**Willis Elementary PTO Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 10, 2017**

Starting Time: 6:00 pm

Board Members Present:   Mr. Stenger, Mrs. Fintel, Bianca Lawrence, Sky Galliano, Tara Merino

Other Members Present: Listed separately

Minutes submitted by Cathy Magda

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Thank you Message
2. WAT
3. Mr. Stenger / Mrs. Fintel Remarks
4. BoxTops
5. Financial Update
6. Speaker Session
7. Q&A

**PTO Welcome Message / Open Positions**

1. Bianca welcomed and thanked the attendees for taking time to get involved. She mentioned that we are hoping to find someone to take on PIE for the rest of the year from Tara Merino. All sponsors have already been identified, it’s just about the follow through on the commitments we made to them.

**Walk-A-Thon**

1. Tara spoke about the remarkable success we had at this year’s Walk-A-Thon.
2. We could do all the amount of planning and strategizing in the world, but nothing would happen without the phenomenal support of our parents, friends and families.
3. We were very happy with the online tool this year and it was amazing to see so many friends and family members across the country supporting our Geckos.
4. We are very fortunate to have such amazing support because there are many schools in the area who are not able to raise even a fraction of what have been able to and aren’t able to offer the same opportunities to their children.
5. Tara discussed that we plan to ensure that we start making investments in our children as soon as possible. We have already purchase science supplies for Mrs. Schneider that arrived this week and the kids will start to utilize over the next few weeks. Lots of really fun rocket ship activities were included, which will be fun for the kids.
6. Tara mentioned that the PTO is also working with the school administration to purchase the second part of the Making Meaning libraries for each classroom and hopes to get those into the classrooms in the next couple of months.
7. We are also working hard to spread out the prizes throughout the year. The first event is this month with Mrs. Fintel and a fun Ice Cream part. Agusta and her WAT Prize team are already working hard on making this a special event for the children.
8. Next month we have our Field Trip to MacAllisters planned with Principal Stenger. Tara has finalized the menu with Tina Bliss who has been absolutely amazing and so generous.
9. Sky is working with Rob Ross on the graphics for the Walk-A-Thon shirt. This year it will be a dri fit shirt and feature Mr. Stenger and Mrs. Fintel on the front and our Walk-A-Thon sponsors on the back. We are aiming to get these out to the kids in early November.
10. A date has yet to be determined for when Mr. Stenger and Mrs. Fintel will be on the wall. Due to Irma manage changes are being made to the testing schedule, so they are waiting for those to be finalized.

**Mr. Stenger / Mrs. Fintel Remarks**

1. Mr. Stenger and Mrs. Fintel are so thankful for the amazing support from our parents. They are going to be working with the PTO board to make some meaningful investments in the curriculum.
2. Mr. Stenger mentioned they are looking at purchasing Being a Writer which is a program that is created by the same company that makes Making Meaning.
3. This year we expanding our support to our sister school, Rogers Garden Elementary here in Manatee County. They are a Title 1 school. Given the abundance of clothes we had in our used clothes closet, Mrs. Fintel took over several bags of clothes to them last week and they were extremely grateful. We still have ample clothes for our Willis students.
4. We would like to also do a book drive for Rogers Garden some time over the next month so that these children are able to bring books home to read and have books accessible to them that they otherwise would not have.
5. Keeping in the theme of giving and kindness, we will again be collecting extra candy that you do not wish to keep post Halloween to be sent oversees to our active military troops. We are partnering with a local dentist who will pay for the shipping.
6. Our staff is going to do another Trunk or Treat this year on October 27th. This is the same day as BooFest on Main Street, so our families can stop by Willis prior to heading over to BooFest. All candy and toys are being purchased by the PTO.
7. In early November we will launch our School Senate elections. We have some great things planned for these students, including the Teddy Bear drive that is given to All Children’s Hospital.

**BoxTops**

1. Heather Caserta reminded folks that we will be collecting BoxTops monthly this year.
2. Also, there is a big expiration date on November 1st, so please send in your BoxTops before they expire.
3. They are still working on the final count for September, but initial numbers are very promising.
4. Be sure to check out the BoxTops app as they have a lot of great bonuses throughout the year. Right now there is a great one on Lysol.

**Financial Update**

1. Tara reported on current financials. Biggest changes are on the WAT, Science and PIE lines. We are still getting money in from WAT from our credit card pledges. By next PTO meeting, we should see the full number on that line.

**Speaker Session**

1. Tara introduced Inigo Merino, CEO of Cienaga Systems, Inc.
2. Inigo discussed the importance being vigilant with our children and their safety online.
3. We should take a multi level approach to protecting our kids online.
4. Although Stranger Danger for the physical world is not where most abuse is seen, in the online world, Stanger Danger is real.
5. Inigo recommends that we first need to educate our kids and ourselves on how to be responsible online.
6. Then we need to look at tools to help us restrict access to inappropriate material that we wouldn’t want our children to see. Inigo provide a list of different options, but stressed that we cannot rely on tools alone.
7. The third step we need to take is monitoring our kids. We need to be looking at what they are looking at. Reviewing who they are talking to. Be mindful that just because you don’t find something doesn’t mean that everything is okay. We need to keep being vigilant.
8. Inigo provide links to different stances on whether parents should try to shelter their kids versus exposing their kids to the dangers of their online world. Every family needs to make their own decision and determine an approach that works best for their families.
9. The deck that Inigo went through with all the data, metrics and links will be provided to our families.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.