

Horace Mann PTA Meeting Notes November 20th, 2019

Attendance: Ariel Dressler, Miguel Lindgren, Monica Dooner Lindgren, Alison Litzenberg, Laura Willson, Karla Lauerman Cummins, Celeste Kopacek, Britt Cruz, Jo Anderson, Jeff Davidson, Nikki Mechelke, Marian Saksena Hatch, Jill Mack, Catherine Guglielmo, Katie Walter, Amy Kortuem, Carrie Dorfsman, Jim Litwin

I. Announcements and Good News Minutes

- a. New board member Karen Vander Sander
- b. Thanks to new members
- c. Congrats to Ms. Bosch
- d. PTA support for community organizations

Question: How are we helping Girls on the Run? Scholarships for the 5K (entrance fee), providing snacks for their celebratory dance

e. New PTA website. Goal is to make navigation easier. Link from school site to PTA site.

f. HM Facebook page is a place for happenings/events at Horace Mann—public information.

g. PTA Facebook page is a closed group. Must ask permission to be in. We post more private information (e.g. “The 5th graders are at Eagle Bluff this week”).

h. Employer Match/Amazon Smile Program. See notes below for further information.

II. Principal’s Report: “Creating Strong Connections”. Sharing information about our bi- or multi-lingual families and giving perspective to our English-only families.

a. Teachers went to English as a second language training—they went through a workshop/exercise to see what it’s like to not speak English as first language. Mr. Litwin shared how many different languages are represented at Horace Mann.

b. Asking for families to have a different perspective, so Mr. Litwin did a listening activity with the attendees: Venn Diagram: Listening in a New Language. First we listened to a short story (not in English) without visual cues and had to jot down what we took from it. (Not much). Then we listened to the story again—this time with visual cue (the picture book) and discussed what were able to take away from it. The point of the exercise was to remind teachers that they should always supplement reading with things to help their students better understand. They are immediately at a disadvantage to other students when they don’t always speak English. The second exercise was a passage (similar to what might be on a standardized test) written completely backwards...followed by a multiple choice test. Once Jim put a picture of the topic (Troggs) on the overhead, it was much easier to decipher.

c. What are the implications for teachers trying to make connections with families? How can we make more parent connections?

Question: Do we translate the materials that go home?

Answer: Only certain things. It is very costly and a certain percentage of the school’s population has to be ELL.

One parent suggested that instead of waiting for families to come to us, we need to go to them. They are often intimidated. Can we have a “buddy” system between families? We need to somehow build a bridge. Or try to find other families who speak the same language—finding commonality. She shared her personal experiences with her daughter—how they eased her into Horace Mann (she was adopted from a Spanish speaking family).

Another parent suggested that teachers make home visits. Debbie Thompson, 4th grade teacher, used to do this...and she loved it. The Union sponsors a few families to do this. A few teachers here participate in the program.

Karla wondered about utilizing the middle school and high school students. Can they translate information for us? Can they do something much more like...going to the home (leadership opportunities for them, too).

Another parent (a social worker with SPPS) reminded the group that sometimes we make assumptions that families don't care or aren't interested when that is simply not the case. Think about our events, for instance, “Sock Hop” and Boo “Bash” is a term that some populations wouldn't understand.

PTA is working with Principal Litwin on how we can provide translators for our own meetings.

***Parents suggested having an international night as an event—where students share their own culture's food.

III. Katie Walter recap about Boo Bash

5th grade fundraiser for Eagle Bluff. Raised \$10,300 (gross)! The committee added new things. Tried adding a “spooky room” that wasn't as scary as the Haunted House. They also added a costume photo booth (people dressed up in costumes and got to take their picture in them). Katie would like to streamline the collecting of donations. She is devising a sign up of some sort, where each class brings an assigned item. She asked for the group's feedback—and parents + Amy chimed in. Amy would be more comfortable spreading it across the grades, but concerned about the pressure families might feel to donate.

