

Minutes of the East Moriches PTO Meeting

November 13, 2024

A meeting of the East Moriches PTO was held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the East Moriches Elementary School.

**PTO Board Attendees**: Vice-President – Lauren Otto; Secretary - Maureen LaRocca, Treasurer – Trish Specht.

**PTO Guest Attendees:** Mr. Schneyer, Elementary School Principal, was present; as well as PTO Teacher Reps Mrs. Steuerwald and Mrs. Percoco.

Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:07 pm. Lauren Otto welcomed everyone. Babysitting was provided by the NJHS.

**Minutes:** The October 2024 Meeting Minutes were dispensed, and members reviewed them. The Minutes are also available online at <https://empto.org>. A motion to approve the October 2024 minutes was made by Alexis Heinz and seconded by Tina Balzano.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Trish Specht read the Treasurer’s report.

**Events/Fundraisers Updates:**

1. **Completed**:
   1. **Cheddar-Up** online payment system; Trish and Lauren started a new way to pay for membership, donations, and other things.
   2. **Scholastic Book Fairs:** Lauren Otto. Teachers were given the opportunity to create electronic wish lists to grow their classroom libraries.
      1. M.S.: 10/10 & 10/11; At the MS, Lauren conducted raffles to motivate students to participate. Students received 1 raffle ticket per transaction that included at least one book purchased. There was low attendance on Friday, but it was also pre-three day weekend. It was held in the school library and was very cozy and inviting.
      2. E.S.: 10/17 – 10/18; At the ES book fair, there was a door prize given. It went very well. Teachers’ electronic wishlists have been fulfilled.
      3. E.S. Evening Fair: 10/17; was the same night as the Harvest Fest to encourage sales. Each person attending the Evening Book Fair received a raffle ticket that was entered in door prize raffles. There were two door prize raffles held according to age. The Evening Book Fair was very successful. Some unsupervised children were disruptive. Thank you to the NJHS for helping to clean up afterwards.
   3. **E.S. Harvest Fest:** 10/17; chaired by Olivia Ruddick. We planned for 100 participants, but we ran out of activities before the night was over, although last year there were leftovers. Next year, perhaps we should ask families to RSVP if they will attend. There was a discussion about how we could better get the word out for events. We already send flyers home, post to our private Facebook group, and email PTO members. A suggestion was made to post to FB community pages, but that infringes upon our students’ privacy, so we can’t do that. Mr. Schneyer suggested posting the sign-up genius links on the school website for events. Maybe we can utilize the school’s Remind app to send home information to every parent.
   4. **M.S. 5th & 6th Grades Halloween Dance & Trunk or Treat:** 10/25; Caitlin Giorgio chaired the dance; Will Beckenhaupt chaired Trunk or Treat. The dance started at 6:30. There was music, dancing, prizes, refreshments, and a Photo Booth. At 7:45, students with wristbands went to meet their parents outside at Trunk or Treat. At 8 pm, the rest of the students met their parent or guardian in the cafetorium to attend Trunk or Treat. DJ announced departures. Thank you to all of the parents who decorated a trunk and/or donated candy to make the event successful. Thank you to Ace Hardware in Center Moriches for donating the gift card prizes for the Trunk or Treat event. There was also a spooky walk (in the gym) leading into the Trunk or Treat. Caitlin’s suggestions for next year are:
      1. Lighting: The gym was a little dark, maybe add some light towers on the stage?
      2. DJ: more variety in music to meet all interests
      3. Spooky Walk: Some kids liked it, some didn’t. This portion can be added on to each year to make it bigger and better.
      4. Dismissal: There was some confusion among the students regarding the wristbands. We need the DJ to be clearer in directions at dismissal. Some adults were confused about where to pick up their children (instructions were on the signed permission slip and flyer).
      5. Transition to Trunk or Treat: Perhaps switching the order of the events would help, and having the Trunk or Treat before the dance? Or, separating the events entirely and doing a school-wide Trunk or Treat on a different date? These are all things to think about for next year.
   5. **E.S. Halloween Costume Parade:** 10/31; Melissa Davis. Students dressed up in costumes and paraded around the bus loop twice for their parents. It was adorable, as always. Thank you to Baha Farm Stand for provided the décor.
