

South Lakes High School PTSA - November General Meeting

Minutes 11/08/23

SLHS Career Center

- I. Meeting Call to Order - 6:40pm
- II. Welcome - Vicky Stacy
- III. Student Spotlight - Vicky Stacy
 - A. **Student Spotlight - Students in the Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) course** highlighting their partnership with Pantry, preparing and delivering food bags for distribution at Langston Hughes. WAT course instills in students awareness and involvement in community service, as well as career-readiness.
- IV. Teacher Spotlight & Volunteer of the Month Recognition
 - A. **Staff Spotlight - Mckenzie Schmidt** in her first full-time teaching position (English 9 and English 9 HN classes) - nominated by a fellow teacher for how she cares deeply about her students
 - B. **Volunteer Spotlight - Rosa Simon** who is a longtime volunteer for Pantry and the Reston Community in general. Ms. Simon was nominated by several people!
- V. Guest Speaker
 - A. **Bethany Demers - FCPS Student Health & Wellness.** Started as a School Psychologist then moved up to central office function. Spoke to us about the initiatives being undertaken by FCPS to support students mental health. Student Survey tracks trends over past year. Mental health trends are getting better, lower rates of depression/stress/suicidal thoughts. Substance abuse is at an all-time low (since 2010) and lower in FCPS than national average. Spoke about "protective factors" and their correlation to lower rates of crisis and substance abuse - including School, Community, Family & Individual. Reviewed all the support resources available in FCPS including school-based, tele-health, other community resources (some are self-serve and school counselors/social workers can help connect students in need to some others).

Followed by Q&A.

- VI. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes (October 4, 2023)
 - A. Motion made: Larry Howell
 - B. Seconded: Abbe Pascal
 - C. Approved unanimously
- VII. Treasurer's Report - **Ashley Kowalczyk**
 - A. Through October 31st - Membership is going well, Fundraising we had a successful Family photos session fundraiser, general expenses on track; Pantry donations are on-track, DIYW 0.5K did very well (raised more than budgeted); ANGP ticket sales going well so far, vendor fees are up this year.
- VIII. Committee Updates
 - A. Pantry - **Abbe Pascal**
 - 1. 0.5K was a big success! Weekly distributions are supporting over 400 families. Could use more parent volunteers for weekly student distributions (thursdays 2-3:30pm); info on how to donate
 - B. All-Night Grad Party - **Michelle France & Lorna Kadunce**
 - 1. Ticket sales and lawn sign sales going well so far; Winter plant sale coming up (poinsettias, Christmas Cactus, Cyclamen, Norfolk Island Pine, African Violets) - last day to order is Nov 27th delivery on Dec 1st; upcoming planning meeting is Tuesday Nov 14
 - C. Hospitality - **Vicky Stacy**
 - 1. Recent event was "Bursting with Appreciation" to staff in October
 - D. Scholarships/Mini-Grants - **Sarah Hobson**
 - 1. One mini-grant approved so far, we want to see MORE!
 - E. Fundraising - **Vicky Stacy**
 - 1. Seasonal photo mini-sessions were a great success - raised over \$3000!! Thank you PTSA VP of Communications, Erin Gibbens for coming up with the idea and being our photographer!
 - 2. International Cookbook (digital) to go along with cultural

day coming up

3. Dining4Dollars - want to do a few this year to support PTSA fundraising efforts

VIII. Principal's Report

- A. Survived 1st Quarter! Report cards coming soon; good response on impact aid forms now that they are online, but still have a bunch outstanding; shared some info on an upcoming SR&R meeting; and a discussion around SR&R and related actions/consequences; shared info on spread of information around incidents that happen in school and communicating more about those incidents to avoid mis-information. Principal Retzer has some suggestions from parents around communicating general info about more serious events to stop spread of mis-information that she is going to take to central communications and see what can be done; discussion around how parents can engage with FCPS administration to advocate (individually or as a PTSA); walkout being planned to support Palestine, students are meeting with Principal Retzer to plan it. Per 1st amendment, the students have to be allowed to walk-out, school does not take sides but does set guidelines for behavior and ensure protest is not inciting violence or hate speech; upcoming events, Sleepy Hollow production starting this week, football team undefeated and regional game is also on Friday, girls Cross-Country won District with one winning individual

IX. Meeting Adjournment - 8:39PM