

WALTON ELEMENTARY PAC
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT
School Year of 2012/2013
June 20th, 2013-06-16

It is my duty and privilege to report back to all of the PAC members on our activities in a very successful and enjoyable school year. In 2012/2013, Walton PAC's working sector, those parents who took on an office on the executive or served the community in any of our committees or as a volunteer, was larger than ever – not just because our school continues to grow with the bilingual program a strong magnet, but also because a larger percentage of parents wanted to contribute to a PAC working so well for Walton. They are too numerous to mention by name, but I want to extend the thanks of all families to our hard-working volunteer parents for offering up their time, commitment and expertise all year. Together, we made a big and positive difference. You are a truly wonderful group of people, and I feel very lucky to have served as your president.

Communication

The previous school year was fraught with the effects of the teachers' strike, but we were able to profit from our experience in making parent-to-parent communications more effective and largely paper-free. We all are really indebted to our Classroom Liaison Coordinator Katie Tong, who has been just marvellous during the past years getting our e-mail communication network up and running. All our thanks go out to the twenty parents who served as Classroom Liaisons this year, fanned out PAC communications and helped getting messages from the teachers to the parents. Walton Elementary is showing great leadership where our communication system is concerned; we are well ahead of most schools here!

Craig Woods and Joanna Kovats were our representatives to the District Parent Advisory Council, doubling as Parental Education officers, and on many occasions what they learned at DPAC meetings was very helpful to this PAC. All our activities are continually communicated to the parents by the minutes of our meetings, done beautifully by Secretary Anna Richter, and by our newsletters, appearing six times a year, compiled by Newsletter Editor Serene Ho. Minutes, Treasurer's reports and newsletters go out via e-mail to the entire mailing list. The newsletters are also posted on the school website.

Multicultural Activities

One of our main efforts in 2012/23 was to strengthen our effort in reaching out to Walton families speaking other languages, so that we might include everyone into our truly multicultural community. It was our first year to elect a Multicultural

Liaison, and I want to thank Grace Chan especially, for taking on a new office and doing a great job of filling it with meaning. We had six volunteers serving Walton community as Chinese, Korean, Farsi, Spanish and Russian liaison parents all year - thank you Sabrina, Diane, Azita, Parisa, Monica and Valentyna! During the Welcome Back Coffee on September 4th, organized by our Social Coordinator Ingrid Doerksen, we introduced the liaison volunteers to parents and informed them and the staff of the existence of assistance in five languages. It was helpful to some new members of our community to have a speaker of their language available for intake interviews and meetings with teachers.

Grace organized and hosted a very successful Newcomers' Information Night in November 2012. The evening was held in English, Mandarin, Korean and Farsi. More than forty Walton families had the opportunity to get informed about the Canadian school system and the PAC. We had the support of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the Settlement in Schools worker from School District 43, Ms Funes.

Thanks to our hard-working translators, we continue to be able to post translations of our PAC newsletters on the school website and offer translations of important PAC messages over the Chinese, Korean and Farsi mailing lists. Thank you SeungHee, Joy and Parisa!

We will continue our efforts in this direction next year under the leadership of Craig Woods. Efforts are under way to communicate the existence of the multicultural service system to new Walton families. We especially hope to be more helpful assisting with parent-teacher-communication in other languages and to strengthen feedback to and participation with the PAC. To better serve the Chinese community at our school, which is the largest ethnic group at Walton, Amy Shang has volunteered to assist Sabrina Wang as a second Chinese Liaison parent next year. Thanks, Amy!

After School Programs

Another new venture of Walton PAC this year was the launch of an After School Programs option. This, too, was a new challenge, and I would like to thank Connie Reed and Nicola Ho for all their organizing work. Walton students had an opportunity of joining a variety of classes in fall, spring and summer, including Yoga, Martial Arts, Lego Building, Drama, Science, Running Club, Golf, Fibre Arts and Mandarin. Most of the courses offered were hugely popular; especially Lego and Science had long waiting lists; and students seemed to enjoy the chance of doing something different after school.

We plan to continue offering three terms of after school learning and fun opportunities to Walton families next year - an information flyer on the fall term will go out in August, with registration starting on the 21st of that month. As some of the companies donated part of their profit back to Walton PAC, we made a round profit of \$900 off those programs this year, although our main goal was not fundraising, but providing extra educational benefit. The PAC has

decided to donate this money towards bursaries, which will give students who require them a chance to participate in the after school programs.

Hot Lunch

Our hot lunch coordinators Connie Wong and Diane Kan-Lee organized a total of ten Tuesday Hot Lunch Fundraisers between September 2012 and June 2013. Thank you, ladies, for your expertise. Our thanks also go out to all the parent volunteers who came in to receive food deliveries, set up, serve food, count money, clean up and wash trays during the year! Regular hot lunches, which now have to be conforming to the healthy eating regulations for elementary students in SD43, have been very popular and successful community events. The students enjoy carrying their lunches to the classrooms on our cafeteria trays, and parents enjoy not having to fill lunch boxes! The PAC made slightly under \$5,000 this year on Hot Lunches, with an additional \$600 payback from The Lunch Lady, the company that continues to service our school with pre-paid lunches on Mondays.

We will continue offering Hot Lunches to the community on a regular basis next year, and plan to up their number to twelve events. Pizza seems to be far the most popular choice of entree, but we may try out other options, using pre-paid ordering via PayPal.

