

**Middlebrook PTA Meeting
May 21, 2015**

I. Call to Order – Middlebrook School at 9:10 a.m.

- **In attendance:** Jeanette Calabrese, Pam Carlson, Janel Cassara, Maria Coleman, Savet Constantine, Stacy Cramer, Vanessa Elias, Pam Hickey, Marni Kiernan, Laurie Maggio, Kim Rogg, Liane Roseman, Laura Rowley, Sujata Vemuri, Maria Wilcox

II. Approvals

- April 23, 2015 minutes approved – motion by Stacy Cramer, seconded by Kim Rogg. None opposed.
- Additional approvals detailed in Treasurer’s Report and under New Business.

III. Principal’s Report – Maria Coleman

- The new activity set has been very popular, with the only complaint being that it is too busy. An apology was offered regarding the small group of students that behaved badly on the structure, and the school took the opportunity to create awareness.
- The end of year concerts were very successful, with standing room only for 6th grade.
- Alexander Koutsoukos went to the national geography bee in D.C. with his parents and Dr. Priest, who was able to Skype the bee with 7 Yellow.
- Student William Duan (8 Yellow) received the highest score in the state at the Mathcounts national competition.
- A thank you was given to the PTA for Teacher Appreciation Week, which is something the staff look forward to each year. Ms. Coleman thanked the PTA for all it has accomplished during the year, including the new activity set, and especially to Savet for all she has done the last two years.
- Teacher Chris Markley is retiring after many years. The PTA is donating *I Am Malala* to the library in her name.

IV. Teacher Representative – Marnia Kiernan

Sixth grade

Green

- Students are currently reflecting on the year and how their hard work has helped them develop strong habits of mind. The Year in Review Project will be on display at Closing House.
- In RWW, students are pioneering four books new to the language arts curriculum; each student selected the novel based on interest.
- The walk-a-thon was a tremendous success; Six Green raised significant money and awareness for the student-selected charity, Alex’s Lemonade Stand.

Red

- Students are finishing their Independent Student Projects and preparing to share them in school and at our Closing House evening. These research projects are student-selected topics of interest covered through a variety of interdisciplinary elements.
- Our team was proud of raising money for both Make A Wish foundation and the LAM foundation. The LAM foundation provides funding and research for a rare lung disease that affects the mother of one of our students.
- Preparing for a fun end to our year with a great group of kids - a few surprises planned...

Yellow

- The 6Y Team is performing today in the Greco-Roman Festival, 5 plays followed by a reception of Greek and Roman foods, generously provided by the many parents!
- Students are preparing their Gallery of Knowledge display for Closing House on June 8th. The Gallery of Knowledge is a way for students to reflect upon their growth and celebrate their achievements throughout their sixth grade year.
- Our dedicated students raised over \$3000 for the Smith Magenis Syndrome Research Foundation during this year's Grade 6 Walk-a-Thon.

Seventh grade

Green

- After school on Thursday, May 14th, over 70 students voluntarily joined our team of teachers and our administration for a Stop Hunger Now two hour meal packaging event. The meals are destined for schools in developing countries and will be used to entice children to attend school, many of whom otherwise would not have an opportunity to be formally educated. The Planning Committee of this initiative, lead by Patrick Cummins, raised over \$5,800 through bake sales, online fundraising, and a benefit concert to purchase the meal ingredients. It was a very special day for all involved.
- The 7 Green team is excited to attend our team field trip that ties into our study of Latin America culture and language. We will be seeing an IMAX movie on Costa Rica and having lunch at Barcelona.
- We are looking forward to sharing our Power Of One experiences this year at Closing House June 2nd from 7pm - 8pm. Students will be displaying their work on 3 sided boards and will have digital support of their journey through programs such as Haiku Deck, PowerPoint, and iMovie.

Red

- Science- finishing the year with chapters that include diffusion and osmosis, photosynthesis and respiration, mitosis and meiosis, and human systems
- World Geography- finishing up the study of Latin America and moving on to the physical features, culture, and politics of Europe
- RWW- Writing a second narrative and the choosing one to be published in an RWW narrative book

Yellow

- The students are utilizing the end of year calendar they were given to plan out their final assessments in each class.
- A small food festival will help culminate the countries of study that students worked on throughout the year.
- 7 Yellow students fully supported the decision to use the \$150 given to us from the PTA fundraiser to help launch a Save the Children campaign for Nepal.

Eighth grade

Green

- In Social Studies, students worked collaboratively across classes to create wikipedia-style encyclopedia articles about 20th-century wars. The assignment required students to research and write about a conflict, edit and revise classmates' contributions, and cite sources using footnotes.

- The 8G Team is preparing for the 8th grade capstone project, PRISMS.
- In science classes students are dissecting frogs. For some, this is the most exciting lab of the year; for others it's the most dreaded. One thing they all can agree on is that they don't like the smell of formaldehyde!

