

**Montessori School of Manhattan Beach
Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Type	Monthly General Meeting
Objective	Update on progress; Planning for remainder of year
Date	5/21/2002
Location	Multipurpose Room, Peck Campus
Attendees	See attached attendance list

Meeting Minutes

Kay Everhart chaired the meeting.

Organization Update - Teacher Appreciation (Julie Schweitzer)

Teacher Appreciation week went well with 11 of the 13 classrooms participating the PTO sponsored Teacher Appreciation event. The other 2 classrooms did their own Teacher Appreciation event, so all classrooms were covered. There were relatively few problems, however, didn't anticipate special teachers or the child to teacher ratios different for each classroom which can be applied to lessons learned for next year. Teachers were given gift certificates to Murad for pedicures, manicures or parafin dips depending on money raised for each classroom. \$1471.21 was raised and the cost of the Murad gift certificates came to \$1517.25. The PTO paid the difference of \$46.04, however, Bell has collected an additional \$58 and when that is received there will be a net gain of \$12.

There will be a pot luck luncheon for the teachers on June 21, which is an In Service Day for the teachers. Many of the teachers work all day and into the night getting ready for the Summer Program. The Teacher Appreciation members will be contacted via email to coordinate.

An idea for next year is to have once a month have the Peck Multipurpose room reserved for an entire day where parents can volunteer to help a teacher prepare materials for a lesson or decorations for the classroom. A different classroom will be chosen each month.

Treasurers Report (Ann Mazuk)

There are 19 Founding Members and 13 Charter Members of the PTO. This has brought in \$680 in dues money for this year. After Teacher Appreciation and a deposit for the professional photographer for the Spring Sing are withdrawn, the total amount in the treasury is \$4643.46.

Organization Update – Fund Raising (Sandra Essex/Letitia Lau)

The near-term goal is to set up National Scrip and eScrip and get this going as soon as possible. Scrip is essentially a gift certificate. The PTO purchases Scrip at a discounted price and then sells it for face value. For instance, the PTO purchases a \$25 Ralph's gift certificate for \$24 and sells it to a parent for \$25, thus the PTO makes \$1 from the sale of that Scrip. eScrip works by registering your credit card and all purchases that are made with that credit card at participating eScrip vendors, the PTO will receive a percentage of that sale. The PTO will start selling National Scrip on Monday, June 3. Parents will be able to purchase Scrip for different stores. Initially, the PTO will have on-hand Ralph's scrip. On Monday's, the PTO will have a table to place orders or the parents can purchase Ralph's scrip on the spot. Non-Ralph's Scrip will be ready for pick-up the following Thursday. eScrip will be implemented after National Scrip. The disadvantage of eScrip is that there is a 3-4 month lag time before the PTO receives its money and there is an overhead charge.

The PTO will be hiring a professional videographer to tape the Spring Sing and tapes of each classroom will be available for purchase. This is primarily a service the PTO is providing rather than a fundraising event. The people in attendance at the PTO meeting were polled to see how much they would be willing to pay for such a tape. Several people said \$20, but most were willing to pay around \$14.95.

Discussed other fundraising options. There will be opportunities for people to donate directly or for specific items. The fundraising committee will report on all activities that they pursue and not just the ones that are implemented. For instance, the PTO had an opportunity to receive a grant to keep the pool open year round. However, the PTO did not receive a positive response from the school administration to pursue this opportunity.

Montessori Minute (Ms. Traci)

Ms. Traci gave a lesson on the broad stairs, a beginning sensorial lesson. A handout was also passed out that provided details on the objectives of the broad stair lesson. The broad stair develops spatial awareness and small muscle control and is similar to the Pink Tower. It's a lesson for 2.5 to 4 year olds. Several questions were asked by parents following the lesson.

Parent: How do you handle misuse of the materials?

Ms. Traci: If materials are misused, we ask the child to put the material away. Kids are free to do whatever they want with the materials unless they use it incorrectly. This teaches them to respect the materials.

Parent: When is fun enter into a classroom?

Ms. Traci: Lessons are fun. Everything in the classroom is appealing. For the children being able to choose what they want to do and the manipulation of objects, is fun. They are given the opportunity to do things in the classroom that they may not be otherwise allowed to at home.

Organization Update – Parent Education (Shara Montana)

A draft of Parent Education activities was handed out and Shara reviewed the handout and well received by those in attendance. There was an open forum with those in attendance of what they would like for Parent Education. One parent suggested that next to the daily sign-in sheet, the teacher post what the topics of the day are. Thus, the parent can reinforce what was learned that day with the child. If the parent does not know, it can be very difficult to reinforce and a monthly theme isn't enough to accomplish this. Suggestions on how to talk to your child about the day are questions like "Who was your partner today?". Every month there will be a Montessori Minute with a lesson from the teacher. Darlynn also suggested the PTO bring in a child psychologist, not necessarily one with a Montessori background, to discuss things about child behavior.

There is a class sponsored by the International Montessori Society August 10-11 that parents can attend. The cost is \$170 for early registration and \$200 after that. If interested, contact Shara for more information.

Website Update (Kay Everhart)

The goal is to have the website available is this summer. Carla Buck has been instrumental in putting together the layout and collecting the content for the site. The website will include reading lists, calendar, how to get involved, tips and a featured teacher spotlight.

New Committees (Kay Everhart)

There is a need for a two new committees.

- **Enrichment Committee:** This committee will be formed to augment the enrichment program for the children. Examples are bringing the aquarium to the classroom, guest speakers for kids, concerts, plays, skills inventory survey of parents, international day
- **Community Building:** This committee will be formed to have parents helping parents, group discounts to amusement parks/theater events, weekend t-ball, book/video swap, transition help, new parent mentors

For more information, look in newsletter or contact any board member.

Playgrounds (Kay Everhart)

We have a challenge ahead with respect to the playgrounds with both Peck and Bell campuses. Kay provided background information on the status of each of the playgrounds.

The Bell campus is in desperate need of an upgrade and it has American with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues. The current playground equipment is not ADA compliant and must be compliant by January 2003. The Bell campus is leased from the Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) and is on a year to year lease with 30 day advance notice. It has been leased from MBUSD for the past 22 years and there is no indication that they will be evicted anytime soon. The only obligation MBUSD has is to remove the current equipment. Thus, if the school wants playground equipment at Bell, the school needs to purchase and install the equipment. Currently, the playground has a sand surface, which is legally acceptable and inspected annually. Many parents dislike the sand and are concerned about sanitary issues. Feedback to the PTO is that Bell parents would like a rubber or tiled surface for the kids, however, this is very expensive (~\$30,000). The Bell campus has 72 students and 2 classrooms representing about 19% of the student population. The PTO is working with the school administration to layout what needs to be done, how much money will it cost, what will it get us, etc and to determine if this is something the PTO wants to get involved with. The PTO wants to make sure that if it does contribute, that it does so wisely. Kay is going to set up a meeting with interested Bell parents and discuss what their concerns are and make a recommendation to the school administration as to what is needed at Bell.

The Peck campus also has a challenge in that the Kindergarten and Transition classrooms play in a playground behind the church. The church is taking back that land to start construction on a new building. The playground will need to be relocated and new equipment to be purchased. Currently, the school and church are working with Manhattan Beach planning commissions regarding the Peck playground and the new church building. The PTO will work with the school as they are for the Bell campus to insure that if the PTO does contribute to this effort, that is done so wisely.

