

Minutes of CES PTO Sep 10, 2024 Meeting

Officers: Aaron Zain, Jen Rice, Heather Cobb, Mia Park, Tyson Stoddard

Attendance and introductions: Jen Rice, Heather Cobb, Aaron Zain, Evin Liljengren, Tiffany Nevers, Amy Sizer, David Champlin, Tiffani Shorey, Brendan Mahoney, Amanda Rasmussen, Susan Parodi, Yu Nong Khew, Emma Burton, Laura McGuire, Rebecca Sinusas, James Grzybowski

Call to order at 5:57pm by Aaron.

Minutes approval: motion by Jen Rice, 2nd by Becca Sinusas to approve June minutes.

President's Report (Aaron Zain): Welcome! Thank you for coming. It is nice to see some new faces and be together. I'll be brief. We are really excited for the school year coming up. We have some great events planned and that need to be planned. Our calendar is full of our traditional favorites, some very large events and some smaller events that benefit our community here at CES.

A reminder, because it is worth repeating often: EVERY parent or guardian is a member of the PTO. Last year, the CES PTO canceled an end of the year event that had pretty much been a tradition here for years and years. The Fun Run and Obstacle Course. The kids loved this year after year. It was an event that required a lot of volunteers and planning to build obstacle courses ahead of the event day. It also took place at the end of the year for a year end celebration. That event was canceled due to lack of help and parent volunteers.

The February Bingo and Basket Raffle - a really well attended evening where there is NO DOUBT that the kids love! They love the night of, but the excitement builds with the raffle starting the week before. This beloved event was also very close to being canceled - due to lack of parent volunteers.

We have also lost many of our dedicated, Committee Chairs and volunteer base through graduation. We are really at a crossroads here now. We can either rebuild our base and continue with these great programs or will need to cancel some of the fun we have planned for our kids. The answer depends upon our parent and guardian base.

We know that everyone is busy... and time commitments are always a struggle... We NEED YOU. The Parents. To make this year successful and great for the kids!

Coming up:

- **Back To School Curriculum Night** on September 19th.
- Our annual **Clothing Drive** on September 20th - September 30th, which is fundraising by the pound!
- The **Fall Book Fair** is in need of planning and fast approaching.
- **Halloween Town:** We are busily planning our largest fundraising event of the year and a great evening for the entire Chester community. Thank you to our Secretary Mia for Chairing this event and pulling this large scale fun night together with the Committee.

Many hands make light work.

Principal Report (Given by James G on behalf of Tyson Stoddard): Tyson is on the mend, everyone is starting to settle in. Social development day was a success with good team building activities. Susan Parodi, the new library media specialist also spoke about the many opportunities for leadership and buddies within the school. She is excited to be a part of the CES community.

Fall clothing drive (Heather Cobb): Our fall clothing drive will run from Friday, September 20th through the morning of Monday, September 30th. The clothing company is scheduled to pick-up on Monday, September 30th between 11am and 12pm. POD has generously agreed to donate a POD storage container to us again this year for use. The POD will be delivered on Thursday, September 19th and picked up on Wednesday, October 2nd.

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Acceptable donations include clothing and shoes, accessories such as belts, backpacks, hats, scarves and handbags, household items such as blankets, bedsheets, towels and pillows, stuffed animals, and bicycles. Children's toys, books and baby gear are no longer accepted.

All items must be donated in secured trash bags. We will have a roll of trash bags available in the pod for use should packaging not be sufficient. Donations can be dropped off outside of these times, in which we will hang signage on the POD directing to place donations securely in the POD.

Do you drop your child off at school in the morning or pickup in the afternoon? If you answered yes and are wondering how you can help with the clothing drive, keep an eye out near the POD for any donations left outside. Please swing over to help organize and place any donations inside the unit.

In prior years the fall clothing drive was held in November. Last year, we decided to move the drive to September, in hopes that an end of summer clean-out would be much needed by families and it was a success! We did better than the prior two years. Here's to another successful clothing drive!

Book Fair: Still in need of a chair. Book fair will run from October 7th-10th. Family night will be Wednesday October 9th from 4-6:30pm in the outdoor classroom. There are YouTube videos available to walk volunteers through procedures and use of cash registers.

