

MINUTES: ECMS PTO MEETING

13 January 2023



Welcome, Opening prayers and remarks

1. Mr. Lazor welcomed everyone present and opened in prayers. Specific prayers for Christina Strange and her kids Grace (7th) and Sam (4th). Husband and father, Scott Strange, passed away Monday night after a long terminal illness battle. Some parents are working together to see how they can support the family and will reach out to you soon.
2. Mr. Lazor said there have been so many changes in our school since he started as principal and it keeps changing. The changes have been good and we have more changes coming up not just with the 3rd graders moving to the Wyckoff campus but also additions to our school and playground. Students are loving the blacktop and basketball courts.

Recap Past Events

1. **Raise Craze** - thank you to all the families and the students that supported this Fundraising through the Kindness initiative. We had such positive feedback from hosting this fundraiser that not just benefited us but also showed kindness in our community. The student had about 370 AOK excluding the work they did on the hands-dirty day. Mr. Lazor had a wonderful silent night sleeping on top of the school roof as well as getting slimed with Mr. Otten. The students loved this. We still have Mrs. Brain and Ms. Merkley that will be kissing a pig in the springtime. The 4th graders enjoyed their ice cream sundae reward for doing the most acts of kindness.
2. **Back to School Game Night** - we celebrated back to school with a family 'five in a row' game night. This was a fun evening where everyone had the opportunity to meet families and reconnect with old families.

3. **Fall Family PhotoShoot** - We collaborated with Justin van Dyke to take family portraits and all spots were filled. Participants who received their photos were very happy and we have seen a few of them on Christmas cards.
4. **Dad's night out** - Thank you so much to all the Dads who attended the Ax Throwing Night. This event was attended by dads from all three campuses. Fun was had by all!
5. **Student Christmas Parties** - thank you to all the HomeRoom Liaisons for organizing and putting together great Christmas Parties for the students.
6. **Parents in Prayer** - a reminder that parents meet each Monday at 8.15 in the art room.

Upcoming events

1. **Mom's Night Out with a Pur(se)pose- 27 January (EC Wide)** - This event is for **all EC moms**. Invite another mom and come for a night out with a purpose. If you have any unused handbags that you no longer use, bring them with you or drop them off at the MS Office before the event. We are **supporting Dress for Success** Northern NJ. The mission of Dress for Success is to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and the development tools to help women thrive in work and life. We will be assisting by providing handbags filled with goods that will help them feel good and look good for their interviews.
<https://forms.gle/5c5BmjJWZWNW9r619>
2. **Souper Bowl - 1-10 February** - Help us **tackle hunger** this during the superbowl. **Students and staff are asked to donate a can of soup** towards our local foodbank. A bin will be in the school foyer where student may drop off their soup donations. Thank you.
3. **Family snow tubing - 13 February (EC Wide)** - invite your friends and neighbors. Our snow tubing is open to anyone who would like to come. So sign up and come enjoy some chatting with other parents whilst **enjoying a cup of hot chocolate**. It's a short week at school, so come and enjoy yourself. **The spots are filling up fast** and we will most likely sell out within the next week or two.

If you plan to attend, get your tickets sooner rather than later.

<https://forms.gle/yaqxEt8nJPdMGMyQ9>

4. **Mom and Student Volunteer Event (7th & 8th grade) - 11 March** - this event is open for our 7th and 8th-grade students. We will be volunteering and the community foodbank in New Jersey. This is a great opportunity for students to earn their FIA hours. This event quickly reached full capacity and you can be put on a waitlist if you are interested.
5. **Student Winter Festival - 24 March** - the most anticipated event of the year. We are busy planning this event. We do **require a lot of parent volunteers** in the evening. We usually have a lot of moms and dads that sign up together during this night. The event is only for students attending our campus in grades 4-8. It will be a fun evening full of games, prizes, and snacks. There is also an opportunity for high school students to volunteer.
<https://signup.com/go/UNQyPNx> (to volunteer)
<https://forms.gle/Ch691wFF922CxFFA> (sign up for the event)
6. **Bundt Cake Sale - April** We will be holding a “Nothing Bundt Cake” sale in April. They will be perfect gifts delivered just in time for **Mother’s Day**. Every day is mother’s day, so buy your cake and eat it. You deserve it.
7. **Staff & Teacher Appreciation week 1-5th May** - more information will come out on how you can help out or donate for this week.
8. **Parents Night Out - 6 May** - a night just for our adults. Attend as a couple or come on your own and just enjoy some time mingling with other parents. **This is open to parents from all our campuses.** Invite parents that you know and come together. You deserve a night out! More information will be coming.
9. **Volunteer Appreciation** - save the date for 12 June
10. **8th-grade Celebrations Coordinators** - Thank you to Lorraine Solimine, Patricia Vasquez, and Trisha Virga. They will be planning the 8th-grade breakfast and socials. They will be in contact with our 8th-grade parents. This is not a PTO event and we just facilitate the signup for coordinators.
11. **Monthly staff appreciation.** - **thank you** to the grades who have completed their monthly staff appreciation. We have received appreciation notes from the staff that they love and appreciate the treats they are placed weekly in the staff

lounge. **Schedule February (6th grade), March (5th grade), and April (4th grade).** <https://signup.com/go/PEUrbss> please select what you would like to donate. Donations are collected the first week of the month. Items may be dropped off with Joan in the office. Please mark it clearly for the PTO's attention.

