

# THE BEMENT SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

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## Minutes from Open Meeting held September 16, 2009

Welcome from Hut Beall, P'15, President of the Parents' Association. Purpose of the Parents' Association is to support the school and promote school-spirit through various educational & fundraising events.

The Parents' Association will hold 3 Open Meetings this year. Once a month, the Executive Board meets to discuss PA business. The Executive Board members are: Hut Beall (President), Jane Plager (Vice President), Terri Mayrand (Treasurer), Meg Clark (Secretary/School Store), Shelley Jackson (Head of School), Dean Fusto (Head of Upper School), Carole Pennock (Head of Lower School), Lisa Echevarria (Faculty Representative), Alice Patton (Parent Representative), Claudia Pazmany (Development Office), Julia Flannery (Development Office), Kathy Elkins (Chair, Spring Fling), and Gretchen Morse (School Store).

Minutes from all monthly meetings will be posted at the Parents' Association section of the Bement School website. Information there has all been reorganized and updated for the coming year. The PA may now also be reached at its email address: [\*\*bementpa@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:bementpa@gmail.com)

Brief descriptions of PA Events for this year: Blazer Exchange, All-School Picnic, Fall Bazaar, Family Movie Event, Skating and Basketball Party, Food Drive (*note: our last February Food Drive, in 2008, ranked #7 in the Food Bank's list of Top Ten Food Drives for that year!*), Spring Fling Auction/Saturday, Book Fairs, and Library help.

Spring Fling Auction: the biggest fundraising event sponsored by the PA. All proceeds from this event go to support the Financial Aid program at Bement. 30% of the Bement community receives financial aid of some type, and this is an important part of what makes Bement the special place it is. In these economically challenging times, supporting financial aid helps ensure our diverse and generous community at Bement.

Spring Fling Saturday Fair is a separate event for the kids and includes Games, Raffle, Book Fair, Bake Sale and other fun activities.

All committees have chairpeople, however, the PA's goal is to have co-chairs for many events, to develop succession plans for each event and ensure smoother transition from year-to-year. The list of Event Chairs, Event dates & descriptions, and the Volunteer Form can be found at the PA section of the Bement website, as well as in the Family Directory (due out in October).

Kathy Elkins, Chair of Spring Fling Auction, is looking for a co-chair for this year's event to help build a succession plan for the Auction. New people bring fresh ideas & evolution to these events. This position is a year-long commitment, fairly low-key management and organization thru the fall but picking up after the first of the year, with April dedicated to the event. Good organization, planning, and communications skills are required. Does not necessarily require you to be on-campus, and solicitation is not required of all positions on the Auction committees! Please talk to Kathy, Hut, or Claudia Pazmany if you might be interested.

Group introductions of those present at meeting.

The PA will be selling the Bement Cookbook at this weekend's Deerfield Craft Fair. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Hut, Jane, Terri or Meg.

Please note that while the Bement Parents' Association works within the school, it is not an authoritative body. If you have an issue or concerns with the School, please contact your teacher, heads of School or the proper Bement School authority.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### ***Q. Will the PA continue to sponsor educational events as it had in past years?***

**A.** Yes. This year the PA will sponsor an Internet Safety program for parents, and possibly students. The details and dates for this event are being worked on, to be finalized at the October board meeting. The PA also will sponsor (and has in the past) the annual Freedom from Chemical Dependency program put on for all students in the fall. Another topic we would like to present is a roundtable discussion for parents with Duncan Laird, the school's licensed Clinical Social Worker, to offer an opportunity to talk about transitions, homework, and other stressors our children may be encountering.

#### ***Q. What does the PA do with its money? What gifts have been given to the school?***

**A.** The monies raised by all PA-sponsored fundraising events (except for the Spring Fling Auction) go towards sponsoring educational events for parents and students, such as those mentioned previously and events like the bi-annual Author/Illustrator Day. Funds are also used for operating budgets of other PA-sponsored events and the School Store. And at the end of each year, the PA seeks out items that the school would like to have, but may not be in the budget to acquire. Such gifts in the past have included the piano in the Barn, the overhead projector in the Barn, new band chairs, donations to the Library campaign when that project was undertaken. Last year's gift was new signage for the north end of campus, to identify the athletic fields and head of school's home as part of the Bement campus.

#### ***Q. How is the new Head of School's home?***

**A.** Mrs. Jackson reports that the acquisition of this property has been terrific for Bement. Significantly, the ability to purchase this property achieved several goals of the Building Community campaign very quickly, and for less financial outlay. The first weekend of school found the boarding students at the property much of the day and into the evening – the new Common Room (where this meeting took place) is a welcoming, fun and comfortable meeting place for students, faculty and families. The summer camp was able to use the pool, there was a class "welcome back" party also held here. Overall, it is working out even better than anticipated, and the Jacksons hope that it will be put to good use throughout the year by everyone, and not considered "just the Jacksons' home".

Thank you all for attending – we look forward to working with all of you in the year ahead.