

HAYCOCK PTA 101

A Guide for Parents



Introduction

On behalf of the PTA, welcome to our Haycock Community!

We work hard to support Haycock's mission of encouraging "the whole child," promoting students' desire for learning, sense of community and appreciation of others. The PTA also seeks to foster communication between parents, students, teachers and school staff.

This guide is intended to be a place for you to learn about all of the wonderful programs that the Haycock PTA supports at our school through volunteer hours as well as financial support. We will highlight how we communicate with the Haycock Community, our Curriculum Enhancement Opportunities, our Social Events, our Fundraising Efforts, our Community Affairs Involvement and how you can help make a difference.

We hope that this guide will help explain some of the programs that you have already been hearing about, and make you excited to volunteer your time to support classroom programs and PTA events.

Please feel free to contact any of the Executive Committee Members listed below with any questions that you may have.

2011-2012 School Year

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COMMUNICATION

Through our various methods of communication, the PTA strives to keep the school community informed about Haycock Happenings, Upcoming Events, and School Board related initiatives and issues.

The Haycock Hotsheet

This weekly email newsletter is our primary method of communication. A few years ago, the PTA decided to move to this format, greatly reducing the amount of paper consumed each week!

Parents and teachers can go to our website www.haycockpta.org to sign up to receive the newsletter each Monday. We refer people to the Hotsheet frequently, and with the reduction in papers sent home, the Hotsheet is often the ONLY place to get informed about events.

Being a PTA Member does not automatically mean a person gets the Hotsheet, they must go to the website to complete that step (see directions below). All new parents and all of our teachers are encouraged to sign up at the beginning of the school year to make sure you know all of the great things going on at Haycock.

The PTA Website – www.haycockpta.org

Speaking of our website, it is a great reference for parents and teachers! We have a running calendar of all the events for the year on the homepage of our site; links to event sign-up information; volunteer opportunities; links to the school website; Blackboard; Dr. Sheer's Blog "Cougar Coffee Talk" – and much MORE!

To register, simply go to the homepage and on the left side of the page click on "Register your family for the school directory and website access." Follow the instructions and fill out the online registration form. Be sure to include your email address! You are now signed up to receive the Haycock PTA Hot Sheet and have access to the members-only information on the website such as the online family directory and ability to register for After School Activities.

It is possible to register and yet opt out of the online directory. This is an option on the Edit Profile page. Also, please understand that registering for the website is a totally separate process from joining the PTA or signing up for Blackboard. If you have questions, please contact us at president@haycockpta.org or if you have problems registering, contact webmaster@haycockpta.org

Tuesday Folders

We have not completely eliminated paper flyers from going home. Each Tuesday, your child will bring home a "Tuesday Folder," an envelope containing schoolwork, a newsletter or

information from the teacher and flyers or communications from the PTA about upcoming events. It can also be used to return papers and forms to the school and PTA.

However, we do limit our paper consumption by distributing these based on a principle of “Oldest and Only”. If a family has 3 children at Haycock, the flyers will only be distributed to the OLDEST child. If a family only has 1 child at Haycock, that child will receive all the communications. This way families will receive one copy of a notice or flyer rather than 3 copies, saving paper, time and money!

For teachers, this means that the PTA will supply you with a list of the “Oldest and Only” children in your class a few weeks into the school year. You will mark those students’ folders so that when you or your volunteers are stuffing folders, the PTA flyers should be sent home with only those children.

For parents, it means making sure that you check your oldest or only child’s Tuesday Folder for all important PTA information.

Directory

The PTA compiles and prints a Student and Family Directory for use by the Haycock Families and Staff. A flyer with information about the Directory comes home the first week of school. Parents need to review all their information for accuracy and have the option to opt out if they choose. All Parents and Teachers who are PTA Members will receive a **free copy** of the Directory. There is also an opportunity to purchase additional copies – great for the car, the office, the babysitter!

PTA Meetings

We encourage all members to attend our monthly PTA Meetings. They are a great opportunity to interact with other parents and teachers and to learn more in-depth information about PTA activities and events, our upcoming renovation and School District issues and initiatives. Our meetings are all listed on the website and the timing is based on input collected by the PTA’s Spring Survey.

School Communications

Our Principal and Teachers also provide many ways to stay informed about what is happening at Haycock and in your child’s classroom.

There are weekly Teacher Newsletters; Blackbaord; the Principal’s monthly newsletter, the Cougar Roar which is posted to the school website; our Principal’s Blog; a Facebook Page (Haycock Cougar), and school’s website www.fcps.edu/HaycockES. Also, please make sure to sign up for Keep In Touch (www.fcps.edu/kit/) – this automated system is used by the

Principal to send out important announcements such as school closings and reminders of school events.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Whether you are coming in to help with reading or math, Junior Great Books, Strategy Lab, stuff Tuesday Folders, assist with a Curriculum Enhancement Program, assist with Colonial Day or Cities, help with a class play, party or other great activity, your time spent at Haycock is greatly valued!!

