



**Kathy Caraway
Elementary PTA
2014-15 Annual Report**

2014-15 Caraway PTA Board Members

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A Note from the PTA President

Kathy Caraway Elementary PTA had a great year in 2014-15. It was a year of change, as we welcomed a new principal, new staff members, new students and families, and new board members and volunteers. As you can see in the reports from the various program chairs, our volunteers tackled a variety of projects with the goal of enhancing the experience our children had at Caraway Elementary. We tried to improve the experience of every single child at our school in many ways, whether it was through financial support of academic programs, providing funding and volunteers for Field Day, or enhancing the social aspects of school by publishing a student directory as well as a yearbook.

None of our efforts would have been possible without the financial support of families who donated to our Give-a Hoot campaign, or attended events like Harvest Festival, Family Dinner Night, and our Spirit Nights. We also benefitted from the support of our great Caraway staff, from the office to the school faculty to every last support person and school employee. And finally, nothing would have been possible without the unpaid work of our PTA volunteers who put in countless hours on our many different programs to make a difference in our kids' lives. The descriptions in this annual report are only a snapshot of their hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm.

Stephanie Coates

PTA President, 2014-15

A Word from our Principal, Katrina Bailey

As the school year comes to an end, I wanted to personally take the opportunity to thank you for allowing me to serve as your child's principal. It has been both an honor and a pleasure to have been their instructional leader this school year. Throughout the year, I have been able to watch students blossom both socially and academically. Our teachers and staff members have given in and of themselves, and have worked tirelessly to ensure that we met the needs of all students this school year.

As we move in to our second year, "New Beginnings" is the catch phrase that comes to mind. I am excited about the future of Caraway and our partnership as a community to continue doing what is best for kids.

Best Regards,

Katrina Bailey, Principal

2014-15 Caraway PTA Committees

Bike Rodeo; Sirish Pande, chair

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 to school reduces congestion in the car rider line and encourages physical activity.

The event started with safety inspections of the bicycles. Volunteers checked that bike helmets fit properly and were in good condition. New helmets were given to students who needed them. After the equipment safety inspections, the skills course provided a fun way to learn and practice cycling safety including bike handling and elementary rules of the road.

Thanks to the sponsorship of local businesses and the Texas Medical Association, 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.

Box Tops for Education; Christine Higdon, chair

Box Top collections provided a fun way for the kids to help raise money for the school. Each Box Top was worth 10 cents and could be found on many common family food and household items. We conducted two major collections this year, tied to Box Tops for

Education submission deadlines in March and November. We included a contest to motivate the kids, giving away small prizes and free recesses to the winners. We collected enough Box Tops to earn over \$3,000 for PTA programs this year.

Caraway Cares; Tonyia Cone & Sheri Pinsonneault, chairs

In early April, students at Caraway Elementary came together to support RRISD students in need. Caraway Student Council, PTA's Caraway Cares Committee, and the Caraway Elementary Clothes Closet representative, Blythe Christopher de Orive, joined forces to organize a week-long underwear and sock drive for the RRISD Clothes Closet, a service project conducted by the Round Rock Council of PTAs that provides gently used clothing as well as new socks and underwear to RRISD students. Caraway students donated 13 packages of girls' underwear, 10 packages of girls' socks, 10 packages of boys' underwear, and 12 packages of boys' socks. Each package included at least six items. Caraway Cares and Blythe Christopher de Orive organized the drive. Student Council made signs and a video that aired on KOWL morning news to publicize the event. No PTA funds were used.

Caraway Cares and Student Council held a food drive for the Capital Area Food Bank from May 18 through May 22, 2015. No PTA funds were needed or used to host the food drive. During the 2013-14 school year, Caraway Cares set a goal of 450 pounds, and 900 pounds were collected. This year, Caraway Cares requested the help of Student Council, and a goal of 1,000 pounds was set. StuCo made signs, placed them around the school, and made video clips that aired on KOWL morning news. With the amazing efforts of StuCo, more than 1,900 pounds of food were collected. The timing of this drive came at

the best possible time. Just three days after the food drive ended, a tragic flood devastated parts of our surrounding areas. More than ever, the CAFB needed canned goods to help families who lost so much.

Caraway Scholarship; Ivonne Natal, chair

The scholarship committee was comprised of 3 parent volunteers (Qing Jia and Jennie Phillips, along with the committee chair, Ivonne Natal). In early April, the committee selected two graduating Westwood High School seniors who were KCE alumni to each receive a \$500 scholarship.