Financial Update

1. **RaiseCraze** - We had a very successful fundraiser that raised \$24 000! Thank you for all your generous contributions. The majority of the funds will be used to purchase a climbing structure to expand our playground. It will be a wonderful addition to the playground also for our 3rd graders next year.
2. We have also allocated some of these funds to purchase **books** for each of the classrooms as well as for the library as well as our **student carnival** event. Teachers have already purchased books that are already being used by our students.
3. **Staff Christmas Donations** Thank you again for blessing all our teachers and staff with your very generous donations. It is greatly appreciated.

Volunteer Opportunities

1. <https://signup.com/go/PEUrbss> - Use this link to **see all** the volunteer opportunities.
2. Thank you to all who helped serve **Pizza and CFA** during the first semester. We are in **desperate need of volunteers to sign up specifically for pizza duty**. We need parents to sign up even if they just do it once. If you have never done this before, we always ensure someone seasoned is with you so you can learn how to serve the pizza and CFA. **Tue CFA & Thu Pizza -11.15am-12.15 pm**
3. **Wednesday Lunch Coverage** - *The teachers need you* to help supervise the students during lunchtime. Feel free to enjoy your lunch at the same time. This is **open to any parent** not just if your student is in 5th or 6th gr. **Each Wednesday from 12:05 - 12:25 pm**. This is an easy and fun way to see your student with their friends at lunchtime. The teachers are using this time to collaborate about their classes and how and what they are teaching together.

4. ***PTO Team for 2023/2024*** - Carolee, Lynette, Pam, and Laura are stepping down from the PTO at the end of this year. Nancy Peralta and Thelma Minnaar will continue to serve on the team. We have created a **nomination/interest form** - if you are interested in serving in a role and/or would like more information please complete the form so we can get in touch. Also, if you know of someone who you think would be a great addition to the PTO, **please nominate them**, so that we can discuss the possibilities with them. We would love to have a new team in place by April to get them started on the planning for next year.
<https://forms.gle/bBxesbVCXXBHNKv36>
5. In order for our community building, fundraising events, and to continue to support our students in staff, we need parents to step into the PTO roles. **No experience is necessary**, you just need the **willingness to serve your students and community**. **Tag a friend and sign up together**.

EC FOUNDATION

1. **Maura Burns** introduced herself and Tonnie Chen. Maura explained that the **Foundation is the fundraising arm of Eastern Christian School** responsible for raising “**Annual Funds**” that **benefit every child**, on every campus, every day by providing enhancements or covering specific expenses that are not covered by tuition.
2. Maura introduced her colleague **Tonnie Chen**. Tonnie reminded us that the **annual EC Auction Gala will be held on April 20, 6-9 pm** and that the **Auction Gala is EC’s largest fundraiser of the year!** The Auction Gala will kick off with a cocktail hour and Silent Auction where people can bid online for wonderful items and experiences. It is a fun-filled evening but the best part is that all proceeds go to benefit every child on every EC campus, especially, our **Fund-A-Need program**. The Fund-A-Need program will support our PTO to help us to complete the installation of our new playground equipment.
3. The Foundation is moving away from all the baskets for the Middle School and High School and would like each grade to sponsor an ‘experience’ or item. Each grade collects funds to go towards the purchasing of a Class Sponsored auction

item or experience. Let Tonnie know if you have any discounts or connections to retailers or experiential opportunities that we can use for the auction.

4. If you are **interested in volunteering with Auction Gala planning** or during the evening of the event, please let Tonnie know.

**tonniechen@easternchristian.org, 973.427.9294 x 7212 Office,
401.212.7799 Cell**

5. A document from the Foundation is attached to the agenda with more details.

Principal Update

1. **AMC** The American Mathematics Competition for 5th-8th grade students is scheduled for January 17th.
2. **Spelling Bee** - each year we hold a school-wide Spelling Bee for any interested students. The winner of the school-wide spelling bee moves on to participate in the North Jersey Spelling Bee against winners from other schools.
3. **Bible Bee** - On Tuesday, February 7, our students will compete against other Christian schools. Two students from each grade level will be selected to compete. Participants will be selected in January.
4. Any information for school events is updated on added to the school website and information is also in the weekly UE/MS Bulletin.
5. Meetings will be held with parents of 3rd and 4th-grade parents as well as with 8th-grade parents in the upcoming months.

Questions/Suggestions/Closing

The PTO thanked everyone who attended in person and online and the meeting was adjourned. The minutes will be made available on the PTO website.

Next Meeting September 2023

STAY CONNECTED

Website www.ecmspto.com, Facebook (ECMS PTO), Instagram (ecms_pto), E-mail mspto@easternchristian.org,