

El Nido del Águila

"THE EAGLE'S NEST," THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5

October 2023

Vol. 9, Issue 1



Welcome back, Liberty Eagles!

In This Issue

* Volunteering in the school * Say hello to your PTO * Meet the teachers *
* Planning Dia de los Muertos * RAD Days * Chipotle Fundraiser *
* Mental health resources * Check out our website * Give to LEAF *

October Calendar

Monthly School Community-Wide Meetings: Tues., Oct. 10th

On the second Tuesday of each month from Sept. through May, Liberty will hold these two meetings back-to-back, in the school library (*except* for Nov. through Feb., which will be held remotely, via Zoom). FREE dinner and childcare will be provided at all in-person meetings!

- 1) **6:00 PM: PSCC (aka Parent School Community Council):** Led by our acting principal, Ms. Garcia, and our Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Coordinator, Ms. Gehring, this meeting serves as our school district's primary way to engage families at the school level. **See agendas & minutes at bit.ly/LibertyPSCC23**
- 2) **7:00 PM: LEAF (our parent-teacher organization):** Led by parents and guardians, LEAF supports our students, teachers, and families through

fundraising, volunteering, and community events. **See agendas & minutes at pghleaf.org/meetings**. And if you can't make a meeting, your voice is still welcome and needed! Write us at president@pghleaf.org. Our ears are open for ways we can best help our school thrive—all of our students, teachers, staff, and families at Liberty K-5!

PPS Public Hearings (Virtual): Pittsburgh Board of Public Education

Monthly opportunity for citizens' comments on district matters.

DATE: Mon., Oct. 23rd at 6:00pm

TO TESTIFY: Write and submit your comments in advance, and then read them aloud at the Zoom meeting. Comments can be no longer than three minutes/about 400 words. First, you MUST 1) register (deadline is noon, the day of the hearing) by calling 412-529-3868; then 2) email your testimony to Laura Getty at lgetty1@pghschools.org. OR, If you are unable to read your own testimony, you may submit it to Laura Getty, and it will be forwarded to the Board of Directors.

MORE ON REGISTRATION: <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/4043>

SPEAKERS' TECH INSTRUCTIONS: bit.ly/hearingzoom

WATCH: <https://vimeo.com/event/2843465>

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Potluck & Party: Fri., Nov. 3, 6–8PM

As a Spanish language magnet, Liberty celebrates this delightful Mexican holiday, a lively and joyous celebration of deceased loved ones. The kids build *ofrendas* (altars) with photos and mementos at school and, LEAF hosts a big, school-wide event, with food, crafts, and a display of our kids' creations on our giant, school-wide *ofrenda*. Volunteers are appreciated! Visit pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf

Fun Fair: May 31, 6–8PM (Rain date June 7, 6–8PM)

At the end of each school year, LEAF invites Liberty family, friends, and neighbors for an evening of food, games, and fun! Step right up for a bouncy house/obstacle course, face painting, lawn games, and a 50/50 raffle. Volunteers are appreciated! Visit pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf

Family Fridays: Sept. 29, Oct. 27, Mar. 15

(These will only occur if the COVID level is low.) Several times each school year, on half-days, Liberty invites students to bring a family member or other beloved adult to school! It's a chance to see the great work our kids are doing, meet the faculty and your fellow Liberty families, and join our children for activities in the classroom.

Fundraiser: Choolaah on Thurs., Oct. 5th

Good eats for a great cause! Come out to Choolaah East Liberty at 6114 Centre Ave on Thursday, October 5th! Make sure your order counts – for in person ordering tell the cashier that you are dining to support the Liberty Elementary Academic Fund (LEAF) fundraiser and for ordering online use the code LEAF at choolaah.com. Code not valid on 3rd party delivery sites.

Hello, hello, from your PTO (LEAF)!

Bienvenidos from LEAF, your friendly parent-teacher organization! LEAF (a.k.a. Liberty Elementary Academic Fund) is a nonprofit/501(c)3 organization. Our mission is to support Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 students, teachers, and families through fundraising, volunteering, and community-building.

Each year, LEAF organizes/supports:

- **fun events**, like Skate Night, Fun Fair, & Dia de los Muertos
- **enrichment for our kids**, like field trips, extracurriculars, classroom books/supplies, & scholarships for advanced learning opportunities
- **teacher appreciation**, like meals, gifts, & professional development
- **communications**, like our school newsletter & PTO website, www.pghleaf.org
- **summer playdates & uniform swaps** at Liberty's school playground

At our May meeting, we elected the following LEAF officers for the 23-24 school year: co-presidents Teresa Pizzella & Elaine Vitone; communications coordinator Jessa Darwin; and treasurer Sarah Starr.