The scholarship was based primarily on need. However, the students also demonstrated strong academic performance, and participation in school activities and/or community service. The committee also evaluated any extenuating circumstances presented by the students in the short essay portion of the application. The committee considered the entirety of each applicant's particular circumstances and considered if the award would make a difference in their college experience. The recipients for 2015 awards are Andrew Goin and Lindsey Goldsmith. The award letter was presented to these students at the Westwood senior awards night in May. Students will coordinate disbursements of funds with the PTA treasurer by September 2015.

It was a heartwarming experience to read about the successes and accomplishments of little Caraway Owls as they get ready for college life.

Caraway T-Shirts; Paul McCreery, chair

This year it was time for a new design for our Caraway T-shirts. Paul McCreery volunteered his artistic and screenprinting talents to create a new design and shirt. He was responsible for the production and delivery of the shirts. We sold over 380 t-shirts to students, parents, and school staff.

Chess Club; Nico Schuler, chair

Chess Club is open to all elementary school grades and met weekly for one hour. Students were introduced to concepts and strategies of chess, played chess with each other or with volunteer parents, and solved chess puzzles. The Chess Club also organized an annual Caraway Chess Tournament during the Spring Semester. The 2014-2015 Caraway Chess Champion is Bhavyashree Duggirala (2nd grade), and the grade-level champions are as follows: Keshav Viswanathan (K champion), Viswanathan Manickam (1st grade champion), Bhavyashree Duggirala (2nd grade champion), Jun Lee (3rd grade champion), Sutej Tapdiya (4th grade champion), and SunJean Lee (5th grade champion).

Clothes Closet; Blythe Christopher de Orive, chair

The Kathy Caraway community donated approximately 50 bags of gently used clothing over the course of the year. Student Council also helped with a sock and underwear drive that yielded 78 girls underwear, 60 girls socks, 60 boys underwear, and 72 boys socks for District kids in need. Along with the sock and underwear drive, Caraway Cares raised \$753.70 that Monica von Waaden, our Round Rock ISD Clothes Closet coordinator, could use to purchase new

items. Thanks to a great deal with Fruit of the Loom, she received free shipping and a steep discount on bulk orders for the kids. The check from Kathy Caraway will go a long way next year to keeping the kids in new underwear and socks!

Curriculum Enrichment; Nicole Kanda, chair

Curriculum Enrichment (CE) was one of the largest PTA budget items. CE funding is given to each grade level and department, primarily based on headcount, and is used to provide materials or field trips that enrich the student's learning experience in all different subject areas. The following are some CE highlights from the 2014-2015 school year:

Kindergarten: Supplies and books were purchased to support literacy, mathematics, technology and cultures / celebrations learning. The students painted local Texas wildflowers onto t-shirts while studying Texas, plants and the environment. They also visited the Austin Zoo to learn about animal characteristics / classifications.

First Grade: Students attended a Frog and Toad play at the Zach Scott Theatre as part of their genre study and visited the Austin Nature and Science Center. They made pilgrim dolls in their study of culture and history. Students practiced reading skills with Reading A-Z, an online leveled reading program. The classes monitored the hatching of chick eggs as part of their science and language arts curriculum.

Second grade: Students benefited from downloadable curriculum units for math and other subjects through Teachers Pay Teachers as well as a subscription to Raz Kids. Students visited InnerSpace Caverns and Laguna Gloria to explore

and observe the natural and human worlds using their senses. They also purchased new books for the classrooms at the book fair.

Third grade: Students also benefited from the Teachers Pay Teachers downloadable curriculum units as well as other supplies purchased for hands-on activities in math, science, social studies and language arts. In the spring they took a trip to Aquarena Springs at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment to enhance life sciences learning.

Fourth grade: Students took a field trip to the Bob Bullock Museum of Texas History to tour the exhibits and visit the IMAX and Star of Destiny Theaters. Math manipulatives were purchased to enrich learning in place value, fractions and decimals. Classroom libraries gained biography books on influential leaders in history.

Fifth grade: Students enjoyed activities at Reunion Ranch that enhanced health education, positive relationships and communication. Students observed life sciences firsthand at a presentation by Austin Reptile Shows. Classrooms acquired science experiment supplies and interactive literature notebooks.

Adaptive PE: Students used flag football belts and scrimmage vests during tag games.

