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# Ashburton PTA Insider

## PTA President's Update

Hello and Welcome back to school to everyone!

I hope you all had a great summer and are now ready for another great year at Ashburton. This summer has been a busy one, with meetings, organizing, and planning for the upcoming school year. We hope everyone has time to participate in some event or activity at school during this school year. This newsletter will be longer than some, so that I can provide information for new families. Even with that said, I am sure I might forget something, so if I do, please let me know so I can get the information out there to everyone. You know, sometimes when we have been at a place for some time, we take things for granted and others don't always know what we are talking about, so I will try to address that in this newsletter, and during this year. If anyone ever has any suggestions or questions, please feel free to email a board member. In addition, once you join the PTA your email address will be added to the listserv, which sends out information regularly. There is also a PTA Wiki site which has been updated and can be accessed at [www.ashburton.wetpaint.com](http://www.ashburton.wetpaint.com). I spent several hours with Lien-Anh Van Wagener this summer becoming more familiar with the site and how to update it with information. I have added several forms and updated the calendar with important dates and events for this school year. Veronica Walgamotte also spent time with Lien-Anh and has added a Google calendar to the site. In addition, we will post the minutes from the PTA meetings on the PTA page of the school site and on the wiki this year. I am honestly not sure why that fell by the wayside last year but we will work on that this year for sure.



Let me start off by telling everyone about a change to the PTA board. Tracy Kalik resigned as Co-Administrative Vice President. We want to thank her for all of her time and energy and dedication to Ashburton over the past three years and also for all of the work her husband Greg did by her side. Her presence will definitely be missed and we hope all of the Kaliks continue to participate in Ashburton events! So, with Tracy leaving, the board, per the bylaws, unanimously appointed Wendy Calhoun to step in and assist Kathy Rose as Co-Administrative Vice President. We are grateful Wendy was willing to take on the job and know that her energy and insight will be a great addition to this year's PTA Board....thank you Wendy!

We would also like to thank the Morris family, whose son Zachary, a first grader at Ashburton, passed away last December. Zachary loved Ashburton and also loved books. The Morris family has donated many boxes of books from Zachary's personal collection to the school media center, so that his love of reading and books can be shared by future generations of Ashburton students. You may also notice several new rocking chairs in the media center, which were donated by the family, in Zachary's memory. So when you have a moment to sit in one of the rocking chairs, and look out the window with a book in your hand, enjoy the moment for Zachary.

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September 2009

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### Happenings Around Ashburton:

- ☺ PTA Meeting—10/6  
7pm
- ☺ Walk to School—10/7  
8:15 am Davis Library
- ☺ Ashburton Open House 10/12 9am—12pm
- ☺ Dine Out Night at California Pizza Kitchen (Montgomery Mall) - 10/13 5pm—closing
- ☺ No School—10/16
- ☺ Picture Days—10/21 to 10/22
- ☺ Family Fall Festival—10/23 6:30—8:30 pm
- ☺ Davis Library Night—10/27
- ☺ Halloween Parade and class parties—10/30 1:45—2:45pm
- ☺ Professional Day—No School—11/2
- ☺ PTA Meeting—11/3 6:30 pm, Bullying, children are welcome
- ☺ Fall Book Fair—11/9 to 11/13

## President's Update (cont'd)

A few words on school events and fundraisers: Last year was a huge year for the PTA in terms of attendance and bringing in money from a variety of events and fundraisers. We are very mindful of the fact that in today's economy, things are tight for many of us and we now may have to think differently about how we spend our money. Please know, that if your child wants to participate in **any** event at Ashburton, whether it be a field trip, Skate Night, Fall Festival, Spring Fling, International Festival, Camp Ashburton, or an after school activity that is organized by the PTA, we, the PTA have set aside scholarship money for that purpose. We know this information is confidential, so if you need to take advantage of this, please contact Andrea Gillespie, the school guidance counselor, at [Andrea\\_S\\_Gillespie@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Andrea_S_Gillespie@mcpsmd.org), and she will be able to help you, and your family.

It was great to see so many families at the Back to School picnic on September 11<sup>th</sup>. I think that I spent hours on the phone with Ms. Eroh, PTA board members, Armand's, and Carmen's trying to evaluate the weather. Not to mention checking weather.com and accuweather.com. We were on, we were off, we were on the black top, it stopped raining, we were going outside, it started raining, we were inside...wow I was dizzy.

But, in the end we were able to hold an abbreviated indoor picnic. I would like to thank the students, who behaved so well, with limited space and no outdoor play activity. I would like to thank our amazing Building Services staff for accommodating our move indoors, when they had to be ready for another group at 7:30! Thank you so much. And to Kathy, Wendy, and Mike for selling Spiritwear, and to Jared, Evan, Naomi, and Thomas for helping to move things back and forth!

Skate Night on the 26<sup>th</sup> was a huge success again. The rain did not keep anyone away. We had a great turn out, even though it was a three day weekend, and tons of folks registered at the door! Since skate night last Saturday, I have received inquiries as to when our next skate night will take place. Since we had two skate nights last year, we are planning for the same this year. I will be contacting the ice rink this week to find a date, sometime between February and April that will work with the Ashburton calendar, MCPS calendar, and the rink's calendar. Once I have a date for the second skate night for this school year, I will let you know so that you can mark your calendars.

Since Dine Out nights have been such a success over the past two years, they will continue this year as well. We will do these monthly at a variety of restaurants in the general Ashburton vicinity. We welcome you all to attend, whenever it suites your schedules, or if you just want to get out of the kitchen.

