



# PTO Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2020

*The PTO mission is to support the educational experience at TJHS and to foster a stronger school community for students, parents and staff.*

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**PTO Board Members in attendance:** Brooke Bolinske, Wassila Hamitouche, Karla Henke, Megan Perkins, Eileen Robinson, Janet Willson, Krista Zizzo

**Total attendance:** 25

## 6:00 pm Welcome

- Eileen Robinson, PTO President, welcomed Board members and parents in attendance. The meeting was held virtually, via Zoom.

## Update from School Social Worker

- TJHS's Social Worker, Samanda Davis discussed upcoming initiatives with the group. The TJ community has done an amazing job with support, but the need is outpacing requests in most programs. The PTO has traditionally supported these initiatives and she appreciates the trust afforded her as much of the work demands confidentiality.
  - Food Bank: Kudos to Suzy and Megan for their work. (More later on this topic).
  - Thanksgiving Boxes: This program usually serves 15-25 families and there have been 85 requests to date. Skills USA and the Rotary Club have stepped up to help. Skills USA is holding a daily food drive in the TJ parking lot from 3-5pm this week (through November 13) and they will be sorting food the week of November 16. A list of items needed was in the school newsletter. Grocery gift cards are always welcome so the families can purchase their turkey/ham and produce.
  - Holiday Meal Boxes: Any food or gift cards left over from the Thanksgiving boxes could go to this project. This year an Eagle Scout candidate in Samanda's neighborhood is coordinating this as his Eagle Scout project.
  - Holiday "Adopt A Family:" is expected to have increased need this year, so Samanda is scaling back the program to serve more families. Parents and family members over 18 years old will not be included this year. The logistics will be a challenge to wrap all the gifts. DECA students have helped with this in the past. Samanda may need help with logistics, for example, using volunteers to manage the Sign Up Genius while maintaining confidentiality. The application process is still TBD. She is struggling with how to make it equitable, given the expected increase in need.
  - Holiday "Shopping Spree:" Usually 20-25 students are treated to a \$100 "shopping spree" at Kohl's. This won't be happening, and Kohl's is getting back to Samanda with other ways they can help.
  - Challenge Day: A virtual event is being investigated as a possibility for the Seniors (with a different focus as they participated in person last year), then this year's Juniors would hopefully get the usual "in person" event next year. The virtual event would be 2 1/2 hours, perhaps held on a Friday with TJ staff in breakout rooms.
  - Eileen Robinson asked Samanda to discuss the Social Emotional supports available at TJ. Samanda listed the following:
    - The first contact is usually the student's counselor or Samanda.
    - There is advisement daily Monday - Thursday (one grade per day). Topics discussed rotate and have covered: coping skills, mindfulness, sexual assault.
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- o There is a referral form that can be filled out online and it is referenced every week in advisement. It's also available on the counseling website if parents would like to fill it out for their student.
- o Members of the counseling team are tasked with different aspects of mental health like drug and alcohol abuse prevention, anxiety support groups, advising the Gay Straight Alliance, running abuse/dating violence therapy sessions. The counselor from Denver Health also provides telehealth sessions.

### **Update on the Food Bank**

- Co-Chair Megan Perkins reported that two weeks ago the Food Bank supplies were depleted but an external donor gave some food boxes. Posts to social media accounts resulted in donations to re-stock the supplies. While donations are steady, they are seeking other avenues for getting food donated.
- Co-Chair Suzy Stone suggested that “local asks” are effective. Reach out to people you know in your neighborhood to donate. She has flyers if anyone would like a copy. Consider re-posting information on your social media sites.
- The need is great, as families feel safe asking for help at the school. Every donation helps, no matter how small you may think it is.
- Perishable food and produce are not being requested as there is nowhere to store it. Gift cards are helpful.

### **Treasurer Report**

- Outgoing Treasurer Tami Patzer reviewed the current financial report, which will be posted online once finalized. Highlights include:
  - o Total assets are \$77,581.21
  - o The balance of funds in the Class of 2020's account will remain until 12/31/20 after which unused funds are reallocated (possibly to the Food Bank).
  - o The quarterly King Soopers Community Reward program check was just deposited today. This quarter's contribution rose from approximately \$1500 to \$1700. This year's class contributions have not been allocated yet.
  - o The Food Bank has received around \$3,000 in donations this month through Square.
  - o A \$3,000 grant from Newmont Mining was received - \$1,000 is for the Food Bank and \$2,000 is for the holiday programs Samanda mentioned.
  - o Denver City Councilwoman Kendra Black's annual donation (\$700) was also recently received.
  - o The Spartan Assistance Fund is a “pass through” for donations for specific causes (family whose house caught fire, for example).
  - o The Food Bank donations are another “pass through.”
- It is difficult to create a budget this year as COVID-19 has changed much of the PTO's operations and finances. Student Activities usually supported by the PTO are not happening and Teacher Appreciation efforts need to be changed this year. (For example, the gift cards that were approved last month).
  - o Rather than approve a budget, the PTO board will approve expenditures as they come up. For example, last month we approved the purchase of coffee gift cards in lieu of the coffee cart that is usually provided in the fall. This month, we approved \$1,400 for the staff holiday gifts to be given in December. (The items were less than \$10 per employee).

- o The two major annual expenses are the Classroom Grants and Teacher Appreciation. Funds from last spring's auction will fund this year's Classroom Grants.

### **Teacher Appreciation Efforts**

- For November's "Gratitude Campaign," Eileen Robinson encouraged everyone to send at least one Thank You email to a staff member this month. This request will go out in next week's TJ newsletter. Sending a physical note or card is difficult as staff are not generally in the building.
- Suggestions for a "grander gesture" can be sent to Suzy Stone, who has agreed to take on Teacher Appreciation efforts this year. She commented that we may be doing Teacher Appreciation earlier this year, perhaps something for the holidays. Please reach out if you can help - [suzystone2020@yahoo.com](mailto:suzystone2020@yahoo.com)

### **Announcements**

- Eileen Robinson suggested that now that meetings are being held by Zoom, the meeting start time be moved to 7pm. There were no objections.
- The December meeting will be a "social hour." Please send suggestion for this Zoom call to Eileen at [tjhspto@gmail.com](mailto:tjhspto@gmail.com). Party games? Icebreakers? Any ideas are welcome.
- Marlene Talavera is a parent representative to the CSC. While she is not on the call tonight, she wanted parents to know that she is happy to share any concerns with the CSC when the group meets next. You can reach her at [tj Spartans2022@gmail.com](mailto:tj Spartans2022@gmail.com).
- The Spirit Store will be holding a pop-up shop on Saturday, 11/14 from 10am - noon in the TJ parking lot. The goal is to sell off the inventory from past years. If there are any 9th grader who have not received their yard sign, they can pick one up at this event.

### **6:55 pm Meeting Adjourned**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, December 8 at 7:00pm**