



October 2007 NEWSLETTER

Key Dates

- Sept 25-Oct 9:** Tupperware Sale
Oct 10: Teens 'Tweens and Technology 7pm
Oct 16: Dover School Committee Meeting 7pm
Oct 24: 5th Grade Graduation Meeting
Nov 3: DSEF Gala
Nov 9: Dads & Donuts 8:00-8:30am

Thanks to all who participated in Chickering's first annual Fall Family Fun Fest and our best-attended PTO meeting ever! 250 water bottles and 20 pizzas disappeared quickly! (If you still need a water bottle, email DoverPTO@comcast.net). FFFF kicked-off both of our 07-08 initiatives:

- **Go Green!** - Help Chickering and Dover PTO reduce, reuse and recycle in all areas - fundraising, Curriculum Enrichment, community outreach, Energy usage and communication.
- **Build the Chickering Community** - Bring people together, increase and broaden participation, help solve problems and improve/increase communication.

The presentation given at FFFF aimed to answer, "Who is the PTO? What do they do? How do they spend the money?" To summarize:

The **mission** of the Dover PTO is to build the Chickering community. To accomplish this, we:

1. Enable communications between school and families
2. Provide volunteers for school, classrooms
3. Fund Chickering projects:
 Curriculum Enrichment (53% of PTO budget),
 teacher/classroom support (32%), Chickering community (15%)

These newsletters will try to communicate our collective progress in achieving this mission...

Communication (Mission Part 1)

All parents and teachers are part of the PTO. It is run by a 12-member Executive Board with 25+ Committee Chairs and hundreds of volunteers.

Annual activities which support our mission are determined by 1) historical success and 2) input from parents and teachers. In 2007, we hosted our first on-line parent survey. The responses have influenced our 07-08 agenda. Summary:

- 123 respondents (115 moms; 8 dads)
- 60% work full- or part-time
- 54% have attended a meeting (want evenings!)
- 94% read the newsletter (80% find it useful!)
- 67% say a CE program has impacted their child
- 76% participate in community outreach
- How effective is the PTO? 4.42/5
- How connected are you to the PTO? 3.01/5

Opportunity? Continue to build our community!
 To fund the activities, the 07-08 PTO budget is:

Sources of funds

Directories/Excuse Pads	\$ 4,500
Product sales	10,000
No Wrap Wrap Sale (check writing)	10,000
Spring event	35,000
Dover Days	<u>2,000</u>
Total	\$61,500

Uses of funds

Curriculum Enrichment	\$37,000
Teacher/classroom	
Direct funds	10,600
Teacher grants	5,000
Balanced literacy books	3,900
Staff hospitality/retirement	1,750
Star Jar	1,000
Chickering community	5,300
Community outreach	1,500
PTO Admin	<u>3,400</u>
TOTAL	\$69,450

Any year-end shortfall will be taken from Reserves. Reserves will also fund the Outdoor Classroom. More survey statistics as well as a financial comparison to 06-07 can be found on the PTO section of the Chickering web site.

Note: **DoverPTO.org** will be our NEW web site. It is under development with a target launch of 1/1/08. If you have web talent, help us!

More electronic communication! Mrs. Chase's new Blog called **ChickeringChats** tells parents about what happens in the library. The Blog can be accessed from the school site by clicking "Library" or "Cheryl Chase" under Staff.

Volunteers (Mission Part 2)

Do you realize that Chickering parents provide over 750 hours a month in volunteer time? Thanks for answering the call! We had a **73%** increase in initial volunteers over last year. Room parents were our first priority and were selected following a strict set of criteria:

1. We must receive the volunteer form by the proposed deadline.
2. If more than 2 parents submit their volunteer forms, preference goes to the least recent room parent volunteer.
3. Further preference goes to having parents of 1 boy and 1 girl in the class.

All candidates entered the review on an equal basis including Dads, Moms and/or working parents. Soon, you should be receiving information on classroom coffees to discuss volunteer opportunities in your child's classroom. If you want more "child time," we still need playground volunteers. Experience recess!

Funding Chickering Projects (Mission Part 3)

Fundraising: Product sales

"Reduce, reuse & recycle" is also our theme for fundraising this year. Our first effort is the Tupperware sale.... think holiday gifts, re-replacing old bins and non-disposables for lunch! We will take orders through 10/9. Remember that Chickering receives **40%** of the total sales.

Directories

After reviewing over 30 entries to our directory cover contest, the winner is **Graydon Wood** (4)! Graydon's artwork will grace the front cover of the directory. Runners-up Isabel Gardner (4), Sophie Grossbaum (5), Talia Grossbaum (5) and Elizabeth Qian-Wang (3) will see their artwork on a back cover collage. Look for directory distribution later this month. Our committee is researching ways to gather info and distribute directories even faster next year.

Curriculum Enrichment (53% of budget)

36 grade-specific and Chickering-wide programs are scheduled for this year (\$37,000). Programs are selected through a rigorous process:

1. CE grade liaisons and teachers work together to identify opportunities for enrichment that tie *directly* to the curriculum.
2. Quality programs are found through in-depth research and previews at other schools.
3. Programs are evaluated annually to ensure quality and valuable use of time.

The following programs are scheduled for Oct:

- *Bash the Trash - K-5*
- *Bay Colony Educators-5*
- *Audubon Nature Program - 1 & 4*
- *Ted Scheu, The Poetry Guy-4*
- *Clara Barton-3*

Teacher/Classroom Support (32% of budget)

You may not realize it, but our teachers put a lot into their classrooms each year (books, supplies, etc.) that are not in the school budget. Thanks to you, each classroom teacher gets \$250 (\$150 or \$50 per specialist) from the PTO to use for their unique ideas and can apply for PTO grants for larger needs. Money raised from this year's "No Wrap Wrap Sale" will fund these programs. Look for the kickoff flyer in backpacks on 11/7.

Chickering Community

School Pictures

The weather cooperated and Picture Day ran smoothly thanks to 28 volunteers! If you ordered a package, they are due by month end. For students who were absent, retake day is 11/15 (when we will also take a 5th grade class photo).

Boston Symphony Orchestra

BSO Youth and Family Concert Series will take place Saturday 2/2/08. \$25 per ticket covers pre-concert activities, the concert and bus. Email Becky Gladstone with questions and to reserve tickets by 11/3 (rhgladstone@comcast.net).

DSEF

DSEF and PTO are two separate organizations that fund teachers and programs that directly impact *our* students. Learn more at dsef.com and please consider attending their gala on 11/3!