

# Miner PTO This Month

Miner Elementary School

September 2018

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## Welcome!

This first edition of our new *PTO This Month* newsletter! This monthly communication from the Miner PTO is a compilation of the work being undertaken by the PTO's various committees on behalf of Miner's scholars, families, staff, and community. We hope you will find it a valuable and insightful resource.

If there are topics you'd like to see addressed, or have other comments or questions, please feel free to email the PTO at [minerpto@gmail.com](mailto:minerpto@gmail.com) or speak to any member of the PTO Leadership Team. Also, if you're interested in helping out on any committee, please feel free to reach out to directly to the chairpersons!

## Appreciation & Recognition Committee

Purpose: Plan, coordinate, promote, and implement and activities to show appreciation to teachers, staff, administrators, students, and parents.

Meet the Co-Chairs: **Jessica and Justin Burniske** are parents to William (Mr. Yoho, K). The Burniskes co-chaired the Appreciation & Recognition Committee last year and are pleased to continue helping with the committee for a second year. **Emily Cahill** is mom to Johnny (Mr. Dovey/Ms. Dorsey, PK3), making this the Cahill's first year at Miner and first year working with the PTO. Contact: [jessica.burniske@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.burniske@gmail.com) and [emily.novinskie@gmail.com](mailto:emily.novinskie@gmail.com).

Over the Summer: The Committee assessed last year's activities in light of the feedback received from teachers, staff, administrators, and families, and began planning activities for the coming school year.

Coming in September: On September 7, the committee sponsored a "Welcome Back Breakfast"

and coffee for more than 70 teachers and staff members. The breakfast sandwiches, oatmeal, fruit and caffeine were a big hit! The Committee will also be stocking all staff bathrooms with toiletry baskets, including soap, lotion, tissues, and hygiene products. Moving forward, we welcome families to "adopt" a bathroom basket for the year to ensure continued replenishment.

Coming this year: The Committee has planned appreciation and recognition activities for every month of the school year. Staff lunches, festive events around the holidays, and May's Teacher Appreciation Week are just three examples of what's to come. The Committee encourages families to show their teachers and staff appreciation every day!

## Communications Committee

Purpose: Manage internal communications channels, tools, and processes for informing PTO membership and the community.

Meet the Chair: **Jen Barrie** is mom to Connor (Mr. Dovey/Ms. Dorsey, PK3). Jen is new to Miner and the PTO this year. Contact: [jen.k.barrie@gmail.com](mailto:jen.k.barrie@gmail.com)

Over the Summer: The Committee met with Principal Jackson to draft a communications plan for the school, for the PTO, and for joint communications.

Coming in September: We have begun actively looking for a new vendor for t-shirts and other Miner-branded school gear. If you have ideas about types of apparel you'd like to see offered, please let us know. We are also in search of a parent, staff, or community member to fill a Graphic Designer role.

Coming this year: The Committee will seek to improve PTO communications and finalize a PTO Communications Plan. We also plan to enhance the items offered in the Spirit Store and provide an online ordering and payment option. We will also work with the school on Miner logo branding

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evolution and guide. Finally, as the year progresses, the Committee will track Miner successes and milestones for end-of-year reporting.

## Community Engagement Committee

Purpose: Establish and maintain relationships with external entities, organizations, businesses, and partners.

Meet the Chair (Acting): **Katy Thomas** is mom to Penelope (Ms. Hayes, 1st) and Ramsay (Ms. Luttmmer/Ms. Jackson, PK4). Katy also serves as the PTO Vice President, and was previously Miner's representative to the Capitol Hill Public School Parent Organization (CHPSPO). This is the Thomas family's third year at Miner. Katy's husband Hill is serving his second term as an elected parent representative on Miner's Local School Advisory Team (LSAT). Contact: [kazt1978@gmail.com](mailto:kazt1978@gmail.com)

Over the Summer: The Committee's focus has been on building relationships with other Ward 6 schools, including a coalition to address the significant lack of technology within DCPS schools. Miner is co-leading the effort and will be ramping up advocacy as the city's FY20 budget cycle begins. Also this summer PTO leadership sat down with our counterparts from other Ward 6 PTOs to learn best practices and share ideas of how to best support our schools. We also met with Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen's office to discuss priorities that can be addressed by the City Council.