IV. Treasurer's Report (see below)

V. Handout

New HM PTA website: www.hms-pta.org If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please email web-admin@hms-pta.org

Facebook HM Family “private” group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/432804370448748/>,

Employer match and Amazon Smile: We also encourage families to check with their employers as many offer a company match to the cash donations made by their employees and if you are an Amazon user, go to <https://smile.amazon.com> and search for “PTA Minnesota Congress 008740 Horace Mann PTA” and designate HM PTA as your charitable organization.

Treasurer's Report: Jackie Hippen:

YTD Total Revenue:	\$ 9,251
YTD Total Expenses:	\$ 17,596
YTD Revenue subtract Expenses	(\$ 8,079)
Bank Account Balance as of 10/31/19:	\$ 56,972
October 2019 Revenue:	\$ 9,251
October 2019 Expenses:	\$ 8,510
October Revenue subtract Expenses	\$ 7/41

Our YTD is August 2019-July 2020

If you are interested in more details of the PTA budget please contact Jackie Hippen directly at treasurer@hms-pta.org

Horace Mann PTA Sponsored Speaker for parents and guardians: You are invited to attend the FREE PTA sponsored speaker. Allison Fey, from the Jacob Wetterling Foundation will present on **Tuesday, January 14th 2020 6:30-8 pm.** The topic will be: Teachable Safety Skills: Replacing Myths with Facts. How do I talk to children about personal safety without scaring them to death? This presentation provides current information about various safety concerns children and teens are facing today, both in-person and online, and how to educate youth on those concerns in a positive way. School-age childcare will be provided by the 5th grade Ambassadors. Location: Horace Mann School, 2001 Eleanor Avenue, St. Paul MN 55116. Look for more information coming in 2020.

Ideas generated and direct requests from prior PTA meetings in progress:

- Flu clinic at HM. Emailed Principal Litwin to find out interest. He will speak to the Nurse.
- Requested to restart the Gifted and Talented Program at HM and to have Principal Litwin ask all families to do one thing to support the school. Emailed Principal Litwin.
- Increased funding for the nurses office at HM. Emailed Principal Litwin to request information at November PTA meeting.
- Principal Litwin to ask for family volunteering (at least 1 per year-per family). Emailed Principal Litwin.
- Interpreters at PTA meetings. Emailed Principal Litwin to find further information. He indicated he would work with HM staff to identify languages spoken and proceed.

Actions taken and completed regarding direct requests from prior PTA meetings:

- Read-a-thon volunteers contact information shared with the co-chair.
- Box Top information request shared with the co-chair.
- Landscape committee shared information about Clean-up (October 12th), Spring Clean-up in late April and the Plant sale May 7th. Shared with the HM school and PTA calendar.
- Boo Bash and Carnival requested to tell ticket prices prior to the event and what tickets will get you at the event. This way families could plan ahead and make sure to have enough. Emailed request to co-chairs and they will implement.
- Read-a-thon requested to share goals per grade level, and share how many minutes read and money raised in each grade level to win last year. Emailed request to co-chair.
- Make small volunteer tasks visible for parents to do. Make volunteer time commitments and responsibilities clear. Utilizing FB more for small tasks and on-going volunteer opportunities.

Committee Reports

Halloween Candy/Card Collection for Active Duty Military Service Members/Family

Volunteer Service Committee: Karla Lauerman Cummins: Thank you to everyone for donating candy (9 boxes totalling 230 pounds) and cards to this service opportunity. A special thank you to Terri Shefelbine for organizing a veteran speaker to speak to the 3rd grade classrooms. Lieutenant Colonel Ron Wodtke USMC for sharing his knowledge. Mike Clark for serving as our contact and as always to Judy Brown in the main office for assisting with the collection. If you would like to lead this activity next year or have any questions please email Karla Lauerman Cummins at Karlaraelauerman@hotmail.com

Business Partnerships: Karla Lauerman Cummins: Information: The HM Business Partnership Committee provides access, opportunities, and recognition to our current and potential Business Partnerships. We had our second BP with Chipotle on Monday, November 4th. We raised \$342.16 Thank you so much for your support. We will plan 1-2 more partnerships this school year. Requests/Input from attendee's: Anyone that wishes to join our committee is very welcome and/or if you have any new ideas of BP opportunities or ways to thank our partners please let us know. karlaraelauerman@hotmail.com and/or cpdorfsman@aol.com Questions?

