



BRIER BUZZ

Volume 8, Issue 4

the Brier Elementary PTA Newsletter

January 2012

2011-2012 PTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President – Jenny McDowell
- Vice President – Sarah Eggebraaten
- Treasurer – Margo Wigington
- Secretary – Cindy Gallagher
- Membership Chair – Stephanie Collins
- Volunteer Coordinator – Kristina Cline
- Newsletter Editor – Robin Oestreich
- Social Events Chair – Michael Brookman
- Assistant Fundraising Chair – Open
- Legislative/Advocacy – Jim Meadows
- School Principal - Tori Thomas
- Teacher Representative 1 - Todd Parker
- Teacher Representative 2 – Jeni Largent
- Teacher Representative 3 – Faye O’Neil

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

With the start of the New Year, many of us set resolutions. Some are life changing and others are more manageable. Is one of your resolutions about being more involved in your student’s school? PTA is a great way to get involved and has many opportunities that work for any parent. Many people say that it’s hard to find the time to be involved with all the demands of life (a job, being a parent, being a spouse, sports, hobbies and family time) but there truly are opportunities that will work with anyone’s schedule. Parents who work at home...parents who work outside of the home...the PTA is for anyone and everyone who would like to volunteer. A few of the upcoming opportunities are at the on-site family fun events, the annual book fair, or the spring carnival. Watch for information regarding these and other opportunities, or contact our volunteer coordinator, Kristina Cline, to have your name added to our resource list. It’s also the time of year that the search begins for parents interested in running for an elected position for the 2012-2013 school year. The nominating committee will be elected at the upcoming general membership meeting (January 18th) and will be sending out information shortly after that. See [page 3](#) to learn about some of the specifics for each position. You can always contact one of the existing executive officers to learn more about their roles and what they have enjoyed about being involved in PTA. We hope to hear from you!

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DATES TO REMEMBER

January

- 12:** Papa John’s Pizza Night- mention Brier Elementary and a percentage is donated to support Watch D.O.G.S
- 18:** **PTA General Membership Meeting** – 7-8 pm in library – Learn how to read with your children. Free childcare provided. **EVERYONE WELCOME!**
- 23:** Extreme Bowling 6-8:30 pm at Lynnwood Bowl and Skate

February

- 9:** Papa John’s Pizza Night – mention Brier Elementary and a percentage is donated to support Watch D.O.G.S
- 13:** Edmonds PTSA Council Meeting 7-9 pm at ESC Rm. 101-102

- 14: BALLOTS DUE:** Replacement Technology and Capital Levy
- 15:** Family Skate Night 6-8 pm at Lynnwood Bowl & Skate
- 20:** PTA Focus Day, Olympia
- 24:** **BOX TOP AND LABELS FOR EDUCATION TURN IN DAY**

March

- 8:** Papa John’s Pizza Night- mention Brier Elementary and a percentage is donated to support Watch D.O.G.S
- 14:** **3rd PTA General Membership Meeting** – 7-8 pm in library – Officer Elections
- TBA:** Family Movie Night in gym



MAKING A DIFFERENCE . . .

In this second edition of the Brier Buzz, we would like to thank all the people who have volunteered their time and energy to support our kids and school.

Staff Breakfast – Thank you to co-chairs Wendy Wolff-Gee and Karin Giboney for coordinating a wonderful event for our dedicated staff. Of course we could not have done it without the generous donations from our Brier parents...thank you to everyone who helped make this breakfast wonderful!

Fall Fundraiser Pick Up – The fall fundraiser is vital to our school. It provides the majority of funding for all PTA sponsored events. Thank you to EVERYONE who purchased items during the drive and a special thanks to the following people who helped organize and distribute the purchases: Leslie Bloomer, Janelle Brookman, Kristina Cline, Sarah Eggebraaten, Cindy Gallagher, Christina Iversen, Cathy Jackson, Karen Manley, Jenny McDowell and Heather Teagarden.

Reflections Workshops – Three times during November, the school opened its doors in the evenings to allow kids time to work on their art projects for the Reflections Program. This extra time would not have been possible without the help of volunteers. Thank you Christina Iversen for giving our kids the opportunity to complete their masterpieces. Heather Teagarden, Synnove Johnson and a very helpful father generously gave their time at the workshops as well. We apologize for not including his name but we couldn't track it down. THANK YOU, SIR!



Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.

