

October Homeroom Parents and Helpers Meetup - Monday, October 9, 2017 at 7pm

Attendees: Deepika Devarajan, Kristen Gulakowski, Beth Vukmir, Andrea Krushinski, Liz Stanley, Vanessa Sumrok, Amy Johnston, Susan Stiokis, Melissa Jones, Melinda Guinn, Melissa Kwiatkowski, Christine Geller, Liz Geraci, Amy Seymour, Kelly Fill, Carolyn Chiquelin, Michelle Cook, Mary Ellen Carey, Terri Kieffer, Stephanie Conklin, Josey Pototo-River, Traci King, Carla O'Brien, Kristen Burgess, Lisa Hnatow, Bethany Miga, Carrie Monteverde, Bill Sparks, Nikki Rosswog, Alison Wegley, Amanda Loludice, Alison Persichetti, Jen Banachoski, Lynne Shurina, Sara McMahon, Rachel Fischbaugh.

I. Welcome

Deepika Devarajan welcomed all in attendance by thanking everyone for volunteering and noting that a record number of applications for Homeroom Parent (HRP) and Homeroom Helper (HRH) were received this year.

II. Opening comments

Deepika introduced herself as Homeroom Parent Coordinator Chair and Beth Vukmir as Homeroom Parent Coordinator Assistant Chair.

All board members and those in attendance introduced themselves along with their homeroom assignments.

It was noted that two classes did not receive any volunteers for Homeroom Helpers. Anyone who can encourage parents to volunteer in these classes would be appreciated.

- 1C - Lynn Shurina, HRP
- 3B – Nikki Rosswog, HRP

III. Roles & Responsibilities

A. OVERALL - HOMEROOM HELPER (HRH) and HOMEROOM PARENT (HRP)

Deepika referenced the formalized expectations for HRP's and HRH's which were provided during HRP and HRH sign up period. Full description of the responsibilities for each role can be found at: <http://www.hartwoodpto.org/homeroom-parents/>. She clarified that these expectations were newly defined this year in order to provide:

1. more consistency in what is expected
2. better understanding of expectations for these roles to newcomers

It was acknowledged that some parents were alarmed by all the "responsibilities" that were defined for each role, and it was reiterated that the objective for this approach was to make the roles more consistent and clear.

Deepika reminded everyone that all HRP's and HRH's must be PTO members with dues paid for the 2017-2018 year.

HOW TO REACH PARENTS:

Deepika shared the following recommendations for communicating with classroom parents:

- Directory provides email and phone numbers for parents who are open to direct contact. 2017-2018 Directory is available for download on Powerschool.
- Alternatively, contact teachers to communicate on your behalf.
- It is recommended to send flyers to the full class list in addition to emailing parents, as an extra reminder and also to reach parents who have opted-out of the directory or email communication.

Some attendees shared that some teachers are communicating with class parents with all recipients copied, and you may acquire additional email addresses (not included in the directory) from this distribution list. Deepika suggested that, in this case, you add a footnote to email communication offering to unsubscribe anyone who is not interested in receiving communication.

B. HOMEROOM PARENT (HRP) RESPONSIBILITIES:

Deepika highlighted some of the primary responsibilities defined for HRP's including the following:

- Provides class parents with monthly classroom/PTO event updates: ex/ TAG program, other support needed.
- Volunteers for at least one Traveling Art Gallery (TAG) session AND is responsible for finding volunteers for staffing the other 3 sessions. In the event of no volunteers, the HRP/HRH is expected to fill in for TAG.
- Organizes monetary contributions from classroom parents to purchase teacher gifts twice a year (Holiday Break in December and End of School Year in May). A teacher survey will be provided to all HRP's to tailor the gift choice for the classroom teacher.
- Organizes and collects contributions to the classroom basket raffle (Feb-March)
- Attends at least 2 PTO meetings (one can be the homeroom parent meeting in Oct)

TRAVELING ART GALLERY (TAG)– An overview of the TAG program was provided by Amanda Loludice, TAG Chairperson: TAG is a program to help students learn about various artists and their styles through short presentations and hands-on activities. Parent volunteers instruct the students using a provided power point lesson followed by leading an artistic endeavor inspired by the artist. No prior knowledge is required.

- All materials can be viewed in advance at the Hartwood PTO website (<http://www.hartwoodpto.org/programs/tag-traveling-art-gallery/>)
- Oct, Dec, Feb, April are TAG months
- Amanda asked that you let her know when you have a parent scheduled for TAG so she can notify Mrs. A. Either email Amanda with the information or ask the parent to update their sign up genius registration to not the date and time that they have arranged with their teacher.

