

In the “Know” with the PSO

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

Spring 2014

Where Does All the Money Go?

by Teresa Amos, PSO Treasurer

The Parent Staff Organization (PSO) raises around \$15,000 a year. Our fundraisers are carefully picked to reflect and support the vision and goals of the Prairie Crossing Charter School (PCCS). They are also planned to build a sense of community. Our annual fundraising events are the School Supply Drive, the Textile Drive, the Holiday Bazaar, Trivia Night, and this year, the Father Daughter Dance. Ongoing fundraisers include SCRIP and Box Tops.

Most of the money the PSO raises goes directly to the classroom to benefit the students. The PSO sponsors a series of grants each year. This year we have 26 Teacher Reimbursement Grants that provide up to \$150 each. Teachers use this money

to enhance classroom activities. Whether it is apples used to study mummification in Ms. Heier’s class, art supplies for Mr. Zamiar’s wax museum project or prizes for Book Buddy Bingo, you are seeing the PSO in action. Consumable products ranging from pet supplies to poster board and flipcharts are popular requests as well.

There are nine grade band grants available that provide \$300-600 per grant. Applications for these grants are submitted by multiple teachers in a grade band. These items are often equipment that becomes property of the school. This year’s requests have ranged from a mini refrigerator to store science

supplies to classroom microwaves to supplies for Family Math Night for the first through fourth grades.

In addition, there is one in school grant per year. Items requested for this grant must benefit the whole school. Last year the PSO contributed \$1,200

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What’s Happening!

April 15	ISCSC Charter Renewal Meeting, LEARN Charter School North Chicago
April 21	Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, 8:45 a.m. in the gym
April 29	CP Presentations, 1-7 p.m. in barn
April 30	Coffee with the Administration, 8:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
May 6	PSO General Meeting, 8:15 a.m.
May 7	Minute-to-Win It, 1:30-3:30 p.m., gym
May 9	Daddy/Daughter Dance, 6:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
May 12	School Supply Pack Sales Begin
May 21	Afternoon Art Institute Outing, 1:00 p.m. (Early Release Day)
June 3	Coffee with the Administration, 8:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
June 4	8 th Grade Graduation
June 11	Last Day of School

PCCS wants to hear from you on the 5Essentials!

This is your opportunity to share your opinions about PCCS. The school uses information obtained from this survey to change methods of communication with parents and to drive the PCCS Strategic Plan. Please take a few minutes and complete the survey. Go to <https://survey.5-essentials.org/llinois/survey/parent/login/> to begin the survey.

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towards the Rock Wall in the gym. Grants for individual student projects are available most school years. The application requires teacher input and awards are decided on a case by case basis. The average award is \$100 per grant.

We also contribute to community building events. New family orientation and play date activities for incoming Kindergarteners are sponsored by the PSO. The PCCS Back to School Picnic is organized by the PSO. We sponsor a back to school luncheon, survival kits during conferences, and wonderful lounge angel lunches throughout the year for the teachers!

Money is not our biggest contribution to the school. Our hundreds of volunteer hours save the school literally thousands of dollars. We also provide services that would be impossible for a typical school to provide. PCCS parents are very generous with their time in the classroom!

The PSO is headed by officers who collaborate with administration to help the team leaders set dates, arrange locations and supplies to run their event or task. A PSO officer is also always present at each general school board meeting. There are also about a dozen team leaders who both coordinate volunteers for specific tasks and who coordinate our fundraising events. Team Leaders head up our classroom coordinators, greeters at carpool and lounge angels! We are literally everywhere. PSO volunteers also assisted administration with setting up the giving tree and staffing the scholastic book fair, although these events are fundraisers for the school and not PSO projects. Every parent and every staff member is eligible and invited to participate in The Parent Staff Organization (PSO) as much or as little as they want or can. The organization has no dues or formal registration process. Everyone, especially our students, benefit.