- Erma Brombeck



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

This month the Brier PTA's Spotlight Volunteer is the Reflections Program Chair, Christina Iversen. Who is Christina Iversen? She is mother to 1st grade Bobcat, Danny Cannon, who is a student in Mrs. O'Neil's class. From Bothell and Everett, Christina moved to Brier in 2003. She currently lives with Danny, her husband Dale Cannon, and a number of pets, including two cats, two dogs, a snake, a guinea pig and a rabbit which they are contemplating entering into rabbit shows. When asked about living in the Brier community, Christina states, "I like being at a smaller school. It seems friendly. And I like the country feel."

Christina has volunteered a number of times at Brier Elementary since Danny started Kindergarten. Last year she was a Library Parent and helped facilitate small reading groups. She has helped with Popcorn Fridays, Monster Mash and Movie Night. This year, when she heard about our need for a Reflections Program Chair, she stepped up to the plate and did a fantastic job. Although she was nervous about the requirements of being in charge of Reflections for our school, Christina says, "It was rewarding to see participation by students who would not have otherwise participated. Some parents told me that if it hadn't been for the workshops I provided, their kids would not have entered the program." Looking back at the experience, Christina states, "it wasn't as hard being a chair as I thought," and she plans to continue chairing the position in the future as well as co-chairing our PTA Spring Carnival. She feels it's important to be involved in the PTA because, "The PTA funds many activities that support our kids."

Thank you, Christina, for having the courage to step up to a challenge and for helping our kids with your efforts!



PTA NEEDS YOU

We are looking for executive officers for the 2012-2013 school year. The term for each position is one year (July 1st thru June 30th) and no person shall serve in the same position for more than two consecutive years. The executive committee members are President, Vice President – Programs, Vice President – Fundraising, Treasurer, and Secretary. The overall charge of the executive officers, along with the rest of the board of directors, is to provide oversight /management of PTA funds in accordance with general membership decree, attend monthly meetings, be involved in the governance of the PTA, support the other board members and committee chairs, and have fun.

General expectations and requirements for all positions:

- Be a PTA member at least 30 days preceding the elections
- Maintain honesty and a high level of integrity
- Be willing to receive and attend required PTA training for each position
- Be enthusiastic and supportive of the PTA unit/council
- Believe in purpose of the PTA
- Be knowledgeable of the PTA organization and its role in the school and the community
- Be relied upon to give PTA a satisfactory level of priority and commitment
- Have good people skills
- Be able to be fair and objective
- Be able to subordinate personal interests to the interests and well-being of the PTA

* **Previous experience with the PTA is helpful but not required**

Some high level responsibilities for each position:

President

- Presides at all the meetings
- Prepares agendas with input for other board members
- Makes appointments to positions and committee chairs
- Maintains positive relationships with the principal and staff
- Is aware of and meets required deadlines

Vice President

- Provides support to committee and program chairs
- Works closely with the President
- Steps up to President role in future years
- Helps with development of board members
- Assumes position of President should President be unable to fulfill duties

Treasurer

- Keeps detailed and accurate financial records of all PTA transactions
- Compiles monthly financial reports
- Is responsible for filing yearly taxes and other WA state filing requirements
- Pays all authorized financial obligations in a timely manner
- Develops and presents the budget for the following year with support of budget committee
- Organizes mid-year and year-end financial reviews of PTA books

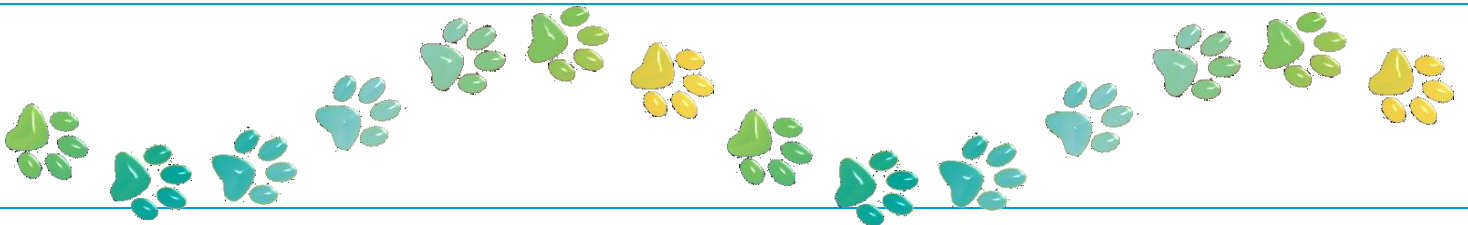
PTA NEEDS YOU *continued from page 3*

Secretary:

- Takes minutes & records all business transacted at each meeting
- Determines if a quorum is present
- Handles attendance for all meetings
- Maintains legal documents notebook and all permanent records

Elections will be held at the general membership meeting on March 14, 2012. The nominating committee will be sending out nomination forms shortly, along with contact information. The committee will be able to provide more detailed job descriptions, and help provide answers to any questions you may have. Feel free to contact the current executive members as well to ask them what their specific jobs entail.

