April 15, 2013

Parents’ Council

General Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Mari Anne, President, at 9:15 a.m. and everyone was asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mari Anne reminded everyone the March minutes were sent out electronically; she asked for a motion to approve.  A motion was made to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.  The slate for the Parents’ Council Executive Board for the upcoming 2013-2014 school year was provided at the last general meeting and distributed electronically as well.  A motion was made to approve the slate, the motion was seconded and the slate was approved.  Congratulations to all of the new Executive Board members!

Mari Anne asked Leah Camper, our Hospitality Chair, to speak about the upcoming Exceptional Volunteer Event.  Leah was a 2007 honoree for the Exceptional Volunteer award and has 6th grade twins in the district.  Leah shared how honored she was to be nominated for Fox Hollow when her twins were in kindergarten.  The dinner at the Hyatt was very special for her to share with family, friends and her new friends from Fox Hollow.  It’s a wonderful event for everyone that attends, not just the honorees.  She now volunteers on the event committee each year and still enjoys it just as much.  It is truly wonderful to see everyone so supportive of the volunteers in the district.  This year’s Exceptional Volunteer Event is right around the corner on Thursday, April 25at the Hyatt Denver Tech Center.  **RSVP’s are due by this Thursday, April 18**.  There is free parking at the Hyatt and vegetarian meals are available.  There are several ways you can RSVP:  RSVP cards were available on the back table, an electronic version of the invitation with the RSVP card was sent out via email last week, or visit **BlackTie-Colorado.com/rsvp**and enter event code “**eve425”**.  We’d love to see everyone there to help us celebrate.

Mari Anne reminded all incoming PTCO Presidents and Treasurers about the upcoming Workshops on May 1 here at SARC.  All Presidents and Treasurers are required to attend one of the workshops in either the Spring or Fall of each school year.  The day and evening sessions contain the same information, so please pick the time that is most convenient for you.  An invitation will be coming this week with details and RSVP information.

Mari Anne also reminded everyone of the upcoming KEJI College Fair this Thursday, April 18 at Cherry Creek High School from 5:30 pm to 8 pm.

Mari Anne asked Karen Fisher to come speak on several subjects as our Communications Chair and a member of the CAP Board.  Karen attended a meeting with the CCSD IT team and wanted to update the group on the District’s online registration process.  The District will again be using an online registration process to collect student demographic information (also referred to as Parent Forms) for all students in 2013.  The Parent Forms electronic system will be ready for public use on June 7, 2013, and all parents must submit student demographic information via the Parent Forms online system prior to the beginning of the 2013-14 school year.  Parents who registered and used the Parent Forms system in 2012 will use the same username and password to access the system during the summer of 2013.  Submitting information via the Parent Forms portal does not conclude the registration process; parents should visit their respective school websites to get additional/specific registration instructions for their school.  This is where Parents’ Council members come in.  Although the new online registration is much more efficient for parents and schools, accessing the household information was a challenge for many PTCO volunteers.  With input from several of you, we have communicated suggestions to the IT team, and they’ve made some adjustments to the program to make the PowerSchool data more compatible with PTCO software such as PTO Manager.  In addition, we have some tips for you to further streamline the process this year:

**First,** since most schoolsuse parent emails to share important communication with families, we strongly suggest that principals or other school personnel explain the “Opt In” choice to parents.  This can be handled in a letter, on your school’s website, or via whatever methods work best for your community.  Encourage all families to choose YES (opt in) at the Household Info tab, ensuring that they’ll receive both school announcements and PTCO information.

**Second**, please make a note of the “Tips for Parent Data Upload to PTO Manager” document on the Parents Council website under the Communication tab.  Next Fall, please direct your PTCO volunteers and Office Managers to this resource, which should save them a lot of time when they’re ready to upload the parent data and emails of the families who opted in.

Karen then put on her CAP “hat” to make two important announcements on behalf of CAP.  CAP’s primary purpose is to support the district’s Wellness Office.  They give planning support to 2 major district-wide wellness-oriented events every year.  The 4th annual CAP/CCSD Family Wellness Summit is this coming Saturday morning at Smoky Hill High School.  This free celebration is for families and community members of all ages.  Karen encouraged everyone to stop by any time between 8 am to 1 pm to enjoy activities that promote health and wellness, free food, crafts and recycling to honor Earth Day (including collection boxes for used eyeglasses and used batteries), water safety demonstrations in the pool (bring a suit and towel), and fabulous school group performances.  There will be a "Fuel Up to Play 60" assembly with Miles (the Denver mascot) at 10:25 am, and 5th Gear Kids who participate can earn points.  In conjunction with the Family Wellness Summit, a 9Health Fair will be held at Smoky Hill from 7 am to Noon for adults aged 18 and over.  Pre-registration is encouraged at [**www.9healthfair.org**](http://www.9healthfair.org/)**.**

We’ve been promoting the Family Wellness Summit and the 9Health Fair over the past weeks through posters and flyers.  Translated flyers have been made available in the District’s top 8 languages.  Everyone is busy these days, and it's hard to plan in advance, so word-of-mouth promotions this week will be critical to the success of the day.  Karen thanked Cottonwood Creek Elementary, who used the Connect Ed system on Friday to send a voicemail message to every household, inviting families to join their principal and PE teacher at the Summit.  If you have any specific questions, please contact Janise McNally in the Wellness Office.  Additional details about booths and activities at the event can be found at [www.assetsconnect.org](http://www.assetsconnect.org/).