The vice president position is open! For info, visit pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf or write us at president@pghleaf.org!

Teacher and staff appreciation

An important part of LEAF's mission is to show gratitude for our amazing faculty at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5. This year, we kicked off these efforts with a spread of donuts in the teacher's lounge in the first week of school!

And there's more where that came from! LEAF will also fund and plan meals for:

- Holiday edition—lunch and/or gift (December)
- Winter Blues edition—lunch and/or gift (February)
- Teacher Appreciation Week—lunch (May)

We'd love to have a teacher appreciation chair to coordinate these efforts. If interested, visit <https://pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf> or write us at President president@pghleaf.org.

And remember: little notes of appreciation can go a long way for our hard-working teachers and staff members. If you notice someone doing a stand-up job, let them know!

Say hello to our teachers and staff!

There were some staffing changes at the beginning of the year, but we are set with a great team at this point. You can find contact information for all teachers on our school's PPS website (<https://www.pghschools.org/liberty>) or in the Student Handbook that was available in paper copy at back to school night and sent home by Ms. Z in our Welcome email.

Kindergarten team: Mrs. Michelle Gehring and Mrs. Kara Matthews

1st Grade team: Ms. Ithania Hawes and Ms. Stacey Black

2nd Grade team: Mrs. Yoli Pinizzotto (ELA) and Mrs. Kelli Lowe (Math)

3rd Grade team: Mrs. Tracy Theobald (Math, Science and Social Studies) and Mr. Lou Berry (ELA)

4th Grade team: Mr. Howard Michie, Mrs. Halley Skiff, and Mrs. Keri Cox

5th Grade team: Mrs. Kelli Lowe and Mrs. Sabina Berger

Autistic Support Classroom: Mrs. Dannielle Cash, Mr. Timothy Christian, and Ms. Heather Malingowski

Spanish: Mrs. Yoli Pinizzotto (K/1/2) and Mrs. Keri Cox (3/4/5)

Learning Support: Mrs. Erin Colbert, Dr. Jacqueline Ahlborn, and Ms. Megan Zirkel

Specials: Mrs. Julie Fuerst (Physical Education), Mr. Robert Zehmisch (Art), Mrs. Hayley Plauger (Music), Mr. Adam Katz (Instrumental Music)


Library: Mrs. Tamara Roach

Coaches: Mrs. Elizabeth Delawder (Math Coach) and Ms. Rasheeda Henderson (Literacy Coach)

Speech Therapist: Ms. Maggie Halferty

Front Office: Mrs. Louann Zwierzynski (Principal), Mrs. Meiko Garcia (Interim Principal, Lead Teacher), Mrs. Ashley Murray (Secretary), Mr. John Snyder


(Custodian), Mrs. Elisa Portillo-Wein (Social Worker), Mrs. Alyesha Dobbs (Nurse), and Mr. Jamaal Gosa (Just Discipline Project)



DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A WEBSITE?

LOG ON TO PGHLEAF.ORG FOR:

- Extracurriculars
- "Gifted" Services (a.k.a. "Greenway")
- Back issues of this newsletter
- Childcare (extended day, summer camps, etc.)
- Kindergarten families' section (orientation video)
- 5th grade families' section (middle-school magnet application processes)
- Making sure you're receiving all announcements from the district, the school, your teachers, & LEAF—your friendly parent-teacher organization!



Care packages for Ms. Z

Our principal, Ms. Louann Zwieryznski (aka “Ms. Z”), is on medical leave until January 29th. To contribute to monthly care packages (cards, restaurant gift cards, gifts, etc.), write Jillian at jillianwriley@gmail.com.

Volunteer for LEAF!

All Liberty parents and guardians are welcome to participate in LEAF! Help support Liberty students' enrichments, fun family events, teacher appreciation, classroom supplies, and our school-community website and newsletter. Many hands make light work, and any amount of time you can pitch in is appreciated! Visit pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf for details.

We especially need:

- Note takers for LEAF's monthly meetings
- Fundraising chair
- LEAF Vice President
- Teacher appreciation chair
- Fun Fair event planning chair
- *Dia de los Muertos* event planning committee members

- Skate Night event coordinator
- LEAF information table at events throughout the year

Volunteer for Liberty!

