



**FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF PS 11 PTA
General Meeting
Feb. 26 2014**

1. Meeting called to order 9:05am.

2. Approval of January's minutes.

The minutes were sent but misplaced. They will be approved at the next meeting.

3. Principal's Report

Mr. Bender noted that kindergarten admissions have changed this year, and the DOE seemed receptive to his suggestions about how to prioritize admissions. He said he has asked that top priority be given to everything down to district siblings.

In response to a question, Mr. Bender noted that there will be only one Pre-K class next year because he needs to reserve space for the much larger kindergarten classes of the past few years, who are now moving through the system and increasing the school's student population.

4. Parent coordinator's report.

Mr. McGill said kindergarten offers will be sent out in April. He anticipated that 450 students will apply for "probably 100 seats."

The pre-K admission process will begin in early March. Parents must complete a Pre-K application online with the Department of Education. Families that have an older sibling **MUST** include that sibling's OSIS number to get the priority accorded to siblings.

Parents will be hearing from teachers shortly about scheduling parent-teacher conferences in March.

The DOE's School Survey will be available soon. The survey asks parents to rate PS11 about safety, communication, etc. It is very important for parents to complete and return these surveys. The response rate has gone down from 68 percent of parents in 2011 to 55% last year. This is not good for the school, Mr. McGill said.

5. President's report.

Jamie said the PTA has been meeting its fundraising targets all year long. He deferred to the individual volunteers to report on their projects as part of the fundraising report.

6. SLT report.

Ben Caldwell reported that March 4 will be Girls Facts Night for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade girls. Mr. Bender said the event had been planned “because we’ve had 3rd-grade girls have their first period at school and didn’t know what it was.” Dads were highly encouraged to come.

March 19th will be architecture night, with 90 minutes of “building mayhem,” in which students will get a short presentation in the auditorium about what architects and engineers do, and then will build entire city blocks from cardboard and other materials in the cafeteria. This is an event for the entire school--all ages. Dinner will not be provided.

A Curriculum Connection meeting is planned for March 14th to discuss school testing.

And the team is still working on mats for the playground and on making bus dropoff safer for students.

Parents are encouraged to email the SLT through the website with suggestions at any time.

7. Fundraising report.

Nicole reported that we have earned \$8,870.10 from Amazon to date this year.

S11 March Match-ness begins March 1. Emails will be sent to parents with more information on this. An anonymous donor has vowed to contribute up to \$25,000 to the Annual Fund to encourage donations. Every first-time donation this school year will receive a \$50 match, and a bonus of \$10,000 if the fund attracts participation from 85% of parents. We are currently at 42%.

The Coin Drive raised \$11,421.99. The winner of the oldest-coin contest, Nate Wildman, got a \$25 gift and donated it back to the school. Mr. Bender is taking him out for pizza to thank him.

Dara Gottfried reported on the success of Comedy for a Cause. She thanked the many who helped, and said the event--which raised about \$70,000 last year, raised \$121,000 this year.

Larry and Scott gave an update on the Spring Auction and Gala, to be held Monday, May 5, at a new venue--Hudson Terrace, on 46th St. west of 11th Ave. Larry reported that they are seeking as many donations as they can get of valuable items to be put up for auction. Events--tickets, use of a vacation home, and so forth--are always popular and sell well. They are also looking for as many restaurants as possible to donate gift certificates worth at least \$50, so that everybody who goes to the gala can leave with something.

Hudson Terrace holds up to 800 people, and ticket prices will likely be lower this year to encourage more participation, but prices have not yet been set. Teachers and P.S. 11 staff will not have to pay to attend. Tickets will be tax-deductible.

The event will be partly supported by an increase in corporate sponsorship, and there will be an early VIP program for parents and friends who can afford to pay more for tickets. The auction will be held downstairs, and the party upstairs. Silent auction items will be spread around the venue. The organizers are hoping for one donation from each family, and they will need as many volunteers as they can get for the event. Those who cannot donate money can donate time.

A guacamole contest will be judged by celebrity judges to be named later.

Alex Levi said she has signed a deal with Fairway in which the company will donate 3% of every purchase by P.S. 11 parents back to the school, with bonuses if certain benchmarks are met. The deal could raise \$20,000-\$30,000 over the school year, she said.

8. Fundraising report

Jamie reported on financials:

\$47,600 was raised in January.

The Annual Fund has so far raised \$255,000, which is 40% of the annual budget.

The Amazon rewards program has raised \$6,640.

9. Volunteer report.

Rachel and Lynn renewed their call for volunteers.

10. New business

Nicole noted that the New York Children's International Film Festival will be donating \$4 to the PTA for every ticket bought using a code. Details are on the PS11 website. PS11 is also planning its own film festival screening; details to come.

Colby reported that the lost-and-found has been re-organized to make it easier for parents to retrieve lost items. If items are labeled with first name *and last name* (important) Mr. McGill will make sure they get back to the kids.

Lauren and the garden committee are revving up for spring. Home Depot has donated container gardens, and the hope is that students in all grades will get a chance to do some gardening. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help should email ps11garden@gmail.com.

The LEGO robotics team competed in January and will be meeting on alternate weeks now.

Nancy said the Young Artists' program does not need any more donations.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00am.

Minutes taken by Paul Raeburn, Co-Recording Secretary, PS11 PTA