

PLEASE NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING.
OFFICIAL MINUTES WILL BE POSTED ONCE APPROVED
BY THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AT THE NEXT MEETING.

MIAMI PALMETTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PTSA
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Andrea Shosfy at 6:45 p.m.

Principal's Report: Principal Howard Weiner thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The PTSA's and school's attempt to get the word out about the very important Underage Drinking/Substance Abuse and Driving Program being presented tonight obviously succeeded. Teachers gave out flyers and some offered extra credit to students. 'Connect ed' calls were made and kids received community service hours for attending. He is happy about the large turnout.

Mr. Weiner had a few general announcements. The first grading period is over and on November 28th, we are going to be issuing Interim Progress Reports. Yesterday, Report Cards went home. Parents should be receiving a report from the school every four weeks (a Report Card or an Interim Progress Report).

The Thanksgiving break is next week and we are close to the Holiday break. Soon, the students in the Senior class will be moving on. Our current Junior classes are the students that were freshmen when he started three years ago. He'll see his first complete cycle of students graduating shortly.

Mr. Weiner hopes that parents noticed our brand new auditorium tonight. We have completed the first phase of a major construction program. He is looking forward to hearing about phases 2 and 3 of the construction program.

He hopes all benefit from tonight's informative program.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Isabel McBrayer distributed copies of the current budget. The front page shows the budget vs. actual income and expenses to date. The back page reflects a proposed amendment to the budget which members will be voting on tonight.

The budget amendment is not an expense, but just a reallocation of remaining funds from two line items (Furniture-Office, Attendance & Media Center and Gym Floor, Container & Cart). It is proposed that the remaining funds be reallocated to Special Projects-Unallocated to increase the budgeted amount from \$15,357.70 to \$24,705.10.

Jennifer Wollmann made a motion to amend the budget as proposed which was seconded by Karen Kett. There were no questions or discussion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Board/Committee Reports:

Membership: Third Vice President Becky Herget stated that, if you are not a PTSA member, there are forms in the front of the auditorium to fill out so you can join. Keep in mind that PTSA's with large memberships can make a difference in taking up issues with the State.

Legislative: Legislative Chair Jennifer Wollmann encourages us to communicate with our legislators and keep informed so we can make an educated decision at the time of the January 29th vote.

Staff Holiday Luncheon: Holiday Luncheon Co-Chair Robin Laidlaw announced that the Staff Holiday Luncheon is scheduled in the Media Center on Tuesday, December 18th, during both lunches. We need volunteers to donate food, desserts, drinks, and provide help setting up, serving, and cleaning up. If you haven't volunteered yet, email her at foreverash@aol.com.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

Convention: Member Randi Trazenfeld attended the Florida PTSA Convention on behalf of Palmetto Middle but, while there, accepted an award for our PTSA. She presented the award on behalf of the Florida PTA/PTSA to our membership for having over 1,000 members last year. Not many PTSA's in the state receive this award. She also told us that the platform that the State PTA/PTSA passed was for it to advocate on behalf of children and it urged the State Legislature to pass a law requiring that every child that appears in dependency court to have an attorney representing the child's interest and support the Guardian ad Litem program.

Teacher of the Year Winner: Second Vice President Cheri Ball was one of the members of the Region 5 Teacher of the Year Committee. Region 5 has 67 schools in it, each with a Teacher of the Year nominee. It was the committee's job to whittle the 67 candidates down to five and observe and interview each one.

Palmetto Senior High School's Teacher of the Year is Terri Ortiz, an outstanding science teacher. On January 18th, Region 5 will have their Teacher of the Year Luncheon. Anyone can come and show their support for Ms. Ortiz. January 30th is the District Teacher of the Year event.

Announcements:

1. The main fundraiser for the students' Senior activities, the Junior Class Magazine Sale, ends on November 21st.
2. Parliamentarian Claudia Glasson advised that on Saturday, December 8th, Kaplan Testing will be offering a practice SAT for all students (especially juniors). To register, e-mail her at Glasson@bellsouth.net. Cost is \$5 per student and they will get the test back before the holiday break. The test booklet will show them the questions that they missed. No schools will see the score.
3. A PTSA General Membership Meeting will not be held in December. Our next General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 16th, at 9 a.m. in the Media Center.
4. The next EESAC meetings are November 20th and December 18th at 2:45 p.m. in Room 1005. The meetings are open to everyone.
5. A Feeder Pattern and Town Hall Meeting will be held on January 23rd in the Auditorium.
6. Member Ellen Genet thanked everyone for donating items for the Drama Club garage sale. It was a big success. The club's next fundraiser is a dinner and drama student performance to support the Helen Marie Witty Memorial Scholarship. It is planned for January 17th in the auditorium. If you can't make the dinner and show, the club accepts direct donations, too. For more information, contact her at Efg929@aol.com.

Underage Drinking/Substance Abuse and Driving Program: Health Programs Chair Sima Miska thanked Principal Weiner and PTSA President Andrea Shosfy for their

support in sponsoring and promoting this program and is very happy about the large turnout. Our experts will be discussing the influence and impact of underage drinking/substance abuse and driving. The panel of experts includes Officer Danny Smith, Assistant State Attorney Christopher Angel, and Ray Estefania, Director of the Adolescent Unit at South Miami Hospital Addiction Treatment Center.

Officer Smith spoke first. He is in his 21st year of police work in Miami-Dade County and has done nothing but DUI enforcement. His most recent 13 years of police work have been with the Coral Gables Police Department. He has been involved in over 7,000 cases of DUI arrests in those 21 years.

Officer Smith stated that, after 2 a.m.; three out of five of all drivers on the road have been drinking. He told the audience many heartbreaking and moving stories of deaths, disfigurements, and injuries sustained as a result of minors drinking and driving. Lastly, he gave a demonstration of a roadside sobriety exercise which the volunteer student failed.

Next, Prosecutor Christopher Angel, Felony Division Chief, addressed the audience. He supervises 800 felony cases including DUI and the traffic homicide unit. He also deals with prosecutions under the "Open House Party Law." ASA Angel says many parents sponsor house parties for their kids, like senior graduation keg parties. The parents do this, they tell him, "So I can make sure they are safe." They are still, however, violating the law.

Adults have a responsibility to keep alcohol and drugs away from minors under the age of 21. He reviewed the criminal ramifications and civil liability ramifications for both adults and juveniles including jail time, civil lawsuits, loss of scholarships, etc.

The last speaker was Ray Estefania, Director of the Adolescent Unit of South Miami Hospital Addiction Treatment Center. He has been Director for about 15 years. He explained that tonight we heard about the consequences of an arrest from Officer Smith and then the emotional and monetary cost of prosecution (punishment) from ASA Angel. He will speak to us about professional treatment for addiction whether it be alcohol or drug related.

Underage drinking and drug use is a bigger problem in the areas of Pinecrest and Palmetto Bay than it is in the so-called 'ghetto' areas. He describes addiction as the continued use of a detrimental substance despite the negative consequences (i.e. the loss of the ability to make good decisions regarding alcohol and drug use). He stated that besides parents setting limits for their kids, they must set a good example and send a clear message that it is not okay to use drugs and alcohol. Children are unable to make good decisions about alcohol and drug use.

One of the consequences underage drug and/or alcohol use is kids with out of control behavior who become adult addicts. Kids are more at risk to develop addictive behavior because the adolescent brain is not fully developed until at least the age of 21 and many children have a family history of addiction problems.

After the panel members addressed the meeting, parents and students from the audience asked them various questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Roxy Lancella, Recording Secretary

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