



In the "Know" with the PSO

ALL parents and staff at PCCS are members of the PSO!

Fall 2014

President's Comment

By Christine Palmer

Fall is here! As I sit typing this the wind has shifted and the summer warmth I was experiencing a few hours ago has taken on a definite chill. Bring on the sweaters.

The PSO has had a busy first few months of school. We had to line up classroom coordinators, learn how to use Google Calendar, hold the first Coffee with the Administration, and held meetings with the Administration to see how the PSO can best help the school.

As parents, you are ALL members of the PCCS PSO. There is no membership fee, there is no volunteer requirement. Everyone is a member and everyone has a say as to what we should be doing with our funds and our time. Will all requests be met? No, but we want to hear from you, because the more ideas we have, the better use we will get from our resources.

I also want to encourage you to get involved in some way at the school. If you have time, volunteer in the classroom or monitor your children during lunch and recess. Go and see one of the sports teams play. Volunteer for one of the many PSO and school events. Or, simply scroll to page 5 and read and sign our "Pledge to End Carpool Idling" with your child.

If you have concerns or suggestions, plan on attending a Coffee with the Administration. The next one is Monday, Oct. 20. Mr. Zamiar and Mrs. Hershiser will be in attendance and while the focus will be on Carson Building concerns, questions about the whole school will be answered.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at psopresident@pccharterschool.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

Mark Your Calendar!

October 20

Coffee with the Administration

October 31

Halloween Class Parties

November 24-25

Scholastic Book Fair

December 4

Holiday Bazaar



2014-15 PCCS School Directory

The PSO is busy working to create this year's school directory for PCCS families. In keeping with the school's mission, the Directory will once again be distributed as a PDF document. The Directory contains similar content as in years past: information about the school and PSO, photos of the staff and campus, list of students in each class, and family contact data. The office will send out the digital version via email to families as soon as the document is completed. A printed copy will also be available to purchase for a minimal cost.

New Family Update

By Lori Maier

We would like to extend another warm welcome to our new families and students at Prairie Crossing Charter School. We are happy to welcome 38 new families and 69 new students this year. The process of welcoming new families and students started in April, continued through the summer, and will continue throughout the school year.

It is important to PCCS that our new families are well informed, are feeling connected and are at home at PCCS. This year, as administration confirmed new families for the 2014-2015 school year, they shared this information with the PSO team and together we worked hard to welcome our new families as they made their way through Kindergarten Round-up, Kindergarten assessments, all-school enrollment, ordering school supply packs, filling out forms, and signing up for the "Getting to Know You" camps, as well as the summer get-together.

We had a great turnout at the summer get-together, which was held by the school and supported by PSO volunteers. Janette Siegel commented, "At the get-together picnic with all the families it was so wonderful to see everyone chatting and getting to know one another. I really liked seeing the upper grade families coming together."

We want to continue to encourage new families to reach out with any questions they have. Our PSO New Family Team Leader, PCCS Administration and mentor families are ready to assist throughout the school year.

A big "Thank You" goes out to our volunteer families for taking the time to share their wisdom and friendship with our new families. Also, we thank our new families for choosing PCCS. We ask everyone...the next time you are at school and see someone you do not know, take the time to reach out and introduce yourself!

'Tis the Season for...Shopping!

Annual Holiday Bazaar Date Set for Dec. 4

By Laura Psimaras

For those new to PCCS, the annual Holiday Bazaar is a fundraising event the kids, staff and families look forward to each year! On December 4th, the school gym will, with the help of many wonderful volunteers, will be transformed into a gigantic store. The teachers will bring each class to the gym and they will have the opportunity to shop for holiday gifts for their families. Each gift will be sold for one dollar. Children can buy gifts for their mom, dad, grandparents, siblings and other important people in their lives. Chosen gifts will then be wrapped, again with the help of wonderful volunteers, and brought home that day. Each year, the children have a blast picking out their gifts and giving them to their loved ones. They also learn that reusing items can bring joy to others.

Here is how families can help make this event a success: The PSO is asking that families donate like-new items from around the house. These items could include books, music CD's, movies, toys, games, stuffed animals, tools, sports memorabilia, crafts, jewelry and holiday/seasonal items. Collection of these items will begin on Monday, November 17th and continue daily until the day of the Bazaar. Gift bags, scotch tape, and tissue paper are also GREATLY needed for the gift-wrapping station.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to volunteer in any of the ways listed above, please email Laura at holidaybazaar@pccharterschool.org. Thank you for your help and support of this special and fun event!

Stock up on Books at the Scholastic Book Fair During Conferences

By Julie Kotzamanis

The annual fall Scholastic Book Fair will take place during parent/teacher conferences Monday, November 24th and Tuesday November 25th. This is a great event that benefits classrooms, students and families.

