

**Minutes**  
**John Eaton Elementary School Home School Association (HSA) Meeting**  
**November 14, 2006**  
6:00-8:30 pm  
John Eaton Library

**Present:** Shaun Seaberry, Carolyn Barnhardt, Sheri Carline, Paul Basken, April Payne-McMillian, Leslie Tune, Tysan Williams, Mark Boss, Deborah Evans, David Shapinsky, Kelley Ellsworth, Gwen Wright, Claudia Withers, Jocelyn Drakeford, Laura Broach, Phronie Jackson, Marla Blount, Eileen Langholtz, Mercedes Lemp, Helen Wechsler, Joan Alker, Don Blanchon, Shadie Ologunja, Sari Henry, Karen McAdoo, Dietra Rogers, Hamlet Bent.

**Absent:** Kimberly Hughes, Kim Bayliss, Joy Carroll Wallis, Lisa Joy Woods.

**MOTION:** Claudia Withers moved to approve the HSA Minutes from the October 10, 2006 meeting. David Shapinsky seconded. Passed.

**Holiday Tree Sale:** Don Blanchon handed out a draft schedule and gave a presentation. The goal this year is to net \$25,000, which means selling about 450 trees. Unfortunately, there is not enough space on the playground area to sell that many trees over two weekends, so we will be selling over three weekends. Hopefully we will sell out the final Saturday and will not have to sell the final Sunday. The trees will arrive November 30, and Don will need volunteers to unload the trees that evening from 6:00-8:00 pm. Class assignments have not yet been made because Don needs to touch base with his shift captains. Each shift will require 8-12 volunteers. Each class will be responsible for two shifts, but they will not both be busy shifts. (Lunchtime and Friday afternoons are less busy.) There will be more competition this year because Oyster is also selling trees (they have purchased 200), so please make an effort to get your friends and colleagues to buy from us. We will also be selling wreaths and some tree stands. JEAP might sell fruit at the same time. Don can be reached at [Donandsarah@comcast.net](mailto:Donandsarah@comcast.net) for more information or if you wish to volunteer to be a shift captain.

Gwen Wright pointed out that we need plenty of strong volunteers to carry trees and to saw off the bases. This is a terrific opportunity for fathers to pitch in and do their share.

**Principal's Report:**

Dr. Drakeford stated that she is currently very busy with structured observations of the classes. Each teacher has a post-observation conference with formal feedback afterwards. Since she is new, she must observe each teacher twice.

Dr. Drakeford hopes that by first of next week, Courtney Breslin, the Kindergarten aide in Ms. Rice's class who is currently being paid by the HSA, will officially become a DCPS employee.

We now have a new fulltime ESL teacher, Valerie Foote, and half-time ESL teacher, Jennifer Ung on board. Welcome!

Gwen Wright asked about the new report card format. Dr. Drakeford said that they reflect the new standards. These are not final grades, they are progressions. Dr. Drakeford will host an evening to interpret DCAS scores and learn about new report cards. It will most likely be held on Wednesday, December 6, and will include a PowerPoint presentation and a question and answer session. After the session, after she has heard the questions from parents, Dr. Drakeford will write an article on the subject for the newsletter.

### **Personnel Update:**

Gwen Wright stated that Eaton is now fully staffed with the co-teachers and special teachers that are funded by the HSA. Because we did not have an assistant for Ms Rice's kindergarten class, the HSA hired Courtney Breslin. She has worked out well, and has applied to continue her job as the official DCPS employee in the same position. Dr Drakeford has been working with her contacts in HR to hire her specifically. The process was held up because they had to find places for all the DCPS teachers who lost their jobs due to "right-sizing" before DCPS could consider into hiring a new teacher.

We decided to hire two part-time 4<sup>th</sup> grade co-teachers because the two top candidates had such different, yet valuable skillsets. There are over sixty students in the grade, and the teachers needed the extra help. Each co-teacher will be working 20 hours per week, which is just a total of five hours more than the other co-teachers. One will be focusing on math and the other will specialize on writing.

