

## Middlebrook PTA Meeting

January 17, 2013

### MINUTES

- I. Call to Order - Media Center, Middlebrook School @ 9am: Stacy Crameri.
- II. Approval of September 20, 2012 Minutes - Aileen Senneff: Maria Wilcox moved, Victoria Madden seconded. Minutes approved.
- III. Principal's Report - Julia Harris: A heartfelt thank you to Hospitality Co-Chairs Laurie Collins, Patty Tomasetti, Kelly Lash, Kim Troy, Sharon Kress, Debbie McGrath and everyone who contributed to the lovely Winter Solstice Celebration in December. What a lovely celebration with such a variety of delicious treats. On Monday, January 13, 2013, WHS counselors visited Middlebrook to present the Program of Studies to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. January 30 will be the WHS Curriculum Night for parents with a January 31<sup>st</sup> inclement weather date. On-line registration will occur between February 4 - 10 and students will return their signed registration forms to their science teacher on February 11. If you have any questions about your PowerSchool account, please contact Nancy Hasenauer. Students participated in the ERB mid-year writing assessments on Tuesday and Wednesday. We use these results to monitor student performance and identify areas of growth for individual students. Congratulations to Emily Mitrione on 8 Y, the winner of the Middlebrook Geography Bee that was held on Wednesday, January 8. Emily will take a pencil and paper exam to qualify for the state finals to be held in April. We were just notified that five Middlebrook students are winners in the Connecticut Scholastic Arts Award Contest. Congratulations to Isabella Jones, Genevieve Edgerton, Chloe Hornby, Emma Bucklan, and Alida Schefers and the art department! We are looking forward to the Middlebrook Science Fair on February 5. Thank you to Victoria Madden and Anne McCann for making this enrichment opportunity available for our students. We hope to see all of you at the Public Hearing on the Superintendent's Recommended Budget on January 24 at 7:00 pm in the Middlebrook auditorium.
- IV. Teacher Representative - Tara Peterson: First of all, on behalf of all the teachers, thank you so much for the delicious Winter Solstice treats! I can't tell you how much we appreciate that kindness and generosity. **On Six Green**, two students, Andrew Segall and Mackenzie McCormick, were

nominated by their peers for displays of good character, spirit and service. These Good Shamrock Awards were presented at a recent team meeting. On December 21, students had a Spirit Day and took a break from the normal routine to celebrate the winter solstice. And after Thanksgiving break, students from all three sixth grade teams got together for "Hearts and Crafts" and made holiday cards for nursing home and hospital patients. **On 6 Yellow**, the RWW the survival unit is underway, which includes the reading of the novel, Hatchet. Additionally, students are creating their own imaginary organisms for a science project, and ordinal numbers are the focus in Spanish. This past month team **6 Red** has had a few exciting things going on. Here are a few: Congratulations to Zach Dedrick who represented 6R at the Middlebrook Geography Bee last Wednesday. Zach went all the way to the final round and was eliminated in a tiebreaker round! In social studies the students have been learning about ancient Egypt and will soon begin discussing roles for the upcoming Greek Festival in March. In world language class, Three King's Day has brought in the New Year. In Science class, Ms. Leen is moving on to classification and the Imaginary Organism Project. **On 7 Red**, English classes are continuing work in vocabulary and grammar, RWW is welcoming Shakesperience on 1/23 to kick-off their study of Macbeth (thank you to the PTA for making this rewarding experience possible!), World Language classes are working with vocabulary associated with "houses" and "household chores" and World Geography is working on "In Depth Current Events Project" on the Middle East. **On 7 Yellow**: Collaboration abounds with using digital microscopes in science and RWW and English classes combining to do ERB category work in small groups. Creativity with support thrives in blog writing about moving to Latin America in social studies and creating conversations in world language class. The Random Acts of Kindness group is starting a new project while inspiring the formation of some other student groups in the second half of the year. **On 8 Green**, in social studies, students are formulating arguments for the Great Debates research project. Students will debate an issue of national importance using Constitutional evidence to support their position. Some of the topics that will be debated include warrantless wiretapping, students' right to privacy in school, and whether accused terrorists should be tried in a criminal or military trial. In Science class they just completed the dissection of the frog. Students dissected a leopard frog and examined the external and internal anatomy. This is a wonderful learning lesson, as the anatomy of the frog and humans have many similarities. Students were also able to participate in a virtual dissection on line. This is always a favorite of 8th

grade science! **8 Red** is doing their annual Hug a Bears drive to support the Council of Indian nations. They are also getting ready to dig in to high school registration and have all sorts of other cool things going on, like weather study, the Great Debates, Shakespeare, phrases and clauses. **And finally 8 Yellow** Students have finished Animal Farm and are now deep into Shakespeare! On Friday, Nancy Ponturo, the Artistic Director of New Pond Farm Summer Shakespeare program, will be doing a Shakespeare workshop with our students. Students have been involved with the other 8th grade teams in the Great Debates project. The science classes survived the frog dissections and will be studying the weather next! Richard Blanco, the inaugural poet, spent a day with their team in December to talk about poetry.

- V. President's Report - Stacy Crameri for Beth Johnson: We received a check for \$7500 from the thrift shop. I've written a thank you expressing our gratitude and told them their donation helped us provide the iPad learning lab and the Overdrive Library as well as many ongoing programs each year. We, as well as the other 3 schools, are trying Lifetouch Photography for next year's school photos. It was a long process trying to coordinate meetings between photo chairs and Lifetouch and Coffee Pond but we are all confident the parents will be pleased with the change. We left Coffee Pond on a good note and have not burned that bridge if we choose to go back to them in the future.