Read-a-Thon 2019 – Reading is my Super Power! Thank you to students, families, and teachers for participating in this year's Read-a-Thon during the month of October! The annual Read-a-Thon is meant to encourage students to develop good reading habits early in the school year and raise money for PTA supported activities. Those Read-a-Thon goals were exceeded this year: collectively the students read over 600,000 minutes and raised more than \$26,000 in donations to the PTA! At the November 7 closing ceremony the top readers in each grade were recognized, Ms Vincent and Ms Witt's classrooms received the class participation award, with both classes returning 100% of student reading calendars, and Principal Litwin completed a super power challenge including learning to fly. In addition, students were eligible to receive a Horace Mann water bottle and Scholastic Book Fair coupon based on donations returned. If your student missed turning in any pledge donations, please bring them to the school office to give to the PTA. If you have any questions or would like to join the committee please contact Tia Anderson tia.l.anderson@hotmail.com Megan Czarniecki megan.czarniecki@gmail.com Becky Mayer beckyjmayer@gmail.com

Save the Date for Make It Take It Susan Weislow. The Horace Mann Make It Take It event will be held Friday, December 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Horace Mann cafeteria. Make It Take It is a fun, family-focused event that provides all of the supplies needed to create fabulous, handmade craft items. They are perfect keepsakes or holiday gifts for loved ones! But it can't happen without YOU! We will need volunteers for one of two shifts, either 5:45 to 7 or 6:45 to 8:30. You do NOT need to be a crafty person – just willing to help hand out supplies and assist kids as needed. Volunteer help is the only way to make it a success. So thank you in advance for any time you can give. Look for a signup link in this week's Perspectives. Kids should be accompanied by an adult at this event -- no drop-offs please. If you have any questions or would like to join the committee please contact Susan Weislow sanovick@yahoo.com.

Give to the Max: Karla Lauerman Cummins: Thank you to all that contributed to support Horace Mann on Give to the Max day. Just under \$500 was collected! Fantastic. Thank you

for thinking of HM. If you would like to lead this effort next year (about a 2 hour commitment) please contact karlaraelauerman@hotmail.com.

Silent & Live Auction Committee: Allison Broughton. After a lengthy search process, the auction committee has selected the University of St. Thomas's Wolfe Alumni Hall. **SAVE THE DATE:** Our event will be held on the evening of Friday, March 20, 2020 and we're excited about our "Roaring 20s" theme. This is a big event and our volunteer motto is the more the merrier. If you're ready to join the party, please contact Amy Hannigan amyantoinette@gmail.com or Allison Broughton allisonbroughton0@gmail.com

Landscape Committee: Maya Missaghi Fall/Winter School Ground Clean Up a Success! Thank you SO much to everyone who came out despite the snow/sleet. Because of Ms. Bosch's hard work, our flower beds are re-mulched. Ms. Bosch and the third graders will plant tulips this fall. The school grounds are ready to face winter when it actually starts. We so appreciate your time and muscle power, and we even managed to have fun in that crazy weather! See you in the Spring! If you have questions please email Maya at mayamissaghi@gmail.com or Eric at ericzakoich@yahoo.com

Scholastic Book Fair: Katie Walter: Thank you for a successful year. If you are interested in being a co-chair for 2020-21, please email Katie Walter kmneunsinger@yahoo.com

Co-President-Nikki Mechlke president@hms-pta.org
Co-President-Karla Lauerman Cummins president@hms-pta.org
Treasurer-Jackie Hippen treasurer@hms-pta.org
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Recording Secretary-Melanie McMahan recorder@hms-pta.org
Volunteer Coordinator-Karen Vander Sanden