



THE FALLSMEDIUM

ISSUE #11
JUNE 2009

A monthly newsletter of the Fallsmead Elementary School PTA
www.fallsmeadpta.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I can hardly believe this is my LAST Fallsmedium letter as PTA President. Looking back over the year, I am particularly proud of several accomplishments we achieved together. The first is the sizeable donation from the PTA for books in the Media Center. You may have seen the plaque recognizing the contribution to the right of the book return desk. As Mr. Payne has noted, we added 3 year's worth of books in a single year, allowing us to fill most of the shelves. Those books are benefitting ALL the students in Fallsmead. I am also proud of all the quality programming we provided or supported through the tireless hours of volunteers. Betsy has the final count in her article, but I know as high as the number is, it probably misses many hours of volunteer work done by parents at home. Whether it was raising funds or implementing great programs, we all have a lot to be proud of. Thank you to all the parents who supported Fallsmead by organizing, helping and/or attending all the events that you did.

I had a couple of personal goals for myself stepping into this role. One was to develop a true partnership with Fallsmead staff. I think we realized this goal as a result of parent participation on Mr. Payne's leadership team; the efforts of an amazing Staff Appreciation team; and the collaborative, respectful interactions between teachers and parents. The other goal I had was to leverage communications channels. I've heard great feedback on the weekly email updates. I hope you all take the opportunity to view our website www.fallsmeadpta.org. Almost ALL of your questions about the PTA, programs, and more can be found on our site (thanks to Rahul Jain for all the website work). And of course, Amy Garmer and Marie Novak have done an amazing job redesigning the Fallsmedium so you can find the information you need.

Thanks so much to my Executive Board: Michele Goodman, Betsy Meltzer, Rahul Jain, Andrea Samborn, Rochelle Hodes, Dave Pawlik, Andrea Bernardo, and Diana Rabinowitz. Michele, Andrea S., Rochelle, Dave and Diana will continue on the board next year to support co-presidents Jamila Bell and Lyn Mullinax. I've had the opportunity to start working with these two great women and I think the Fallsmead PTA will enjoy a great year under their leadership. Thank you to all the committee chairs who have run amazing programs all year to make Fallsmead such a great school. Special thanks to: Mike Schoen (for coordinating all the Toolbox orders and directory work); Adria Schoen (for getting those fabulous Field Day T's); Michele Goodman (for making sure all the kids had yummy popsicles on Field Day); Sabrina Altman (for running a great Box Tops program); Arlis Delappa, Cindy Henschel, and Cindy Singman (and all the other parents who put together the fantastic 5th grade celebration); Lee Pai-Sherf (who runs Sunshine all by herself – our PTA program to recognize personal events in a teacher's life); and Kathy Carr and Julie Walkup (they put together a wonderful yearbook!).

To ALL Committee Chairs, please don't forget to complete your check request forms by 6/30/2009 as the PTA books close on that date (& any money not dispersed is GONE!). For next year, please let me know if you need to make alterations to the program schedule as we will be making up the calendar before mid-July.

Please send feedback and ideas to president@fallsmeadpta.org. We will be redirecting emails to the new officers so that addresses stay the same - pretty cool, right? Bookmark our site and check back as we post news and information all summer about Fallsmead as we hear it. Have a great summer everyone.

Vina Coonin
2008-2009 Fallsmead PTA President

IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

A huge thank you goes out to all our PTA volunteers. I wanted to print the names of everyone who volunteered this year, but that would be over 300 people and I was afraid I would miss someone (not to mention the paper we'd use!) You know who you are. Please give yourself a pat on the back! Our efforts as a community are one of the things that make Fallsmead Elementary a special place to be.

- We averaged about 100 people a month coming into the school to volunteer.
- Through May we have a total of 3160 in-school hours volunteered this year.
- We also had an additional 1670 volunteer hours accrued by projects at home and after school.

Why do we do it??? Of course we do it to help our school help our children. However, after spending the last 8 years volunteering at Fallsmead, I know that I did it for myself as well. Volunteering at Fallsmead gave me long lasting friendships and the feeling of camaraderie that will last long after the kids move on.

Thanks again to all the incredible Fallsmead volunteers!

Betsy Meltzer
2nd Vice President and Volunteer Coordinator

Open Committee Chair positions for the 2009-2010 School Year

After School Programming
Bingo Night
Civic Action
Communications
5th Grade Celebration
Group Piano
Kids Club
PTA Directory / Membership
Recess/Lunch Volunteer Coordinator
Sally Foster
Variety Show

COMMUNITY SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thank you to all of the students and families who participated in the Community Service projects over the 2008-2009 school year. The Fallsmead school community undertook a variety of projects that served many people and organizations in our area, including:

Children's Toy Drive for Shady Grove Hospital ◇ Adopt a Family - Holiday Gift Giving ◇ Manna Food Drive (with the SGA) ◇ 3 fundraiser dances ◇ Calling All Sneakers shoe drive (shoe donations to an orphanage in Honduras) ◇ diaper collection for area shelter systems ◇ School Supply Drive to benefit Linkages to Learning ◇ Pull Tabs For Charity (collection of Pull Tabs to raise money for cancer research and treatment) ◇ Terracycle Program (juice pouch containers) ◇ Pizza Professionals (with the guidance counselor) ◇ Glories Happy Hats

Thanks to all of those who generously supported these efforts!