Karen’s 2nd CAP announcement is a “Save the Date” request for the 13th annual First American State Bank Fitness Festival.  Since 2001, the Fitness Festival has raised over $872,000 for CAP to support the district’s prevention and wellness programs in all of our schools.  The 2013 race will be held on Saturday, September 7th.  Because the event is so soon after the start of the school year, they’ve learned it’s best to start to publicize it in May, before summer vacation.  Elementary students who plan to take the Cherry Creek Fitness Challenge can see their PE teachers for that paperwork next month as well.  Karen wanted share one exciting upgrade to the race this year:  All 5K participants will be officially timed using disposable timing chips embedded in their race bibs.  This will eliminate the task of hunting down the old tie-on timing chips, which often fell to PE teachers the week after the race.  It also allows all students (and adults) to access their official race times.  Parents’ Council will not meet again until after September 7th, so please mark your calendars today.  Race registration and school team forms are available at [www.fasbfitnessfestival.com](http://www.fasbfitnessfestival.com/).

Mari Anne invited Jennifer Churchfield, CCSD School Board President, to provide an update.

Jennifer looks forward to this meeting every year, so she’ll keep her comments brief to allow the students plenty of time to speak.  She calls every April & May the “- tion” months, months of celebrations and graduations, inspired by those that don’t give just once, but over and over.  The definition of inspire is: “Fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something, esp. to do something creative: "his enthusiasm inspired them".  Jennifer feels this is what the staff and administration do every day, throughout the district, and it all leads to the celebrations in the coming months.  We also celebrate excellence at many of the upcoming events, recognizing students, staff, retirements, volunteers, and teachers in these celebrations.  Jennifer thanked the Parents’ Council Executive Board for the countless hours they put in throughout the year and Mari Anne for her leadership.  The Board was scheduled to vote at their meeting that evening on passing a Resolution declaring May 6 thru the 10as Teacher Recognition Week; she asked everyone to take the time to thank their children’s teachers.  District Teachers of the Year will be recognized during this time as well.  Jennifer thanked the students for coming to share their stories, which are always inspirational and moving, and the entire district is proud of them for reaching their goals.  Jennifer feels they will continue to inspire those around them even after graduation.  She and her board colleagues are excited to shake their hands at the graduation ceremonies next month.

Mari Anne introduced each principal from the District, who in turned introduced the two Seniors who accompanied them to share their stories of overcoming adversity to reach graduation.  The student speakers were:

From   Endeavor:                    Shaienrae Archuleta & Jeremy Wiberg

Grandview:                 Summer Hammond & CJ Emanuel Manning

Cherokee Trail:           Lorissa Cummings & Elijah Martin

Smoky Hill:                 Aya Blanco & Bisrat Tadesse

Overland:                    Liz Alvarez & Mukanya Tchombela

Cherry Creek:             Katie Keeler & Jeremy Silva

Eaglecrest:                  Mallory Evans & Josiah Martin

Each student’s story was unique and very personal.  Each student’s path to graduation took them to places they never thought they’d go, thru trials, tragedies and triumphs that somehow allowed and even helped them achieve their goal: High school graduation.  It was a moving and inspirational morning that touched everyone in attendance.  Parents’ Council is very grateful for their willingness to share with us.

Mari Anne asked Mary Chesley, Superintendent, to also provide an update, and although the students would be a hard act to follow, if anyone could she felt it would be Mary.

It’s said the greatest knowledge is when you know that nothing else to needs to be said, which Mary felt was appropriate for the morning, after hearing from the students.  She didn’t want to say too much, so that all the thoughts, feelings, hopes and inspiration from the last hour will stay with us in the place that makes us human; our heart.  Mary asked everyone in the room who had important roles in the student’s lives who spoke to stand for recognition.  The district has 50,000 students, but they don’t do the same thing 50,000 times.  They do 50,000 different things each day.  When the district administration started the school year, they talked about “Every” as their goal this school year.  Mary was pleased to say that this year she’s seen the “Every” carried out in so many different ways that more than exceeded what she thought could be accomplished.

Mary recognized and thanked Parents’ Council; Parents’ Council was first started in the Cherry Creek School District and is now copied in other districts.  When Mary became Superintendent, her first thought was to have the District run under the radar, so to speak, but she then realized that public education is too important to handle that way.  The District is 60 years strong and excellence continues throughout the district, in all 60 schools, in all types of schools.  Some of the schools have 3% of the students receiving free lunches, while others have more than 80%.  There is great diversity in all areas, representing the nation as a whole.  Public education is a circle of life that continues on.  Mary feels Parents’ Council is an important cog in the wheel of the district.  There is no mystique to the district, just every part of society walking, wheeling, and being carried into our schools every day.  The district feels it is important to have every neighborhood school be an excellent school.  The district is “real” in many areas; real transparency, real caring, real teaching.  Mary also feels we have a “real” School Board, where politics are left outside of the board room and the only policy being followed is “What is best for the kids?”  As we think about the 14 students that spoke today, we realize the district is blessed by families that “lean in”.  We’re all part of the Cherry Creek family and no one can take that away.  Cherry Creek is a community by design; people move here to live in the district, to be a part of it, and Mary is very glad she was a part of it as well.

Mari Anne concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.  She also thanked the Executive Board for their work and support over the past year.  This is the last Parents’ Council meeting of the year, but she encouraged everyone to check the Parents’ Council website frequently for information on the upcoming workshops, requests for contact information for next year and online school registration help.

We will look forward to seeing you next Thursday, April 25, at the Exceptional Volunteer Event, and then on Monday, September 9 at the first meeting of the 2013-2014 school year.  Have a great summer!

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Speer

Secretary