

June 2, 2010

Dear Argonne Parent Community,

As the school year draws to a close, we want to share with you some of our thoughts about the past year at Argonne and ask for your help in the year to come.

The Year That Was

It's been another terrific year for our school. Argonne offers a caring, stimulating, rigorous, safe, joyous and well-rounded learning environment for our kids. Field Day, Field Trips, Reading Buddies, Caring Schools, Art-in-Action, Lunar New Year Celebration, Russian Language Learning, Poem in Your Pocket, Science Fair, Mayfair, School Chorus, Children's Playground, Academy of Sciences, K Playground Clean-up, New Parent Picnics, Pen-pals, Fort Mason, Kickball, Dance Ensemble, Spirit Days,...the list goes on and on.

We want to thank Argonne's teachers and staff who put so much energy into helping our children flourish. Special thanks to our principal and PTO co-chair, Robin Sharp.

Robin's caring and social justice-centered vision is, in many respects, our school's heartbeat and its conscience. We also want to thank all of Argonne's parent volunteers. Whether you contribute your time in the classroom, in the library, in the computer lab, writing checks and paying bills, translating, stuffing folders, raising money, organizing events, chaperoning field trips, umpiring kickball games, setting up exhibits, leading committees, taking pictures, buying supplies, painting faces or just making sure your kids are prepared each day, Argonne's parent community helps make it one of this City's finest and most special schools.

This year, our PTO worked hard to make sure Argonne continues to have the resources to provide our kids with all of the activities, programs and support they deserve. We proudly raised over \$120,000 and kept to the budget parents and teachers set in the beginning of the year. In the face of District budget cuts, the PTO has also been asked to provide additional funding for "core services and support" in the classrooms. In order to support basic reading, writing and math curricula, additional PTO dollars will fund our reading team and the social and emotional support Argonne provides to students and their families.

On a personal note, this was our second and final year as PTO co-chairs. We have done our best to promote and support all that Argonne does well and have tried to tap into all the potential in our community to become even more special for our kids and their families. Next year, we will turn over the PTO parent co-chair roles to David Silberman and Robin Morjikian. David and Robin are both incredibly talented and dedicated to our school. They will no doubt strengthen the Argonne community through their leadership.

We Need More Parents Like You

With school funding under attack, the PTO will need parent involvement and parent help more than ever. If you are already involved, stay involved. If you can do more, we ask that you do. Because of parent support and well-managed PTO budgets, we are able to meet this year's budget challenge by relying, in part, on some reserves. But, our community must also understand that if the PTO is going to play a larger role in supporting Argonne's curriculum, programming and family services, we **MUST** raise more money. Our 2010-11 proposed budget contemplates raising \$150,000 -- a 25% increase from last year. Each year, the PTO raises money for our school through our annual giving letter, Mayfair, and several other fundraising activities. For context, our proposed budget means that we will need to raise approximately \$450 for every Argonne student to meet our goal.

But, we need more than money. We need your talent and support. The PTO is specifically seeking people who are willing to take on the following responsibilities:

- *Communications* -- We need committed parent volunteers willing to help make sure we are communicating with each other effectively. We are looking for those willing to help publish a weekly (mostly on-line) newsletter, design and manage an Argonne website, ensure up to date email addresses and phone numbers for Argonne families and develop and implement other effective communication strategies. This should be job for a team, not just one individual.
- *Technology* -- We need committed parent volunteers willing to work with teachers, staff, district representatives and consultants to help Argonne better implement technology in the classroom. We will be hoping to secure a grant to help us in this area. In addition, we need anyone with Macintosh administration skills to help on an ongoing basis to help the lab running smoothly. If you would like to add to this team or know others who have these skills, please let us know!
- *Fundraising/Resource Development* -- We need added parent volunteers willing to help us pursue grants, develop partnerships and fundraise, fundraise and fundraise. This includes the giving letter, Mayfair and all the other new ideas we can deploy next year to increase our goals! We have a great crew that works tirelessly for our school, but they can always use an extra pair of hands....
- *English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)* -- We need committed Chinese speaking parents who will work with our current ELAC chair to monitor, promote and support the learning of our students of limited English proficiency and with advising the PTO in connection with bilingual education programs and plans.
- *Programming* -- We need committed parent volunteers willing to help us plan special programs and events.

- *Volunteer coordinating* -- We need set, committed parent volunteer coordinators to help us recruit and track parent volunteers to make sure we leverage all the resources available and have us organized and ready for any activity that needs a pair of hands!
- *Schoolyard Greening* -- We need committed parent volunteers willing to lead Argonne through a conversation and later planning and development of a schoolyard greening initiative.

Please consider joining us in the coming year, we need you and we promise you will have fun and really enjoy getting to know the school, the parents and the staff a bit better.

We hope you enjoy a wonderful break and we look forward to seeing you here for the start of summer session on July 6th.

Many thanks,

Phil Ginsburg and Adina Safer
Outgoing Parent PTO Co-Chairs