Lisa Merkin, Community Service Chair

June Drawing Winners: Nate Buckley, Sidney Cohen, Grace Dellapa and Emma Stern

Grand Drawing Winner: Stone Tarwater



The grand drawing winner for the year receives a Fallsmead T-shirt for participating in the Box Tops collection drive. This year we collected a total of \$524 worth of Box Tops for Education. Please continue to collect Box Tops coupons over the summer. Thank you for your support!



GROUP PIANO: There is an opportunity to bring group piano back to Fallsmead in 2009-2010 through the Montgomery County Group Piano program. Requirements: minimum of 18 students and parent volunteer time. Cost: approximately \$280. The program would run the entire year. PTA would need a committee chair to take the lead on coordinating this program. If you are interested in having your child participate, could volunteer some time, and/or are interested in organizing this program, please contact Vina Coonin at president@fallsmeadpta.org.

Minutes of the Fallsmead PTA Meeting
Tuesday, June 2, 2009
7:15 pm

The 2009-2010 PTA budget was reviewed line by line and approved with minor edits. In addition to voting, the meeting attendees took the opportunity to provide feedback and discuss the programming as the budget for each line item was discussed. Process changes for the next school year are also included in these minutes.

Budget Synopsis:

We typically underestimate income from fundraisers and overestimate expenses in order to create the most conservative budget possible. As a result, we have forecast a budget deficit of \$1025. This does not particularly alarm the PTA leadership as the 2008-2009 Budget had a deficit of \$3175. Nevertheless, we discussed the need for fundraising creativity as the current fundraisers may fall short of what we need in order to meet the increasing financial needs of Fallsmead. If fundraisers perform better than expected, the budget can be amended and programs that were cut in this version of the budget may receive additional funding.

Fundraisers:

We will keep the following fundraisers: Book Fair, Gift Wrap, Silent Auction, Membership dues and Restaurant Dine-Outs. We voted to postpone adopting the "Fun Drive" where each family would be asked to make a recommended donation in order to fully fund all the initiatives and programs that we support at Fallsmead. The following fundraisers will not be held during the next school year: Election Day Bake Sale (no election this year); Original Artworks; and Used Book Sales.

Events:

We voted to fund the following events: International Festival (\$500, same as prior year), Spring Fair (\$500, same as prior year), Family Bingo (\$100 income, same as prior year), Fifth Grade Celebration (\$750, previously \$1000), Back to School Picnic (expect \$300 income; previously \$500) and Science Fair (\$250, same as prior year). Note that in preparation for the Science Fair, a school wide science program could be scheduled using Cultural Arts funds (chairs of both committees need to coordinate). The following events will no longer be funded: Variety Show and Family Dance. The following events will be under the new budget line item of "Hospitality": New Parents Welcome, Boo Hoo Breakfast. Last year the fifth grade was not able to raise enough funds to pay for 2 days of Glories Happy Hats and the PTA voted to amend the budget and pay the difference of \$732. For the 2009-2010 school year, the PTA decided that the 5th grade must have the funds in place before scheduling GHH or come up with a community service project that does not require so much funding.

In-School Activities:

We voted to fund the following events at lower levels than this year due to the projected deficit: Chorus/Festival of the Arts (\$400, previously \$600); Cultural Arts Programming (\$2000, previously \$3000); Safety Patrols (\$300, previously \$500); Staff Appreciation (\$1200, previously \$2750); Enrichment (formerly "Artist in Residency" and "Framing for Art Gallery" now \$750, previously \$2500); Teachers Discretionary Fund (remains at \$3600). We are not funding the following: GAC and Room Parents. We would like to provide aid to Fallsmead Elementary to purchase many of the supplies that had previously been purchase using "Activity Fee" money that teachers are now prohibited to collect. This includes Time for Kids and other programs that teachers all want to use but cannot ask children to pay for. We will be looking for ways to be creative in stretching our resources to benefit the most children possible with each dollar spent.

After School Activities:

We will be removing the following line items from the budget as the PTA no longer serves as a "pass through" for these activities. That is, in the past, the PTA would collect all the program fees and then pay out to each after school program.

