

Caraway Elementary PTA 2012-13 Annual Report

PTA's Purpose

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship;
- To raise the standards of home life;
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth;
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth;
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Membership

Texas PTA is committed to helping every child reach his or her potential. Texas PTA offers parent education, programs for the health and well-being of children, programs designed to inspire creativity in the arts and environment, continuing education opportunities for teachers and administrators, and support for individual Local PTAs through training, resources, guidance, programs, materials, answers on managing a small non-profit association, and ideas for success. Learn more about how you can join the largest child advocacy association in the nation. Over 500,000 parents, educators, students and community members join hands across Texas.

- We care about children.
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- We care about education.
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- We care about parents.
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- Join us today.

2012-13 Caraway PTA Board Members

President:	Gigi Winkelman
1 st VP	Christina Carrier
2 nd VP	Mark Albert
3 rd VP	Julie Cooper
Treasurer	Stephanie Coates
Secretary	Suzanne Tappe
Parliamentarian	Julie Tafoya
Historian	Mary Ann Fitch

2012-13 Caraway PTA Committees

Bike Rodeo; chair, Mike Barrett

The Bike rodeo is a beginning level cycling skills and safety course presented with the intent of making the students safer on their bicycles and more likely to ride to school. Riding is a preferable to being in the car rider line for immediate concerns to traffic congestion, particularly at morning drop off, and maybe more importantly to get our student more active while they are getting somewhere.

The event comprises safety inspections of the bicycles. Instructions is given on wearing a helmet properly; including fitting their helmet when appropriate and making sure every participant has a helmet in good condition by giving away new bike helmets. After the equipment safety inspections, the skills course is a fun way to learn and practice cycling safety including bike handling and elementary rules of the road.

With sponsorship of local businesses we were able to provide expert mechanical inspection and adjustment of the kids' bikes and provide many of our Caraway community with new bike helmets. Thanks got to Bicycle Sport Shop and Aaron for donating his time. Also to Dr. Sharon Hausman-Cohen for sponsoring the helmet give-away. The helmets are provided by the Texas Medical Association's "Hard Hats for Little Heads" program through a grant from the Texas Medical Foundation. We must mention TMA's outreach coordinator, Tammy Wishard, who once again walked us through the grand process with diligence and patience beyond measure. Mrs. Wishard is a former Caraway parent.

For our rain delayed event on Saturday, October 6, we had over 100 children register for the event, we distributed 100 helmets and had a perfect safety record.

BoxTops for Education; chair, Colleen Miller

This was the second year PTA coordinated the BoxTops for Education program and it was once again a huge success. We held a school-wide collection contest in the fall and the Spring. The events were publicized on the KOWL news, in the PTA newsletters, through the teacher and with poster in the school hallways of each grade level.

The 2012-13 BoxTop campaign tallied to around 30,000 BoxTops resulting in \$3,000.00 to invest in educational programs for your children.

Cafeteria Monitor Program; chair, Tamara Amos

This year the Cafeteria Monitor Program provided support to the Kathy Caraway Staff in the cafeteria and on the playground during lunchtime. The duties of the volunteers included the following: helping to enforce standard of behavior in the cafeteria, assisting students in opening lunch containers, helping students cross the crosswalk to the playground safely, and providing additional adult presence on the playground. Volunteers selected their own dates from the Caraway PTA Website. The Cafeteria Monitor Chair reached out to contact volunteers to ask for their assistance, communicated with volunteers regarding their duties, sent out reminder emails, and volunteered in the cafeteria when necessary.

We are deeply appreciative of all the volunteers who participated in this program. These volunteers gave up their personal time to essentially perform duties which normally would be by the school staff members, in order to give the teachers additional lunchtime and students additional recess. This program, which gives the children about 20 extra minutes of recess time per day, allows them to return to class better able to focus on their work, increases physical activity to prevent obesity, and increases valuable time needed to work on social skills.

Caraway Cares; chairs, Lysa Kornfeld, Wendy Betron, and Jenny Krueger

“Caraway Cares” teaches the students about appreciating our community and giving back. Earth Week, “Caraway Cares” spent an entire week promoting our Earth. The week ended with a Recycled Hat Day and parade. Thanks to all who helped further the kids education about what it means to give back.

