



CASIS PTA POST

Issue 57

www.casispta.org

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THE PREZ SEZ...

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

It is hard to believe we are already at the midpoint of our 2008–2009 school year. We have so much to be thankful for at Casis—the dedicated teachers, staff, and administration and the wonderful enrichment opportunities provided by PTA volunteers and resources. I thank you for all you do for our school. I am happy to share with you that while we as a country face the challenges of an economic downturn, we as a school community have rallied to support Casis programs and services through our major fundraisers. Thank you so much to Gift Wrap Chairs Julie Kocurek, Ellen Miura, and Cari Ezell for their successful campaign and for moving us closer to an online ordering process. Net proceeds from the sale are estimated to be just over \$30,000!

What an All-American, Star-Spangled Night! Carnival was an amazing red, white, and blue success, complete with community spirit, happy children, and perfect weather! Many thanks to Carnival Chairs Ashley Fowler, Brandy Reimers, and Thresa Nasi. These Carnival Chairs and their All-American Committee planned and executed an event that touched everyone in our Casis community and far exceeded projected earnings. We are pleased to announce Carnival raised more than \$135,000 for our PTA. We didn't know what to expect with such discouraging economic developments, but our families and community made Casis programs and services their priority. Our amazing auction team and our new online auction system allowed us to match generous donations with happy bidders and double auction revenues. A win/win for all! We especially want to thank the many parents who volunteered to make the raffle, cake decorating contest, and our Carnival night a magical experience for all!

Book Fair hit the road with great success this year under the leadership of Book Fair Chairs Kendall Pace and Claudia Burnett. Book People was a gracious host; families turned out for Family Night and shopping throughout the week; we enjoyed visits from authors John Grogan and Emily Gravett and auctioned off an adorable yellow lab puppy "Marley"; our fourth and fifth graders had the opportunity to create original poems and perform them in the poetry slam; and we were able to gather as a community in a wonderful local venue. Our fifth graders sold Casis hoodies, long-sleeve shirts, and Mangia gift cards for a total of \$7,000 in revenues to support their spring class trip to Port Aransas. We are pleased to announce that our Book Fair exceeded budget and raised just over \$6,300 for our school!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 6	Back to school
Jan. 8	PTA Executive Board Meeting, 9 a.m.
Jan. 9	Principal's Brown Bag on Departmentalization, 11:30 a.m., Portable 1
Jan. 15	Prospective Parent Open House, 9:30 a.m.
Jan. 16	PTA General Meeting – SPEAKER, 8 a.m.
Jan. 23	PTA Budget Work Session I, 9 a.m.
Jan. 23	Principal's Brown Bag on School Safety, 11:30 a.m., Portable 1
Feb. 5	PTA Executive Board Meeting, 9 a.m.
Feb. 6	Author Visit!
Feb. 12	PTA Budget Work Session II, 9 a.m.
Feb. 20	PTA General Meeting, Noon
Feb. 27	PTA Budget Work Session III and FINAL, 9 a.m.

With all of this fundraising success, we are working hard to responsibly spend our dollars this year on the many programs and services outlined in our budget. Believe it or not, it is time to plan for our 2009–2010 school year PTA spending! The PTA will begin the first of three budget meetings for 2009–2010 in January. We would love to hear from our parents and teachers on how you would like to see your PTA money spent. All are welcome to attend these budget meetings. The PTA will also begin the nominating process for next year's PTA Executive Board. More information on these topics is available in this issue. Finally, I have been in touch briefly by e-blast on the new AISD southwest middle school and boundary issues that could impact O. Henry Middle School. I will continue to keep you posted with news from the O. Henry PTA President and any action that might be required to keep our middle school strong. Let us enjoy our holidays, rest up, and prepare ourselves to ring in 2009! 2008 has been a great year for Casis!

—Julie Ballard

PRINCIPAL'S BROWN BAG

Our principal, Patty Martin, is calling a brown bag lunch on Friday, January 9, at 11:30 a.m. in Portable 1 to discuss the topic of departmentalization of classroom instruction. Some elementary schools in our area have chosen to departmentalize core subject instruction—their students travel to different teachers who specialize in a core subject and then return to a homeroom for all other instruction. If you are interested in learning more about our instruction model at Casis as well as alternative models that have been reviewed, please join us!