We have raised a great deal of money dining out monthly, with Sally Foster, at school events, with some of the grocery store programs, through the Caps Cares Clicks to Win program last year, and with other activities and have been able to allocate money for Ashburton in many areas. Let me tell you some of the places where we have been able to use these funds.

1. We have set aside money for the purchase of new computers in the next year or two.
2. You may have noticed the school supply list looked different this year. Parents can no longer be asked to pay the \$5 or \$6 for the Scholastic or Time magazines that teachers use in the classrooms. The PTA has allotted money to pay for these magazines **for the entire school for the next three school years**. At the end of that three year period, we can revisit the issue and determine whether funds are available for that in the future.
3. Scholarships for students to participate in school events and/or to help families in need.
4. We have partnered with a sister school Veirs Mill Elementary School, which is located in the Silver Spring/Wheaton area. We researched elementary schools in our quad cluster to see where there was a school in need of a partnership. I have communicated with the administration and PTA of the school, and they will let us know where their needs are, so we can help them this year. We will give you more information as we are informed.
5. We have purchased the benches and tables that you see on the playground and the courtyard and will purchase another bench soon.
6. Last year, we provided teachers with gift cards to Target, to help reimburse them for purchases of classroom supplies again this year.
7. We have assisted the school in being able to compensate teachers who sponsor the Wednesday afternoon clubs that are offered for several months of the school year.
8. We will be planting a tree and purchasing a brick paver, in memory of Zachary Morris.

Join us for  
**DINE OUT NIGHT at  
California Pizza Kitchen  
on 10/13**

## President's Update (cont'd)

9. Last year with our International Festival and Spring Fling, we began identifying an organization and some part of the money brought in, was donated to a charity. We want to continue this tradition this year, for the three main events, Fall Festival, International Festival, and Spring Fling. As these events get closer, and we begin advertising them, we will give you more information about the details. If you have any thoughts or suggestions of worthy charities, please send me an email.
10. We donated some of the money raised at the book fairs to the Media Center to purchase more books.
11. Upon approval of this year's PTA budget we will again fund teacher grants to help teachers with the purchase of things they need for their classrooms that they often purchase with their own money.

I am sure there are things that I have totally forgotten to mention here. We will continue to evaluate areas of need at Ashburton and in our community to see where we can contribute as the school year progresses. And, as always, we are open to your suggestions.

There have been many flyers sent home in the first few days of school. We hope you have paid attention to them all. We know the volume has been higher than normal. Trust me when I say I have spent many hours copying and sorting flyers this summer. But, sharing information is important. We will also try to send out the flyers on the listserv and post them on the wiki site. If you are wondering about the flyers sent home, they were related to topics such as PTA Membership, general fundraising letter, Back to School Picnic (9/11), Five Below Fundraiser (8/28-9/4), Dine Out at Ledos (9/2), Sally Foster and Entertainment Books, grocery store cards (Giant, Safeway, and Harris Teeter), Skate Night Registration (9/26), and after school activities.

Remember we have monthly PTA meetings, usually on the first Tuesday of the month (sometimes the first Wednesday). We always have an agenda, so if there is a topic you want to discuss, please email me ahead of time to see if there is room on the agenda. We attempt to keep the meetings to one hour. And, of course, Ms. Eroh and Ms. Cino have an open door policy and are always willing to meet with parents.

If you ever have any ideas or suggestions that are appropriate for the PTA, please contact one of the board members below. Communication and information about what is going on at school is useful to us all. The PTA has a listserv for members that sends out numerous emails every week, and there is also a wiki site with information as well. If you have questions about the listserv contact Rachel Yang. If you have questions about the wiki site contact Lien-Anh Van Wagener.

This year's PTA board members can be contacted at the following email addresses or phone numbers:

Amy Cohen		
Kathy Rose		
Wendy Calhoun		
Ellie Damo		
Christine Furman		
Veronica Walgamotte		

Feel free to contact any of us with your input and suggestions. We are always open to suggestions and feedback and have used your thoughts to modify, change, eliminate, and add to our events and activities at school this year. We hope you all enjoy a great school year at Ashburton Elementary School!

With Warm Regards,

*Amy*



## 2nd Parent/Teacher Softball Game was Great Fun!

Veni, Vidi, Vici. Parents saw, came, and once again conquered the Ashburton teachers at the second parent/teacher softball game of 2009. A whopping 20 runs for the parents and 11 hard fought runs for the teachers rounded out the afternoon's festivities. However, it wasn't the final score that mattered so much, it never really does, it was more the pure, unadulterated fun in watching our teachers try and maintain any sense of decorum under the kind, tender, yet watchful eye of Ms. Eroh. As the parents kept the runs coming inning after inning, the mutual yearning for good play and fun gave way to a more nuanced sense from the teachers that said, "Another nice hit there, by the way, your child will be in class Tuesday right? OK then." All in all, a perfect game, perfect day, and an event that we all know makes Ashburton the perfect place for our kids to be! A huge thanks to Scott Davids for organizing the game and to Bill Trombley for this recap.



## The PTA is on Facebook and Twitter!

twitter



Are you on Facebook or Twitter? If yes, then become a "fan" of the Ashburton PTA on Facebook (search for "Ashburton PTA" on Facebook to find us) or "follow" us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/AshburtonPTA>). We are using these social networking sites as just another way to push information out to parents. We welcome your feedback on how we can improve communications on and off-line.

facebook

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Ashburton PTA Info!**

[ashburton.wetpaint.com](http://ashburton.wetpaint.com)

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If you have content suggestions for future issues of the newsletter, contact Lien-Anh Van Wagener.