Caraway Scholarship; chair, Michelle Lane

The Kathy Caraway Elementary scholarships are awarded each year to two Westwood seniors that also graduated from Caraway Elementary. These seniors each receive a \$500.00 scholarship. In February, Ivonne Natale, Mary Brocato and Michelle Lane read through the submitted applications and chose Tina Houston and Brandon Klingemann as the recipients for 2013. A letter of Award is presented to these students at the Westwood senior awards night in May.

Carnival/Harvest Festival; chair Shelby Soleimani

A roaring success! The weather cooperated and families came together to enjoy a FUNfield day. Shelby had a team of volunteers that consisted of UT Students, Westwood High School Students, Canyon Vista Students, Teachers/staff, and Caraway Parents. The volunteers hour calculated into approximate 2,000 hours. The Harvest Festival raised about \$5,000.00. This was based on wristband sales, business sponsorships, and family sponsorships. The monies are used towards enriching each and every child at Caraway Elementary, such as field trips, books for the library, arts and science programs.

Curriculum Enrichment; Chair Debbie Brandes

This is one of the largest budget items for the PTA. This is money that PTA puts directly back into our child's classrooms. Each grade level is given an amount to spend based on it's number of students. The team of teachers from each grade level decides the best way to use the money to enrich the curriculum. These funds provide for field trips and presentations and projects as well as books and classroom supplies. Students experience many opportunities throughout the year that are only possible because of the money from PTA.

Kindergarteners got to enjoy a field trip to the Austin Zoo. They dissected owl pellets in class to determine what an owl eats and had an animals and birds presentation visit from the Austin Nature Science Center. They observed caterpillars metamorphosis into butterflies and released them. They went on a tour of the Natural History Museum. Also, they enjoyed many teacher-made cooking lessons, sampling included!

First Grade experienced the symphony of many cheeps in the class when they hatched chick eggs. Naming the chicks, observing their growth, and just plain joy of having a temporary class "pet" was one of the highlights of first grade. They went on 2 field trips, one to the Bob Bullock Museum and the other to the Elgin Tree Farm. Teachers purchased book boxes to help students with in-class organization. Students enjoyed many edible lessons, one of which was an edible landforms constructed from chocolate kisses, graham crackers and icing.

Second Graders went to the Klett Performing Arts Center in Round Rock and were treated to a live play, Cinderella, to complete their unit on fairy tales. They also got a spring field trip to the Austin Nature Science Center as a culmination to their animal unit. Teacher also purchased books to enhance the curriculum.

Third Graders took several field trips, which included a play, hands-on science, and history lesson. Students also benefited with potted plants when studying the plant unit in science. Students got to take home soda bottle fish tanks at the end of their ecosystems study. Teachers purchased book boxes to assist students organize their on-desk items.

Curriculum Enrichment; continued

Fourth Graders remembered the Alamo! They spent an entire day in San Antonio at the IMAX and the Institute of Texan Cultures after spending the year 4th grade Texas History.

Fifth Graders capped off their elementary years with a trip to Reunion Ranch, where they spent the day in teamwork to encourage and support each other and to challenge their own person. For some, it meant stepping out of their comfort zone and believing in themselves. Additional trips for the 5th graders included a tour of the Red Bud Center and the Water Show at the convention center, where they focused on water and LCRA efforts to preserve and manage our water system in Central Texas.

In addition to the grade levels, many other departments received Curriculum Enrichment Funds from the PTA:

Ms. Padilla in Music had purchased materials (cds, books, sheet music, etc) to enhance the music program, including Caraway Choir.

Ms. Conti in Art purchased supplies which helps all our budding Caraway artists. She also provided supplies towards the Fifth Grade Art Gala.

The P.E. Department has purchased some needed equipment and materials to help the children strive and maintain a healthy lifestyle with physical activity, including the creation of the Running Club and a fun-filled Field Day.

Ms. Letendre has purchased many more wonderful books for our Library for the students to enjoy.

Other departments that received C.E. (Curriculum Enrichment) funds included: T.A.G. (Talented and Gifted), Special Education, Adaptive PE, Technology, Counseling, Intervention, Dyslexia, and PPCD. Each of these areas purchased supplies and other material for our students.

This school year all of the Curriculum Enrichment funds have been used to provide new and exciting learning opportunities for children both inside and outside the classroom.