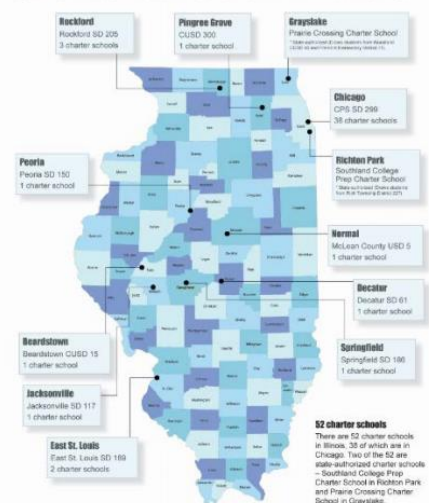
PSO Year-At-A-Glance

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Newsletter Volunteer Appreciation Event	D/D Dance Teacher Staff Appreciation	Graduation Summer Break begins		Welcome Back Picnic	Board Elections	Textile & Clothing Sale Drive Halloween Parties	Thanksgiving	Holiday Bazaar Holiday Celebrations	

Charter Renewal Process Ongoing

Our school last received a renewal of our charter in 2009. The charter was renewed for a 5-year period. The school submitted a renewal proposal to the Illinois State Charter School Commission (ISCSC) at the end of 2013. This proposal included information about the progress and finances of our school. You may have seen representatives of the ISCSC as they toured the school or at one of the open meetings. The ISCSC will now vote on the PCCS renewal proposal. This open meeting concerning the charter renewal, originally scheduled for March 25, has been rescheduled for Tues., April 15. The meeting will take place at LEARN Charter School, 3131 Sheridan Road, Great Lakes, Illinois on April 15th from 3-6 p.m. Please consider attending the Commission meeting. If you are unable to attend and would like to offer a letter of support for PCCS and its renewal, please forward to Dil Dybas by 3 p.m. on Mon., April 14.

Charter schools in Illinois



8th Grade Fun Fair Success

On Fri., April 4, students from all grades filed through the gym doors after school. This time, they were spared a class period of squats,



(Pictured Above Left) Salem, NH Freedom Shrine at the Kelley Library.

pushups and other calisthenics. Instead, they were greeted by inflatables, snow cones, art tables, hair braids, and other activities. Eighth graders hosted the event to raise funds for the National Exchange Club's "Freedom Shrine"—a collection of replicas of America's documents of freedom laminated on wooden plaques. The Freedom Plaques will be mounted on the walls in the Rachel Carson building. The event raised in excess of \$2,500. Thank you to the lead parent coordinator, Laura Fay, 8th graders and PCCS community!

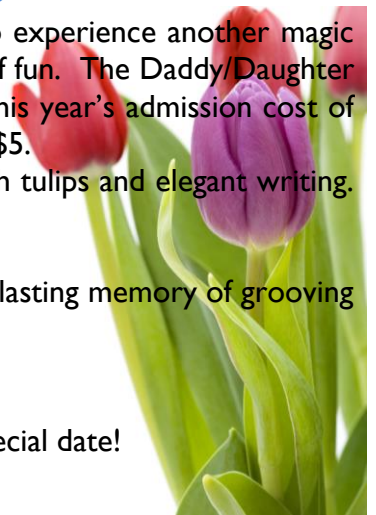
Top 5 Reasons to Attend the Daddy/Daughter Dance

Thanks to an amazing group of volunteer parents, we all have the opportunity to experience another magic evening where daughters are escorted by their most trusted dates to an evening of fun. The Daddy/Daughter Dance is being held this year on May 9. The theme will be "A Spring Formal". This year's admission cost of \$25/couple includes one session in the photo booth, with additional sessions only \$5.

If you have a daughter at PCCS, you have probably seen the invitation printed with tulips and elegant writing. If you have not sent in your response yet, consider these reasons to attend:

5. It is in May and the chance of snow goes down slightly here in the Midwest
4. The gym is transformed from the place of gym class and Green Assemblies to a lasting memory of grooving tunes
3. Every girl deserves a chance to see her dad try to dance
2. It's even funnier when you get to see a friend's dad try to dance
1. It's a great opportunity for girls to see how great guys treat their "girls" on a special date!

Please make plans on attending this special evening.



