

Minutes of CES PTO October 8, 2024 Meeting

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

Attendance and introductions: Mia Park, Jen Rice, Aaron Zain, Evin Liljengren, Brendan Mahoney, Amanda Rasmussen, Laura McGuire, Andrea Selmer

Call to order at 6:03 pm by Aaron Zain.

Minutes approval: motion by Jen Rice, 2nd by Laura McGuire to approve September minutes.

President's Report (Aaron Zain):

I gave a speech at our September meeting for more parent engagement and feel hopeful as we have seen more parent involvement. I want to send special thanks to David Champlain, a kindergarten parent who created the School Directory this year.

Our events are in full swing. The Clothing Drive ended on 9/30 with many parents, teachers, students and staff making it a great success. The Fall Book Fair is ongoing with parents signed up to volunteer. The Halloween Town committee is busy planning our largest fundraising event of the year. Many parents, including Kindergarten parents, have signed up for scenes and other roles. Thank you!

Principal Report (Given by Andrea Selmer on behalf of Tyson Stoddard):

The teachers and staff thank the PTO for all that it does.

The need for more teacher and staff Halloween Town volunteers for later slots was discussed. Andrea will encourage more folks to sign up.

We discussed whether the Mini grant deadline will be extended and the answer is no. Teachers will need to wait until next year, but PTO will send out a reminder over the summer so teachers have time to prepare their applications.

Big thank you for the heart cart from teachers - it's appreciated and a moral boost. Kindness ninjas excited.

Fall clothing drive (Given by Jen Rice on behalf of Heather Cobb): Our fall clothing drive ran from Friday, September 20th through the morning of Monday, September 30th. This appeared to be one of the best collections we've had in quite some time! Special thanks to Adele McAndrew for coordinating the POD and clothing truck, thanks to Jen Rice for volunteering on pickup day and huge thank you to Amy Lippincott, Katie Burgener, Sanay Ayele and our entire 5th grade class for loading the truck! We couldn't have done it without you.

Book Fair (Given by Aaron on behalf of Tawnya): Book fair is running 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. Aaron volunteered today and all looks good. Only thing not present was gift books for teachers.

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Andrea volunteered to print names of teachers and they can put books on a table for families to buy. E-wallets went well for students. Possible e-wallets set up for teachers. Family night will be in music room.

Halloween Town (Mia Park):

Halloween Town is going to be spook-tacular! Planning is going well.

- Downtown streets closed off to cars 4-9 pm: Laurel Hill Cemetery to Water St.
- **Costume parade**, led by Chester Fife and Drum, at 5pm from **North Quarter Park** to downtown. **Costume contest** and live music to follow.
- Chester Merchants: trick or treating, outdoor foods, Honeycone flavor, decorations, red carpet for costume contest.
- Cemetery activities 5-8:30pm.
- **Cemetery walk**: ALL classrooms are signed up for a scene. Thank you parent scene leaders! Reach out to your scene leaders to contribute time, props, or funds.
- **Carnival Games & Food**: A new carnival game. Prizes. Cotton candy, hotdogs, kettle corn and cupcakes will be sold. \$1 ticket per play, \$2 ticket per food item. Volunteers to fill all sorts of roles needed!
- **New partnerships**: Chester Library is running the scavenger hunt this year, Town officials judging costume contest and scenes, Chester Hose Co. approved to accrue volunteer hours at event, JW dance scheduled for week before.
- **Advertising** to tri-town through social media, town newsletter, flyers in libraries, hopefully Valley Courier person of the week, CES morning broadcasts and posters.
- **Sponsorships**: Whelen \$1K and smaller donations from local businesses. We have verbal confirmation that The Chester Leadership Fund will cover admission tickets for all CES students and 1 accompanying adult for \$2350. Woohoo!
- SEt up a FB group page to communicate sharing props
- **Formal request for spending vote**: we will trial selling Halloween Town tote bags, designed by a former CES student. We are requesting a vote to increase allowable Halloween Town spending by \$450 to purchase bags. We would sell for a small profit. Bags cost about \$1.50 each and will sell for \$3. Motion to vote approved by Jen Rice and Andrea Selmer, Unanimously approved by those present.

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

Keri Sciuto requested stools and theraband for her classroom; Diana Amara and Elaine Fleischer requested membership to Everyday Speech program; Geane Giordano requested volleyballs; Lori Lenz and Andrea Selmer requested Bulk Domino set; Dana Lutz paper cutters, stapler and treasure chest stuffer.

Committee approved, e-board approved, and Aaron motioned to accept \$1092.98, second by Evin.

