

**Takoma Park Middle School Parent Teacher Association**  
**Minutes of September 8, 2015 - General Membership Meeting**  
**TPMS Cafeteria 7:00 – 8:30 pm**

**People in attendance:**

Shruti Bhatnagar, President  
Lisa Finkelstein, Vice President  
David Groberg, Treasurer  
Frances Cook, Secretary  
Mary Hanisco, Secretary  
Alicia Deeny, Principal  
Carlyn Patterson-Breese, Vice Principal  
Andrew Partan  
Katya Partan  
Bonnie Grimm  
Julie Grosman  
Mariama Orange  
Rose Piard  
Kaitlyn Wannall  
Marla Nix  
Jenny Wagner  
Lia Hone  
Julie Drizin  
E.Y. Song  
Nereyda Dunn  
Mikal Williams  
Isabelle Johnson  
Lynn Seel  
Alice Weiss  
Ayo Atterberry  
Jennifer Villa  
Lorgi Charkoudian  
Heidi Hessler  
Anna Nabity

General membership meeting was called to order by Shruti Bhatnagar, PTA President, at 7 pm. Shruti opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and introducing Ms. Deeny, TPMS Principal, and Ms. Carlyn Patterson-Breese, Vice Principal, then asked all officers and everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. The other members of this year's PTA executive board introduced themselves. Officers in attendance: Lisa Finkelstein, Vice President; David Groberg, Treasurer; and Mary Hanisco ,followed by introductions from all in attendance. Recording Secretary. Correspondence Secretary Frances Cook arrived later during the meeting.

**Reading of Mission of PTA** Mariama Orange, this year's representative to the NAACP, was introduced by the PTA President and read the PTA's mission statement.

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**Agenda Addenda** PTA President, Shruti asked members to review the agenda , propose any changes if needed before proceeding to vote. Parents requested that three items be added to the agenda: PE protocols for exercise and water breaks on hot days; students and locker issues; and the issue of late lunches and snack availability for students. Alice Weiss moved to add these items and Katya Partan seconded. Agenda was adopted as ammended.

**PTA Updates** Shruti Bhatnagar shared that the PTA officers are excited to start the school year and work with the school community to support the students and needs at TPMS. She urged parents to support the PTA by becoming a member and reported that the PTA grew by 90% the previous year and was recognized by the Council and awarded a certificate of recognition by Maryland State PTA at the 100th Annual MD PTA convention in July. She also asked that parents support the fundraising initiatives and mentioned the need for someone to coordinate the annual "Blue Devil" fundraising drive. Shruti urged parents to volunteer and said there would be many volunteer opportunities, which the PTA would keep the community apprised of. Shruti advertised that the position of one Vice President was open and for anyone interested to contact her. She said the PTA would have a table at Back to School Night the following day with all forms and information packets. She then moved on to introduce the guest for the evening, Lucy Neher from Takoma Park Safe Routes to School.

**Safe Routes to School** Lucy Neher, coordinator of the Safe Routes to School initiative, described the program. Established in 2007 and funded by a federal grant, it encourages safe walking/biking/scootering/skateboarding. It provides infrastructure improvements such as wider sidewalks and bike racks, and also provides programming like crosswalk simulations and bike rodeos. It sponsors the Takoma Park 5K race, funds from which go back to TPMS and other other participating schools. Lucy presented a \$5K check to the PTA for this year's race. The only stipulation is that the PTA use half the proceeds on health/wellness/fitness initiatives. Lucy encouraged people to volunteer for the 5K race and school run club, and to let her know if students need helmets, as she has many to give away. Marla Nix, PTA Committee Chair for SRTS events also said a few words, encouraged parents to volunteer on the committee and support all SRTS events during the school year.

**Officer Reports, Committee Chairs and New Business**

- Lisa Finkelstein, PTA Vice President, reported on behalf of the Mini grants committee to share that applications are available for minigrants, which can be used by staff or parents for student enrichment projects that total \$300 or less. She encouraged parents to sign up their Giant cards so the school will get rewards (card sign-ups must be reviewed annually) and to make purchases at Amazon through the school's unique link. Finally, she mentioned Books and Basketball, one of the PTA's biggest events and fundraisers. It will take place on Feb 19 and 20, and needs volunteers.
- David Groberg, PTA Treasurer, reported on the current status of PTA finances. He said that this year's budget was approved last May to allow PTA to spend money during summer but also needs approval again at the start of the new school year. Shruti asked people to take a few minutes to review the budget and ask any questions before voting on it. A couple of questions came up regrading line items that showed changes in amount since last year like

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the 6th grade picnic, music department and carryover amount. David explained that in general the PTA budgets more than it spends, and constantly re-adjusts as necessary. He mentioned that though last year's Blue Devil appeal brought in less money than budgeted and the 5K brought in \$1500 more compared to previous years.

A question on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade picnic budget led to discussion among staff and parents about the event, which was organized differently than last year and received less funding. Consensus was that the budgeted amount of money and food was sufficient, but the logistics of the event needs to improve. The event was not as fun and interactive as an outdoor picnic has been in previous years due to long lines of people waiting for food in the cafeteria, so we need to make changes next year to avoid that.

Motion to approve budget as is was made by Lisa Hone and seconded by Lorig Charkoudian, and approved by voice vote.

- Heidi Hessler, Staff Appreciation Chair, described staff appreciation events and told parents food contributions will be needed and signups will be available.

**Principal's Report**

Ms. Deeny reported a number of statistics related to school enrollment growth and academic achievement. She reported bathroom upgrades made over the summer. She then addressed the agenda items added to the agenda. She described the PE program and the county's weather/exertion guidelines; explained how kids can get help if they can't open their lockers, and confirmed that kids who have late lunch can have snacks in class.

She also reported on a planned feasibility study for an addition to the school, giving dates of upcoming meetings.

**NAACP Report** Mariama Orange, new NAACP rep, reported on NAACP efforts to work with schools and PTAs to better involve students of color in schools and to better allocate resources. She gave dates of upcoming meetings and events and said volunteers would be needed for a choice study.

**Closing remarks:** PTA President, Shruti Bhatnagar thanked everyone for attending the meeting and their input on all discussions. She encouraged everyone to attend other meetings in the school year and work with the PTA to support the students & needs at TPMS.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted & Signed By:

Mary Hanisco, Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Sept 9, 2015

Final Minutes Approved by the PTA President:

Shruti Bhatnagar: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Sept 11, 2015