

Middlebrook PTA Meeting

October 18, 2012

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order - Media Center, Middlebrook School @ 9am: Beth Johnson.
- II. Approval of September 20, 2012 Minutes - Aileen Senneff: Stacy Crameri moved, Patty Tomasetti seconded. Minutes approved.
- III. Principal's Report - Julia Harris: School Climate Surveys are being administered to students in grade 7 today. They are also being administered to parents and students in grades 2, 4, and 10. Thank you to our fundraising volunteers, especially co-chairs Bev Hermann, Jennifer Davatzes, and Dottie Jankowski. You brought back our pig races and a healthy spirit of competition for our school. The students frequently check the pig standings in the front lobby. We appreciate all that you have done for us! Sixth Grade Activity Night was "fabulous" according to Dean Hasenauer. She was most impressed by the Top Inclusion Models who made the evening fun for everyone. We are in the midst of Teen Read Week and there is still time for students to donate new or gently used books during homeroom. These books will be donated to the School Volunteer Association of Bridgeport where students in kindergarten through grade eight will be given the opportunity to take home their very own book. Next week is Red Ribbon Week sponsored by the Wilton Youth Council. The theme is "You're Not the Only One." A variety of special events will occur during the week, including dress up days, students signing pledges for be Alcohol and Drug Free during lunches, and presentations during the morning announcements. Photo Retake Day has been changed to Wednesday, November 7. We will have our next Coffee with the Principal on November 7 from 9-11 on the topic of "Internet Safety." We will be joined by States Attorney Rich Colangelo, School Resource Officer Rich Ross, and Matt Hepfer, the Director of Technology for the Wilton Public Schools. We will be learning about the latest in technology, including InstantGrams. This is a similar presentation to the one next week on Tuesday, October 23 at 7 pm at the Wilton Public Library. We are thankful that Jennifer McNamarara and the Wilton Domestic Violence Task Force are providing this program for working parents. This is an example of a positive collaboration. We are also looking forward to the Kick Off for the Science Fair on November 7 with Science Shows by Tami Strauss, a talented former Middlebrook science teacher. Thank you to Victoria Madden and

Anne McCann for organizing and helping with this excellent enrichment opportunity for our students.

- IV. Teacher Representative - Tara Peterson: **Six Green** students have started work on their Year in Review Portfolio by writing a paragraph on "coming to MB", taken a learning styles survey, and have thought about what reflection is and why it is important. Students have also written paragraphs in English and created a "Who Am I?" description, which are currently on display in the team hallway. **On 6 Yellow**, through a Web Quest in their science classes, students are investigating how Long Island and Long Island Sound were formed by glaciers. The team is looking forward to their next team day on Oct. 31 with some team-building tricks and treats in store! **6 Red** is finishing up their CSI - crime scene unit. This was an interdisciplinary project that had students analyzing a crime scene in social studies, determining time of death in math using EXCEL formulas, and writing a well-supported police report of the crime using extensive detailed notes from the crime scene. **On 7 Green** Reading/Writing and Social Studies students collaborated on an essay and presentation extolling the features of their "Favorite Places" while English students researched aspects of 1960s culture and began reading Robert Lipsyte's novel, The Contender. **On 7 Red**, English, RWW, and World Geography students are continuing their work on the interdisciplinary unit called "Biomes of the World" (BOW): heading toward presentations and then essay writing. **7 Yellow** is subtly incorporating their team theme of Change as they start to notch it up to full speed now that standardized testing and shortened weeks are behind them. **The 8 Green team** is planning their field trip to Philadelphia on Thursday, Nov. 8th and Social Studies just finished with their Sentries project, where they completed speeches on influential leaders, events and discoveries in US history. On Friday, the classroom will be transformed into a museum of American History. **8 Yellow** is finishing up its poetry unit and Mrs. Candels has been impressed with the work from all of her young poets! They will be travelling to Philadelphia on Nov. 5th. And finally **8 Red** is gearing up for their trip to historic Philadelphia next Thursday and they are about to begin an exciting new "world audience" project related to that trip.
- V. President's Report - Beth Johnson: 8 Green sent a thank you note for the lunch provided. PTA Council has discontinued their fundraising and gifts and grants program. Therefore, they have donated \$4000 to each school and are just maintaining operating costs going forward. There will be no further donations to unit PTAs as in past years. The executive board attended state PTA training. One issue discussed was how PTA members can attend Board

of Education and Board of Finance meetings and represent themselves as either individuals or members speaking on behalf of their PTA. In order to speak on behalf of the unit PTA, the unit PTA must draft a statement for review and formal approval by the members of the unit PTA. The approved statement is then read, verbatim, at the appropriate meeting by an approved representative of the unit PTA. The representative will clearly state they are representing the unit PTA. The Wilton High School PTA is spearheading an initiative to get Route 7 in the area of the high school designated as a school zone. The town of Wilton is already supporting them and they are now working at the state level.

