriculum. Mr. Dorken also reminded us that Valentine's Day is Thursday. If students bring Valentines, they need to bring them for all the students and bring them candy free.

VII. Unfinished/New Business

Environmental-The district wide Green Team group is trying to implement a series of new environmental initiatives in the District. The PTA pledged to try to use some of the money from the grocery bag sales for environmental initiatives. It has been proposed that Lyon become a pilot for District Plastic jug recycling. PTA would pay for the pilot while the Board figures out how to best proceed with recycling for the whole district. This will cost PTA about \$250. Liz Price proposed that PTA fund the pilot program. There was discussion, and a motion to approve the money. The motion passed. Liz will proceed with this process. Mary Hershey also passed around a volunteer sheet for green team volunteers. There will be a Green team and an environmental team. Look for information in the school newsletters.

School Aid—Liz reported on an initiative that was presented at PTA Council by representative from the Henking/Hoffman cluster. These two schools have partnered with an inner city school and the PTA worked to help to provide supplies that the schools needed. This project could be done at various levels. Possibilities include the donation of gently used supplies at the end of the school year, a book drive for gently used kids books, or donations of school supplies when we order our school supplies next fall. Liz challenged PTA to consider using this project as a way to get our kids involved in giving back to the schools. CPS has a list of schools and their needs that we could take choose from. Liz Price passed out a sign up sheet for anyone who might want to spear head this effort.

Phil Collins also discussed the facilities committee recommendation to the School Board. The committee reported at the February 4th meeting that the District will probably need another building in the future to accommodate all the students. The primary school population is growing and there will be more military housing starting next year. Next year Henking and Westbrook will probably need 2 mobile classrooms. The District will probably need a new building by 2012. The District's education committee will be evaluating how the new building can best be used. Should it be an early childhood building? Should it be a primary building? Once the building plan is approved by the committee and the Board, the District will have to go to referendum to fund it. More information will be available as the process proceeds.

VIII. Announcements (Calendar Overview)

Wednesday, February 20th—Jump Rope for Heart at Pleasant Ridge from 2:30-5:00 p.m.

Monday, February 25th—School Board Meeting at 7:30 at the Administration Building. There will probably be a vote on class size reduction. There will also be a program by the Lyon 1st graders.

Saturday, March 1--Science Fair at Pleasant Ridge 9 a.m.-12 noon

Tuesday, March 11th—Next PTA meeting at 9:15 at Lyon School

IX. **Adjournment**—Liz Price adjourned the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Hinrichs, PTA secretary