

PTSA Parent Meeting

MINUTES

Monday, January 14, 2019

Hillside Cafe

5:30 PM

Presentation by Center Lane

“The Changing Landscape: Best Practices in Affirming LGBTQ+ People”

The presentation originated via Hillside’s diverse book initiative. As a reminder, teachers have received training this year on three topics: learning difference, gender, race.

The presentation started with Lisa Scott from [Centerlane](#), which is a program of Westchester Jewish Community Services (WCJS). WCJS is one of largest mental health providers and biggest nonprofits in Westchester. Centerlane is one of their 88 programs. Centerlane is Westchester’s only program serving LGBTQ youth. They offer support groups, trainings, special events and a summer camp for LGBTQ youth.

The presentation began with an exercise. Words printed on cards were distributed at each table. The meaning and connotation of the words was discussed by the participants. The participants learned that the words derive from The Riddle Scale of homophobia (1974). The exercise was intended to frame the subsequent discussion by encouraging participants to reflect on their own attitudes (both positive and negative) towards LGBTQ individuals.

The presenter reviewed the meaning of all the letters in the LGBTQ+ acronym and defined some terms and language related to each one. There was identification of and discussion about prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions. Respectful identification and use of preferred gender pronouns was noted as an affirming action for many trans-identified individuals.

The presenter discussed some issues of particular concern to parents of trans-identified youth. One key takeaway was noting that when young children (elementary school age) say something that suggests they may be exploring their gender identity, as parents it is important to thank them for talking about it and asking “what does that mean to you?” It is most important to communicate that the child is being heard and to affirm what they’ve said.

The presenter fielded several questions from parents and presented a [shareable graphic](#) to help remember the key concepts discussed.

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The Hillside Enrichment At Recess Time (HEART) program needs volunteers. As a reminder, this is an opportunity to volunteer your time once a week at recess for 4-6 weeks to share an activity with children who may want an alternative to outdoor free play. This program can only be offered if parents volunteer. You can also split the time commitment with another interested parent. Past HEART programs have included playing board games, friendship pin making, jewelry making, making art out of found materials, shrinky dinks, dancing, yoga, intro to wrestling. Contact Hillside PTSA VP Kevin Doyle (doylecb@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering.

The Used Book Fair is scheduled for March 6-9. Book collection will begin in the Hillside lobby starting February 1st. Please donate any used books (adults and kids) or games.

[Awareia](#) is a Technology-based Lost and Found solution that is now offered to interested parents at Hillside. You can purchase labels through Awareia for your children's belongings (clothing, lunchbags, etc). The labels have a QR code. When the item goes missing, Hillside custodians can scan the QR code and parents will get a text on your phone pinpointing the exact location of your child's belongings. It's a secure service. It is completely optional.

The PTSA VPs reiterated ongoing Fundraising efforts:

- **Box Tops** – please collect and send in your child's folder or drop off in Hillside main office.
- **Oliver's Labels** (visit www.oliverslabels.com/HOHPTSA to purchase labels for school or camp and 20% goes to your PTSA)
- **Amazon Smile** (designate PTA New York Congress 18-205 Hastings-On-Hudson PTSA);
- If you shop at **DeCicco's** or **Foodtown**, please designate the PTSA as the recipient of a portion of your purchase price. You can speak to customer service at both stores so that the PTSA automatically is designated when you use your frequent shopper card.

Barbara Rizzo, VP of SEPTA, provided SEPTA updates as follows:

- Jan 22 – **Annual Review Education night**. Panel Q&A with special education experts, breakout sections. Learn about the CSE process. 6:30p at the High School library.
- Feb 9 – **SEPTA trivia night** – 7-10p at the Southside club. All funds to school programs. Two \$3000 scholarships were given last year based on fundraising from this event. Tickets are \$65 in advance –includes drinks/food. \$75 at door. [Click here to buy tickets.](#)
- March 21 – 6:30p – **SEPTA/Hillside Community Conversation**.
- June 2 – **SEPTA Carnival** at Hillside.

Ms. Cazes reported the diverse book initiative is going very well.

Ms. Cazes reported that the first outdoor classroom committee recently finished its work after multiple meetings to determine where space exists in the current schedule to best utilize the outdoor classroom, while considering state mandates and other issues about time and scheduling. The committee recommended an increase of lunch/recess time, only if it does not negatively impact the students' educational experience. Ms. Cazes is hoping to identify a few extra minutes to add to recess to help with transitions and maximize outdoor play time. Ms. Cazes reported that the Instructional Process committee has begun meeting and is exploring what outdoor learning can be for Hillside students. There are numerous locations to visit and research. Finally, a design committee including parents, educators and students will meet to actually create and build the outdoor classroom.

The Building Leadership Team (BLT) continues to meet to explore the issue of Homework. The group is evaluating research on both the value of Homework and parent concerns about it. A survey about it will be going out to Hillside teachers, students and parents soon.

The Social-Emotional learning program is going well. Ms. Snyder is leading many groups and the safety patrol for 4th graders has been initiated, enabling students to demonstrate leadership.

Mr. DeKams gave an update on the development of the Positive Behavior in School (PBIS) program. He reported that right before the holiday break teachers attended professional learning at BOCES about this topic. There are plans to bring in a consultant to enhance Hillside's efforts in this area.

Ms. Cazes reported that space is at an all-time low at Hillside and an ongoing concern. Ms. Cazes and the PTSA VPs encouraged parents to educate themselves about the \$17M bond proposed by the BOE. Detailed information about the proposed bond is [here](#). Ms. Cazes reported there is a Space Committee at Hillside that works to hear everyone's perspective about the best way to use building space while minimizing impact to kids.

There were no questions from parents.

One item was inadvertently omitted from the agenda: Emergency Dismissal Procedures. This topic will be revisited at the next meeting, which is March 11, 2019 at 6:30p. In the meantime, Ms. Cazes shared that the Emergency Response Team has been meeting to enhance protocols to ensure both efficiency and safety for all.

For questions or feedback please contact one of the Hillside VPs:

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