Teachers will often solicit volunteers for classroom programs and you will also see several calls for volunteers as we get close to dates for our larger social events. In addition, you can fill out the Volunteer Interest Form on the website and be contacted to provide support in areas you are interested in.

When you come to school to volunteer, make sure to stop in the Front Office first and sign-in using the laptop on the counter. Please wear the name badge that prints out and keep it on while you are at school. Then, stop in the office when you are finished and sign out!

We know you will find your time spent at Haycock rewarding both from a personal standpoint and from the knowledge that you are supporting the students, school programs and school staff with your time and effort.

CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT

The PTA sponsors and supports many areas that enrich our students on multiple dimensions of academics, arts and physical activity. Participation that is before or after school requires sign-up and payment by parents. Other efforts the PTA supports, such as Cultural Arts Assemblies and Author Visits happen throughout the year during the school day. Other programs have a dedicated volunteer for each participating classroom, who leads the programs throughout the year.

After School Programs

The PTA offers exciting after school enrichment offerings for Haycock students in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Look for details of these offerings including timing and cost in a Tuesday Folder flyer, on the PTA Hotsheet and on the PTA website. Parents must sign-up for these classes on the Haycock PTA website (see above for directions on how to register on the website). Parents are asked to read all the information carefully and pay attention to any days the class may not be held during the session.

Each after school class has a coordinator who will communicate with the parents in that class and provide the teachers with a list of students enrolled in each class. If a child is not going to

be attending a class, the parent needs to email that class coordinator to inform them of the absence.

FLEX/Global Language Classes

The PTA provides a volunteer to assist with the Fairfax County based FLEX/Global Language Program. This coordinator communicates with the teachers regarding how they may want to participate in the program. Information is sent home to parents regarding the languages offered and details on how parents can sign-up. This program takes place at Haycock before school but is County, NOT PTA, sponsored.

Strategy Lab

We are lucky to have placed a focus at Haycock on providing students with time each month for hands-on learning that fosters creativity, persistence, problem-solving and divergent thinking. Each class gets time each month to play a series of games, puzzles or activities and needs parent help to make the session successful. Classroom teachers will solicit volunteers. The training is provided by our Advanced Academic Resource teacher, and no previous experience is necessary. The games are great fun, and it is a fun way to watch the children engage in creative thinking.

Cougar Woods

The first part of this PTA funded program relies on parent volunteers to organize, lead and assist classroom teachers with outdoor education and learning activities. Training and lesson materials are provided to our classroom volunteers. Each classroom participating in Cougar Woods programs needs at least one volunteer.

The second part relies on volunteers to help with the outdoor landscape all around the school. Fairfax County does not provide for any funds or staff – our volunteers are the ones to maintain and update our landscape. Through work nights and garden angels, we weed, prune, mulch and maintain the garden beds around our school. If gardening is your thing – look out for these opportunities.

Art Appreciation

All participating classrooms need at least one volunteer to help lead quarterly lessons for this PTA funded program. Volunteers receive all needed training, supplies and lesson plans from the committee. No art talent required!

Each quarter a lesson is planned around a specific artist highlighting a unique style. During the lesson, the students learn more about that artist and get a chance to emulate the style in a project of their own. This program is separate from Art Class and is done right in the classroom. It's a great way to engage students in a creative outlet.

Junior Achievement

This PTA-sponsored program relies on free materials professionally developed for each grade by the Junior Achievement Organization. This program educates students on important age appropriate economic concepts that will ultimately enhance their understanding of the world around them.

Each participating class needs a volunteer who will present the lessons in the late spring. Training and all materials are provided by the PTA Junior Achievement Coordinator. The time commitment will involve weekly lessons which typically begin after Spring Break for the younger classes and after SOL exams for older classes. The exact schedule is determined by the teacher and parent volunteer.

Reflections

This is a National PTA sponsored program which is a creative expression competition. It's an excellent creative outlet for students. There are local winners determined by a Committee which then move up to other levels of competition.

Submissions are due in the fall, dates and deadlines will be in the Hotsheet and flyers that are sent home in Tuesday Folders. Winners are notified and participate in a celebration in the spring.

Star Reading

This is a classroom reading program that encourages and celebrates literature in the classroom and library. The volunteers for this committee collect gently-used books and purchase new books that teachers earn with "reading credits." Teachers can look for more information from the Star Reading Coordinator during the year.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Social events serve many purposes at Haycock. For our largest events, they are an excellent way to bring our entire school together. They are also often ways for the PTA to raise additional funds to support our programs.