Coming in September: CHPSPO meets Tuesday, September 18 at 6:30 pm (location TBD). On Thursday, September 20 at 7:00 pm, CHPSPO is co-hosting a State Board of Education (SBOE) candidates forum at The Hill Center (921 Pennsylvania Ave., SE). On Monday, September 24 at 6:30 pm, Councilmember Allen will host a Ward 6 Community Discussion on the DCPS Chancellor Search at the Watkins Library (420 12th St SE).

Coming this year: The city's FY20 budget cycle will begin this fall and it is vital for Miner's voice to be heard by DCPS and the City Council. Many opportunities will arise to testify before the Council or at town hall forums. Ensuring a robust parent voice at these events helps demonstrate the commitment to not only improving public education across the city, but for Miner specifically. The Committee will advertise these opportunities well in advance, draft talking points/testimony, and work closely with anyone who is willing to step up and advocate for our students!

## Facilities & Grounds Committee

Purpose: Maintain a list of all needed repairs and upgrades to school facilities and grounds, and work with the school administration to ensure the work is completed.

Meet the Co-Chairs: **David Treat** is dad to William (Ms. Hayes, 1st) and Kathryn (Ms. Jones/Ms. Loving, PK3). This is the fourth year for the Treats at Miner. David also serves as the PTO Secretary and has served as PTO President (2016-2018) and co-President (2015-2016). David is also an elected parent representative to Miner's LSAT. **Billy Lynch** is dad to Kelley (Ms. Betts, K) and Emilia (PK3 next year) and husband of Bernadette Wittschen, chair of the Family Support Committee. They moved to the area from Wheaton in 2018 and are happy to be new members of the Miner community. Contact: [dtreat2mars@gmail.com](mailto:dtreat2mars@gmail.com) and [william.lynch@gmail.com](mailto:william.lynch@gmail.com)

Over the Summer: The Committee has worked closely with Miner's Director of Strategy & Logistics (DSL), Dr. King, to continue identifying, tracking, and resolving dozens of facilities issues that have been open for a number of years. We are so happy to see such incredible progress this summer, including deep cleaning and painting, upgraded lights and security cameras, and repaired water fountains and bathroom vent fans. Per request of the school administration, the PTO purchased new toilet paper

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and paper towel dispensers for several bathrooms. Finally, the PTO purchased a new refrigerator for the staff lounge and a new electric range for the ECE kitchen.

Coming in September: The Committee will be writing and submitting a mid-term report for our 2-year, \$35,000 garden grant from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), as well as submitting a continuation application for the second year of the grant. We are also working on a number of upgrades to the garden to help make it an incredible and inviting environment for student exploration and learning.

Coming this year: The Miner community will be a part a multi-month “Master Site Plan” process in collaboration with DCPS. This will be an opportunity for us to collectively deliberate on the best way to utilize the \$1.5 million set aside in the District’s FY19 budget for playground and campus upgrades and improvements at Miner. Construction will occur next summer. The Committee will also be advocating for accessibility upgrades to a number of points around the campus.

## Family Engagement & Events Committee

Purpose: Plan, coordinate, promote, and implement major school-wide and other events and activities to facilitate and increase family engagement at the school.

Meet the Co-Chairs: **Mariana Jones** is the proud mother of Mason (Ms. Olazo, K). This is Mariana’s third year at Miner where she has served as the co-chair of the Fundraising & Grants Committee, as well as a member of the Family Support and Family Engagement & Events committees. **Teresa Dorsey** (PK3) is a seasoned faculty member and has contributed to the well-being of our youngest Bears for many years. Her previous and current leadership as co-chair of the Family Engagement & Events

Committee has proven invaluable in the growth and nurturing of the Miner family. Contact: [marikjones@gmail.com](mailto:marikjones@gmail.com) and [theresa.dorsey@dc.gov](mailto:theresa.dorsey@dc.gov).