Art: 4th graders visited to the UT Blanton Art Museum to see a contemporary exhibit. Various art supplies and 3D materials were purchased for the art room and for Fine Arts Night.

Counselor: Staff attended the Association for Play Therapy annual conference and purchased books on positivity, anger management, brain development and anxiety management.

Dyslexia: Staff purchased a magnetic journal, phoneme tiles and word cards to enable instruction of morphology and multisensory word-level comprehension.

FAC/ PPCD: These combined departments brought Fry's Fun Farm petting zoo to the students this spring where they got to hold, pet and feed small farm animals.

Intervention: Purchases include magnetic journals to manipulate and build words as well as gel word boards to write and finger trace high frequency words.

Library: Staff purchased numerous wonderful fiction and non-fiction / resource books, including Texas Bluebonnet Award nominees. Students were also treated to a visit by Bluebonnet Award-nominee author, Polly Holyoke.

Music: Staff attended the Texas Music Educators Association annual conference, Eisen / Robertson grade level music books supported music learning and literacy. Recorders were purchased for students to experience a wind instrument.

PE: Students worked on hand eye coordination utilizing a new basketball rim, hoop and set of basketballs. Students in all classes and Running Club marked their progress towards fitness goals by earning toe tokens, feet and hearts.

Special Education: Staff purchased Raz Kids on-line subscriptions for reading development and box sets of fiction and nonfiction books at varying reading levels.

Speech: Staff utilized Teachers Pay Teachers resources to accomplish a variety of receptive, expressive and pragmatic language goals for Pre-K to 5th graders. Books and literacy materials helped staff teach inferencing, story comprehension and narrative language activities.

TAG: Staff purchased math learning subscriptions to Twig Math, Yummymath and Dynamath and enhanced language arts learning using Flocabulary. Students also used CE-funded Shakespeare books in preparation to participate in the district Shakespeare festival.

Technology: Staff used CE funds to offset substitute costs so teachers could attend training sessions on integrating Google drive into a collaborative classroom setting. Funds were also used to purchase snowball mics for classroom use and K-OWL News broadcasting as well as digital cameras for students to capture special events around the school.

Directory; Randall Bell, chair

This publication contained contact information (phone number, address, and email) for all Caraway students. It was distributed only to the Caraway families and staff. Printing costs were funded by local business through advertising sales. Each student was given one directory free of charge, with additional copies available for purchase.

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

Family Dinner Night; Kine Currier, chair

FDN was the last and biggest PTA fundraiser of the year. This year, we decided to hold the event at Canyon Vista Middle School's cafeteria. It took place on March 7th, 2015. The theme was western/cowboy, and we served burgers from Hat Creek Burger Company. A wide variety of baskets, services, and goods were auctioned, and as always, the Caraway faculty contributed their time and attention for the students to buy raffle tickets to try to win.

About 600 students, parents, and staff attended and were entertained by a visiting student performer, and by a "Kiss a Pig" contest that kept the students engaged and aware for the whole week leading up to the event as well. In the end, over \$11,000 was raised and a fun and exciting time was had by all.

Field Day; Jim Browarski. chair

This year's Field Day was a huge success! We recruited over 100 volunteers and set up four main areas including obstacle courses, water play, and bounce houses.

Give a HOOT Fund Drive; Nichole Jones, chair

This is the first PTA fundraiser of the school year. Instead of selling merchandise, we asked parents to contribute \$60 per child to help fund our PTA programs, including curriculum enrichment, educational software, outreach, and scholarship programs. Over 200 Caraway families participated.

Green Team; Jodi Shores, chair

The Green Team provided programs to teach students about the environment in our community and on the Caraway campus. Each year we have different programs and events that are decided by the committee. The Green Team hosted two campus clean-ups this year. The "Celebrate Earth Day" campus clean-up was a huge success. The volunteers were able to complete many tasks that were on the Green Team's Wish List including refreshing the Educational Owl Garden, planting new plants in the Marquee Garden, cleaning up the Green Team shed and picking up 18 bags of trash from the nearby woods. Members of the Green Team also coordinated projects throughout the year such as the recycling program at Caraway's various events and maintenance/upkeep of the Purple Martin Houses on the property.