Volunteers are welcome and appreciated throughout the year to support our students in the classrooms and help chaperone at field trips. To keep our students safe, any volunteers who have direct volunteer contact—care, supervision, guidance or control of children—MUST have clearances. Here’s how to get started:

Step 1 - **Get your clearances** (PA State Criminal History Report, Child Abuse Certification, FBI Criminal History Report) and turn them in to the Liberty office (email Ms. Murray at amurray1@pghschools.org). See the link below with required forms. Please note this paperwork can take a week or so to process.

Step 2 - **Reach out to your child’s teacher** to ask what they need help with and if there is a volunteer opportunity in the classroom. Let them know you are available and what you can help with.

Step 3 - **Schedule** your volunteer time with the teacher. Only scheduled visitors to the school are permitted in the building. Volunteering does NOT require a regular, ongoing time commitment, per Ms. Z. (However, coming in on a regular schedule “is appreciated, because in some instances teachers need help with a specific project.”)

Step 4 - **Sign in** at the main office when you arrive for your volunteer time. Please note that volunteers will only be permitted in the building if the district’s health and wellness protocols permit.

Roles that do not require background checks include attending school-wide events (Family Fridays!), volunteering at school-wide events (Dia de los Muertos!), assisting teachers or staff with clerical duties or assisting with a birthday party when the teacher/staff is present the entire time.

For more information, go to the district website with links to the required forms. <https://www.pghschools.org/Page/3958>

Volunteer opportunity: uniform organizer

Liberty is seeking a volunteer to help us keep our uniform closet organized & usable! Right now we have lots of uniforms to share, however, they are packed onto shelves & not organized by size. They are currently being stored in two different locations & now we have more in boxes! Help is needed to get the shelves organized by size & item (this might be a big task, Liberty staff will support) and potentially figuring out a better shelving system! If you're able to stop by on a bi-monthly (this is flexible) basis to help keep this functioning that would be great, but obviously not required. Ms. Portillo is happy to show anyone what is currently going on before they commit. Contact her at eportillowein1@pghschools.org.

RAD Days

RADical days is an annual thank you to the public with free admission, tours, performances, and family activities offered by the organizations and attractions that are funded by RAD. RAD Days will run until October 16th. The complete schedule is available online: <https://www.radworkshere.org/events>

Boys & Girls Club after school program: scholarships available!

Located just blocks from Liberty, the Shadyside Boys & Girls Club offers after-school programming, evening programming, a variety of sports through the school year, and summer camps. Scholarships are available!

- For more info visit: <https://www.bgcwpa.org/location/shadyside>
- SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE! Please contact Dave DiGirolamo d_digirolamo@bgcwpa.org

Liberty students learn to ride a bike!

Our amazing Kindergarteners, Ms. Z and our staff at Liberty worked together to reveal a special surprise on the last day of school back in June. Liberty students are now going to learn how to ride a bike in their physical education class! This is thanks to Yamaha Outdoor access initiative, who funded the All kids Bike program at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5. Many thanks to Yamaha and Tom Schimizzi, Owner / General Manager, Hillview Motorsports, and to Ms. Julie Fuerst for organizing this fundraising effort.

The full program includes a fleet of (24) balance-to-pedal bikes, pedal conversion kits, fully adjustable helmets, one teacher instruction bike, and an 8-lesson Learn-to-Ride Curriculum aligned to SHAPE America National PE standards. The bikes are for the school to keep and meant to last at least 7-10 years, teaching hundreds of future kindergarten students to ride.



Lección de Español (Spanish Lesson)

Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 is a school-wide magnet school with an emphasis in Spanish; teachers routinely use Spanish throughout the day in addition to providing direct instruction in the language. Students learn about the culture of many Spanish speaking countries throughout the year. Classrooms "adopt" a country for a semester, learning about its geography, history, and culture. As a culminating activity, students, teachers and staff share their knowledge with each other and their families.

In each newsletter, we introduce basic Spanish words, numbers, phrases, and some introduction to basic conversation. Here are a few intro words and phrases to kick off this year:

Popular Spanish words

<i>gracias</i>	thank you
<i>a</i>	to
<i>ir</i>	to go
<i>estar</i>	to be
<i>bueno</i>	good
<i>de</i>	of, from
<i>su</i>	your, her, his, or their
<i>hacer</i>	to make

