



PTO Meeting Summary: October 3, 2024 @ Havens Center

PTO President Luis Rivera opened the meeting at 8:22am and welcomed all in attendance. He said that the PTO meetings are meant to be collaborative, and he hopes that the move to Havens and the circular arrangement of the seating facilitates more conversation.

PTO Treasurer Eva Fuentes gave the financial update, including expenditures for the recent teacher appreciation breakfast. Thank you to the donors who contributed to the Teacher Appreciation Fund to help make that happen. The PTO has \$1,315.70 in the bank at this time. The next big expenditure will be pies and flowers for the staff for Thanksgiving, and you can help with those efforts by giving [HERE](#).

PTO Vice President Leslie Delcid discussed upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. As an opportunity to make a difference in our community, St. Stephen's participates in Socktober every year. Socktober is a national movement to connect young people with their communities by providing socks and financial support to a local organization that serves people experiencing housing insecurity. **Socks are one of the most-needed and least-donated items to shelters.** At St. Stephen's, we are partnering with [Grace Place](#), a non-profit that provides "a safe, welcoming environment for vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness of all sexualities and genders; providing nourishment, healthy relationships, and hope for the future." In addition to clothing, Grace Place also provides food, skills building, connections with mentors, and direct access to other supportive resources. **A collection basket will be in the front of the church by Ms. Whitney's desk throughout October, and you are encouraged to drop off NEW socks any time this month.** The socks will be blessed at chapel and delivered to Grace Place on behalf of St. Stephen's. If you would like to make a monetary donation to support all of the services at Grace Place, you can give by clicking [HERE](#), and 100% of the gifts received through this fund will be passed along to them at the end of the month. In partnership with the school's Socktober efforts, the Church is doing a drive for collecting new and gently used shoes for [Lord of the Streets](#). They are specifically looking for men's shoes, but everything helps. The collection basket is also in the front office near the Socktober baskets.

The PTO is excited to announce a BINGO Night on Wednesday, October 16 at Betsy's (4400 Bellaire Blvd.) from 6 to 8 pm. Bring your family and enjoy dinner and treats while you play! The cards are \$1 each, and all of the proceeds will support the PTO's teacher appreciation efforts, including the upcoming pies and flowers gifts in November and the gift wrap for Holiday Wrap Up in December.

Leslie encouraged everyone to fill volunteer requests from the school. **PTO Communications Secretary Ann Avants** spoke about her ongoing volunteer service of watching the front desk for an hour once a week to give Ms. Whitney the lunch break she deserves. Additional volunteers are requested for this position. If you are able to give an hour in the middle of the day and help out with front desk duties, please contact Liz Newchurch at lnewchurch@sseud.org.

SSESH Annual Fund Co-chair Adrienne Choksi was happy to report a successful kick off for the Annual Fund for 2024/2025. They already have 100% participation from the Board and the PTO Executive Board. Contributions to the Annual Fund can take our school from good to great, and you can give right now (and stop the reminder emails) by clicking [HERE](#). Additionally, please ask your employer if they have a charitable giving matching program.

Dr. Roddy was unable to attend this morning, so **SSESH Principal Nahla Nasser** gave an update about the school. She reiterated the importance of the Annual Fund and how previously donated funds were used for professional development. There is a waitlist for Orientation and Primary, and the school continues to receive many inquiries about

enrollment and tours for all levels. SESH has been accredited for more than 20 years, but they are currently undergoing another accreditation process, and there will be a site visit in December. Please mark your calendar for the upcoming Take your Parent to School Day on October 24 or 25. This is a great opportunity to learn from your children about what they do every day.

SESH Director of Development Kate Booth and **SESH Director of Enrollment Elise Moore** spoke about promoting the school to your circle. The school is in need of positive reviews on Google and Yelp, so please post a few sentences about your experience to help promote the school to people searching for Montessori schools. There was discussion and praise for the school's Instagram account. If you are on that platform, please make an effort to "Like" and comment on the school's posts every day to amplify them in the algorithm.

A parent asked if the school was making efforts to reach out to former families for fundraising, and Kate addressed that question, stating that there is an ongoing effort to engage the alumni. There was additional discussion about volunteer opportunities, and Leslie made a special request for volunteers on the morning of Thursday, November 21 to distribute pies and flowers to all of the teachers and staff. We should be able to get everything done in less than an hour if we have lots of people available to walk the gifts to their intended recipients. Luis brought up Campus Beautification on the morning of October 26. Parents and children are encouraged to sign up to volunteer for this event when the request comes from the church in the upcoming weeks. He specifically mentioned that the Scouts Troop will be there to volunteer, and that gave an opportunity for **Pack Committee Co-chair Diana Rivera** to speak about the SESH Scouts Troop. They meet every other Sunday afternoon at the school or activity locations, and it's a great opportunity for the children to socialize and learn new skills. This year, the troop is selling popcorn to raise money for a new Pinewood Derby track for their annual competition in the spring. You can join Scouts today by clicking [HERE](#).

President Luis gave a closing summary of the meeting and thanked the attendees. The meeting was closed at 8:52 am. The next meeting of the PTO will be on November 7 in the Havens Center at 8:20 a.m. after drop off.