Clothes Close; chair, Valerie Armstrong

Caraway Elementary receives donations of gently used clothing from Caraway families and ensures they are transported to the RRISD Clothes Closet monthly. The RRISD Close Closet provide five sets of clothing (pants, tops, socks, underwear) and a coat per semester to RRISD students in need. Caraway is assigned a 2 hour shift the second Tuesday of each month to “work” in the Clothes Closet. Caraway donated clothes throughout the year and volunteers donated their time to sort and hang clothes. Caraway organized as Clothing Drive the first few weeks of February, “Share, Care, Give a Pair”, which was a huge success. To see the expressions on the faces of the parent and kids – when they pick up their coat/jacket – is “priceless”. This is truly a great service for kids in need.

Directory; chairs, Dean Score and Dawn Stokes

This publication contains contact for all Caraway Students. It is distributed only to the Caraway families and staff. Printing costs are funded by local business through advertising sales. We raised enough funds to cover local printing cost. Each student is given one directory, while additional copies can be per-ordered for purchase at the beginning of the school year on the “One Stop Shop” form.

Many thanks to all of the teachers who helped with data collection forms as well as to a team of Caraway parent volunteers from planning to distribution.

Family Dinner Night; chairs, Julie Cooper and Gigi Winkelman

Family Dinner Night is Caraway PTAs final fundraiser of the year. The fundraiser took place in the School Cafeteria on Saturday, March 5th, 2013. Nearly 600 people attended this fun, 50's themed event catered by Austin's own Pterry's Burger Stand. The evening included basket drawings that included, iTouch, Razor Scooter, American Girl Doll, and more! The staff, faculty, and teachers at Caraway also raffled off one-of-a-kind services, including a trip to Amy's Ice Cream by our Principal, Shelly Hohmann. Over 100 businesses donated items to our Silent Auctions. We raised \$9,000.00 to help fund our school and classroom enrichment programs.

Give a HOOT Educational Fund Drive; chair Leslie Wellons

This is the first PTA fundraiser of the school year. Instead of selling merchandise, we heard parents request to simplify fundraising by providing one-time cash in-kind donation per child. 2012-13 Fundraising efforts raised around \$20,000.00. This campaign funded our curriculum enrichment, educational software, outreach, and scholarship programs.

Green Team; chairs, Richard Fowler & Jodi Shores

October is the annual Kindergarten seed stomp and replanted the PPCD garden with kid-safe, deer and drought resistant plants.

Green Team is working with the principal and future Eagle Scout to continue to provide Eco-friendly projects that will be sustainable for many years to come.

The Green Team celebrated Earth Day a bit fishy this year. Students found out from the Whole Foods fish expert what Sustainable Fishing and Seafood was all about. The fish expert brought seven different fish for students to learn about up close. The focus was how we can protect our oceans, lakes, and rivers in order to sustain the fish habitat for years to come. The kids had a great time after the talk being able to hold the fish (with gloved hands).

Healthy Lifestyles; chair, Marci Shrull

This year we organized two successful Walk & Bike to school days. We continue to see strong participation. We also purchased playground balls for each grade to use at recess. Three tether-ball poles were installed in the Fall and we see lines of children waiting to play every day.

Our 2nd annual Family Fun Night was well attended. We had many volunteers both from the school and the community leading games and fitness areas as well as nutrition areas.

Homeroom Parent Coordinator; chair, Erin Simmons

This role involved coordination the homeroom parents and was very helpful in getting messages out through these parents all year. Thank you to all those who volunteered to be Homeroom Parents this year. You helped plan the class parties, and recruit volunteers for school-wide events. The main role of the Parent Coordinator of each class is to communicate throughout the year with homeroom parents of events, parties, Teacher Appreciation Week.

Hospitality; Chairs, Kathleen Jennings and Missy Lofton

The annual Thanksgiving Pie Drive has become tradition to provide each Caraway staff member with a pie right before the Thanksgiving holiday. The Hospitality committee organize this event each year by requesting a pie for each teacher and support staff from homeroom parents. Parents of Caraway have given generously to this great cause.

