**Middlebrook PTA Meeting**

**November 20, 2014**

1. **Call to Order – Middlebrook School @ 9:10 a.m.**
2. **Approvals**
   1. October 2014 Minutes
   2. Laura Rowley voted in as Secretary
   3. See Treasurer’s Report for additional approvals
3. **Principal’s Report – Maria Coleman**
4. New Vision being finalized by District. Middlebrook has also developed its school vision statement: Middlebrook School, a fully teamed learning community, will be a rigorous, student-driven, collaborative, dynamic environment filled with positive energy where all learners are empowered to wonder, explore, innovate, and question.
5. Food drive extended to Thanksgiving break
6. Teens Read Book drive was a success with 1794 books collected for the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Bridgeport
7. Discussion regarding better publicity for certain PTA sponsored events
8. **Teacher Representative – Marnia Kiernan**

Grade 6

* All teams enjoyed a fabulous field trip to the Bronx Zoo on a beautiful fall day!
* All three teams had on-team assemblies which gave students the opportunity to listen to veterans talk about their experiences serving our country.
* In science classes on all teams, students have started a unit on cells and will begin using microscopes to study their structure

Yellow

* In the Language Arts classes, students began their first novel, North to Freedom
* In RWW they will be writing short stories

Green

* In RWW, students are reading Hatchet and learning the effective tools an author uses to tell a story
* In Spanish, students are using iPads to create and record “?Como eres?” raps to describe themselves and others

Red

* Students who earned all A's in all classes were treated to a pancake, bacon and eggs breakfast cooked for them by the teachers before school!
* In social studies, students are finishing the Stone Age unit and getting ready to construct masks as part of an Egyptian mythology unit.

Grade 7

Yellow

* Alternative ways to demonstrate one's knowledge occurred this week with a Water Drop story in science and English as well as a Socratic seminar in social studies.
* A few students have been walking around before Team Base in a chicken suit to help promote our Acts of Random Kindness group's effort to raise money for Heifer International.

Green

* To kick off our Power of One unit, students spent a day with community members who embody the notion that one person can and should endeavor to make a positive difference. Students heard from former 7G students who have continued their Power of One work, as well as representatives from Community Plates, The Unified Sports Program of the Wilton YMCA, Volunteer Square, the WISE organization from WHS, Midnight Run, and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Students then chose their own issue to research and share with their peers.

Red

* In RWW, students are starting A Christmas Carol
* In English, students are working on argumentative writing to “sell” something
* In science, students designed and researched an inquiry lab about abiotic factors and brine shrimp eggs

Grade 8

All teams enjoyed a wonderful trip to historic Philadelphia (kids earning sincere compliments from the park rangers and site curators)

Yellow

* In English, we just finished the poetry unit.  All students made beautiful poetry books and read one of their poems to the class.
* In RWW, students just finished To Kill a Mockingbird and will be watching the movie the day before Thanksgiving.
* As a team, all of the students will be concentrating on the writing process in every discipline.

Green

* On Veterans Day the 8 Green team hosted a question and answer session with two WWII veterans. Students were lucky to learn about serving in the armed forces from members of the “greatest generation.”
* In science, students are doing a lab called Protect the Pill.  It is a STEM lab in which students are challenged to create a pill coating that will not be dissolved in the GI tract.
* In English students have started reading Hiroshima and in RWW students will soon begin reading Animal Farm.

Red

* In social studies, students participated in a Constitutional Convention role play
* In English, students are studying the turn of the century with A Tree Grows in Brooklyn or the Battle of Gettysburg with Killer Angels

1. **President’s Report – Savet Constantine**
2. Fundraising participation year over year is up 30 – 35%, with a total participation rate of 50 – 55%.
3. The PTA is working to fine tune communication through several avenues. First, they have added a “What You Need to Know This Week” section at the beginning of the weekly Messenger. The goal is to highlight main information points, while encouraging parents to scroll through for additional detail.
4. A Facebook feed was discussed as a possibility. Ms. Coleman asked to see examples from another district, which Laura Rowley described.
5. It was mentioned that targeted emails tend to have much better response rates – an example cited was the 6th Grade Activity Night email that went solely to 6th grade families.
6. PTA is encouraging the use of volunteer sign up sites for easier management, such as signupgenius.com and volunteerspot.com.
7. **Officer Reports**

A. Vice President-Pam Hickey

1. Though membership is down from last year at 492 members, there are 6 more teachers than last year. Of those 492, 441 are parents and 51 are teachers.

B. Treasurer – Maria Wilcox

1. Our form 990 was filed at tax time and a copy was mailed to the state PTA.
2. Our insurance premium has been paid, and we still need to sign a waiver for coverage not received.
3. We have received a request for a Visiting Author presentation in January from the school. Author Gordon Norman has been recommended and should be available. He will see each grade level separately, talk about his life (particularly how he was published as a teenager by Scholastic) and make a full presentation. His fee is $3,500 for up to 4 hours. To cover the cost, we have asked Ms. Ellis (who agreed) give back some of last year’s grant (encumbered last year), $2,000, plus we will use $1,000 in excess gift and grants funds and a final $500 in excess general funds. Motion was approved to reallocate library funds of $2,000, and another motion to use $1,500 in other funds was approved.
4. We have $25,000 to spend on the playground currently.

C. Parent-At-Large – Stacy Crameri

1. BOE has posted the 2015/16 calendar, with a school year start date of August 31st and an ending date of June 14th, not to go past June 24th due to emergency closings.
2. There are new delayed openings on that calendar- February 3rd, and March 16th.
3. The proposed re-vote on the Miller-Driscoll project was denied.
4. The BOE is currently drafting a new district-wide vision, which incorporates goals such as a rigorous, relevant curriculum, recruiting talent, mutually supportive environments and personal commitment.
5. The new teacher contract for 2015 to 2017 was approved. It was not for three years due to new tax ramifications under the Affordable Health Care Act beginning in 2018, which need to be better understood.

1. **Committee Reports**
2. Fundraising – Laura Kirkpatrick

Innsbrook sales results: 533 people used credit cards, or roughly 50%. Paper sales, less costs, averaged $31 per order. Cash sales averaged $68 per order, with 259 people contributing. Total gross paper sales were $17,000.

1. Reflections

The theme of this year’s arts and letters competition is “The World Will Be a Better Place If….”. The kick-off is scheduled for November 25th.

1. Book Fair

This event is ready, with lots of coverage, though there is still a need for volunteers on December 2nd.

1. Science Fair

Kick-off meetings have been completed with the kids, and there has been a lot of positive feedback. About 35 to 40 kids have already attended the help sessions, and the due date is 11/21/14. There are currently 10 applications turned in, and it is being suggested the due date be extended. In addition, the committee has asked WEF for funds to support expenses and prizes.

1. 6th Grade Activity Night

Approximately 200 kids attended resulting in a roughly break-even event. Co-chairs will do a post even write-up, but had much success using Minute to Win it games with the kids.

1. 7th Grade Activity Night

About 88 kids attended, and this is typical as participation is lower in 7th grade. There was a lot of interest in the photo booth set up by one of the parents.

1. Hospitality

The Veterans Day celebration was a success, and upcoming events include coffee and bagels for our bus drivers on December 4th, and a teacher dessert table in December as well.

1. Wilton Youth Council

Red Ribbon Week was well received, in particular the presenter, who was filled with positive messages for the kids.

1. **Adjournment 10:37 a.m.**