

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2016

2015 was an excellent year for the PTA and I hope that everyone enjoyed their involvement with our activities as much as I did. I was touched to be asked to take the role of President again and hope that I have done it justice. My own contribution was only a tiny part of what we achieved together. Several new parents joined us at the beginning of the year and we have built a strong core of members who are unswervingly loyal, hard-working and dependable, committed to supporting Westlake Boys and helping to make it the best possible school for our sons.

Each year our remit is threefold: to provide support at school events, to fundraise for the school and to act as social forum to connect the school and its wider community.

Support for School Events

I'm proud that the school now sees the PTA as a resource and relies on us to provide helpers for a broad range of school events during the year. The first of these was the 'Welcome to Westlake' evening in February, at which we provided refreshments for a number of the families new to the school after their introductory talks. Each year one or two of the people we meet at this evening become involved with the PTA and help replace those we have lost from the previous year.

We provided teas and coffees at all the Parent/Teacher evenings and at the Information Evening for prospective students and their families in July. We also helped serve refreshments at the first Grandparents' Day morning tea – a huge event that will now be a regular feature on the school calendar. The last event of the year is Graduation Dinner at the end of November, and we helped set up more than 50 tables, making the auditorium look stunning for this very special event.

One of our favourite events is providing a special morning tea at the end of the year, which is an opportunity for all parents to show their appreciation to all the teachers and support staff. Since in 2015 this fell on November 5th, we felt compelled to have a Guy Fawkes theme and decorated the staffroom accordingly, complete with a hung, drawn and quartered 'Guy' as the centre-piece. Thanks to donations from parents we were able to lay on a fabulous morning tea and provide a gift for every member of staff. They were

enormously appreciative and I want to thank everyone who contributed to making it such a special event, whether by donating things, helping during the week beforehand, setting up the staffroom on the day or clearing up afterwards.

Fundraising

To say that our major source of income for 2015 was the Trading Post, our sales of second hand uniform, would be an understatement. We had a good supply of stock and consequently achieved excellent sales through much of the year. Our extra days in December were very successful and we processed a lot of items sent in for sale or donated by students leaving or changing to 7th form uniform. The Trading Post has become a well-oiled machine of items being sorted and processed, sales recorded and cheques issued to the sellers. Not only does it produce a large amount of income for the PTA, but it also provides an important service for school families, making uniform that much more affordable. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all the people who give their time so that the shop is open every Tuesday and during the summer holidays, especially Donna Houghton and Rochelle Thomas for their tireless efforts.

After a successful 'Nearly Christmas' Market in 2014, we decided to hold a Christmas Market as our main fundraising event of the year and were able to do this on November 11th, so that it really was a Christmas Market. This time we held the event in the Street and had almost 30 stalls, including a small food court in the quad. We had seasonal music playing and turned the reception area into a Christmas grotto full of elves. Everyone we spoke to who attended, including many of the stallholders, agreed that it was a lovely event with a nice atmosphere. However, we raised just under \$900, which was not a huge sum considering the vast number of hours and effort that had gone into running the event. It has greater benefit than simply fundraising, as it was a lovely way to connect with the local community, but we will need to consider carefully if this is an event we want to repeat. We did not charge the stallholders this time, since we felt it was a good idea to build up goodwill with them, but could definitely do so in future. Thank you to all the PTA for your contribution to the evening.

Meetings and Social Events

The PTA provides an opportunity for parents, caregivers and other members of the wider Westlake community to get together for in a are of the firm belief that the PTA should be a social forum and meetings should be both fun and informative, as well as dealing with event planning and so forth. 'Meet the Leaders' has become a regular and popular date on the school calendar, a chance for

parents to learn about the various bodies associated with the school. James Skinner from the Westlake Foundation, Suzanne Donovan-Skeens from the Board of Trustees, Richard Stevens, Chairman of the Westlakers, David Ferguson, Principal, and Andre Jackson, Head Boy, all spoke about their roles and the different parts they play in the life of the school. As a result of our 2014 fundraising, we were able to hand over a cheque for \$12,000 from the PTA to the school.

In April we were delighted to welcome the other senior prefects for 2015, Liam Rawlings, Deputy Head Boy, Riley Cahill, Cultural Captain, George Han, Academic Captain, and Louis Abplanalp, Sports Captain, who spoke to us about their responsibilities and their aspirations.

Our last get-together of 2015 was a pot-luck dinner at my house in December, which was a fun and relaxing way to end the year.

There are always a number of important 'thank yous' to make. First of all we thank Arnold Van den Heuvel, who continues to be our liaison with the staff, who stalwartly sits through all our meetings discussing the minutiae of events and produces all the copies of minutes and agendas for us. He is always helpful and cheerful and we love having him on the PTA.

Once again Evelyn Martin put her hand up to be PTA Treasurer, for which we were extremely grateful, as this is usually the hardest role to fill. Unfortunately due to unforeseen personal circumstances, Evelyn was unable to attend many of the meetings, but we managed and we realised that our finances are not too complicated!

Thank you to all of you who valiantly attended meetings through good weather and bad and again put your hands up to help and gave so much of your time to the PTA this year.

Finally what can I say about our wonderful secretary, Macy Cheuk. She really is the backbone of the PTA and it simply would not function without her. She doesn't really like the limelight but prefers to work quietly and unfussily in the background. She is endlessly cheerful, polite when I am slack and the hardest working volunteer I have ever met. We thank her for all her years of work for the school and say a very sad goodbye.

Here's to a good year in 2016.

Thank you all.

Mandy Curry

WBHS PTA President 2015