To help alleviate the stress of the STAAR test, Texas' new standardized testing tool, the hospitality committee is providing small healthy snacks to Teachers and Staff to keep them focused and energized through the testing period. Throughout the 7 day testing period in March and April, take-and-go snacks such as pretzels, trail mix, fruit, granola, etc. are available in the teachers lounge.

The committee also provides a lunch for all teacher/staff during Teacher Appreciation week in the month of May.

Legislative Representative; chair, Kellyn Bradford

The RRISD Council of PTAs hosted two candidate forum this year. The legislative representative formed of 4 PTA members who meet and create the questions for the candidates to answer at the two candidate forums. Both forums were well attended and council received positive feedback from the candidates on the forums. In addition the committee crated 5 questions for each candidate to answer and then posted on the PTA Council website.

Legislative Representative; cont'd

The legislative representative along with 50 PTA members attended Texas PTA Rally Day in February. PTA members met with their legislators to discuss their concerns regarding high stakes testing, education funding, vouchers and school safety. In addition, during the current legislative session, the legislative from our students either by passing out fliers to law makers as they prepare to vote on bill or by testifying in front of either Senate or House education communities. The Legislature has passed HB 5 which will alleviate many of the over testing of our students. Thank you to our parents for calling their law makers and making their voice heard, it worked.

Math Pentathlon; chair, Manoj Kumar

Math Pentathlon is a program of interactive problem-solving games, supportive curricular and instructional activities, and assessment tools for primary school children. This motivational program strengthens basic math concepts and skills, aligns with National and State Mathematics Standards, critical feature of this program is linkage of arithmetic reasoning with geometric/spatial and logical/scientific thinking. At Caraway we have three groups at different grade levels that meet once a week. Students are taught the rules of the game by parents or high school volunteers. By the end of the year, the students master these games. PTA monies were used to purchase games and instructional materials and to help subsidize tournament fees. We started the year with 72 kids participating in weekly club meetings. 32 of the kids went to regional tournaments, and the Caraway teams metaled in all three divisions.

Membership; chair Gigi Winkelman

The Membership Committee works to recruit Caraway families to join PTA. There were opportunities to join the Parent Teacher Association events throughout the year. Two dollars of the \$6.50 goes directly to our school and the balance to state and national PTA. This year we had 450+ members.

Principal Pride; chair Kathleen Trail

What a fantastic year for Principal's Pride! The teachers' participation in the 2012-13 school year has been amazing, with thoughtful and heartfelt nominations submitted each week. Our front hallway bulletin board featured photos and nomination cards for the Principal Pride nominees, updated each week by Nurse Judy Gullen.

Principal Pride; cont'd

On Friday mornings parents of nominated students come to watch their children as they are recognized as leaders of their classroom for the week. The ceremony is conducted by Ms. Hohmann, Ms. Thompson, and Ms. Vrazel. Parent volunteers for this committee were Tammy Saxon, Kathleen Trail, Alexandra Loukas, and Judy Lopato.

Publicity; chairs, Tammy Saxon and Kathleen Jennings

Publicity for the PTA includes first, the school marquis and second communication with the media. Thank you Tammy for keeping the marquis current with upcoming school-related events. PTA extends its gratitude to Kathleen Jennings for being a liaison between our school and the media when sponsored events are promoted.

Reflections; chair, Kandis Hendricks

Based on the theme “The Magic of a Moment”, students submitted entries in the categories of photography, visual arts, literature, and musical composition. We received 60 entries and of those 17 received the Award of Excellence and advanced to Council to compete with entries from other schools. One entry won the States competition and advanced to Nationals. We look forward to continuing this program in the future as it encourages our students to showcase their talents and creativity.

Red Ribbon Week; chair, Kelly Babbitt

Red Ribbon Week was held October 22-26, 2012. This is a national drug prevention campaign to get our students and parents to show their support for a drug free community. Kelly Babbitt worked closely with Caraway's school counselor, Susan Creason-Vrazel, to facilitate the program. Banners were hung on the by the school entries and students were invited to participate in dressing in fun clothing through out the week to show case their support to live a drug free life.

