



POMS E-



PTO NEWS



A SPECIAL WORD FROM OUR INTERIM PRINCIPAL *AMY SIMSON*

In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy." In our case, it is the measure of a school, of a community. During a time of transition in the school and district, how are we maintaining focus and continuity in the classroom? What do our students see and feel in the classroom and the school environment? It is a testament to the caliber of our faculty and staff that we

are able to continue pushing forward and maintaining our focus on strong academics and student centered culture without losing a step.

Pin Oak, under Mr. McDonough's watch, rose to one of the top middle schools, not just in the city or state, but the entire nation. While this was taking place, he guided us in creating an environment on our campus that exemplifies student-centered culture. By example, he taught us all, students and staff alike, how to be better leaders. While he will be sorely missed, we can take pride in knowing that we will all continue to build upon the great things

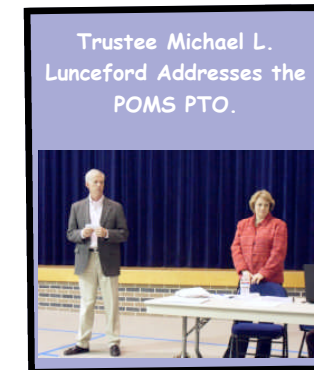
that Pin Oak is known for.

On a personal note, it is an honor and a privilege to serve as interim principal during this time of transition, and I want to thank the many individuals who have stepped forward to offer their support. Your confidence and kind words have been very much appreciated, and I look forward to working with you this Spring. Many thanks,

A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM EVENING WITH THE STARS

The fall event chairs Liz McGuffee and Angie Sigmon would like to thank all the fine arts teachers, staff, parents, students, administrators, and committee members for helping make this year's Evening with the Stars - Carnival Night such a huge success. Together the PTO was able to raise an amazing \$25,000 with \$10,000 going

to the fine arts teachers. All of the money raised will benefit all the students of Pin Oak in so many ways. We would like to thank the students for their entertaining performances and the parents for volunteering to run carnival booths, sell tickets, and sell food. Thank you to those who bided on our silent auction items and sociables. Mr. McDonough and all the

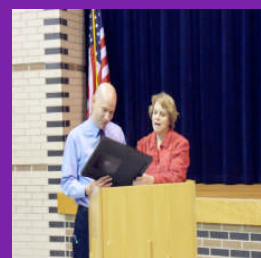


Trustee Michael L. Lunceford Addresses the POMS PTO.

Inside this issue:

Communication Survey	2
Sociables Gone Good	2
Around the Oak	3
Seeking PTO Board Members	3
Contact Information	4

POMS PTO Says Good-bye to Former Principal Michael McDonough



McDonough Presented with award from PTO

house principals said the attendance numbers made Pin Oak history. Over 1,200 people were in attendance!! It was truly a magical evening. If you missed out in the fun, not to worry...planning has already begun for next year's festivities. Liz and Angie would like to welcome the new chairs for the 2010 fall event: Linda Ashman and Tami Owen.

POMS PTO COMMUNICATION SURVEY

To determine what information and methods of communication are important to the parents of Pin Oak Middle School, the PTO drafted a brief survey via an online site called Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and emailed it to parents listed in the PTO Manager database. A total of 114 responses were received during the survey period in January 2010. The results of the survey indicated that parents: (1) want and receive adequate information regarding grades, particularly through Gradespeed (which is preferred); (2) want more consistent information (in terms of timeliness, clarity and consistency among the clusters and electives) about homework assignments and projects; and (3) want more information about school activities to increase participation and foster school spirit. Each of these issues can be addressed with the refinement of existing programs and technologies,

imposing little additional time to the faculty and staff and incurring little, if any, additional costs to the school or PTO.

Conclusions

Overall, the parents answering the survey believe that communication between Pin Oak and parents is good and that any deficiencies could be remedied with little effort or cost.