CASIS STUDENTS HIT THE ROAD

October was a big month for Casis students and their bicycles! On Friday, October 17, Casis held its second annual Walk/Bike to School Day. Around 90 bikers, plus walkers, scooters, and skateboarders, ditched their cars and headed to school, far surpassing the average 15 bike riders a day. A highlight of the day was listening to Casis families talk about their experiences walking and biking to school. Many said they really enjoyed seeing so many other families walking and biking up Exposition to school. The “water station” was also a great social gathering place for children and parents. Whole Foods supplied the water, and Jack and Adams supplied the bike racks. Fridays are always our specially designated day to walk or bike to school, but everyone is encouraged to walk or bike to school whenever possible!

Also in October, Casis P.E. teachers Cindy Samok and Jan Jackson taught a bicycle safety course where students learned proper biking techniques. At the end of the course, third, fourth, and fifth graders brought their bikes to school to participate in a bicycle rodeo during P.E. class. A simulated residential neighborhood was marked off on the basketball court, and students demonstrated their ability to steer and ride a bike, give proper hand signals, and turn and brake safely.



Students enjoy Walk/Bike to School Day.



Walk/Bike to School Day, Friday, October 17

PTA BUDGET MEETINGS BEGIN JANUARY 2009

How do we feel about how we currently spend our PTA dollars? What new funding requests or new project initiative requests have we received this year? How long will this economic recession last, and how should we plan for it as a PTA Board? These will be the burning questions we will ask during our budget sessions in January and February. Anyone may join the three budget meetings before a budget will be prepared for a general membership vote. If you have an idea or proposal to submit to the PTA for consideration in the 2009–2010 budget, please contact Julie Ballard at julie@bcballard.com. We appreciate hearing from you!

FEBRUARY TEACHER CONFERENCE DAY

Please note that Friday, February 13, is a Student Holiday/Staff Development Day, and Monday, February 16, is a Parent Conference Day. Our teachers have asked that parents please observe Parent Conference Day on Monday, February 16, and not ask teachers to reschedule conferences for a different day, as this takes away from their planning time on other days. Thank you from our dedicated teachers!

PTA GENERAL MEETING

JAN. 16, 8 A.M., CAFETERIA

Go green! Come hear how parents and Casis can work together to help fulfill the City of Austin’s Go Green Initiative and the city’s zero-waste goals. There will be breakfast tacos and coffee served, so be there!

CASIS FAMILIES GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR OUR TEACHERS

For the fifth year in a row, Kathy Odom has donated \$6,000 per year to the Casis PTA, specifically so the Casis faculty will have educational resources and opportunities not available to them through AISD. Over these five years, teachers have been able to attend important workshops paid for by the Casis PTA. In recent years these conferences have included topics such as literacy education and new technology tools integration in the classroom. Kathy's commitment to educational excellence benefits all of our Casis students. Thank you!!!

Dawn and Dwayne Goetzel have given a generous gift of \$3,000 benefitting our Teacher Appreciation Fund. The Goetzels have been at Casis for eight years. They would like to honor the wonderful teachers and staff at Casis with funds for their holiday and spring faculty celebrations. Their generous donation will also help reimburse teachers for classroom supply and equipment needs. This gift demonstrates the passion our parents share for our teachers and staff. Thank you!!!

For a second year, Suzanne Freid and the Clark Family have stepped in at the close of our Book Fair Family Night to ensure that our teachers receive all of the books they listed on their classroom library wish lists. This year, that gift totaled \$1,400, which was given with an open heart. Suzanne acknowledges that her English degree and love of books motivate this generous gesture for our teachers. Thank you for sharing your love of reading with our students!

These examples once again demonstrate the unique educational environment Casis enjoys because of generous parents! Thank you!!!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE PROCESS TO BEGIN THIS MONTH

The nomination process to select the PTA Nominating Committee begins in December. This committee is responsible for recommending a slate of officers for the 2009–2010 school year. The Nominating Committee will be elected, and nominations for officers will begin at the January general meeting of the PTA. More information is to come in the weekly newsletters. If you would like to nominate someone for the Nominating Committee, or if you have any questions about the process, email Parliamentarian Wendy Thompson at winifredpage@aol.com.

CASIS ENDOWMENT FUND

Did you know that Casis has an Endowment Fund? The fund was established by the Casis PTA Executive Board in 2000. The purpose of the fund is to generate a long-lasting gift to our school. The Endowment Fund is administered by Austin Community Foundation and has a balance of \$39,216. There are two ways to give a gift to the Endowment Fund. One is to make a contribution to the Austin Community Foundation either online at www.austincommunityfoundation.org or with a check made payable to the Austin Community Foundation (Casis PTA Endowment in the memo line), P.O. Box 5159, Austin, Texas, 78763, or by purchasing a paver on our Path of Excellence Sidewalk in front of our school. For more information on the Path of Excellence, visit our Web site, www.casispta.org. Please consider giving to the endowment fund during the holidays. Donations make wonderful lasting gifts to honor a current or former student as well as remember someone or something special.