Red

- 8RED students are engaged with our service project of restoring the memorial sites located around the Middlebrook school grounds.
- The 8RED team is organizing itself and preparing for the 8th grade capstone project - PRISMS
- Teachers and students are preparing for the array of upcoming end of the year events such as the Lake Compounce Trip

Yellow

- 8Yellow students are now finishing their Hiroshima unit.
- We are also organizing ourselves and preparing for the 8th grade capstone project - PRISMS, as well as preparing for the Lake Compounce science field trip.
- The social studies classes are engaged in the Discovery Project, which focuses on famous inventions of the 20th century.

V. President's Report – Savet Constantine

- Thank you to the Hospitality committee members for another successful Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Savet spoke to parents of incoming 6th graders about who and what the PTA is and what it does.
- A thank you was given for all the support from the board, and particularly to Pam Hickey for taking the lead on the activity set, Marica Wilcox for tracking the funds and Laura Kirkpatrick for the successful fundraising efforts.

VI. Officer Reports

Treasurer – Maria Wilcox:

- The 8th Grade Dinner Dance committee is staying within budget and is very thankful for the generosity of Village Gourmet, who is feeding 380 people for the \$2,000 budget. There was a small savings on the invitations coming in at \$360 versus \$500 budgeted.
- Final donations for the new activity set were as follows: \$1,500 from Cider Mill PTA, \$2,000 from Miller Driscoll PTA, \$500 from WHS PTA and \$1,500 from the Wilton PTA Council, totaling \$5,500.
- With fundraising and donations, we should be roughly breakeven this year including approximately \$10,000 in Gifts and Grants.
- Grants requested to support annual programs related to curriculum totaling \$9,515 were approved – motion by Stacy Cramer, seconded by Laura Rowley. None opposed. Details as follows:
 - a. Shakesperience Workshops - \$3,200
 - b. World Language Assemblies - \$1,900
 - c. "Chariots of the Sun" assembly - \$815
 - d. Birds of Prey Assembly - \$1,500
 - e. "Beyond Me" Presentation - \$1,000
 - f. Guest Poet - \$1,100
- A reallocation of Chinese New Year funds in the amount of \$650 (funds allocated for and not used in 2014-15) to the proposed Outdoor Classroom (total project cost of \$1,450, see additional grant information in next item) was approved – motion by Janel Cassara, seconded by Laura Rowley. None opposed.

- Two new Gifts and Grants (both an Outdoor Classroom for \$800 and a Power of One guest speaker/supplies for \$750) are approved pro rata funding for two new grants up to \$1,500 if cash balance and a return of excess team grants allow for it – motion by Laura Rowley, seconded by Stacy Crameri. None opposed.
- Due to cash constraints, the Gift and Grant request for new editing equipment in the amount of \$3,900 was tabled until October when fundraising numbers are known.

Vice President – Pam Hickey:

- The activity set equipment is completely fine, though there have been misconceptions spread. The 8th graders are using the equipment according to campus supervisor.
- It was recommended the school check on the balls which were bought by the PTA as well as possibly repainting basketball lines on the outside courts to further kids’ enjoyment during break.

Parent-at-Large – Stacy Crameri:

- Town budget passed by default due to lack of voter turnout.
- Middlebrook was recognized by the Governor as a top summer reading participant.
- An informational session on weighted grades was held, with information posted on BOE site. The BOE is looking for input on this issue.
- The School Premise Search and Seizure policy has been updated to allow dogs in schools.

VII. Committee Reports

- Nominating: No changes at this time. Will remove “Team Coordinator” as a position. A note was put in the Hot Cider newsletter regarding open slots. Will continue to recruit.
- 8th Grade Dinner Dance: Details are in the Treasurer’s report.
- Special Education/PAB: Disability Awareness Month went well, especially at Miller Driscoll and Cider Mill. The Mix It Up lunch at Middlebrook needs some follow up to determine how well it went.
- Wilton Youth Council: Vanessa Elias is replacing Maria Wilcox.
- Soaring Ahead: All is coming along fine. The 8th graders received their t-shirts prior to the Six Flags trip and it went well. Mrs. Nobles appreciated that we divided shirts by home room, alphabet and size. Next steps include working with Karen LaMantia on invite, room set up and refreshments.
- 7th Grade Social: Committee is ready, but still needing help from 11-12 on June 12th.
- Box Tops: Highest amount earned in last five years, with \$700 raised toward our goal of \$1,000.
- Back to School Messenger: The incoming 6th grade families will be mailed a copy of the BTS Messenger, and we can use the school’s meter to save money on the bulk mailing. All other families will receive the BTS Messenger electronically.

VIII. New Business – Vote on Proposed 2015-16 Board Slate

- Executive board positions approved as follows: President – Laura Rowley, Vice President – Pam Hickey, Treasurer – Maria Wilcox. Motion by Laurie Maggio, seconded by Savet Constantine, none opposed.

IX. Adjournment 10:30 a.m.