Health and Safety

The parents continue to monitor traffic safety during drop-off and pick-up around the school premises. Thank you to our traffic safety volunteers who came out punctually in all kinds of weather to help with the flow of traffic through the drop-off lane and with parents and students crossing Walton Avenue safely. Thank you, Amanda Baker, for the donation of a dozen high visibility vests and traffic cones to the PAC.

The PAC last year started an emergency preparedness funds. A contribution of \$15 per student, collected once in their Walton career, will enable us to keep enough food, drinking water and other supplies in the shed behind the school to use for students and staff in case of an earthquake or other disaster. We have switched to using bottled water for emergency supplies, that we can replace with the water bought for hot lunch, so we will not have to waste PAC funds on throw-away water pouches any longer. Thank you, Melissa Fong, for serving as our Health and Safety Coordinator this year.

In cooperation with the administration, parents declared Walton Elementary a food-treat-free zone, in order to protect the rising number of students with special dietary needs.

After some problems with vandalism on the premises during the summer months, we tried to alert our neighbours to the problem and hope for their cooperation in calling the police to Walton.

The PAC hosted three workshops on sexual education for students and their parents in October, with Dr. Wiebe from Saleema Noon. We had very positive feedback from parents on this educational opportunity.

Fundraising

We are greatly indebted to our Fundraising Coordinators Gail Harrop and Melanie Lee for all their hard work during this year. They are such pros, and without their commitment, Walton PAC would only be able to do a fraction of our activities for the students' education and welfare. During this past year they organized the Value/Entertainment coupon book sale, three rounds of gift cards sales, two rounds of coffee sales, the bake sale during the Christmas concerts, a total of six family movie nights and a Zumba night, plus the concession on Sports Day.

I am proud to state that during the year of 2012/13 the entire Walton PAC managed to raise a total of just over \$16,000 from all of our fundraising activities, the ones mentioned in this paragraph and other efforts, such as hot lunches. That was almost double the amount we received from the governmental Gaming Grant this year (\$8,100).

Main Disbursements

The largest sum spent this year out of the PAC's available funds was the purchase of a smart board for \$4,090. Parents were able to admire the amazing possibilities of this technology in Mrs. Wegrich's classroom during the November PAC meeting.

We supported the teachers with \$3,852, reimbursing them for supplies they bought for use in their classrooms out of their own pockets.

Walton PAC donated \$2,000 towards the school t-shirts all children received in September and paid over \$4,400 for several performances brought to Walton (critters show in opening week, Flyin' Bob, opera, Tapco).

We were able to support field trips Walton students went on by paying for the bus transportation expenses. This covered the pumpkin patch field trip of the kindergartners and grade ones, the Space Centre field trip of the grade two and threes and the skating field trip of the grade four and fives, plus the whole school's going to see the anti-bullying drama at Terry Fox Secondary in April. The total expenses were just over \$ 4,100 (not all bills are in yet), a large portion of which we were able to take out of the Gaming Grant money, which is restricted in use.

The PAC also footed the expenses for the grade five students' celebratory grad day pool visit and lunch, around \$600.

And we bought a new refrigerator for the PAC kitchen for \$650 - we needed a place to store food for hot lunches, and the old unit was unreliable, leaking and rusty.

Smaller disbursements included gifts to staff members at the occasion of retirement or leaving Walton and new babies born and support of our Running Club, organized by mom Angela Plagemann. Not mentioned are small sums and fundraising expenses. Details of our financial transactions may be got from the Treasurer's report attached to the June meeting minutes.

I want to thank our wonderful Treasurer Rod Comrie for the thorough and totally reliable job he does for Walton PAC - this is a great person to have your back and wallet as treasurer.

Other Activities

Walton families donated three used computer tablets to the PAC this year for the use of the Student Service staff assisting special needs students with their maths and reading skills. Thank you, Rick de Courtney and Justin Kovats! We also received \$560 in donations to the PAC from families in our community this year. Thank you for your generous financial support.

We have started to recycle containers from the students' snacks and lunches with a program sponsored by Encorp. The students collected more than \$300 worth of refundable containers plus a large number of recyclable materials since January. Thanks to Mrs. St.Pierre for her support and leadership and to moms Misun, Diane, Karen, Dorothy, Julie, Parisa and Monica for their help with the washing, sorting and transporting of the containers. The money will go back to Walton Elementary School.

We supported the Terry Fox Secondary students in December, when they were selling pink t-shirts to fundraise for their anti-bullying drama "The Bullying Games". Our pink shirt order was the third largest in the school district, so we got to see the drama for free. Thanks to all supporters and to vice principal Mrs. McMeiken for her hard work with this effort.

Thank You!

My heartfelt thanks go out to Sandra Meister and Kate McMeiken for their support of the PAC this year - you are great people. Thank you, Debbie Gradiner, most effective and organized of all school secretaries ever, for knowing the answer to all the questions and for copying and distributing work. Thanks to the wonderful Walton staff for their unfailing support and encouragement. We are so lucky to have you educate our kids. Special thanks to afternoon custodian Cary for helping us out with whatever we were doing at Walton after hours and never forgetting to unlock the door in time. Extra thanks for best child-minder ever, Samantha Loo, for keeping our kids safe during meetings and Newcomers' Night.

Most of all, I want to thank the parents of Walton Elementary students for their dedication, great sense of humour and unfailing helpfulness - PAC members,

you are lovely people, and it is a joy and a privilege to work for this community. And thanks to the Walton students: You are (most of the time) model young citizens and great friends who warm my heart every morning.

Cordially yours,
Stefanie Putzhammer, President Walton PAC