All-School Events

Our largest all-school activities provide a range of great ways to get together, have fun and celebrate our community.

Movie Night is a free event, held in September with a movie on the back field; it's a great way to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones!

The PTA holds a Fall Family Event. Some years it is a Halloween costume party with refreshments, activities and a performance. Other years it is an outdoor celebration with games, food, activities.

International Night is a chance to come together and celebrate all of the cultures represented at Haycock. This event is free to families and is a great way to share our heritage and backgrounds with each other.

The Fun Fair provides a great carnival like atmosphere complete with games, food, a bake sale and the famous Cake Walk. Information for this event and others will be widely circulated in the Hotsheet and with flyers that come home with ticket information. There is always a great need for parent volunteers to make it an exciting day for the whole school.

Our Trek Fun Run is a 5K run/walk in the neighborhood surrounding the school. It's a great way for everyone to contribute to Haycock's Wellness Scorecard and show their support for a lifetime of health and fitness.

Room Parents

Teachers will be asking for volunteers to serve as a Room Parent. Being a Room Parent is a great way to be involved in your child's classroom. There is a Room Parent Coffee in the fall held by the PTA to provide information and ideas, and allow you to meet other Room Parents in your grade. Room Parents often work in teams on events during the year.

Your class Room Parent will be another source of communication during the year and will be reaching out for help and support - please help them when you can!!!

Hospitality

This committee works throughout the school year to coordinate events and celebrations to thank our teachers, specialists, administrators and school-wide staff for everything they do. In addition, we provide things like the water in the Teacher's Lounge for the entire staff.

Some events include the breakfasts we hold throughout the year sponsored by various grade levels. Your Room Parents will reach out to help solicit contributions for your grade's assigned breakfast.

We will also announce other days for things like Bus Driver Appreciation Days; Administrative Assistant Appreciation Days, etc., throughout the year. Remember that a hand written, thoughtful thank you from you and your child is always a valuable way to show your appreciation!

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an important part of the PTA's job. While we are grateful to attend such an excellent school, Fairfax County does not provide all the funding necessary for everything we would like our students and teachers to have and do.

One area we have been underfunded in was technology in the classroom. Thanks to efforts by our families over the past four years, we now have Smart Boards in all classrooms and additional laptop carts for use by our students.

But, we aren't done! We need to continue to improve the technology available to our teachers and students. We also want to make sure that our teachers have opportunities for additional training and development. We want our students to be able to go on outstanding field trips to enhance what they learn in the classroom. We want to fund educational programs like Math Counts, Science Olympiad, Continental Math and others. We want to make sure that students who need financial assistance can receive it.

In addition to providing funding directly to the school for the resources and opportunities described above, the PTA funds the majority of the programs and events you have been reading about in this handbook.

We pride ourselves on keeping our operating expenses low so that we can put as much money as possible into our programs and to give directly to our school.

The PTA Budget is presented and voted on at the first PTA meeting and details how we plan to raise money each year and where we will be spending the money.

You will get information on the menu of fundraising choices that we have put together and we hope that you will participate and help support our efforts to enhance our school.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Our Community Affairs committees focus on informing the Haycock community about events within Haycock as well as those in the greater community that affect Haycock. They also facilitate relationships between Haycock and the greater community.

Haycock Happenings

In addition to the Hotsheet and Haycock PTA Website that were fully described above, Community Affairs committees organize the Back to School Folders, the PTA Bulletin Board, the copying for all Tuesday Folders flyers, publicity about Haycock happenings, and the school's Yearbook that is produced in conjunction with 6th grade students and teacher representatives.

Community Involvement

Members of Community Affairs committees attend meetings of The Superintendents' Parent Advisory Committee, the Fairfax County Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, the MCA and other state and local affairs organizations and report back to keep the Haycock community up-to-date with happenings that affect Haycock.

Cougars Care

This committee works to coordinate and market to the Haycock community the benefits of outreach opportunities that provide a variety of services to those in need, i.e., blood drives, food collections, clothing drives, collecting winter coats, toys for less fortunate families, etc. They provide us a way to model to our children the importance of giving back to those in need in our community.

Thanks for reading this far!! As you can see, we do a lot at Haycock to support and enhance our already outstanding school.

We can't do it alone. The strength and effectiveness of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) can be greater than the sum of its parts.

We hope that you take the time to show your support and join the PTA, to volunteer for a program or committee that interests you and participate in the fundraisers that appeal to you to help fund all of these outstanding programs!

We sincerely thank you in advance for your assistance and support!