GIFT BASKET / CLASS ROOM BASKET FUNDRAISER– An overview of this fundraiser was provided by Jen Banachoski, Fundraiser Chair: Baskets will be raffled off during the annual art show in spring. Basket themes will be determined and collection for baskets will need to start in February. More information will be coming. A survey may be used to generate new ideas for baskets.

TEACHER GIFTS: Kristen Gulakowski provided an update that she is developing a [survey](#) to help classes who would like to plan for a group gift. When the survey is ready, Homeroom Parents should reach out to teachers with the survey to determine what teachers would like for a gift for the holidays and at the end of the year. A discussion followed about several reminders:

- Preference is no cash gifts; Gift cards OK
- Make sure people know you are collecting for a class gift, even if people can't contribute
- OK for HRP to share the teacher's wish list out to all class parents, even for those parents who prefer to give their own individual gifts
- Consider asking the kids what their teachers like and don't like

C. HOMEROOM HELPER (HRH) RESPONSIBILITIES:

Deepika highlighted some of the responsibilities defined for HRH's including the following:

- Volunteers for at least one Traveling Art Gallery (TAG) session. In the event of no volunteers, the HRP/HRH is expected to fill in for TAG. See below for more information on TAG
- Participates in the Teacher Assistance Program (TAP). See below for more information on TAP
- Works closely with the HRP and offers any assistance his/her tasks
- Attends at least 2 PTO meetings

TEACHER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP): An overview of this program was provided by Deepika and Nikki Rosswog, TAP Chair. The program is intended to help teachers and staff with clerical work. All HRH's should be on the distribution list for Teacher Assistance communication, but Nikki encouraged HRH's to approach their teachers and see if they have tasks that they need help with, keep in touch and offer to be available-- keeping in mind that teachers are often busy and don't think to ask.

<http://www.hartwoodpto.org/programs/teacher-assistance-program/>

IV. Other Announcements / Discussion

A. FALL FESTIVAL

Alison Wegley, Fall Festival Chairperson, reminded everyone that the Fall Festival is on Friday, Oct 20 and shared that volunteers are still needed, especially during the 5th & 1st grade and 3rd and K time slots.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f054dafa82fa1fa7-fall2>

B. PTO COMMITTEE CHAIRS & CO-CHAIR SIGN-UP

Several PTO committees and programs still need chairs and co-chairs.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f054dafa82fa1fa7-ptovolunteer1>

C. CLEARANCES

Deepika noted that all HRP's and HRH's as well as volunteers for PTO events must have all of their clearances, and it was suggested that everyone add reminders to all communication about volunteer sign ups. Kristen noted that clearance information has been updated on the PTO website:

<http://www.hartwoodpto.org/sample-page/clearances/>

It was noted that clearances are good for 5 years and FBI clearance must come through Department of Education.

Kristen noted that teachers do not have a list of which parents have clearances.

D. CHILD CARE SHARING

Melinda Guinn offered to organize child care sharing if anyone needs assistance with child care during PTO events and meetings.

E. HOLIDAY PARTIES

Alison Persichetti provided an update that all party sign ups will happen via Sign Up Genius this year. HRP's and HRH's must sign up this way, along with other parents, if interested in volunteering. There will be 4 volunteer spots total per classroom, per party. Based on recent history, the Hartwood PTO board determined that this was the fairest way to give all PTO parents an equal opportunity to volunteer.

Concern was expressed by multiple parents for not giving HRP's and HRH's the first opportunity to volunteer for these parties. Bill Sparks offered to hear concerns and further discuss this with anyone at a separate time.

Concern was expressed that opening sign ups during morning or evening commuting hours was not fair to working parents who are interested in volunteering. Allison Persichetti committed to open Sign Up Genius for party volunteering during the evening timeframe to ensure the most parents are available to go online and register if interested.

F. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES VS. PTO ACTIVITIES

Kristen clarified that classroom volunteer activities like reading opportunities, pumpkin carving, decorating, and field trip chaperoning are not PTO events / programs and teachers are responsible for organizing these events and soliciting volunteers. The only case for HRH's and HRP's to help organize classroom activities is if the teacher asks the HRP for assistance.

V. Closing

Deepika thanked all HRP's and HRH's on behalf of the PTO Board and offered to address any questions that come up.

Rachel Fischbaugh thanked everyone on behalf of the teachers and faculty, noting how amazed the teachers are at all the support that is offered through this program.

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