

Minutes
Doctors Charter School of Miami Shores PTSA
General Meeting
September 9, 2008

Call to Order by Ellen Bonet at: 7:10 p.m.

Ellen Bonet, this year's PTSA Vice President introduced the PTSA Board for 2008-2009:

Liz Kern: Recording Secretary (not present)

Michael Stock: Vice President High School Affairs

Daphne Stewart: Vice President Middle School Affairs

Lianne Yao: Corresponding Secretary

Angela Collins: Treasurer

Ellen Bonet explained that Lorraine Jennings, who had last year taken the position of PTSA President, had unfortunately had to resign due to time constraints from her job. Ms. Bonet read a letter of resignation from Ms. Jennings. She further explained that, when a board position is vacated after the election, the sitting board can appoint a replacement. She called for volunteers from the membership.

Ms. Charles was introduced as this year's Teacher Representative and Alexa Green as the High School Student Representative. (Alexa could not be present at the meeting due to a volleyball tournament). Ms. Bonet called for a volunteer for the Middle School Student Representative and received one: Frederick Legere, a current 7th grader.

Mr. Meredith gave a vote of thanks to the PTSA and offered the full support of the faculty and administration. He recognized the teachers and staff present at the meeting and stated that last year, there was 60% involvement from staff/faculty and that this year's goal is 100% participation.

Minutes from May 21st meeting were presented by Ellen Bonet and approved without correction.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer's Report, headlined by the 2008-2009 Budget was presented by Angela Collins. Ms. Collins highlighted certain areas of this year's budget including:

- The success of the pizza sales spearheaded by Juliet Suman
- The success of the Yard Sale
- The intention to increase the monies allocated for teacher grants ↑ from \$2,500 last year to \$3,500 this year.
- The intention to allocate monies to the Media Center

Several parents had questions regarding certain line items as well as the carry-over from year-end, which were explained and answered by both Ms. Collins and Ms. Bonet. The line items that were questioned included:

- P.E. Uniforms (it was explained that the uniforms are purchased and re-sold, hence it showing as both expense and income)
- Chamber dues (These are dues paid to the Miami Shores Chamber of Commerce)
- Insurance (This is a requirement of the National PTA)
- Sunshine Club (While this is a faculty function, the PTSA makes an annual donation)

Ms. Charles inquired about PTSA support of the Honor Roll Dessert Parties and Breakfasts and it was confirmed that these activities will once again take place. They are included in the "Hospitality" line item of the budget.

The budget was approved following this discussion.

As a final note, Ms. Collins also explained that, according to the bylaws, The PTSA books must be audited once annually; this task was accomplished by Alan Rubin, Loretta Kleinman and Lorraine Godinez. Lorraine Godinez reported that all was in order and that appropriate checks and balances were noted.

Lianne Yao, as Membership Chairman, gave a brief tally of current members: 50 parents, 34 students and 4 teachers. However, because this was the first meeting of the school year, it is expected that this year's membership will meet and/or exceed last year's of 300 total. Some suggestions for recruitment included adding a membership form to the Doctor's Note and Mr. Meredith's excellent call for a Dress-Down Day reward to all student members.

Some 2008-2009 events and activities were discussed:

- Kathryn Blakeman discussed the recycling program for printer cartridges and cell phones, explaining that toner cartridges, IPODs, video cameras, etc. were added to the list of recyclable items. (Toner cartridges also bring more money to DCS.) Ms. Blakeman called for donations and noted that this year, Dade County will donate \$1,000 to each of the top five schools with the highest number of recycled cartridges. She suggested that every parent working in an office solicit cartridges from work as well. The donation box is in the school office.
- Kathryn Blakeman also discussed the Yard Sale. This event was hugely successful and popular last year. This year, the fee will be \$25 for anyone who wants to sell. School clubs and departments can exhibit/sell free of charge. For instance, the Athletic Department raised money last year by selling soft drinks and hotdogs. Mr. Meredith is considering an appropriate date for the event.
- Wendy Salzburg gave her usual lively presentation on the Boxtops for Education program. She has been single-handedly managing this program since her son Ben was in 6th grade. (He is now a senior.) Ms. Salzburg noted that coupons are included on items from whole wheat bread to toilet paper, NOT JUST JUNK FOOD! She also encouraged everyone to start clipping this month since between now and the beginning of October; Target will match the money donated to the school by General Foods. Questions about participating vendors can be answered by visiting: www.boxtops4education.com.
- Kathryn Blakeman then added that DCS is already registered with Target to receive 1% from every purchase made by Target red card holders. She encouraged all Target shoppers to get the Target card and designate DCS as the school to receive the funds. This is easy to accomplish online: www.target.com.
- Kathryn further offered that there were keycards available for purchases from Footlocker, 1-800-FLOWERS, Subway, Travelocity and more. A 1% donation will be made to DCS for every purchase. For online purchases, promotional codes are noted on the PTSA web site.
- Marianne Schmidhofer then discussed the PTSA's signature event: Winterfest. She noted that it grows every year and that it is not too early to begin to solicit donations from local vendors, friends and businesses. Items for donation can be incorporated in creative baskets designed by Ellen Bonet.

EESAC was discussed by Aline Gonzalez. EESAC is the EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL. Its purpose is to work to ensure improved student achievement. One of the ways the Council does this is by assisting in the preparation and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan. Ellen Bonet explained that the PTSA elects the parent members of the EESAC committee.

(EESAC cont'd) There are also faculty and administrative members. She gave the names of the member volunteers and asked for one additional and called for the membership to approve this slate. The slate was approved as follows:

Middle School: Ginny Craven
Tracy Seaton
Angela Collins (Alternate)

High School: Fernando Mendez
Steve Parkinson
Bonnie Green (Alternate)

EESAC meetings are held monthly. The first meeting is this Thursday, September 11th at 5:00 p.m. in the Media Center.

A parent raised concerns about her daughter's homework load. Her daughter is an 8th grade honor roll student, but is bogged down with 4-5 hours of homework nightly. Mr. Meredith promised to review the situation. The parent also distributed an article about a recently released book, *A Case Against Homework*.

Another parent raised concerns about the huge load of textbooks that must be hauled around by students and inquired as to the timeline for the assignment of lockers. Mr. Meredith took full responsibility for the delay and promised that lockers would be assigned to students in the near future.

A parent inquired about the new Gradebook online as well as the general accessibility of the Parent Portal on www.dadeschools.net. Some parents can access the site using Mozilla Firefox, while others cannot. The site itself recommends using Explorer as the web browser. Another parent said that she has accessed the Gradebook, homework, etc., by logging on through the student portal by using her children's school ID #s. Apparently, the information is the same through either access point. Ms. Brown was having a seminar on using the site. There is also a helpline set up for parents having difficulties: 305-995-3705 is available Monday-Friday from 4:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Ms. Charles announced a special event for October 30th. Ms. Lifeset, DCS Drama teacher in conjunction with the Art and Music departments will present All Hallows Eve on this Thursday evening from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Parent volunteers are welcome and appreciated.

Stephanie Lievano encouraged parents to purchase the school yearbook for \$60 and also added that senior shirts are available for \$20.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.