Over the Summer: The Committee conducted its initial meeting for scheduling and planning for events for the upcoming year.

Coming in September: Planning is currently underway for the first event, which is “Oktoberfest” on October 31. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12 at 5:45 pm. All are welcome as the committee is always seeking volunteers and committee members.

Coming this year: The following marquee events are planned for this year: family movie night (winter), spring dance, and community playdates (spring). Other activities are under discussion and will be finalized once the PTO works out budgetary and scheduling constraints. If you have an idea for an event, just let us know!

## Family Support Committee

Purpose: Plan, coordinate, promote, and implement events, drives, and activities to meet critical needs of Miner families.

Meet the Chair: **Bernadette Wittschen** is mom to Kelley (Ms. Betts, K) and Emilia (PK3 next year) and wife of Billy Lynch, co-chair of the Facility & Grounds Committee. They moved to the area from Wheaton in 2018 and are happy to be new members of the Miner community. Contact: [bernadettewittschen@gmail.com](mailto:bernadettewittschen@gmail.com)

Over the Summer: The Committee worked with Miner’s social workers to establish the needs of some of our families. We received several backpacks to add to our Family Support collection for students who may need them. We have also come up with ideas for various drives and donation opportunities throughout the school year.

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Coming in September: Our first order of business will be to purchase school uniforms for the social workers to distribute as needed. While we always welcome and appreciate donations, the Committee has PTO funding to purchase some of the more uncommon and in-demand sizes.

Coming this year: Based on the feedback we received last year, some of our most welcome events were the Thanksgiving food drive, the Holiday Toy donations, and the Mother's Day Flowers. We hope to build on the success of last year to do everything we can to support our families in need.

## Fundraising & Grants Committee

Purpose: Plan, coordinate, promote, and implement major and supplementary events, drives, programs, and activities to acquire financial or in-kind resources for the school.

Meet the Chair: **Maggie Ben-Or**, mom to Noah (PK3), and Edan, a future Bear at 2 months old! Maggie is new to Miner and the PTO this year. Contact: [margaret.giovannetti@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.giovannetti@gmail.com)

Over the Summer: The Committee developed a list of funding priorities based on consultations with Miner's administration and Local School Advisory Team (LSAT). Current priorities are 1.) field trips for all grade levels; 2.) additional classroom technology; 3.) family engagement events; and 4.) classroom and grade-level "mini" grants.

Coming in September: The PTO will be kicking off our 2018 fall fundraising drive for Miner's Bear Paw Fund. This year's theme is "Explore! Excite! Expand!" Communications regarding the drive will begin this week at the PTO meeting, through email and the school website, and at the PTO table during drop off and at Back to School Night.

Coming this year: The PTO's big fundraisers this year will include our second annual Move!Play!Grow!

business sponsorships, third annual Holiday Greenery Sale and fourth annual Community Yard Sale. The Committee will also seek out and apply for grants to fund specific needs identified by the school community.

## PTO Purpose

The purpose of the Miner PTO is to enhance and support the educational experience at Miner, to develop a closer connection between school and home by encouraging family and teacher involvement, and to improve the environment at Miner through volunteer and financial support.

## PTO Executive Board

- President: Julie Muir (parent)
- Vice-President: Katy Thomas (parent)
- Treasurer (Interim): Ryan Cahill (parent)
- Secretary: David Treat (parent)
- ECE Teacher Representative: Tarren Cummings (ECE educator)
- K-2 Teacher Representative: Christin Riddick (2nd Grade educator)
- 3-5 Teacher Representative: Katherine Unger (5th Grade educator)
- Principal: Bruce Jackson

## Contact Information

Address: 601 15th NE, Washington, DC 20002

Website: [www.minerelementary.org](http://www.minerelementary.org)

Email: [minerpto@gmail.com](mailto:minerpto@gmail.com)

Twitter: @MinerPTO