Amigo

friend

Common Phrases

<i>Buenos dias.</i>	Good morning	<i>Como esta usted?</i>	How are you?
<i>Buenas tardes.</i>	Good afternoon	<i>Estoy bien.</i>	I am fine.
<i>Buenas noches.</i>	Good evening,	<i>Mucho gusto.</i>	Nice to meet
greeting		you.	
<i>Hola, me llamo Juan.</i>	Hello, my name	<i>Adios.</i>	Goodbye.
is John		<i>Hasta luego.</i>	See you later.
<i>Como se llama usted?</i>	What is your	<i>Con permiso</i>	Excuse me.
name?		<i>Por favor.</i>	Please

Mental health resources: Student Assistance Program

At Liberty, you can find the help your child needs by reaching out through the Student Assistance Program (SAP). You can call:

- Your child's teacher <https://discoverpps.org/liberty/staff>
- Our school nurse, Nurse Dobbs (412) 529-8458
- Our social worker, Ms. Portillo-Wein (412) 529-8457

There are four phases to the student assistance process: (Thanks to PPS Obama for this excellent description of the program!)

Referral: Anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about someone's behavior—any school staff, a student's friend, a family member or community member. The students themselves can even go directly to the SAP team to ask for help. The SAP team contacts the parent for permission to proceed with the SAP process.

Team Planning: The SAP team gathers objective information about the student's performance in school from all school personnel who have contact with the student. Information is also collected from the parent. The team meets with the parent to discuss the data collected and also meets with the student. Together, a plan is developed that includes strategies for removing the learning barriers and promoting the student's academic and personal success to include in-school and/or community-based services and activities.

Intervention and Recommendations: The plan is put into action. The team assists in linking the student to in-school and/or community-based services and activities. The team might recommend a mental health assessment.

Support and Follow-Up: The SAP team continues to work with and support the student and their family. Follow-up includes monitoring, mentoring, and motivating for academic success.

Give to LEAF

At [pghleaf.org/give](https://www.pghleaf.org/give), you can make a tax-deductible donation via Square or Facebook. ... And by the way, on Facebook, you can opt for either a one-time donation *or* a recurring donation—or encourage your friends to post their own fundraisers by sharing this link: <https://www.facebook.com/fund/PghLibertyPTO/>

Liberty spirit wear and Black history tees

Support Liberty's parent organization, LEAF, and show you Liberty spirit by purchasing some Liberty gear--which is considered part of our school uniform! (And BTW, we carry hats, too!) Also available year-round: Liberty's Black History gear (pictured, below). The front reads, Because They Did, We Can; the back: Black History Matters at Liberty.) Sizes are available for both kids and adults! Orders may be placed online and paid via paypal or credit card. bit.ly/LibertySpiritWear



Submit to this newsletter!

Send stories to president@pghleaf.org

This newsletter is produced by the parent-teacher organization known as LEAF (Liberty Elementary Academic Fund), a nonprofit organization. LEAF's mission is to support the students, teachers and families at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5 through fundraising, volunteering, and community events.

Website: www.pghleaf.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PghLibertyPTO/

Email: president@pghleaf.org

Support Ms. Z

Ms. Z will be on medical leave for the 1st semester of the year and is planning to return to Liberty at the end of January. You can support her during her recovery.

We will be putting together monthly care packages. You can drop items off at the school and they will be collected and sent each month.



- Cards
- Small treats (no food)
- Gift cards - Amazon, Whole Foods, Giant Eagle, GrubHub, UberEats

Questions? Contact Jillian Wein Riley (jillianwiley@gmail.com)

30%



CHoolaah FUNDRAISER

INSTORE + ONLINE + CHoolaah APP



LIBERTY ELEMENTARY ACADEMIC FUND FUNDRAISER

Thursday, October 5, 2023 10:45 am - 9 pm

To support, visit Choolaah East Liberty at 6114 Centre Ave in Pittsburgh and tell the cashier you're here to support the **Liberty Elementary Academic Fund** fundraiser or order online from choolaah.com or the Choolaah app using the code **LEAF** at checkout. Choolaah will then donate **30% of the proceeds** to our organization.



CHoolaah

Eat Different

We're Choolaah, a fresh and fast Indian concept which combines 4,000 year-old clay cooking techniques with a modern commitment to responsible ingredient sourcing. We craft bright, fresh and crazy-craveable dishes made by hand and devoured with joy.

CHoolaah.com @CHoolaahyum



DOWNLOAD APP





LEAF PRESENTS

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS '23

POTLUCK & PARTY @ PITTSBURGH LIBERTY K-5

FRI. NOV. 3, 6-8PM
RAIN OR SHINE!

TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE, VISIT
[PGHLEAF.ORG/VOLUNTEER-FOR-LEAF](https://pghleaf.org/volunteer-for-leaf)