VI. Officer Reports:

- a. Vice President - Stacy Crameri: 2 new members. Membership status still good.
- b. Treasurer - Maria Wilcox: Fundraising this year was 57% Innisbrook orders, 43% cash donations. We have received \$7500 from the Turnover Shop and \$5000 from photos.
  - i. Current financial status - Without Beth present, there can be no decision regarding donations today, but \$30,000 is budgeted and we should be on target for donating that amount.
- c. Parent-At-Large - Savet Constantine:
  - i. School Budget Update: A 4.39% increase to \$77,300,000 is being sought; the board of finance wants a 1.75% increase.
  - ii. Upcoming Budget Meetings - Public Hearings will be held on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at Middlebrook and January 31<sup>st</sup> at 9:15 am at Cider Mill.

- d. Nominations - Michelle Doggett: We need to know as soon as possible who will be staying on in their current role for next year, as well as if you have any names of candidates for open positions for next year.

VII. Committee Reports:

- a. Wilton Youth Council - Aileen Senneff for Nancy Gany: March 12, 2013, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM: **Parent Connection's Parenting Book Group Series** with Dr. Susan Bauerfeld: "*That Crumpled Paper Was Due Last Week: Helping Disorganized and Distracted Boys Succeed in School and Life*" by Ana Homayoun. At the Wilton Library. Admission is free, reservations are highly recommended. Late March or Early April 2013: **Task Force Panel Event**. The Task Force to Reduce Substance Abuse wants to do more with the results of the Youth Survey taken among Wilton students (7th - 12th grades) and is working to put together a panel (to include the WHS outreach counselor, HS resource officer, mental health professionals, attorney, Positive Directions reps) to address survey findings and further the conversation. April 23, 2013, 6 - 8:30 PM: **No Kidding, Me Too! Documentary** showing at WHS. This film was originally aired to the Wilton community in 2009 and is Joe Pantoliano's directorial debut about his fight against the stigma and shame of mental health disease. May 2013 (Date TBD): **HS Transitions Program for Parents of 8<sup>th</sup> Graders**. We will host this 2<sup>nd</sup> annual program at WHS for parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are new to the high school. A panel of HS students, guidance counselors (from both MB and WHS) and WHS administrators share important information and answer questions.
- b. Hospitality - Debbie McGrath: The Winter Solstice event was a success, and they will call Mary Channing to set up bus driver appreciation event.
- c. Reflections - Patti Sylvia: There were three entries from Middlebrook, which was the lowest participation rate of all the schools. The entries have been judged but names of winners have not yet been announced.
- d. Special Education - Patti Sylvia: Working with Fran Monroe on Disability Awareness Month. They are working on improv skits at the high school with other groups including Wilton Youth Council, Peervention, etc., during the day for students and during the evening for parents. The first Monday in April is "Light It Up Blue", an event to wear blue in support of autism. The Top Inclusion Models are

creating bookmarks again, and are available to attend events. Their advisor at the high school, Michael Walsh, has a Facebook page through which to contact them.

- e. Activity Nights: not present, no report.
- f. Science Fair - Victoria Madden and Ann McCann: Patti Sylvia moved and Stacy Cramer seconded increasing the science fair budget by \$500. We are very pleased with our budget. We have 90 kids this year versus 51 last year. The science fair is on February 5, and takes place entirely on that one night.

#### VIII. New Business:

##### a. Guests:

- i. The Wilton Playshop - Zelig Pforzheimer: The Playshop has finished with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and will be showing the Drowsy Chaperone 2/15-3/2. There is a core group of women dedicated to maintaining and reviving the Playshop. The value of live theater to children has been documented in a study by Rand. Kids watched televised, a live theater, or musical theater versions of a show. The kids who saw the musical theater version improved their test scores by 5 points. The Playshop has very high quality productions, sets, and talent. Zelig would like to encourage people to volunteer in venues that may be outside of the areas of their children's interests.
- ii. WHS PTSA - Vicki Michael: There are a lot of open positions at the high school due to a high number of "youngest siblings" graduating. Positions like school store and photos are open. The high school PTSA meetings are on Tuesday's at 7:30 pm.
- iii. MB Library/Media - Lori Ellis: Lori wanted to discuss one of the services funded by the PTA, Overdrive. Overdrive is a virtual library that went live about 3 days before the winter break. There are 113 titles available, currently 98 are checked out. On Edline, you go to Middlebrook, then Media Center, and click on the Overdrive link. There are both FAQ's and an online help link with step-by-step instructions. Students log in with school login information, and the pin is the last 4 digits of the home phone number. Lori gave a brief demonstration of how to check out a book. Students can have up to 2 books at a time, and can renew titles if no one has placed them on hold. Parents get an email when their child checks out a book due to COPA

laws. Purchasing ebooks for the library is the same as an actual book, we receive one "copy" of it. The prices and formats are in flux as publishers struggle to decide whether to make the books permanent, time limited, or checkout limited. Please contact Lori with any questions or to arrange individual or group instruction. Also, Middlebrook has changed its preferred ereader from the Nook to the Kindle Paperwhite. We had purchased Nooks previously because of their screens, but now the Kindle's screen technology has surpassed that of the Nook.

## IX. Adjournment