It's important to note that the Vice President (Sarah Eggebraaten), Treasurer (Margo Wigington), and Secretary (Cindy Gallagher) are all in their 2nd consecutive year and cannot serve another term in their current positions. We need you to help keep us up and running!



WATCH D.O.G.S (Dads of Great Students)

There are still plenty of spots available on our calendar for the men in our students' lives to make a difference by coming in and spending a day at school. The Watch D.O.G.S program is all about increasing male involvement during the school day and providing positive male role models. You don't have to be dad to participate. You can be a grandpa, an uncle, a brother, a friend, or a member of the community who wants to make a difference. All kids benefit from positive male role models and we would like you to be one of them. The links below will help you learn more about the program and provide you the information you need to volunteer.

- To learn about volunteering at school and to find forms, click [here](#).
- To learn more about the Watch DOGS Program in general, click [here](#).
- To view the Brier Elementary School Watch DOGS volunteer calendar and to find available dates, click [here](#).
- To contact the Brier Elementary School Alpha Dog, click [here](#).



One hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of house you lived in... what kind of car you drove... what your bank balance was... but what will matter is that you were important in the life of a child.

- Adapted from a quote by Forest Witcraft



REFLECTIONS

Reflections, an arts recognition and achievement program, was a success this year with a total of 24 entries. The theme for this year was “Diversity Means...” During our November workshops students were given an opportunity to work on their art and several students composed their artwork at home. Many more just came to play in the paints and play with their friends.

All entries were judged initially by Northwest artist Jeff Leake who holds a Masters in Fine Arts from UC Davis and a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute. Of the 24 entries, 11 were forwarded to compete at the Edmonds School District level and of those four were chosen to compete at the state level. Congratulations and thanks to all the entrants! The students whose art was advanced to the district level were:

Primary - Francene Nguyen, Gabriel Espitia, Alicia Brennan, and Olivia Brennan

Intermediate - Josi Miller, Kaley Giboney, Kristy Wigington, and Memphis Ramerman

Middle – Max Coleman, Allison Miller and Anna Johnson



It took me four years to learn how to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.

- Pablo Picasso



All of the above were invited to attend the awards ceremony at the Lynnwood Library on January 4th. To see which students are representing our school district at the state level, go to page 6.

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REFLECTIONS *continued from page 5*

Our four state entries into the Reflections competition were created by **Francene Nguyen, Josi Miller, Memphis Ramerman, and Olivia Brennan** (*clockwise from top left*).



Good luck to our blooming artists! We hope that all of you and more will participate next year!

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UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION – JANUARY 18, 2012

At our upcoming general membership meeting we have a special demonstration planned – How to Read with your Child. Two of our teachers, Mr. Parker (1st/2nd grade) and Mrs. VeCera (3rd grade) will demonstrate the best way to read with your child, why it’s important, and tips to make it as productive as possible. We will also handle the general PTA business, as well as hold elections for the nominating committee. The charge of the nominating committee is to recognize and recruit the most qualified people available for the PTA executive positions. This is a very important committee and we are looking for 3-5 volunteers to serve. The goal is to have a qualified candidate for each executive position for the elections that are held in March 2012.

Everyone is encouraged to attend! Free childcare is provided by the Beyond the Bells staff, light refreshments will be served and to end the meeting we will have drawings for door prizes.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

School Phone Directory

Thank you everyone who got their contact information in for this year’s Phone Directory. Thanks also to our parents who generously advertised in this year’s Directory!! This is a great communication resource for the Brier Community.

The directory was delayed this year as we were waiting for a volunteer to come forward and help with this task. **Lisa Davis** stepped forward and volunteered her experience with Excel. **Cindy Gallagher** also stepped up to make sure the books were prepared and printed. Some parents thought they had already signed up for the Directory, but it requires its own opt-in form each year.

Please support the advertisers in the back of the Directory whose advertising covered the printing costs. We couldn’t have the Directory without our generous supporters or without the help of volunteers like Lisa and Cindy. Thank you all for all you do!



MEMBERSHIP GOALS

In our last newsletter issue we shared the Brier PTA’s membership goals that were established at the beginning of the school year. Our hope is to increase membership among families and staff alike. Last year we had a membership of 209 individuals. We’d like to reach 275 this year. As of January 6, our family membership stands at 159 – **an increase of 9 members since November**. Our second goal is to achieve 100% teacher membership. **Our staff membership has increased by one since November**, for a total of 21 staff members, approximately 44%. The graphs show the current membership numbers compared to our goals...keep checking back to see how we progress!