### **Appointment of an Executive Committee:**

Gwen Wright pointed out that there have been two instances already this year when big decisions had to be made quickly between Board Meetings. She suggested that circumstances like that could be dealt with by having an executive committee that could make decisions in between meetings and report back to the Board. This is what was done last year, and Gwen suggested that the Executive Committee be comprised of the same positions as last year. Last year it was the two co-presidents, the treasurer, secretary and vice-president for personnel. (There are two this year: Claudia and Eileen).

**MOTION:** David moved that an Executive Committee be appointed to make interim decisions, to be comprised of the two co-presidents, the treasurer, the secretary, and the co-vice-presidents for personnel. April seconded. Passed.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Deborah Evans passed out copies of the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual (attached). She pointed out that, although apparel sales are relatively high, we spent more than that on inventory, so it is a loss at the moment. There was discussion about how we could sell more apparel. Some suggestions were: have a school spirit day every month, in which students are encouraged to wear their Eaton apparel; set up a school store like we used to have; or use apparel as required PE uniforms.

Deborah stated that although the budget states that we netted over \$7,000, we really made \$6044 from the Block Party. (Expenses were over \$3300, but not all receipts are in.) There was a discussion about the lessons learned at the Block Party: people were not charged for the magic show and pictures taken, when they should have been; there were not enough volunteers so Marla and Deborah had to keep leaving to pick up items; and we would have benefited from a better turnout. The band was a big success. Laura Broach suggested we have a “debriefing” to learn from our mistakes and take suggestions from others. Deborah pointed out that St. Patricks is the gold standard of school fairs, but that we could do as well. Marla said that our efforts to get other schools to sell tickets to our Block Party were not successful. Eileen pointed out that perhaps next year we should assemble the Block Party team in the spring so there is more time: “it takes one year to do it, and another to do it *well*.”

Deborah pointed out that the gift wrap sale did not do as well as hoped. Some parents pointed out it could also be because Eaton families are already overstocked with gift wrap or because Sally Foster’s products are not as appealing as they used to be. There was a discussion about perhaps looking into another gift wrap company, or selling another product altogether.

Grocery certificates are not doing as well either, although we still have the rest of the year. Marla suggested we get back into the Safeway e-scrip program. Karen McAdoo suggested we actively promote the program on other occasions besides the Back to School night.

There was a discussion about bookkeeping and Deborah urged all to have forms attached with checks when they are submitted so she knows how to apply them. This is also important to the ENF fundraising because Kim Bayliss cannot track class standing if we do not know which child a donation goes with. Once we have sorted out which contribution goes with which child, we can start planning for pizza party and ice cream party incentives. Deborah suggested that we create a special ENF drawer for Kim. She also pointed out that checks, receipts, etc cannot just go to Maria Barreto. We need to have a centralized place.

Marla pointed out that monthly reminders for ENF payments have not gone out.

### **Recent Events:**

**Halloween Parade** was fun and the Haunted House was not too scary. Thank you Pam Alozie for doing this for our community another year! Gwen thanked Kelley Ellsworth and her husband for helping pass out the treats.

Mark stated that Pam Alozie may wish to retire from that job. Perhaps someone else could take over (someone with teenagers to help?) Ms. Peterson from the Recreation Center will continue to help coordinate the event. Mercedes suggested that Eaton alums (from Deal?) could volunteer.

### **Election Day Cantina:**

Huge thank you to Sari Henry for putting it together and staffing it all day both days. We earned \$553 for the general election and \$800 for the primary. We netted close to \$1000.

## **Future Events:**

### **Holiday Tree Sale (see above)**

**Open House:** There will be an Open House starting in the library from 9:00-9:45 and then a tour until 11:00 am. Gwen said that there was a notice in the NW Current, others posted flyers on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, and it was posted on the Cleveland Park and John Eaton listserves. Three board members have volunteered to help: Lisa, Joy and Eileen. Mark and Gwen will be there as well. Everyone needs to spread the word. Current parents can come as well. A few more Open Houses need to be planned for January and February before school decisions need to be made. Kelley gave thanks to Tysan and Eileen for doing such a good job attracting new parents at last year's Open Houses. Eileen pointed out that teachers need to be reminded so they are prepared. Generally Fall Open Houses are well-attended.

Gwen made a plea for more volunteers: Deborah and Tysan agreed to help.