Halloween Town (Given by Evin Liljengren on behalf of Mia Park): The Halloween Town Committee is excited for the 2024 event. We think it's the best and biggest event of the year: Halloween fun for Chester families in a uniquely safe environment. Our team consists of 8 current and 2 alumni* CES parents (**looking for someone to chair costume contest!**).

Event includes Halloween Town in the cemetery, carnival games and food, along with parade and music downtown. Costume contest pending volunteers.

Huge PTO fundraiser – over 1/3 of our budget -- and we need all the help we can get! Greater volunteer involvement crucial for sustainability of this event. HT committee is focused this year on building volunteer support by:

- Appointing a volunteer coordinator: Evin Liljengren
- Communicating with Carolyn Gbunlee, JW principal, so dance is not scheduled on same date. Allows us to recruit CES alumni (7 & 8th graders) volunteers. Aaron thanks Carolyn for her willingness to help.
- Contacting VRHS athletic teams and local organizations.
- Advertising the event and volunteer needs early.
- Asking room parents to help get parents involved.

Started using QR codes and calendar links on flyers and emails to make it easy for parents.

Motion by Evin to formally request a spending budget of up to \$1,000 for Halloween Town expenses including: pathway lighting for safety (\$100); game creation (\$100); lit, stay-on-path signs (\$50); port-o-potty (\$200); food/game tickets for volunteers (\$200); straw bales (\$50); and game prizes (\$200). 2nd by Jen Rice, vote unanimously approved.

Mini-Grants (Given by Jen Rice on behalf of Caitlin Calder):

Cultural Arts: Tyson not present to discuss; however, Laura McGuire has volunteered to coordinate for this school year. Jen Rice to connect her with Tyson and Adele McAndrew for further instructions.

Room Parent Coordinator (Rebecca Sinusas): Room parent volunteers needed! Anyone interested can contact Rebecca or the PTO at cescpto@gmail.com. Sign-ups will also be available at Curriculum Night. She plans to send out a Teacher Favorites survey to all the teachers to assist in treat and gift buying ideas.

Yearbook (Jen Rice on behalf of Adele McAndrew): Submit your back to school photos through Treering.

Heart Cart (Rebecca Sinusas): The Heart Cart is back! Rebecca is coordinating with Andrea Selmer and the Teacher Enrichment Committee. Plan to have one grade donate goodies per month with Student Leaders and Kindness Ninjas distributing rather than parent volunteers.

Treasurer's Report (Heather Cobb): Evin has stepped down to focus on Halloween Town. The executive board has appointed Heather Cobb as interim treasurer. Heather distributed and reviewed the treasurer's report.

Income

We raised \$551.78 in donations for the back to school teacher luncheon and received \$3.35 in bank interest.

Expenses

Our PTO insurance for this fiscal year is \$699.00. We spent a total of \$620.12 on the back to school luncheon; \$552 was payable to Wheatmarket and \$68.12 was reimbursed to Jen Rice for drinks, salads, and miscellaneous supplies. \$68.34 was used from our Teacher Appreciation luncheon as monetary donations did not cover the full amount.

Additional Comments

This year, we need to raise \$17,067.87 towards next year's budget. This amount is calculated as our current year budget plus a 25% buffer, less what we have in savings.

Old Business (Jen Rice)

- Survey: A survey of parents was completed at the end of last school year. She plans to share the results with committee chairs but will table further discussion until next meeting due to time constraints.
- Open Committee/Chair persons: Aaron Zain planning to create FB posts with descriptions of each open position. Further discussion tabled until the next meeting due to time constraints.

New Business: Parent Engagement; Tabled until next meeting.

Member Comments:

- James G requesting dates for Holiday Craft Fair (tentative Dec. 6th) and Bingo Night due to high demand of gym space from the community.
- James G requesting assistance from the PTO in fundraising for a new saltwater fish tank for the school. The fish tank was originally provided with contributions from the community many years ago. Estimated cost between \$8,000 and \$9,000. Tiffany Shorey suggesting a dunk tank fundraiser, Rebecca Sinusas suggesting Penny Wars.

Motion to adjourn at 7pm by Aaron Zain, 2nd by Jen Rice.

Next Meeting October 8th at 6pm.