A THANK-YOU NOTE FROM THE CASIS CUSTODIAL STAFF...

The following note was sent by Marco Medrano to the PTA on Thursday, November 13:

I just finished running our floor scrubber machine on the Cafeteria floor, and every single time I do it, I think of the way it was before we had this machine. I never got around to thank you and to tell you how much we all appreciate you getting it for us. It is hard to think that we were mopping the halls and Cafeteria by hand time after time. Besides being time consuming, you and I know that all we were doing was spreading the dirt around with the mop. With the scrubber, we are wetting it with cleaning solution, scrubbing it, and vacuuming up the dirty water to dispose of it down the drain. Sounds like an infomercial, but every school should get at least one. Today, as I was finishing up scrubbing the floor at the left side of the Café, Mr. Dunn was coming inside the other door to set up his equipment for rehearsal, and the children were right behind him. It gave me great satisfaction to see and to know that your children were sitting on a dry, clean floor 10 minutes after the lunch period had ended.

It is also saving us from mopping over 5,000 square feet of hall floors, and with the activity and traffic at Casis, people can walk on the floor almost instantly, and we have not had a single person slipping on wet floors since we started using the machine. Also, because our wet vacuum was not working properly in an emergency, I found out that it can be used as a more powerful wet vacuum with a lot more holding capacity. Thanks—I felt like I needed to give you an update report on your purchase. —Marco



\$\$ CASIS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS \$\$

Ways your day-to-day shopping can raise money for Casis

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Do you know that many local and online businesses donate money to Casis just by your patronage? Below is a list of these opportunities as well as information on how a business can partner with Casis.

MATCH



Dell Employees

Choose to support the Casis PTA, and Dell will match your donation dollar for dollar with a CASH donation to the PTA. Contact Anna Belle Williams at ab_williams@dell.com to learn more.



invent Hewlett Packard Employees

Any HP employee may choose to submit his or her Casis PTA contributions through the HP Product Matching Program. HP generously gives a 3:1 product match. Identifying HP/Casis parents will help pool contributions to maximize this matching resource for our technology program. Please contact Ashley Putman at Ashley@Hotlink.com for details.



IBM Employees

Any donation you plan to give to Casis (including Spanish or Technology contributions) can be pooled with all IBM/Casis parents for an employer matching contribution from IBM. IBM generously donates 4:1 with IBM product. Last year Casis received 32 printers for the teacher classrooms. Please contact Cynthia Bengtson at cbbengtson@yahoo.com to pool your contribution for Casis.

Does your company match? Please contact Ashley Putman at 473-2755.

SHOP



Austin Software Architects

Austin Software Architects provides a variety of software, hosting, and integration services that provide a cost effective solution for high-quality business needs.

<http://www.austinsoftwarearchitects.com>

(512) 535-0074

Gayle Velayos Photography

Gayle's bright photographic murals of children are on display in the Casis cafeteria to promote our Health and Wellness program. Gayle is also the official PTA photographer. She specializes in children's portraiture. For more information, please call Gayle Velayos at (512) 769-6503 or visit her Web site, www.gaylevelayos.com.

Westbank Dry Cleaners

Turn in your dry cleaning receipts at Westbank and three percent of your total will be donated to Casis. To date, \$1,586.00 has been donated.



The Soup Peddler

Order healthy, delicious meals delivered free. New menu each week! Five percent of purchases go to Casis. Order at www.souppeddler.com/casis.



Randalls

Casis receives a percentage of your Randalls purchases. Designate your Remarkable Card to #4888, Casis, today. Over the last 10 years, Casis has received more than \$50,000!

CLIP



Boxtops for Education

Many General Mills products have small, pink, box-top coupons on the package (go to www.btfе.com for a current and complete list of participating products). Casis earns 10 cents for each box top submitted. Last year the PTA earned more than \$1,800! Box tops are collected and submitted twice a year. The next collection period is February 9, 2009, to February 20, 2009. Box-top baggies are located in each classroom during the collection periods. Or, place them in the box-tops folder, located in the office. As always, keep clipping and saving box tops for the next collection period.

PARTNER

Are you interested in partnering your business with Casis? Please contact Ashley Putman at Ashley@hotlink.com for more information.