VI. Officer Reports:

- a. Vice President - Stacy Crameri: Membership after all open houses is 585, 536 parents and 49 staff members. This is an increase from a membership of 326 last year.
- b. Treasurer - Maria Wilcox: Insurance and dues are paid, taxes are due 11/15/12. 6th grade activity night broke even.
- c. Parent-At-Large - Savet Constantine: No report.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a. Spiritwear - Patti Sylvia: we raised \$3,324.00 for the 2012-13 school year so far for the gym clothing and spiritwear items. May raise even more towards the end of the school year with the incoming 6th graders. **Team Shirts Update** - Sold 228 shirts at a profit of \$7.00/shirt, which totals \$1,596.00, less printing costs and sample shirt orders. More than half of the orders came from the Yellow Teams. It helped providing the teachers with order forms to distribute so need to do that next year. Anne Munkenbeck, son Corey Savia, designed them. Will pick them up on Saturday and distribute on Monday during lunch shifts. Can use help folding and tagging them over the weekend.
- b. Hospitality - Patty Tomasetti: Veterans Day is coming; there will be 3 assemblies with breakfast and lunch provided.
- c. Fundraising, Dottie Jankowski: 5 Pigs (Dore, Randall, Priest, Dunn, Leen) - classes with 75% participation. 28 Blue Ribbons - classes with 50% Participation. Overall so far we've raised \$25,441.40 with 52% participation, which is an increase from last year. Please enter Innisbrook wrapping paper order online and then send in check with

voucher. Innisbrook orders will end on Friday, but we'll continue accepting checks and paypal donations to get us to \$30,000. Last prize day is Friday.

- d. Reflections - Patti Sylvia: **CALLING ALL ARTISTS, WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, DANCERS AND COMPOSERS!** The PTA's creative arts competition has begun! This year's theme is "The Magic of a Moment." All original works of art, photography, writing, and dance and music composition in the spirit of the theme are eligible. Entry forms and guidelines can be found on the Wilton PTA website www.wiltonpta.org. Entries will be collected at school (look for the blue bins by the front office) the week of December 3rd. Professional judging and awards occur at the Wilton level with all first place winners moving on to the state judging. Send any questions to your school's Reflections rep: Patti Sylvia - pattisylvia@aol.com What is your dream of the Magic of the Moment?
- e. Activity Nights - not present. 7th grade activity night is 10/26/12, currently seeking volunteers.
- f. Special Education - Fran Monroe: Top Inclusion Models are attending all events, and 25% of freshman has signed up. Meetings are every other Tuesday at 6 or 6:30. They are discussing starting a TIM club at Middlebrook.
- g. Boxtops - Pam Carlson: We earned \$200 this summer, and another \$130 worth of Boxtops was just submitted. There will be one more check in the spring. Thank you for trimming your Boxtops before you submit them!
- h. Science Fair - Victoria Madden: The science fair kickoff is planned for November 7. Extra help sessions are scheduled for November 20 and 29th. Entry forms are due on December 7.
- i. Wilton Youth Council - Nancy Gany: **Red Ribbon Week at Middlebrook and Wilton High School** During the **week of OCTOBER 22-26**, students will be working hard to provide a program of informational spots on their morning school TV broadcasts, bake sales, decorations and much more! (Red Ribbon week is organized under the auspices of the Wilton Youth Council's Task Force for the Prevention of Substance Abuse Among Youth, who is always looking for dedicated

volunteers to serve on their board.) Red Ribbon Week is a way for our schools to take a visible stand against substance abuse. The Red Ribbon Campaign was started when drug traffickers in Mexico City murdered DEA agent Kiki Camarena in 1985. In honor of Camarena's memory and his battle against illegal drugs, friends and neighbors began to wear red badges of satin. Parents, sick of the destruction caused by alcohol and other drugs, formed coalitions which took Camarena as their model and embraced his belief that one person can make a difference. These coalitions also adopted the symbol of his memory, the Red Ribbon. The National Family Partnership organized the first nationwide Red Ribbon Campaign in 1988. Since that time, the campaign has reached millions of U.S. children. This began the continuing tradition of displaying Red Ribbons as a symbol of intolerance towards the use of drugs. During Red Ribbon Week, Middlebrook and Wilton High School will join the fight to stop drug and alcohol abuse. The schools will be decorated with Red Ribbons. Every student is invited to join in by celebrating that one person does make a difference. **Parenting Book Discussion Series**