Look for your children's wish lists to come home just prior to the fair. Also, don't forget to check out the books in the teacher's "Wish List Bags" which will be located at the fair. Families are welcome to purchase these books to donate to their children's classrooms for all to share. The book fair truly generates a lot of excitement around reading and it earns PCCS "Scholastic Dollars" which are used to purchase useful resources for the school.

We hope you will have a chance to stop and browse the fair before or after your conferences. Please remember there will also be an online Scholastic Book Fair for your convenience. Watch for those dates to be posted. More books are available online and all orders will be shipped free to PCCS and sent home via backpack.



Box Tops Update

By Kara Edgeworth

Last year we earned close to \$1,200.00 from Box Top collections and we would love to earn even more money this year. Please let grandparents, neighbors and coworkers know that PCCS collects and redeems Box Tops. Every contribution helps. This money goes directly back to the classrooms to provide better opportunities for your children. Box Tops are found on nearly everything from toilet paper to fresh veggies. Box Tops can be turned into the office or your child's classroom teacher on an ongoing basis.

Treasurer's Note

By Jena Mertz

Hello from your PCCS PSO Treasurer. I'll include a note in these newsletters to let everyone know how PSO is raising funds and what we are doing with the money. Since we're just starting our new year I'll give an overview of what we do.

All of PSO's money comes from our fundraisers. Some of those fundraisers are the big events (Textile Drive, Holiday Bazaar, Trivia Night, Daddy-Daughter Dance, etc.) and some are the ongoing opportunities (Boxtops, SCRIP sales, etc). We do not receive any funds from the school or from the state. It is all through the efforts and generosity of our PCCS community.

So what do we do with all that money? We spend it on the kids and teachers. Most of the money goes back into the classroom through teacher and grade band reimbursements. We provide a certain dollar amount per teacher and grade band to reimburse purchases directly benefiting the class or grade band. We also help with the Welcome Back Picnic, New Family Mentoring Events, Parent Education Events and Staff Appreciation Luncheons.

We are always looking for new ways to grow our funding to allow us to do more for our kids. So, if you have ideas or want to get involved, just let us know! We never turn down a helping hand.



Third Annual Textile Drive a Success

PCCS held its annual Textile Drive and Clothing Sale October 2-4 2014. Textiles such as gently used clothing and shoes for children and adults were sorted and sold at the community-wide event to benefit the PSO. Unusable items such as ripped or stained clothing and linens were also collected for Chicago Textile Recycling to be remanufactured into other products. In all, the event earned over \$2,600.00. Thanks to all who helped at the event and supported the school by shopping at the sale!



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Pledge to End Carpool Idling

By Jena Mertz

Ok. You send your child to an environmental school. You pack trash free lunches. You probably even recycle. But you leave your vehicle idling in the carpool lane? I can only imagine it is because you don't know why this is even an issue. A quick Google search on "stopping idling" will reveal it is an issue—at least lots of folks seem to feel it is. So what is the deal?

According to some sites, two minutes of idle time equals the gas usage and emissions of driving one mile. And one pound of carbon dioxide is released every 10 minutes your engine is left to idle. So turning your engine off will save you gas (and money) and significantly cut down on CO2 emissions. Win-win!

Health concerns are prevalent on these sites as well. The particle pollutants released by an idling engine are linked to increases in asthma, allergies, heart and lung disease and cancer. And because kids inhale more air per pound of body weight, they are even more at risk than adults to these health problems.

Turning your engine off when you are going to idle for an extended period of time, like for a long train or waiting for the carpool lane, is good for your engine too. Something about heat and stuff building in things; I have to admit I didn't understand most of what those articles said—I'll just have to take their word for it. But hey, if it limits how many trips I have to make to the body shop, I'm in!

It sounds like the arguments to turn your engine off while in the carpool lane are solid. So, I have a proposal: Let's take a pledge to turn off our engines while we wait in the carpool lane. It is not just a "crunchy granola hippie" thing. It is a backed-by-science thing. We need to do our part to help our kids do their best and leave the earth in decent shape for them to take over. If all we have to do to help make that happen is turn the key and shut the engine off, why not do it? We'll have more money, less pollution and potentially healthier kids. What's not to love there?

Sign the below portion with your child(ren). Let them know you are doing your part to be a good steward of the earth and reinforcing some of the lessons of their schooling. Let's do this together.



I (parent's name) do hereby pledge to turn off my car while in the carpool lane to INCREASE AIR QUALITY AND DECREASE HEALTH RISKS for the PCCS community and surrounding communities.
Signed (parent's signature) Date _____
Witnessed by (student's signature) Date _____

