

PTO MEETING MINUTES

Charter Oak International Academy PTO

December 7, 2017, 6-7:30 pm, Cafeteria

Attending: Lisa Scranton, Kim Hughes, Rachel Tenney, Maureen Colon, Amanda Peters, Jodie Smith, Manuela Canales, Jennifer Smith, Ripley Heintz, Kirsten Sanderson, Juan Melian, Joanna Curry-Satori, Kate Jerram, Dawn Hyland, Amy Flores, Danielle Rodriguez, Nordia Napier, Lorna Farquharson, Jeanette Goyzueta, Julie Choffel, Roberta Lamothe, Jonathan Small, Anne Bonito, Irene Garneau, Kate Eikel, Judy Busch, Bobie Jr. Parker

Restaurant night at Effie's Recap: This was one of the most successful ones of all thus far. Representative from Effies came in to speak to the meeting guests. They encouraged Charter Oak to come back again in the Spring. Presented a check for \$300 for the fundraising effort.

Kim's introduction with a paper agenda.

Juan's principal report:

Highlights: Met with someone from the Peace Corp. Explorations will be starting in January. A literary magazine will be started soon. Next week on Tuesday, a meeting by Moms and More will be held in addition to mindfulness every Tuesday. Expressed a big Thank you to the parents for strengthening the school and giving the kids new experiences.

Literary Magazine is being created to give the kids a voice and take action. "The Original Acorn" will be the name of the publication. Poetry, fiction, non-fiction submissions.

Amy, a peace corp volunteer in Morocco, has been working there planting trees. The goal is to get the children to hear the stories from the Peace corp as a way to expose them to new experiences and inspire them. Late January will continue this partnership.

Explorations will start in the second week of January. Nine offerings are available to serve 112 students but they are always still looking for more parents and staff to step in.

Example: Kim will be teaching an indoor gardening, and farming from around the world.

UN Video will come out on December 8th. Fifth Graders have been working very hard on it.

Treasurer report: Amanda- financial health is very good overall. Strong with personal donations and still tallying final numbers for the past few fundraisers.

Fundraising report: Rachel and Judy- thank you to everyone for selling over 400 pies.

Volunteers have noted changes to make this better for next year. Silvergraphics ordering is available until June. New initiative to have a Friday night at the Yard Goats and DJ at Veterans to help.

Communications: figuring out ways to reach parents in all different means whether it be fax, email, blasts, robocalls, texts (as a new suggestion)

Special Events: No specific news to report.

Engagement: General parents, classes, room parent connections are really getting better.

Helping to really personalize the experience. Using a web of connections: one person reaches out to five close families, then each of them reach out to another five, etc.

Ideas include putting contact information on the school website and even on the Facebook site.

FRC: FRC/COIA school play auditions will be coming up in January. Name of the play is still a secret.

Town Cultural Council: organizes cultural performances in all the West Hartford schools. African inspired dance. (see Manuela's notes below for further details)

PT Council: Jodie Smith: push for cultural competence starting with cultural consciousness.

Also working on cultural responsiveness including choosing books about their own cultural stories. Looking for ways to help deepen kids bonds with their own backgrounds.

Joanna Curry-Satori is introduced to start a group conversation about "Social and Emotional Health and Well-Being of Our Families".

Ideas to promote this:

Yoga

Adventure nights

Parent book club/strategies of parenting.

Getting together as a parent group, casual conversation with other families to feel solidarity and sharing information.

Group gathering places (playground, library, etc)

Older kid mentors "Problem solving buddies"

Finding connections/networking with other parents (ex: Math tutor parent helping another parent's child).

Learning how to be more present and be aware of what blind spots are for families

Additional notes from Manuela Canales regarding Cultural Council:

Event date: Monday, April 6, 2018 at 10 a.m.

