

PTO Meeting: March 14, 2023, Virtual (due to weather conditions)

Attendees:

Stephanie Barry
Dianne Caraviello
Francis McCall
Caity Castagna
Rebecca Peterson
Jayashree Mohandas
Katie Carbone
Cristina Addesa
Beth Leavitt
Danielle Solari
Colleen Pentland Lally
Sara Blais
Amy Hamilton
Carrie Wihbey
Katja Maravelias
Caroline Wilder

Diane Caraviello spoke about the program she created called Family to Family. Diane was a teacher at Bancroft for over 25 years and an Andover resident. She started Family to Family when her children were young.

The mission has been to help Bancroft students and families access school and community opportunities through communication, transportation and funding.

Parents, teachers, and town organizations all have been helping. Things they did in the past:

- Fun Fridays (after school activities at Bancroft)
- Summer Book Club
- Backpacks for kids
- Summer Camp (donations for Rec Park - Drop-in Playground and evolved to other camps as well)
- Kid to Kid program - Club at Andover High (Sophomores hang out with kids and do activities)
- Dance lessons
- Van to AHS Football game

Because Diane doesn't live or teach in town anymore (she is retired), she is looking to pass this over to someone who can take it on. She'd like to stay involved. She is making a manual to help others that is based on the calendar.

Caity asked how Diane is communicating with parents - she texts now. Before she would go over and see them. She would also send flyers to the Andover Housing Authority and they passed out to the neighborhoods. She would also hand out flyers on the bus line.

They currently have 2 Community nights - August (when we give out backpacks and discuss what they were interested in and to make help connections). **The other is March 22 - 5:30, Pizza will be served. Diane will send Stephanie the flyer. The YMCA and AYS will be there to help sign up for Summer Programs.**

Frank McCall suggested that there be a Family to Family committee at school to take it over. He also suggested that we make it clear to the teachers that there are resources for students. Frank also suggested that Diane explain the structure that other towns have to make this a "town" thing, rather than a Bancroft thing.

Sara suggested that we make sure to weave those in need into all activities we do.

Carrie introduced herself as the PTO representative for Family to Family
Carrie is working on a community fridge that lives behind Doherty and will need PTO help on managing/stocking. They will ask families to sign up to stock it once a month or once every other month.

Next Steps: This is an ongoing discussion about how to help Diane offload the program without missing a beat because it is so important to our community.

Katja spoke about the AHS project from town meeting last night.
K/1/2 kids will benefit from HS project so it's important for the Bancroft community to be involved. The PTO sent out a link to a survey that closes on 3/15 and will send it out again.
There is a Town meeting vote is a vote to be able to fund the next phase and there are displays and posters in the lobby of Bancroft.
Classroom parents can send out the information about where to find more information about school related issues.

Next steps: Residents should attend the Town Meeting to stay informed and participate in the vote.

Stephanie and Beth spoke about the Science Fair.
They thought it went really well - lots of enthusiasm - all 6 grade levels were represented.
It was smaller than last year but that was nice for the first year back. There was a feeling that now that the staff knows what it is and entails, they will promote it in class next year.

Amy gave an update on the Learning Labs.
226 kids are participating - almost half the school. It is one of the largest turn outs so far.
All has been going well with them this season.

Amy also spoke about the Wizard of Oz - Play
The group had one rehearsal so far. (Tuesday was canceled due to snow/early release)
This year is the condensed schedule and everyone is excited about it.

Stephanie and Beth spoke about Cultural Arts
Great response from school on all the programs so far.
Specifically this month the Women's History Month displays with activities are great.

Beth spoke about the Community Read Along
It will take place at the end of the month
A lot of guest readers will be in each class
Sign up went out - families can donate snacks
Next Steps: Send out reminder for donations

Stephanie spoke about the Variety Show
A parent has volunteered to run the show - Kelly Michaels.
We will need several volunteers to make it all happen at the Collins Center.
In the past, when you sign your child up, you were asked to sign up for volunteering for something and the PTO will employ that again this year.

Progressive Dinner
Danielle has not received a great response
In the past, we had 10-15 houses hosting
Next Steps: Send out another call for hosting to try and get the numbers up.
Suggestion: Should we send out a video explanation or show pictures of the past so that it's really clear what it is, especially for the younger grade parents who've never attended?

Spring Fling
Spring Fling is on 5.12.23
This is the school dance. We still need to pick a theme.

Fun Run
Katie/Kate are helping to run the Fun Run.
They are looking to have help from people who've done it in the past and suggest what worked/didn't work.

Spark/Wine Night are going to be combined on 3/29 this year. Next year we will plan Wine Night separately.

Beth spoke on a few things:
Bingo for Books will be taking place.
B fit Bruins in May - floor hockey, wellness
American Heart Association - \$16,991 - It's a record!!! With 2 weeks left
Family Survey - presentation prepared - can present that at the next PTO meeting
There was a question on what the School Council was. It is composed of parents, teachers and community rep (Patty Barrett) - meet 4 times per year to discuss ideas and issues.

