

## **MT. BETHEL PTA REPORT FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**Goal:** The overall goal of Community Outreach at Mt. Bethel was the development and continuation of programs that encouraged cooperative efforts between Mt. Bethel and other members of our community to enhance the well being of all children and their families. We sought to foster in our families a spirit of giving to the community and to include the community in the programs and goals of our PTA and bringing to life our theme, “Our Children. Our Future.”

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** We directed our primary efforts toward our sister school in the further development of the **Powers Ferry Media Center** and **reading programs**. The Committee recruited volunteers to read in the classrooms and assist children in the Media Center and in taking AR tests. Mt. Bethel families donated books from the wish lists at the **Mt. Bethel Book Fair** and (2) Mt. Bethel **Book Swaps**. At the beginning of the school year, we had a school supply drive so that their students would be prepared to learn in the new school year. We also had a stock the pantry drive in the Spring. **Results:** Powers Ferry students were given tools to meet literacy goals. **Resources:** E-mail, the newsletter, website and fliers were valuable tools.

**BIG HELP:** Big Help was a PTA-sponsored student service committee (grades 3 through 5) whose primary goal was to coordinate community service projects for student participation. We had over 60 students participate this year. They promoted their projects school-wide, resulting in the collection of items for charities and donation of community service hours. Some of the many projects these children took on were: making artwork for Children’s Healthcare, adopted a marine battalion in Iraq, recycling, visited a local nursing home, and cleaning our school’s

outdoor Habitat. They also continued their annual support of the Ronald McDonald house throughout the year by collecting soda tabs. These tabs helped offset the medical expenses of the children in the house. **Resources:** Three co-chairs, parent volunteers, and school administrators worked together to make Big Help a success. All of the parents participated in various capacities such as donating snacks, helping in. The Big Help students bought identical lime green T-shirts to wear during meetings to identify themselves as Big Helpers.

**Results:** Response to all projects and drives was excellent. Children gained a sense of leadership, community, and compassion by completing these projects. For this reason, Big Help continues to be a very popular extra-curricular activity at Mt. Bethel. The co-chairs worked especially hard to accommodate this number of participants so that they could all make a better future.

**CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORLD:** For the 6th year, this celebration took place for two weeks. The celebration provided a basis for exploring various world cultures, traditions, and history through 12 Winter Festivals from around the world. Volunteers designed and created exhibits of games, photos, books, artifacts, and information about the celebrations in each culture. **Results:** Parents, teachers, and students gave very positive feedback. Participants explored the rich diversity of the world that is representative of the students at Mt. Bethel and our community. **Resources:** This committee consisted of 2 chairs and an over 30 volunteers contributed to the success. The committee collaborated with Mt. Bethel's Instructional Lead Teacher to develop the theme and display ideas for the Celebrations. Teacher, parent and student volunteers provided all materials.

**WELCOMING:** The Welcoming Committee provided a friendly environment to new families of Mt. Bethel. Newcomers were invited to coffees held twice during the year. Packets about our

PTA, volunteer opportunities, the East Cobb community, and our Partners in Education were provided. Our Principal, Assistant Principals, Counselors, PTA Executive Board, and available Committee Chairs all attended. Each discussed his/her responsibilities. Many of the Committee Chairs present were also new to the community and could share their experiences. New families were given the opportunity to acquire memberships, calendars, and directories at the meetings. Parents could also sign up for E-Minders, were given Room Rep information to make the transition to the classroom seamless, and could also sign up for many different volunteer opportunities. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions about the PTA and the school in a relaxed and inviting setting. Two chairs and nine volunteers worked on this committee. Our second coffee was not only for newcomers, but was opened up to Kindergarten Parents. This was a need expressed the prior year so that those parents can become more comfortable with school procedures as well as better understand what the PTA means to their families. We opened the floor for questions that were directed at PTA, school staff, and administration. This was a huge success and we plan on adding a coffee for parents of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to discuss Middle School. Both coffees were well attended.

**Resources:** Two chairs and eight volunteers worked on this committee. PTA provided funds for postage, printing, refreshments, and paper goods. Kroger, our Partner in Education, provided centerpieces as a giveaway for a lucky newcomer at each coffee.

**Results:** Both coffees were well attended. Families felt welcomed and left with an awareness of volunteer opportunities, answers to questions and new acquaintances. Many took the opportunity to join the PTA and begin their involvement at Mt. Bethel.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Several other committees helped us achieve our goals for Community Outreach. **Fun Run:** The 20th annual Mt. Bethel Fun Run was a 5K race and 1-mile race/walk,

held in November. It was open to the public and promoted community awareness of the need for physical fitness. **Health and Safety Fair:** Held in conjunction with the Fun Run, this event brought in various members of the community such as Cobb County Fire Department, St. Joseph's Hospital, Cobb County Police, and East Cobb Pediatrics. **Membership:** This Committee encouraged all families in the Mt. Bethel community to join the PTA at Meet & Greet, through articles in our PTA newsletter and at our PTA general meetings. In addition, we provided a free, fun-filled *Family Night in the Park(ing Lot)* in September to welcome families, community businesses, and Partners in Education. Our Membership committee also encouraged the school staff to join the PTA and received the **Oak Tree Membership Award** for 100% staff membership. We also went into the community and achieved the **Partnership Membership Award**. **Website:** The Mt. Bethel web site contained useful information concerning the school's events, classes, and organizations. It provided a way for parents to contact teachers and administration as well as links to other helpful sites. Furthermore, it offered information to any member of the community or visitor interested in potential enrollment. **Reflections:** Volunteers from the community and school acted as judges for our Reflections competition. **East Cobb Parade:** In September, the Mt. Bethel PTA participated in the East Cobber Parade, annual community event. Members of the PTA, the school's assistant principals, and the teacher of the year rode on convertibles provided by PTA members. Student marchers included members of the Mt. Bethel unicycle club and student council. **In Conclusion:** This year, community outreach remained one of the most significant focuses of our PTA. The activities of the Community Service, Big Help, and Cultural Celebrations of the World, and many other committees achieved our goal of maintaining Mt. Bethel as a contributing community partner. With the support of parents, students, and community as well as the commitment from the PTA

board and school staff, we were able to continue our essential community outreach efforts and respond to new issues as they arose. With all that has been accomplished, we have learned that we indeed put the pieces in the correct places.

