

## **PTA Meeting Notes, September 30, 2009**

Treasurer Diana Rutherford called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

### Director's Report/Role of the PTA

Director Fran Favretto welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the year. She noted that all CYC classrooms now mix 3 and 4 year olds, a recent development. One benefit of mixing ages is that it gives children the opportunity to be in the same classroom for 2 years. Another is that younger children learn from older ones, and older ones enjoy the opportunity to be young mentors. During the first few weeks of school, Fran has observed 4 year olds trying to help teachers in teaching rules to the 3 year olds. Fran noted that "it's fun to be a child here."

Fran stressed that parents are vital to the success of the school. Parental involvement shows the importance of school to the children and builds a sense of community. She urged parents to share whatever gifts of time and energy they have and to be as active as possible.

Fran reminded parents that they should please park only on the outside parking spots adjacent to sidewalk—not the center spots, which are less safe for the children. There is also an additional row of spaces available just past the main parking lot.

Fran also asked that parents who pick up children late in the day should try to pick up by 5:15. Teachers will not have time to talk at the very end of the day. Closing time is 5:30 and teachers need to get on with their personal and professional activities. Late fees for arrival after 5:30 go to the teachers who need to stay, not to CYC.

### Introduction of PTA Board

Diana Rutherford introduced the 2009-20 PTA Board:

President: Meridith Phillips, who unfortunately could not be present

Vice-President: Dionne Belk

Secretary: Paul Beatty

Treasurer: Diana Rutherford

Diana mentioned that there is a vacant Historian position that has actually never been filled. The Board is open to filling it and helping to define the role if any volunteers are interested.

Outgoing President Kisha Blackwell also welcomed attendees and reiterated that a key purpose of the PTA is to build community, which takes place at meetings and many other events. Gatherings provide an opportunity for parents to share experiences and discover what's happening in other classrooms. Kisha noted that the PTA also organizes a number of fund raising events which support scholarships and

gifts to CYC. Ideas for fund-raising are very welcome, and parents should share ideas with any Board member.

### Financial report

Diana Rutherford presented a financial summary of current and past fiscal years.

The annual Silent Auction is the most significant source of cash. The most recent auction earned more than \$5,000, which was more than a 1/3 increase over the prior year. This was especially remarkable given the economic downturn, and Diana credited the many excellent gifts to the auction. There are downsides to having our biggest fundraiser at the end of the year, but we are fortunate to work from a sound financial base. Each year costs about \$10,000, and we have about that as our beginning balance.

Family Nights Out are also significant fundraisers, last year bringing in over \$1,700. Some organizations are very slow to pay us, and we still have some money coming in from these. The Fall Scholastic Book Fair also brings in significant funds, over \$1,000 last year. We also accept cash donations (checks to CYC PTA can be given to Diana). Some other sources of cash income are actually funds held in escrow for CYC.

Funds are used to support PTA meetings (pizza and babysitting) and various other events such as the Fall Picnic (hamburgers, hotdogs, buns and drinks) and the International Dinner (paper supplies). The PTA also makes a \$1,000 annual contribution to the CYC Scholarship Fund, and provides an annual gift to CYC, which last year included some Great Room equipment for indoor play when the children's can't go outside.

### Upcoming Events

*Fall picnic:* Mari Hoefler is currently coordinating and would welcome other volunteers, who would receive service points. An Evite has been sent out, and so far 115 have confirmed that they will be coming. Through the Evite, parents can also volunteer for picnic activities such as grilling.

*Family Nights Out:* Meridith has set up quite a few already. Upcoming ones include Mama Lucia's on October 13, Franklin's on October 26, and Boston Market on November 18. Franklin's is one of our biggest draws—we receive proceeds from their restaurant and gift shop all day. Volunteers are needed for this event to make sure that children are monitored in the gift shop and stairway in the restaurant.

The conditions of Family Nights Out vary—sometimes credit is only given to those who explicitly mention CYC or turn in a coupon, so parents should pay attention to the specific terms of the event. Announcements are usually made via email and through flyers in the children's cubbies. These events are especially helpful for building community, so please attend if you can. Also, although many have been set up for this semester, volunteers are still needed to fill out the schedule for the rest of the year.

*CYC Family Reads:* Mindy Martone-Boyce described the program, which entails children borrowing one of 12 books selected by Anne Daniel each semester (located in the Great Room) and reading them at home. Upon returning them, the children put a pom-pom in a designated jar to show how many have read each book. They also meet with Anne to describe their reactions to the book, and a card is punched to track which books they have read. There are about seven copies of each book—each book should be signed out and is due back in two days (which is important so everyone can have a chance to borrow each book). Each participating child receives a certificate.

Anne Daniel said that books are her passion and it is gratifying to see how much the children look forward to the books, and how much discussion and enthusiasm the program creates. The discussions with the children are especially important—she said that it lets them know that their opinion matters and gets them used to expressing themselves. This is the 11<sup>th</sup> semester of the program. She seeks a variety of books—this can include some wordless picture books, some classic stories, and some newer selections. This year's books include one that is a sort of game, one about sounds in other languages, and of course a variety of stories. Last year 91% of families participated, and our goal is 100% for this year.

In addition, some past selections will be available in a used book sale starting Friday October 2, in the Great Room.

*Fall Book Fair:* Gail Waller mentioned that the book fair will start in mid-December. Volunteers will be needed to staff the tables and help in a variety of other ways. This year's Book Fair will again be conducted through Scholastic Books. This offers less variety than we have had when conducting this in other ways, but using Scholastic makes it a very smooth operation.

*Other upcoming activities:* The International Dinner and Silent Auction both need chairs and there is much advance work to be done. Jovan Swann would be happy to discuss what the Silent Auction entails and help a volunteer get started. Also, two people are needed to chair potluck lunches for teacher appreciation (held on parent-teacher conference days). To sign up for any of these, parents can speak to anyone on the PTA Board.

#### Updates from room representatives:

*Red room (Alli Matson):* Red room children are about ready to begin their study on grocery stores.

*Orange room (Diana Femat):* Orange room children will be studying vegetables, and currently they are working to discover what the students already know about them. One member of their class is unfortunately moving, but a new friend will be joining the class this week.

*Yellow room (Anu Aiyar):* The Yellow room children are still focusing on learning their general routine. The older kids are the "Yellow Room Experts" who are showing new kids what to do.

*Green room (Hoshing Chang):* The focus of the first few weeks has been learning to understand the Green Room—getting to know each other, the families, and the functions of various parts of the room including dramatic play, blocks, and the art table. The first study should be decided next week.

*Blue room (Jovan Swann):* The Blue room study will focus on the human body. The children have also been busy with Writer's Workshop and Reader's Workshop, and have been reading parts of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory each day.

*Purple room (Joanne Rotondi):* The Purple room children are getting acquainted with the room, routine, rules, and learning about each other's families. They haven't yet chosen a study but look forward to getting started.

#### Other

In response to a parent's question, CYC staff reported that the University of Maryland furloughs would not result in any additional days of CYC being closed this school year.

The meeting concluded shortly before 7 p.m.

- Paul Beatty, PTA Secretary