PTO Council: *e-Newsletter*

February 2, 2009 ***"Strength Through Unity"*** **Issue #3**

WELCOME:

This is the third issue of the PTO Council newsletter! This newsletter will be published monthly during the school year and will include articles of interest to Ann Arbor Public School PTO officers as well as updates from the PTO Council executive board and AAPS District administration. We hope that this communication will be informative and helpful to you and your PTO – please feel free to copy and distribute as you wish. We welcome any comments, suggestions and/or questions; these may be sent to Helen Starman (hstarman@comcast.net) or by interschool mail c/o Burns Park Elementary School.

PTO TREASURER TRAINING:

Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 – 8:30 pm; Scarlett Middle School Media Center

This training presented by the Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW) Center will focus on best financial practices for a 501c3 nonprofit corporation, as well as the new IRS tax filing requirements. All PTO treasurers or their representatives are welcome to attend. A $10 fee will be collected to cover the cost of take home materials. Please contact Lewis Fulcher (lfulcher@ach-llc.com), PTO Council treasurer, with questions and to register. **Advance registration is required.**

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

- Dr. Todd Roberts for his selection as the Region 8 Superintendent of the Year by the Michigan Association of School Administrators. This award is presented to presented to an individual who has shown tremendous effort and dedication to enriching the lives of children and the community as a whole and recognizes strong leadership, creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students, communication skills, professionalism, community involvement and the success of students that has taken place during tenure in their district.
- Randy Trent, Director of Physical Properties and Ann Anglim who received an award from the Sierra Club at the January 16th Board of Education meeting.

STAY INFORMED:

Do you receive PTO Council emails? These are a vital source of information from the district and a good resource for PTO officers. To receive these emails please join our Yahoo group. PTO Council newsletters will be distributed monthly to this group. You can join through our website, www.aaps.k12.mi.us/ptoc.home/pto_council_home or visit www.yahoo.com, click on groups, enter AAPSPTOC and then follow the directions to join.

VILLAGE FUND INITIATIVE:

The popular saying "it takes a village to raise a child" is being made a reality by the Village Fund Initiative (VFI) of the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation (AAPSEF). As a result of increasingly difficult economic times, the levels of poverty and homelessness in Ann Arbor have risen and in turn the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches in the Ann Arbor Public Schools has soared to almost twenty percent. Because of their financial need, these students often do not have the warm clothing and school supplies that they need nor are they able to participate in the daily school activities most students and their families take for granted, such as: school pictures, yearbooks, field trips, book orders, spirit wear, birthday treats, big school projects and school functions.

Social exclusion and the associated feelings that arise when a student is unable to participate in day-to-day school activities are detrimental to the academic success of that student and to the success of our schools in general. Children who feel included and accepted in their school community will have increased educational success which in turn will lead to individual independence, reduced social costs and regional economic success. Additionally, when students are involved in their schools in a meaningful way, their families are more likely to be involved as well. **The VFI is committed to the idea that no AAPS student should experience social exclusion because of financial need.**

Many elementary PTO's already address the needs of the low income students at their schools by doing some or all of the following: promoting a school community that recognizes and accepts differences, teaching conflict resolution, providing warm clothes and school supplies as needed, negotiating with picture companies for free pictures and yearbooks, paying for field trips and/or giving vouchers for book sales or book orders and free tickets to all school events like ice cream socials. This support is consistent with the mission of a PTO and with some advance planning and budgeting can be accomplished. The VFI strongly encourages all AAPS elementary PTO's to look at their current budgets and reserve funds to determine how they can best meet these needs in their own schools. Additionally, the VFI can provide information about best PTO practices regarding size of reserve funds and how to most economically meet the needs of the lower income students within the school; the VFI can also provide a list of community resources in Ann Arbor.

The VFI recognizes that some AAPS PTO's may not be able to meet these needs internally and for this reason has established the "Village Fund" with the AAPSEF. This fund is a simple mechanism that promotes social inclusion district wide by accepting monetary gifts and "passing them through" to PTO's that qualify for assistance. The VFI committee actively solicits donations to this fund from PTO memberships, special fund collections, individual citizens, community/private foundations, vendors and local businesses.

The VFI's first grant cycle, ending January 2009, offered grants to elementary schools where more than 20% of the students receive free and reduced lunch. During the grant

cycle each qualifying school was invited to apply and asked to provide the following information: a copy of the current PTO budget and most recent 990 (if applicable), a statement of principal and PTO endorsement and a budget for using VFI funds to meet social inclusion needs (school pictures, field trip fees for students who can't afford them, spirit wear and school events). At the end of the grant cycle, four elementary schools received grants between $500 and $1,000 to support social inclusion. The VFI will have a second grant cycle in the spring of 2009.

If you have any questions, would like to learn more OR would like to share with us how your PTO handles social inclusion please visit www.aapsef.org or contact one of the committee members.

Village Fund Initiative: Joan Doughty, joandoughty@juno.com (grant committee member), Betsy McCallister, bmccallist@aol.com (grant committee member), Amy Shepherd, ashepherd1@aol.com (grant committee member), Helen Starman, hstarman@comcast.net (grant committee member), Wendy Correll, correllw@aaps.k12.mi.us, LeeAnn Dickinson-Kelly, Marla Goldstein, Pat Jenkins, Liz Margolis and Karla Rice

GREEN SCHOOL CERTIFICATION:

Allen, Bach and Mitchell Elementary Schools all have received the Green School Certification by the State of Michigan; additionally, a number of others schools are seeking certification in 2008-2009. The District encourages all schools to look into becoming certified as a green school. This initiative, involving building staff, parents and students, can be a PTO project, a class or grade level project or a service club project. Please visit, http://www.lawmasc.net/greenschools.htm, for more information on obtaining certification; Ann Anglim (anglim@aaps.k12.mi.us) coordinates with the District administration to provide support to individual schools during certification.

PTO COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE:

All meetings are at the Balas Administration Building, 2555 South State Street, Main Conference Room; 7:00 – 8:30 pm

March 16, 2009: Meet all School Board candidates.
April 20, 2009: Forum: Fundraising Options
May 18, 2009: Strategic planning session, review goals/accomplishments, elect new board officers.

Hope to see you there!

QUESTIONS?

Want to learn more about PTO Council? Please contact one of our Executive Board Members:

Chair, Martine Perreault (ptocexec@gmail.com)
Deputy Chair, Donna Lasinski (lasinski@mac.com)
Treasurer, Lewis Fulcher (lfulcher@ach-llc.com)
Recording Secretary, Andy Thomas (athomas@med.wayne.edu)
Corresponding Secretary, Marsha Skoman (mssd@umich.edu)
School Board Representative, Anne Brod (abrod@comcast.net)
Officer At Large, Helen Starman (hstarman@comcast.net)

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity available in any school on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language differences, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, height, weight, marital or familial status, or disability.