

Downingtown Music Parents Association Meeting

March 8, 2016 – Downingtown East High School Band Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 pm by President Donna Beard.

Board Open Positions: Donna Beard stated that currently President & Treasurer are open. Nobody has expressed interest. MPA could go without a president but not without a treasurer. Interest had been expressed by Karolyn Withka & Deanna Bradley for the Secretary-West position, and Michelle Nedved expressed interest in the VP-West position.

Retirements: Sherry Weaver, orchestra director for East, West, and STEM, and Brent Lewis, Band Director for East, are retiring in June. The MPA would like to commission pieces for each one of them. We'll open it up to alumni and anyone else who would want to contribute.

Financials: Patrice stated that the MPA will donate to each Post Prom committee for the three high schools. She is getting the tax returns done and Kim Woodward is auditing the Downingtown Student Fundraiser (DSF) accounts.

Calvary Fellowship Church: they had a problem with their roof collapsing in the January blizzard. I suggested we reach out to them, since they were so supportive of our fundraising efforts for the Pasadena (they hosted a car wash for us). The Pastor was overwhelmed that we had reached out. I had said if there was any way the students could help (manpower for moving furniture, for example) that they should let us know.

Concessions: Kyle Costanzi is officially retired; Neal Johnson is now the contact.

Director reports:

Matt McCloskey, West Choir: the MPA scholarship information went out March 1. The final orchestra concert is April 15. The choir concert is May 13.

Matt also reported for Brian Lloyd, STEM choir, that they will be participating in the Uwchlan Hills Variety Show on April 26, featuring accompaniment on wine glasses.

Ed Otto, West Band: the symphonic band concert is April 28.

We're doing research on how best to go about the 8th graders' transition.

The biggest news is the possibility of having a trip for the combined parade band to be in the inauguration parade—we made the first round. We will know for certain by November. The best way to take this is a one-day trip down & back. No matter what, it will be an historic election. We'll look great going down the street in our blue & white uniforms & we have the size band they want to see. We really need to get more parents to these meetings. We're primed to go to the next level. Next year, we're looking at a New Orleans trip, but the thing that's hardest about finding a place to go on a trip is going around the testing.

Keith Jeffries is here for a unique fundraiser. It's one of those situations of "wow, why didn't we think of this sooner?" It has to do with something that everyone has—a smart phone.

Keith Jeffries introduced himself, from E-fundraising--a company that did the gold varsity card that was started 30 years ago. E-fundraising is the largest online discounting company in the world. Locally, I've been to the local merchants. Some you're accustomed to. This is a smart phone app for discounts. Within 5 miles of here, there are 48 vendors (and not just restaurants). The app sells for \$20 for a 12-month cycle. The student gets \$14. This smart phone app is international. It's got Wyndham and other hotels. Sometimes it's only one purchase that covers the cost of the app with the discount. After PA, Florida is #2 in the country with number of vendors signed up. In December 2015, in 46% of purchases made, the final decision was made using a smartphone app. These are all contracted deals. It's going to create its own buzz because it's technology, and app, and money for a school. This is going to be a normal thing in two years.

Ed stated that the goal is to have this as the music department fundraiser. As far as the footprint, there's a lot of people to sell to. It would help the choir for their big trip next year (if it works out). The program is large enough with the bands, three choirs, three orchestras, we could make it as our thing.

Shawna Powel stated that all three schools would have to approve these.

Ed stated that nobody else does this. We would do it in three weeks' time. There are deals that the kids would want to use in the summer. The approval from the two middle school principals & the three high schools is anticipated to be fairly quick. There's not anything else going on now, and we're not stepping on anyone's feet. In the fall, we would be.

Patrice stated that we've done that in the past, to get the 8th grade directors involved when we did the Pasadena trip.

Matt McCloskey stated that the football team gold cards start in August.

A series of questions followed:

- Patrice Costanzi asked Keith if he ever had this program co-exist with a gold card type of program.
Keith stated that it does. The average kid sells 13 of these. You have more feet on the street.
- Susan Chindemi asked if it is a per-device sign up.
Keith stated that yes, it's per device.
- Donna Beard asked if the music parents participated in this, would you allow the football team to do so as well.
Keith stated that it would be his decision, and that quickly becomes a political hot potato. I would look at which program needs the most support. To me, it would be the music program in all its permutations. I haven't called anyone else in the district about this.
- A parent asked if the offers keep changing.
Keith stated that there's a 99% retention rate, but yes, we can change offers. It's not a coupon or printout, it's on the phone. So there are efficiencies built into it. For example, Timothy's is valid 15% off, including Friday & Saturday nights. Deals depend upon the vendor. Wyndham is 20% off their best online price. It's GPS-based, so you can type in the town name and it draws a circle from the center of town. There are over 11,000 merchants in PA alone.
- Nancy Chew asked how the kids would get their money.
Keith stated that he can set up a square account for the money for each kid by e-mail address. I'm also working on an app that they can sell from. Next year, if they renew, the student gets the money again.
- Donna asked what happens when a senior graduates-- then where does the money go?
Keith stated it would go to a general fund.
Ed Otto stated MPA would be back-end loading.
- Nancy asked if there was a way to grandfather a sale to an 8th grader.
Keith stated that the easier way would be to give the 8th grader the list. Just as every time you renew your insurance policy, the agent of record gets the money.
- Patrice asked where the money goes.
Keith stated that he never sees the money. It goes straight to you. There's an automated feature in Charms and there is an automated amount.
- Troy asked if this app would survive a phone upgrade.
Keith stated yes; we have three back office processes to make sure that it is protected.
- Matt McCloskey asked if it would be easier if we had it in Excel?
Keith stated yes. I own Charms also and I and have templates for that.

- Nancy stated that only one school out of the five has charms now, so how would that work?
Patrice Costanzi stated that the other directors looking into that.
Keith stated that E-fundraisers donates the equivalent of the cost of Charms to the district.

Another parent: this is an easy thing to sell, and the kids really need this money.

Susan asked if this works, would this replace the rest of the fundraising.

Nancy stated that they will still need to have the other fundraisers.

Patrice stated that some people look for specific fundraisers.

There being no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.