Wilton Youth Council's Parent Connection will once again partner with psychologist and Wilton mom, Susan Bauerfeld, to sponsor a parenting book discussion series. We had a great turnout last year and are pleased to offer this to parents again this school year. There will be three to four discussions in the series over the course of the school year, which will be held at the Wilton Library's Rimer Room in the mornings from 10:30 AM - 12:00 noon. The first discussion will be held on **Tuesday, November 13, 2012** and the book is: *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids* by Madeline Levine. The series format will include an overview/outline of the book and its major premise along with practical suggestions for how to apply the principles and time for questions/discussions. Admission is free and reservations are recommended. Please register at www.wiltonlibrary.org. **Rescheduled Parent Connection Event**
Parent Connection Presentation: "Connecting with Your Kids: Learning the Language of Teens, Part II" **Thursday, December 6th from 7 - 8:30 PM** at the Wilton Library. Barbara Greenberg, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of teens and their families. She is co-author of *Teenage as A Second Language-A Parent's Guide to Becoming Bilingual*. Parent Connection brought Dr. Greenberg to speak to Wilton parents in December 2011 and

attendees overwhelmingly confirmed they want her back. Please join us for what will be an informative and interactive presentation. Admission is free and reservations are highly recommended. Please register at www.wiltonlibrary.org.

VIII. New Business

- a. WEF - Spelling Bee: Community event for adults. Each PTA is sponsoring a team of teachers. Beth Johnson proposed approving \$130 for the entry fee and additional funds for the team to by "epi-pens" (lifelines for help answering the questions.) Maria Wilcox moved to approve up to \$200 toward the entry and epi-pen fees, Victoria Madden seconded. Motion approved.
- b. Middlebrook PTA evening meetings
 1. Liz Suchy emailed the PTA President to inquire about and request that the MB PTA considers holding periodic evening meetings for the following reasons -
 - a. Morning meetings exclude working parents from participating in the organization in a meaningful manner
 - b. The PTA's continued position.... (of holding morning meetings exclusively) does a disservice to a portion of the population of parents
 - c. Working parents who have less flexibility in their schedules than volunteers would welcome the opportunity to be more engaged in the PTA
 2. PTA Executive board discussed the issue and requests feedback from members in attendance of this meeting. Points raised at the Executive Board discussion and presented at the meeting are as follows -
 - a. The monthly meetings are comprised of updates from the committees as well as the Principal and Teacher Representative (all of the information shared is available through the minutes.) The important planning and action work of the PTA is done at the convenience/discretion of the volunteers and committee members outside of the monthly PTA meeting

- b. A greater way to contribute and participate in the PTA would be to join one of the committees rather than to attend a monthly meeting
 - c. Important school issues that would affect a child's education are not decided at the monthly PTA meetings. Those issues are or would be presented at separately scheduled, issue specific, widely publicized, evening meetings....such as Board of Ed and Board of Finance meetings, Internet Safety (Coffee with the Principal or evening at the library), Math-In-Focus presentations, etc.
 - d. The option of calling a special meeting to address a specific issue is always open
 - e. Opportunities exist for parents with time available in the evening hours to contribute (such as PTA Council VP-Budget...2-4 evening meetings/month from Oct-May)
 - f. People are busy in the evenings with family-related activities, sports events and practices, school-related performances and assemblies, various community service committee meetings, and assisting children with homework
 - g. Middle school age children are not able to drive themselves to their evening activities
 - h. Meetings held while the children are in school allows for more time to be spent with the children in the evenings
 - i. Regardless of the nature of a parent's daily work responsibilities, they are often times too tired to add another meeting at the end of the day
3. The conclusion of the discussion and opinion of the majority present at this meeting is that the MB PTA membership should be polled or surveyed regarding the best time to hold meetings

IX. Adjournment