\$3000 is amount to award. Aaron motions to make a special line item under Special Projects for fish tank with remaining \$1900. Jen seconds. Unanimous vote.

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Cultural Arts (Laura McGuire):

All classes in Fall will have the Audubon Society to visit in a manner that aligns with their science curriculum ~\$2000. Will stay in touch with Tyson and Niki Waz to provide programs that teachers want/need.

Room Parent Coordinator (Given by Jen Rice on behalf of Rebecca Sinusas):

I sent out a welcome letter to all room parents, let teachers know who the room parents are, and sent out information about Halloweentown. We are still looking for room parents for DeBlasio's room (4th grade).

Heart Cart (Given by Jen Rice on behalf of Rebecca Sinusas): The Heart Cart email is scheduled to go out on Tuesday, 10/8 to the 1st grade room parents and Heather is going to send home the flyer on Thursday. Andrea is all set to do the cart on 10/18 and the office staff knows that donations will be coming in on 10/16 and 10/17.

Holiday Craft Fair (Given by Jen Rice on behalf of Allison Abramson):

- Aaron thanks Allison for volunteering to chair this event again. Committee members are needed to support this event.
- Date set December 6. Set up at 4:00 p.m. I'll be checking in with James to have same set up as last year.
- Question for 6th Grade: do they want to host a bake sale fundraiser? Typically raise \$300.
- Allison will reach out to Ms. Raymond to see if Green Team will host the toy and book swap.
- PTO Survey: I have feedback from parents, but I do not have the list of parents interested in volunteering at this event. Did anyone express interest in helping with the holiday craft fair? If so, I'll include them in the first planning meeting this month (date TBD).
- I need Canva and Sign up Genius log-in credentials. I'll be providing PTO with a volunteer recruitment flyer and a general event flyer.
- Andrea Selmer asked about teacher/staff involvement and encouraged PTO to reach out for help when time comes.

Treasurer's Report (Heather Cobb):

Income

We raised \$1,450 in sponsorships for HalloweenTown and received \$0.96 in bank interest.

Expenses

We reimbursed Adele McAndrew \$25.59 for a 23/24 yearbook for the front office. We used \$411.55 in approved HalloweenTown expense costs to reimburse Patrick Bryan for supplies for games, lit stay on path signs and HalloweenTown bags for resale.

Yearbook (Jen Rice on behalf of Adele McAndrew)

No significant updates. Orders continue to come in. I'm waiting for portraits from Joseph's photography that he'll send me after retakes are done. Just hoping that all PTO events are getting photographed, so we can add more to the yearbook this year.

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Survey (Jen Rice): Led by Becca Sinusas at the end of last year to get feedback on PTO organized events. Summaries were sent to Committee Chairs to inform event planning. Most comments were mostly positive. Suggestions for future fundraising: read-a-thon, night of care for holiday shopping, give \$ amount to donate if you can't participate/help, rent out theater, fundraiser, pizza delivery night, teacher cookie swap.

Jen happy to share the results if anyone is interested.

Old Business

Luncheons: Tyson sent a nice note of appreciation for the Welcome-Back Luncheon for teachers. We are still looking for a parent to Chair the spring appreciation luncheon - involves ordering and picking up food, soliciting donations/volunteers through sign-up genius that is already created and helping to set up/break down.

Parent Engagement (Aaron Zain)

- Kindergarten parents stepping up even though new, including the directory.
- Parents volunteering for events so far, book fair
- Bring a friend to PTO
- February basket raffle and bingo night, still need chair and a committee. Aaron will get a date set with James G.

New Fundraiser ideas:

1. Election Day bake sale fundraiser idea (Jen Rice) - Idea from meeting with other tritown PTOs. Groups sell baked goods at Town Hall during voting day and is reported to be a successful fundraiser. Jen will see if Town Hall will give permission.
2. Fundraiser suggested by Aaron Zain, Pura Vista bracelets in CES colors and sell at different events. Will look up pricing. Multiple requests by her kids to have them.
3. Jen Rice will follow-up on new merchandise vendor and provide special sales periods - what are school colors? Blue and yellow
4. Brendan offering a snow cone machine for Halloween Town. Will get in touch with HT committee members.

Fish Tank Fundraising ideas (tabled until next meeting)

Aaron has asked James G for a more detailed budget for the proposed purchase of a new saltwater fishtank. Estimated cost between \$8,000 and \$9,000. Aaron will look into grants given the fishtank is a therapeutic tool for the school.

Motion to adjourn at 7pm by Aaron, seconded by Brendan.

Next Meeting November 12th at 6pm.