Parents & Staff Brave the Cold to Participate in Trivia Night

What European country celebrates the 4th of July?
What war ended in 1814? Who said, "Look, it's simple, whatever mileage we put on, we'll take off. We'll drive home backward?" In what year was PCCS honored with the National Green Ribbon Award?

This is just a sampling of the questions posed to parents and teachers during the annual PSO Trivia Night held at the Byron Colby Barn on Friday February 7. This year's theme "Another Day Off," proved to be both challenging and enlightening. Parents and teachers teamed up in groups of eight to answer questions in six categories ranging from "American Glory" to "Holidays." There was also a bonus round of PCCS-specific trivia. If they didn't know the answer, teams were given the option to purchase "tactics" including stealing another teams answer or a 90 second use of the Internet to improve their chances. In addition to the trivia competition, teams were given the option to choose a theme and

dress up and/or decorate their tables to tie into that theme. Themes ranged from "The Bleeding Hearts," to Chicago Super Fans to "The Abe Froman's," appropriately named after the character from the 1980s film Ferris Bueller's Day Off.

"The biggest surprise of the night was how well many of the teams performed. It was a very tight competition for the first 4-5 rounds," said Neil Estrick, who was in charge of the event this year, "The biggest shock was that the winning team was the smallest team, with only 4 people!"

The winners, "The Abe Froman's," won custom coffee mugs created by Neil Estrick in his studio. "The Bleeding Hearts" won goodies from Uniquely Sweet in Grayslake for best table design. All profits went to fund the PSO. And, in case you're still mulling over those trivia questions, the answers are: Denmark, The war of 1812, Ferris Bueller, and 2012.

Graduation

by Dil Dybas

Class song. Class gift. Speeches. Memories. Ceremony. Graduation. All of these ingredients and much more make up a unique experience that our 8th graders hopefully will remember for a lifetime. We are fortunate that we can recognize and celebrate our 8th graders in this way. If you haven't attended a graduation ceremony yet, it is a must-see event. Our students, many of whom started out as Kindergarteners here at PCCS and metamorphosed into butterflies, are now taking the biggest step of their lives and moving on to high school and new opportunities. Before they go, however, many people help create a memorable event for these students to remember their years at PCCS. Graduation for us at PCCS is more than giving or receiving a diploma; it is a recognition of our graduates' place in our hearts, experiences, and community. It is our hope that they will always remain part of the PCCS community. Please join the Class of 2014 and their families on Wed., June 4th at 7 p.m. in the gymnasium and help celebrate their graduation.

Rice Krispie Peanut Butter Granola Bars: Trash-Free Snack

Ingredients:

- 1 c. Rice Krispies cereal
- ¾ c. quick oats
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- ¼ cup dark corn syrup or honey
- ¼ c. smooth reduced fat peanut butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ¼ c. raisins or coconut (optional)
- ¼ c. mini chocolate chips

Directions:

Lightly grease 8"x8" pan.
 In a medium bowl, combine cereal, oats and raisin or coconut (if using). In a saucepan stir corn syrup or honey with brown sugar until just a boil.
 Immediately remove from heat and stir in peanut butter and vanilla until well combined. Pour over dry ingredients; mix quickly to combine before mixture solidifies. Stir in mini chocolate chips (if using) working fast before mixture hardens. Transfer to pan and press evenly with fingertips or spatula. Let stand for 30 minutes then cut into 10 bars and store in airtight container.

Volunteer Coordination Primary Focus

In this newsletter, Teresa Amos does a good job describing where the money goes, which is back to the teachers, students and school. But the PSO is so much more than fundraising. Our main job is to help coordinate the volunteers that help make the school run every day.

Right now, we're in the process of recruiting Team Leaders and Officers for the 2014-2015 school year. Our school charter recognizes the importance of parent involvement and lists it in the school mission statement. Your unique talents are needed to help our school to continue to grow. Everyone's ability to commit to activities for this school will be different but great progress can be made even with smaller amounts of time. Without your participation, we won't gain your unique perspective and insight! Without participation from a greater percentage of our population, we risk becoming a small group that does not accurately represent our whole population.

If you are interested in being a team leader or an officer for next year, please feel free to contact myself, Teresa Amos or Malia Naipo.

Thank you

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