The most-discussed item parents want addressed is how to communicate Homework. It is done in various ways by the various Clusters or, in some cases, not at all. This must be changed. Parents prefer looking in ONE place for ALL of their child's homework. They want what is expected in the business world to be implemented in their school. They want it consistent and concise. The Clusters and Elective should have a uniform method of providing a weekly online newsletter/schedule that provides email

updates and attachments.

Second, parents can access grades online via Gradespeed and expect - as they should - that grades will be posted in a timely manner. This is being done most of the time but, as it does for students' assignments, the school should implement a grading policy for teachers that makes the expectations clear for everyone.

Finally, to build a Pin Oak community, the school needs to communicate and promote its Activities. Parents want to know about the athletic and artistic events, clubs and fundraisers. They want to participate. They want to discuss these things with their children. The success of any school is linked to parent involvement. By issuing a Principal's letter and placing the content of the morning announcements online, Pin Oak tells parents what the school and their kids are doing and allows them to be a part of it and support it. That is precisely the goal of all communication and each of the recommendations set forth here.

"Imagine that the school is a choir. It can have many voices, singing many parts, but they all need to be singing the same song in the same tempo." Paula Colman—VP PTO Communications



Almost 50 Pin Oak parents enjoyed queso and conversation on January 19th at the "Fiesta with the 3 Amigos" sociable held at the home of Roxanne and Charles van Ravenswaay. Michael McDonough, Amy Simson and Alberto Fernandez were the "principal" guests of honor at this fajita dinner hosted by the Van Ravenswaays, Alison and Chris Bell, Rita and Ron Graves, and Paula and Howard Colman.

Tickets to the 3 Amigos Sociable were purchased at the Evening with the Stars

SOCIABLES GONE GOOD

held at Pin Oak last November. The proceeds from the tickets were part of the event's fundraising; the host families paid the costs associated with the dinner itself. This is what makes sociables such a successful form of fundraising for the school. It is also a great way for parents to meet each other and have a good time.



AROUND



THE OAK

SCHOOL STORE:



Due to a request from parents, the school store is now selling royal blue baseball caps with Pin Oak and the Pin Oak Charger logo on them. These are for students to wear before/after school to show school pride or for parents to wear to support their child's athletic team. Get one now! They are only \$12 each.

DIRECTORY: The Pin Oak student directories are out and are on sale at the school store for \$5.00 each. They will be on sale until the end of the school year. Hurry before they run out!

B O X

The deadline for Box Tops for Education submission is February 25th. We are having a grade level contest again, with a coupon for a free pizza from Gugliani's as the prize.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

On February 28, 2010 Continental Airlines will take 21 Pin Oak MS 8th grade students to Washington, D.C., for a one-day visit to the Air and Space Museum to commemorate the first African American pilot. They were selected through submitted essays, six from each house were selected and some special education students.

TOPS:

THE PRINCIPAL SEARCH

According to Michael Lunsford, HISD Trustee District 5, the plan in the next two weeks is to gather information from parents, teachers and student to select a Principal Selection Committee. Dr. Grier will prescreen candidates for the committee to interview. Executive Principals will compete with all other Principal candidates since their jobs. For Principal Selection committee will still work with the existing Regional Superintendent and Executive Principal for our district for May 2010 expected target.

TRANSITION TIMES . . . THE POMS NEEDS YOUR HELP

As you may be aware, this year has seen many changes for our beloved Pin Oak Middle School. The year started off with our Magnet Coordinator Rita Graves moving on to become the principal of Roberts Elementary School. February 1, 2010 marked the end of an era when Mr. McDonough officially moved on as principle of Westside High School. As parents of middle school students we understand that transition can be tough. That is why it is so important that we make those transitions as smoothly as possible and have the best people to lead those transitions. The PTO is in transition as well and is looking for the next group of leaders to assume the helm and help continue the great traditions here at Pin Oak Middle School. The Board is currently taking nominations for all of the positions listed on Page 4 of this newsletter.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN THE BOARD?