Harvest Festival; Gigi Winkelman, chair

A roaring success! The weather cooperated and families came together last October to enjoy a FUN day. Gigi led a team of parent and student volunteers that provided a great afternoon of games, a petting zoo, the Haunted Hallway, and various inflatables. The Harvest Festival raised over \$4,000 for PTA programs from wristband sales and sponsorships.

Healthy Lifestyles; Laura Mewhinney, chair

This year we organized the International Bike and Walk to School Day on October 8, 2014. Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Letendre helped lead a group of walkers/bikers down Carlwood Drive to the school to kick off the day. Fifty-two percent of our students participated.. Awards were given to the two top classes in K-2nd grade and 3rd-5th grade with the most participation. HEB donated enough money to provide

healthy snacks of fruit to Ms. Marsh, 1st grade (71% participation), Ms. Schmidt, 2nd grade (67%), Mrs. Toler, 3rd grade (84%) and Mrs. Marshall, 5th grade (71%).

We also provided each class with their own set of balls to use at recess. Each class received a set in the Fall and again in the Spring.

The 4th annual Family Fit and Fun Night was well attended and provided families with many activities to choose from. Many volunteers helped with Yoga, Basketball, Volleyball, Football throw, Hula Hoops, Boxing, Jump ropes, Tether ball and a 1/3 mile fun run.

Homeroom Parent Coordinator; Lynn Bonsky, chair

This role involved coordinating 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; Shannon Arnett and Erica Gant, chairs

The hospitality committee's goal was to foster a hospitable environment for the teachers and staff throughout the school year so that they felt our presence and support from start to finish. We started the year with a catered lunch from Newk's for the teachers on a work day before the start of school to welcome everyone. We also provided chips, salsa, and cokes at their October staff meeting. In November, the week before Thanksgiving, we provided breakfast

for the teachers and staff (breakfast tacos, and baked goods). Before the Winter Break, we hosted a Cookie Exchange (in the library) with cookies donated from Caraway families. The week before Spring break, we provided a snack bar in the Teacher's Lounge. We provided snacks in the teacher's lounge every day we had STAAR testing. During Teacher Appreciation Week, we provided a candy and treat bar in the teacher's lounge. A few days before the last day of school, we provided a coffee barista for custom-made coffees.

International Festival: Hanna Horsey, chair

The 2nd annual International Festival took place on January 29th, 2015. Twenty countries were represented by parent volunteers, who created displays showcasing the customs, language, history, and food of their home countries. Attendees had a great time learning about our international families.

Kinder Liason: Meghan Stack, chair

Since March, there have been 5 playgroups for the incoming kindergartners of 2015/2016 and their parents so they can get to know each other and be prepared for the upcoming year. There is also a Facebook page where playgroup information is posted. There are 70 people on the email list who get the same info. This summer there will be at least 2 playgroups a month as well as playgroups on assessment days. In August, there will be two tours of the school so the kids and parents are excited and comfortable to start the new year.

Marquee Sign; Grant Saxon, chair

Thank you to Grant Saxon for overseeing this year's communications for the marquee sign in front of Caraway Elementary School,

displaying important information about upcoming school-related events.

Math Pentathlon; Jennie Willingham, chair

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 met once a week. Students were taught the rules of the game by parent volunteers. By the end of the year, the students mastered these games. PTA monies were used to purchase games and instructional materials and to help subsidize tournament fees.

Membership; Suzanne Tappe, chair

The Membership Committee worked to recruit Caraway families to join PTA. There were opportunities to join the Parent Teacher Association at events throughout the year. Two dollars of the \$6.50 went directly to our school and the balance to state and national PTA. This year we had 400+ members.

Reflections; Chris Browarski, chair

The Caraway Reflections program mainly took part at the beginning of the school year. Within a couple weeks of school starting, the Chair used several communication methods to encourage entries. The Chair then coordinated judging for all entries and then passed

along higher ranked entries to the District for judging. A reception was held for all the entrants to show off their work.

Robotics; Mary Ann Fitch, Sirish Pande, Mark Doran, chair

The Caraway Robotics Program was able to take 112 students through four 10-week sessions. It was an amazing year because 75% of the 112 students were taking the program for the first time. The program ran 2 classes (We-Do for Kinder-3rd and EVE3 for 4th-5th graders) during the Fall and Spring. This year the students in the EVE3 class competed to build the fastest F1 EVE3 race cars, build a halfblood robotic to find their way out a Percy Jackson maze, create the next generation toys to spread holiday cheer, and competed in Sumo Wrestling. In our WeDo Robotic class the kids were able create a “love boat” ship that sent a special message out to their family, made an alligator talk, and ran our first ever Robotic Pinewood Derby race.