For accounting and liability purposes, this year we decided to have each after school activity do their own scheduling and fee collection. The following will be removed: FLES, Mad Science, and After School Program (all budgeted for \$0 for the past year). During the 2008-2009 school year the PTA spent \$314 to replace chess sets and materials that went missing after the construction was complete. As there are only 30 children in the club and the PTA does not fund any other club, it was voted that the Chess Club must be self sufficient and will not receive additional PTA funds.

Communications:

The Fallsmead PTA will be outsourcing the production of the school directory next year (projected income is the same, \$100). We will also fund the following: Back to School Orientation Package (\$500); Fallsmedium printing (\$2000); and Website (\$250). We removed the following expense item: Parent Handbook.

Other Sponsored Efforts:

We will continue to run Merchandising programs where you can pre-order the merchandise in order to keep our inventory (and costs) low. We reduced the funding for yearbook (\$100, previously \$300). We anticipate the same amount of income from Kids Club (\$2000) and the School Toolbox (\$0). We are not funding the Community Action Committee, Landscaping (previously \$250), or the Math Lab (previously \$500). We anticipate the Math Lab will get additional funding if the fundraisers perform better than expected and the budget is amended.

PTA Administrative Expenses:

We created a new line item called "Hospitality" for Boo Hoo Breakfast, New Parents Welcome, Monthly meetings, Volunteer Orientation meeting and grouped all the funding together (\$800, previously \$900). Other costs we kept the same: Administration (\$200), Insurance (\$200, previously \$300); Contribution to Wootton Post Prom Party (\$100).

Additional Discussion on Fundraising and Programming:

Although we realize the need for fundraising, we also recognize that each family has less time to spend on these types of activities, so we are actively looking for ways to raise funds to support the programs at Fallsmead without adding many of time-consuming events. Feel free to offer suggestions of ways to increase our funding in order to meet the increasing needs of Fallsmead Elementary programming.

Class Party and Teacher Gift Funding:

In the past, room parents were tasked with collecting funds from each student for the Halloween Party, the Valentine's Day Party, the End of the Year Party, teacher gifts and teacher appreciation activities. Room parents try very hard to stretch those dollars. It's especially difficult if there are more gifts to buy (student teachers) or if you have an unusually high percentage of parents choosing NOT to participate. In the effort to achieve party parity between classes, we voted that next year, the PTA will collect all the party/gift fees. From all of the funds collected, gifts for non-homeroom teachers will be purchased. The remaining funds will be divided between the classes for their homeroom teacher gifts and class parties. Centralizing the collection will also alleviate the murky situation of having a parent hold all the classroom money in their private checking accounts.

One Check in the Fall:

If you are like me, you probably have drastically reduced the number of checks you write on a regular basis except for all of the ones you write the first month of school. One way that we would like to simplify things in the fall is to allow you to write one check to the PTA for all the things you typically fund: your PTA membership (which gives you a copy of our school directory); your child(ren)'s class party funds; and your Kids Club membership. Although writing the lump sum check might feel painful, we thought the convenience of 1 transaction outweighed the pain. We hope many families will enjoy this benefit.

FALLSMEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

2009-2010 BUDGET

approved 6/2/09

	2008-2009 Budget Approved		2009-2010 Budget Approved		Note:
FUNDRAISERS					
FunDrive			postponed		
Book Fair Income	13,000		13,000		
Book Fair Expenses	-11,000	2,000	-11,000	2,000	
Gift Wrap	10,500		10,500		
Gift Wrap Expenses	-3,500	7,000	-5,500	5,000	
Silent Auction	3,000		3,000		
Silent Auction Expenses	-300	2,700	-300	2,700	
Membership Dues from Parents & Teachers	5,000		5,000		
Membership Dues Expense	-1,300	3,700	-1,300	3,700	
Bake Sale		0		0	#4
Restaurant Fundraisers		500		400	
EVENTS					
International Festival	0		0		
International Festival Expenses	-500	-500	-500	-500	
Spring Fair	1,500		1,500		
Spring Fair Expenses	-2,000	-500	-2,000	-500	
Family Bingo	600		600		
Family Bingo Expenses	-500	100	-500	100	
Fifth Grade Dinner Expense	-1,000	-1,000	-750	-750	
Back to School Picnic		500		300	
Community Service Projects/GAC Fund		-100		-100	
Science Fair		-250		-250	#3
Family Dance		0		0	
IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES					
Chorus / Festival of the Arts		-600		-400	#1
Cultural Arts Programming		-3,000		-2,000	#1
Field Day		-175		-175	
GAC Fund		-250		0	
Room Parents		-50		0	#2
Safety Patrols		-500		-300	
School Fund****		-2,000		-2,000	
Staff Appreciation Events (incl luncheon)		-2,750		-1,200	#1
Sunshine		-500		-500	
Enrichment (formerly Framing and Artist in Residency)		-2,500		-750	