I am glad that you asked. Research shows that when families are involved, a child is more likely to get higher grades, more likely to graduate, and go on to college. As a member of the Board you have direct access to information that goes on at the school on a daily basis. As a Board member you will typically learn information regarding the school before anyone else does and are "the first in line" to determine how to best deal with the situation. It also allows you an opportunity to bond with other parents who can help you be a better advocate for your child in the long run.

I WORK, I DON'T HAVE TIME!

Many of us on the board like you are working parents. We are every day people who are looking to ensure that our children get the best education has to offer. Many positions are shared posi-

tions between volunteers and several positions allow you to use the talents that you use every day to help the school.

I WAS A PART OF THE PTO AND I WAS BURNED OUT!

At POMS we are men and women working together toward a common goal. That goal simply stated is creating a better school and better educational experience for our children. We strive to create an atmosphere where teachers, administrators and support staff can do their best work—and so can our children. However, there is so much more that can be done and we need your help. There is a saying that "many hands make light work." That is so true and is why we need you to add your hands to the PTO. We want Pin Oak to continue on the path of greatness and we need your help to do it. Are you ready to take on the transition?

GET NOMINATED: FIND A POSITION THAT FITS. GO TO PAGE 4 OF THIS NEWSLETTER AND LET US KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO SERVE AND BE NOMINATED. ALL POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT BOARD TERM. CONTACT PAULA COLMAN AT p.colman@mac.com FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BE NOMINATED AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.pinoakpto.org!

Pin Oak Middle School

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This newsletter is brought to you by the POMS PTO. The PTO is a group of parent volunteers seeking to serve the needs of Pin Oak Middle School. If you are interested in volunteering or want to know other ways you can help POMS continue to be a successful middle school please contact us via e-mail:

PTO President: president@pinoakpto.org

PTO Treasurer: treasurer@pinoakpto.org

PTO Website Coordinator: webmaster@pinoakpto.org

Newsletter Chair: deltalaw98@yahoo.com

Membership Chair: membership@pinoakpto.org

Publicity Chair: publicity@pinoakpto.org

Volunteer Coordinator: volunteers@pinoakpto.org

School Store: pinoakschoolstore@gmail.com

Like to tweet? Keep up with the PTO through our new twitter site:

<http://twitter.com/pinoakpto>

- President** Ann Nichols
- VP 1 Communication** Paula Colman
- VP 2 Activities** Becky Kringel
- VP 3 Development** Kim Reider
- Secretary** Maria Perez
- Treasurer** Shahara Wright
- Parliamentarian** Jay Aiyer
- Historian** Sharyn Baker
- Volunteer Coordinators**
- Mimi Branham & Laura Tullier
- VP 1 Chair Website**
- Christine Wilson
- VP 1 Chair Newsletter**
- Shahara Wright
- VP 1 Chair Publicity**
- Andria Blitzer & Sharon Veldman
- VP 1 Chair Membership**
- Carrie Carlson
- VP 1 Chair Orientation** OPEN
- VP 1 Chair Student Directory**
- Ruthie Piller

VP 2 Chair Fall Event

Angela Sigmon

VP 2 Chair 8th Grade Promotion

- Renee Bowling & Lisa Somera

VP 2 Chair Open House

- Becky St. Denis & Ann Marie Falloure

VP 2 Chairs Staff Appreciation

- Cindy Stafford & Elizabeth Sanford

VP 3 Chairs Magnet Week

- Kathy Vingoe and Mary Beth Yard

VP 3 Chairs School Store:

School Store Byers

- Kathy Vingo & Mary Beth Yard

School Store Uniforms

- Lisa Lehmann & Candy Hanis

Asst. Treas. School Store

- Dana Abramczyk

School Store Vol. Cord

Lisa Tullier

VP 3 Chair Pin Oak Idol

- Latonya Ellerbee

VP 3 Chair Retail Partnerships

Renee Bowling

VP 3 Chair Fun Food Fridays

OPEN

This Newsletter only gives you a glimpse of what the PTO does on a daily basis for POMS. As you can see we do a lot! By joining the PTO you will be a part of your child's education! To show your support for our school and to help ensure a successful and positive year for all our students please take a moment and join the POMS PTO.