It was the 5th year of the program’s existence at Caraway. One of the special ingredients of the program is our parent and National Instrument Volunteers (Daniel Simpson, Luke Zurek, Pallavi Laxane, Serhiy Makhivshchuk, and Tommy Glicker). A special shout out to Daniel Simpson, who has been with us the last 5 years and is our lead coordinator with National Instruments. We also welcomed a new teacher sponsor, Ms. Glicker, this year.

For our WEDO class, we are able to expand the program to include a new Lego set called Simple Machines. It’s been a very successful year of building robotics and expanding the kids’ software programming skills. The program emphasized not only learning about Robotics but teambuilding. Thank you to our school coordinators:

Mary Ann Fitch, Mark Doran, Sirish Pande, Jennifer Morgan, and Erik Matthies. We also want to thank the young student volunteers that have helped in our WeDo class all year round assisting with program and support for the younger students in Robotic builds: Abby Arcaya, Abby Winkleman, and Clay Morgan.

School Supplies; Jenny Norrell, chair

Caraway PTA provides a convenient service each spring that allows parents to purchase school supplies for the upcoming school year. We worked with our vendor partner, 1st Day School Supplies, as well as the Caraway faculty and administration to create grade-specific supply packages that could be purchased online. The supplies will be August and distributed to the appropriate classrooms.

Science Night; Jennifer Van Metre, Guy Currier, chairs

The bi-annual Science Night Tradition continued with two more successful events. Hundreds of parents and students came in October to learn 'How Things Work', where they got to see inside a computer, make their own lava lamp, test out bird wing shapes, and more. In April, they explored "The Universe of Energy". There was a Van der Graaf generator, a giant Newton's Cradle, as well as places where they could start a fire with friction or make a working battery.

Talent Show; Amy Blackmon, Heather Lawrence, chairs

The 2015 Talent Show lived up to its name, showcasing our incredible Caraway talent. This year the Talent Show, planned over

two nights in late February, was held at Canyon Vista Middle School. On the first night of the show there were lights, sound design, a real stage and snacks for the Kindergarten-3rd grade performers. On the second night, the Fourth and Fifth graders had all the same... and a winter advisory that closed the show down right before it got started. Unable to reschedule at Canyon Vista, we did our best to recreate the 4-5th grade show at Caraway a couple weeks later.

Despite the weather drama, the shows highlighted the skills of 66 of our talented students! From singing and dancing to piano and violin, the range of talents made for a great mix of acts. As always, the talent onstage was matched by the overflowing support and enthusiasm of the Caraway audience.

WatchDOG Dads; John Kelly, chair

WatchDOGS are fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father-figures who volunteered for at least one day at the school. During the day, WatchDOGS helped out in the classrooms and around the campus, reading and working on flash cards with kids, playing at recess, eating lunch with their children, watching the school entrances and hallways, assisting with traffic flow, and mentoring students.

Yearbook; Tammy Saxon, Kelly Babbitt, chairs

Working with the Balfour publishing company, the Yearbook Committee Chairs helped create the annual yearbook for Caraway Elementary School. The yearbook chairs worked with amazing parent volunteers who took pictures of students during many of the Caraway events. The chairs and parents used online software to

create each page for the yearbook. The yearbook contained pictures from events such as Science Nights, Skate Nights, Family Dinner Night, the Talent Show, International Festival, and many other great events.

The chairs worked throughout the year to promote sales for the yearbook -- both for pre-orders and for sales once the yearbooks were delivered. This year, the PTA ordered 375 yearbooks, and 267 of those yearbooks were pre-sold. Almost all the remaining yearbooks were sold by the end of the summer.



PTA is a grassroots organization made up of parents, teachers and others around the state who have an interest in children, families and schools. PTA membership is as diverse as Texas is in cultures, education levels and parenting skills. By joining PTA, a member becomes part of the largest child advocacy organization in the state with over 500,000 members across Texas.

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. We are committed to providing support for individual local PTAs through training, resources, guidance, programs, materials, answers on managing a small non-profit association, and ideas for success.



The overall purpose of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA Values

- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.
- **Accountability:** We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.
- **Respect:** We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.
- **Inclusivity:** We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.
- **Integrity:** We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.

PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education.

Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.