   6. **Candy Buy-Back Fundraiser:** 11/1; Maureen LaRocca. We partnered with orthodontist Vic Grazina for this fundraiser. Dr. Grazina’s office collected unwanted Halloween candy to send to American troops overseas and local food pantries. The PTO earned $1.00 per pound of unwanted Halloween candy that we collected (up to $200). We collected 181 pounds of candy and earned $181 for PTO. Thank you to everyone who donated.
   7. **E.S. & M.S. Picture Retakes:** 11/6
   8. **E.S. Red, White & Blue Day:** 11/8; Colin Salmaggi; This event was for veterans and their families only. Students sang songs to honor the veterans in our community. This year, we provided chairs for the veterans to sit while they were waiting to be checked in to security. We also provided healthy refreshments (fruit, veggies, munchkins, coffee) for them to enjoy. Brittany Onorato decorated the stage with a beautiful balloon display.
2. **Ongoing or Upcoming Business:**
   1. **Believe Fundraiser (Distribution):** 9/20 through 10/9; Trish Specht. We are at approximately $15,000 in sales. The PTO gets back 40% of sales as a fundraiser, which is $5,952 in profit. Distribution is set for Thursday and Friday, November 21st and 22nd, from 4:30-6:00 pm. We could use a couple of volunteers.
   2. **E.S. K-1 Milk and Cookies Event:** 11/14; Alexis Heinz is the chairperson. Mrs. Percoco is the advisor. The purpose of this event is to promote the love of reading between parent and child. It is supposed to be a quiet event where parents and children can snuggle together and enjoy books. Last year, parents were very social during this time, and the chatter was distracting. Mrs. Percoco requests that everyone try to maintain a quiet atmosphere for this event. Alexis reported that we have 63 RSVPs so far. Students will be given little goodie bags. The NJHS students will be there to help out. 11 teachers volunteered to be guest readers. Thank you to the teachers and NJHS students for helping to make this event a huge success.
   3. **M.S. Spelling Bee:** 11/19 @ 7 pm; Maureen LaRocca. Co-chair needed for refreshments. There are 2 winners from each individual class’ spelling bee. Those students will represent their grade level in the school-wide spelling bee. There will be trophies given to the first, second and third place winners of each grade and a trophy given to the overall school winner. Refreshments will be provided for the spelling bee participants and their families.
3. **New Business:**
   1. **E.S. Scholastic Book Fair 2025:** Alexis Heinz has volunteered to chair the Elementary School Book Fair next year.
   2. **E.S. Author Event:** Jocelyn Kaleita is chairperson. An author, Renee Smith, will be visiting the Elementary School on Tuesday, 11/26 (tentative) during the school day. She will do a Reading/Writing workshop as well as show and tell her creative process for writing books.
   3. **E.S. Magical Winter Wonderland:** 12/5 @ 6:00 pm. Tina Quaglino and Caitlin Giorgio are chairpersons. We need lots of volunteers for this event to be successful. Santa will be there. We need a volunteer to be Mickey Mouse Santa. There will be a Gingerbread House Contest (voting will be in the hallway.) A registration fee will be collected; the fee is dependent upon the size of the gingerbread house. There will also be a Basket Raffle. We are preparing for 150 student attendees. In the evening, Karen Lee will run the E.S. Holiday Gift Fair in the school lobby.
   4. **E.S. Holiday Gift Fair:** 12/5 & 12/6. Karen Lee & Olivia Ruddick.
   5. **M.S. Holiday Gift Fair:** 12/12 & 12/13. Karen Lee & Olivia Ruddick.
   6. **We need chairpersons (or co-chairs) for the following upcoming events:** 
      1. **Dodgeball Tournament Refreshments (January):** Tina Balzano
      2. **E.S. 3rd and 4th grade Bingo 1/9**
      3. **M.S. 7th & 8th grade Bingo 1/16**
4. **Questions and/or Comments:** Please keep comments or questions to under 3 minutes.
   1. There was a suggestion made that we hold book drives during the Bingo events.
   2. Tina Balzano suggested purchasing 4 over-the-door basketball hoops at 5 Below as a gift for Frost Valley students. She said the kids have to stay in their cabin and it gets boring.
   3. Tina Balzano also suggested a Meal Train for a first grader with cancer. The teachers are currently doing a meal train weekly. Perhaps we can do something after the holidays. Tina is also a representative for the Strong and Brave Foundation. They are hosting a fundraising event for this student on Wednesday, December 6th, from 4-7 pm at Waterdrinker (tentative location).
   4. Lauren Otto mentioned that we got an email from a Adam Montpetit representing Stony Brook University athletics, regarding purchasing tickets to attend Stony Brook basketball and football games.

There being no further business, Mrs. Steuerwald motioned to adjourn, and Alexis Heinz seconded the motion. The PTO meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

The next P.T.O. Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Middle School.