Lego Robotics; chairs, Mary Ann Fitch, Mark Doran, and Anita Pradeep

The Lego Robotics program at Caraway has expanded this year growing the number of students participation to over 80 students. 2011-12 Lego Robotics worked with 4th & 5th grade program. 2012-13 the Lego Robotics supported 4th & 5th grade as well as opening additional dates for 1st thru 3rd grade classes. This program meets after school and is supported by Caraway parent volunteers as well as two sponsor/volunteers from National Electronics, Daniel Simpson and Keith Malan. Lego Robotics teacher representative in 2012-13 was Mr. Sosa. Mr. Sosa worked after school and on some weekends to assure its success.

A team of 3 Caraway students were invited to participate in the RRISD Robotics Showcase at McNeil Highschool.

Science Fair; chair, Bill Lackowski

This year Kathy Caraway Elementary held its annual science fair on January 31st. We had one of the largest turnouts ever with 182 student entries. The judges were kept busy and had a difficult job picking the best projects to represent Caraway in the Austin Energy Regional Fair. 20 winner from all grades were chosen as 2013 winners and received a medal. The winners were showcased on the school KOWL news. The winners from 3rd – 5th grades were able to move onto the Austin Energy Regional Fair. Eight student received 1st place honors. Congratulations to all the students who participated and those staff/parent volunteers for judging

Science Night; chair, Jodi and Kelly Shores

We are happy to report 2012 Science Night continued in the tradition of successful events! A huge and enthusiastic crowd 550+ attended Science Night, October 2012. Our theme this year was STEM. Activities, experiments and exhibits focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Students were able to Catch the Beat with Math, and activity run by parent volunteers from IBM. Mr. Foux brought his reptiles for an up close view of snakes, lizards and more. Back by popular demand was the Laser Maze. National Instruments donated the robotic activity. Students were able to design a box that would protect an egg dropped from the roof of the school.

Science Night; cont

The Little Lab was in full swing for our youngest budding scientist. Paper airplane making, giant Jenga, liquid light exhibit, catapult, air powered rockets, number games and a real wind turbine rounded out the awesome activities participants were about to see and do.

We had strong support from our community partners this year as well. The hot air balloons were again a big favorite. Thank you Central Texas Ballooning for bringing three huge colorful balloons to fill the sky over Caraway. Charles Maund Toyota displayed an electric car for families to check out. Austin Energy and Girlstart were back with fun and educational experiments. And thank you to our kind donations from HEB, Austin's Pizza, and the Blue Baker.

As always, Science Night is a team effort starting with the generous support of the Caraway PTA, Teachers/staff, and 75 Science Night Volunteers, without those support the evening would not be possible. A huge thank you to the committee members who spent their time designing, building, sanding, folding, transporting, testing, screen printing and much much more, Your dedication to this event makes it happen. Thank you!

Yearbook; chairs, Tammy Saxon, Kelly Babbitt

The Yearbook chairs compile and arrange for publication of yearbook, handbook or directory for the Local PTA's members. The purpose of the yearbook is to give relevant facts and figures about the Local School.

The chairs had many wonderful Caraway Parents volunteer their time to take pictures of in-class projects, field trips, as well as Caraway PTA sponsored events.

Thank you to all who participated in the planning to the delivery of the Caraway Yearbook. These memories captured will last a lifetime.

A Note from our PTA President;

“Gratitude” was the motto that our principal and faculty embraced this year after district level budget cuts were less severe than expected. Kathy Caraway Elementary's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) also embraced this motto since we have much to be grateful for at Caraway. In addition to having a stellar faculty and staff, Caraway is one of only 5% of Texas schools to receive and “exemplary” state rating.

It has been a great year for Caraway PTA, thanks to many wonderful volunteers.

A word from our Principal;

Dear Caraway Parents,

This has been “The Year of Gratitude”, because we were able to keep many of the employees who we thought would have to leave us based on legislative budget cuts for education. We are so pleased to have these staff members remain on our campus, and I truly can't imagine how we could have done without them! Another source of gratitude is the supportive partnership we share with our Caraway parents. Our teachers feel blessed that their students have parents who truly care about their education and serve as willing participants in school activities. Finally, we are extremely grateful for the respectful, inquisitive, funny, and loving children you send to our school. They make it worthwhile!

We know that you do so much to make our school a special, close-knit place. Because of this positive culture, our children benefit from their teachers and parents working together in their best interest. Thank you for modeling respect for school and all of its components.

Thanks again for all you do for our school. Your children greatly benefit from your involvement and interest.

Sincerely,

Shelly Hohmann