It is with great excitement that we share this school year's featured Cultural Council program! In the spring (not definite dates yet) we have the great good fortune of bringing *Stepping with Step Afrika!* to our elementary schools. Step Afrika! is a Company that blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities, African traditional dance and influences from a variety of other dance and art forms. Their performances integrate songs, storytelling, humor and audience participation. Technique, agility, athleticism and pure energy drive their work making it a unique and powerful educational tool, the focus of which is placed on teamwork, personal and academic growth and cross-cultural understanding. We hope you'll take a moment to visit: <http://www.stepafrika.org/company/> to learn more. There

was also a great article in the New York Times in November about another critically acclaimed show of theirs which closed last weekend in New York City:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/03/arts/dance/step-afrika-the-migration-reflections-on-jacob-lawrence.html>.

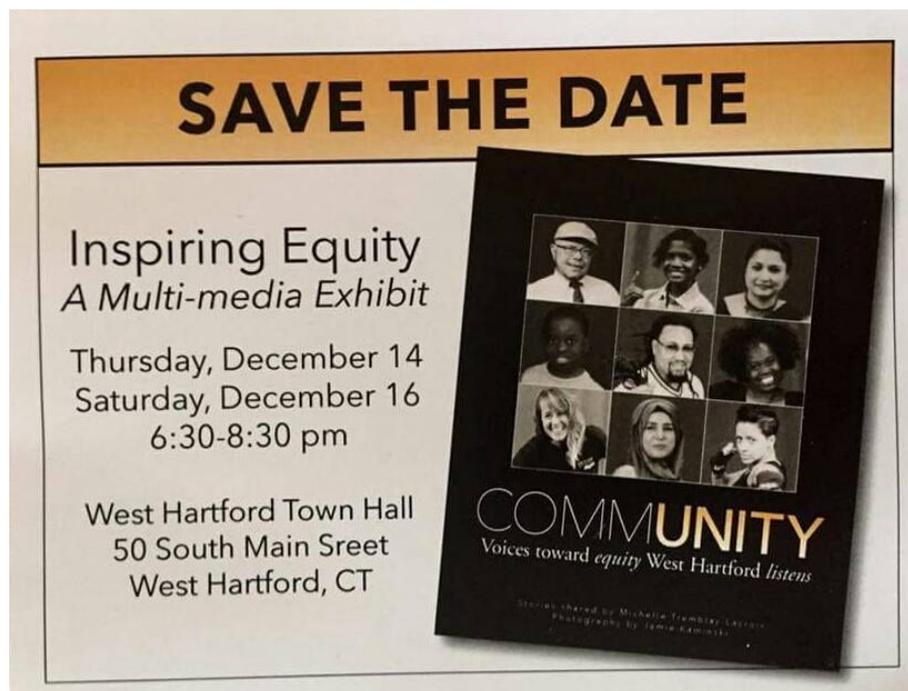
Since 1951, the Cultural Council has brought an exciting variety of musical, dramatic, and visual arts experiences to West Hartford's elementary schools.

The organization brings one performance per year to West Hartford's 11 elementary schools. The Cultural Council is solely funded by parent, community and family donations and has a fundraiser each spring to generate income for the following year's performances/programs. Each school, no matter what the fundraising result or effort, is provided with equal programming and exposure to these performances and offerings.

Last year's show, "Abe Lincoln: From Railsplitter to President," took place in the fall. There's a pretty big team of people that supports the WHCC to ensure our students have the best experience possible: the WHPS Arts Department, Arts for Learning, an organization that connect school with recognized artists, staff and parent representatives at each school, and families that show their support.

You can follow WHCC in Facebook and find out not only about the council, but also performances in CT outside our schools.

PT Council announcement:



SAVE THE DATE

Inspiring Equity
A Multi-media Exhibit

Thursday, December 14
Saturday, December 16
6:30-8:30 pm

West Hartford Town Hall
50 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT

COMMUNITY
Voices toward equity West Hartford listens

Stories shared by Michelle Trumbick-Larkin
Photographs by Jamie Samuels

Meeting adjourned at 7:30