### **Holiday Partnership with HD Cooke:**

For several years, we have asked our families to donate toys to the students at H.D.Cooke Elementary School in Adams Morgan. Last year, they asked us, instead, to donate money for books in their new library. What do we want to do this year? There was lengthy discussion about whether to donate toys or books to Cooke, whether to partner with them in other ways such as having pen pals, videotaping a "happy holidays" from our kids to theirs, recording our kids reading books to theirs, or singing with the Cooke kids at the Omni Shoreham during the holidays. Many parents were interested in doing something, with Cooke or any other endeavor, which involved the kids in giving back. April has a contact in South Africa where she sent outgrown clothes. They sent back photos of the kids wearing her children's clothing, which really made an impact. There was also talk about doing something with local homeless children, or for the schools in New Orleans. Karen McAdoo suggested we have a co-chair for Community Service, and there was talk of having a community service requirement to graduate from Eaton.

David Shapinsky offered to lead this project. He pointed out that this is related to the post of Co-Vice-President of Public Policy that he and Leslie Tune hold.

**Auction:** Tysan Williams said she and Carla Hillery already sent out notices to previous donors and are getting responses, but we now need new business. We need people to walk the streets in different neighborhoods. You only get 60% of the business from the previous year. This may feel early, but time is going fast: the Auction is only four months away. If you are going to give, give now. Packets are on the table by the main door. Packets include the letter, the form, envelopes, stamps, etc. We already have \$10,000 in donations. April and Leslie have also been working hard on the auction. The catalogue needs to go to the printer by the third week in March.

**JEAP:** Dietra Rogers reminded us about Parents Night out, which could perhaps be an opportunity to debrief from the Block Party.

### **Food Allergies Discussion:**

Joan Walsh-Alker and Helen Wechsler gave a presentation on food allergies, which are often linked to asthma. The recent increase in food allergies may be caused by the use of antibacterials which are causing an immune system response. More processed foods means that kids are more exposed to trace amounts of foods like nuts.

Joan's younger daughter has an allergy to peanuts. She is the only one in her immediate family to have it. Food allergy reactions can range from a rash to death from anaphylactic shock or asthma. If a child is having a major reaction, you have to inject them with epinephrine. As long as this is administered quickly, then the child will be okay.

DCPS policy is that meds must be kept in the office and only someone who is trained may administer it. Eileen proposed that we train the HSA-funded teachers and co-teachers how to spot a reaction and how to administer the medication. Marla pointed out that many parents might wish to be trained as well. Kelley pointed out that teachers should be trained in basic first aid as well since we do not have a fulltime nurse. Last year, Kelley's son broke his femur and was carried by staff to the nurse's office. If his bone had severed his femoral artery, he would have died quickly. Teachers should know not to pick up a child who has fallen.

There was a discussion about the no-nut table proposed by Nurse Hapli at Back to School Night. Helen pointed out that, so far, Eaton has nothing in writing about dealing with nut allergies. Should the no-nut table only be for kids with nut allergies, or for any kids without nuts in their lunch? The latter could work if a teacher were willing to check lunch bags for nuts. Another option is to have "peanut gallery" table for those kids WITH nuts. Helen pointed out that if we had a written policy and a letter went home in the backpacks, that would add another layer of checking, and of safety. Joan pointed out that they are not requesting a nut-free school. That would be too difficult, especially for vegetarians. Gwen said she and Mark will talk with Dr. Drakeford about the no-nut table and creating a written policy.

There was a discussion about Epi-pens (which are used to give a shot of epinephrine) and how absurd it is to have them locked away in the nurse's office and only administered by designated individuals. They should be in a different class of drugs. There was talk of getting a group together to urge DCPS to change the policies. Leslie Tune and David Shapinsky will work on this.

### **Topic of the Month: Getting Parents More Involved:**

Gwen pointed out that we did not have time to have this discussion tonight, but we will get to it because it is increasingly important, with so many events coming up. The Politics and Prose book sale is coming up. Sheri Carline volunteered to head this up.

The HSA listserv now has 250 members.

Although the Co-Room Parent Coordinators have been making a good effort to communicate with room parents, some folks feel that the room-parent network is not as effective as it has been, perhaps because some classes have more than one room-parent, and need to choose a lead room-parent.

**Meeting adjourned 8:37pm.**

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**Kelley Ellsworth**  
**HSA Secretary**