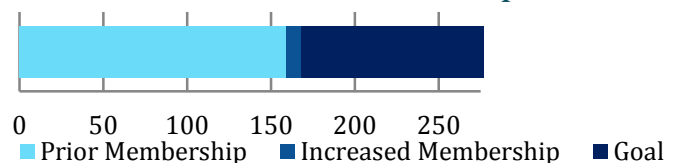
WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

The membership dues for Brier PTA are used to train PTA leaders for the benefit of schools. Local PTAs provide grants and opportunities to families and kids that might not exist without them. Membership dues are also used to support advocates who work at the state level to push legislation that benefits kids’ education. Please help us maintain our advocates – it’s particularly important during these difficult financial times when state funding for schools is being eliminated.

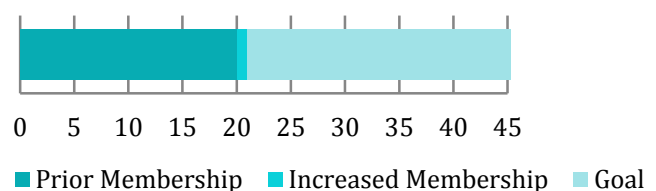
You can become a member by downloading the PTA membership form [here](#).

Thank you for your support!

Brier Families' Individual Membership



Staff Membership



E-SCRIP- DONATE 21ST CENTURY STYLE

What is eScrip? eScrip stands for electronic scrip. Schools have joined with companies for decades in a mutually beneficial relationship based on the idea that members of a school community could purchase goods at a participating business and the business would donate a portion of its profits back to the school. It used to be that you had to buy Scrip coupons in advance...but no more! With eScrip you enroll online and Brier will receive donations each time you use your credit or debit cards at participating stores or shop online. The two stores that fund our school through eScrip are Safeway and Bartell Drugs, but there are multiple stores available through the eScrip website, including businesses like Amazon, AT&T, the Apple Store, Walmart and Nordstrom. If only 50 families sign up, we have an earning potential of \$12,000.00 a year on average.

Please visit the [eScrip website](#) and consider supporting our kids in a way that doesn't cost you anything extra.

DONATIONS TO DATE: \$23.43

BOX TOPS for EDUCATION

We are having another collection on FEBRUARY 24. During our fall collection, the Brier Community donated 10,450 box tops which brought in \$1,045.00 to our school. There was another \$230 in online bonuses. This is a great way for you to help support your PTA. If you don't want to hang on to your box tops, there is a collection bin in the office at school so feel free to drop them off any time.

Thank you for your efforts!

DID YOU KNOW? CASH DONATIONS

While the PTA is pushing for parent volunteers, we recognize that people have very busy schedules. If you would like to support your PTA, but don't have the time, one thing to consider is a cash donation. There are employers in the community who will match contributions to their employees' schools. Microsoft and AT&T are two of those employers. If you would like to donate, check to see if your employer has a matching program. Any money received is used to support and enhance our kids' educational experience – both academic and social.

Thank you!



TREASURER'S REPORT

Year to date highlights (as of December 31, 2011)

	Income	Expenses	Net Income/(Loss)
Programs	2,992.05	1,963.11	1,028.94
Social Events	1,268.60	1,192.58	76.02
Fundraising	17, 717.09	7,241.33	10,475.76
Administrative	1,721.00	1,983.17	(262.17)
Grants	-----	1,036.80	(1,036.80)
Allowances	-----	361.90	(361.90)
TOTAL	\$23,345.54	\$13,136.79	\$ 9,919.85

Many Important Cuts Loom for Public Education

In our busy lives as parents and teachers, it is sometimes a challenge to keep up with the policy and politics that affect our schools. You may have noticed much press coverage about education budget cuts in recent weeks. This briefing provides a quick summary of some of the most important information coming out of Olympia. As always, feel free to contact me at jmeadows@washingtonea.org if you'd like further information or if you'd like to get more politically involved with issues that affect our little Brier Bobcats.

Special Session: Governor Gregoire called a 30-day special legislative session that began on November 28th. The intent of the special session was to solve an interim \$2 billion budget shortfall in the state's 2011-2013 budget. On the table were some dramatic cuts to social services, healthcare, public education and other services. As mentioned in the last legislative update, on the table for potential education cuts were reductions in state funding for school buses, a possible shortening of the school year and cuts to other education services. The special session wrapped up with only \$500 million of the cuts solved, pushing the task of cutting \$1.5 billion into the 2012 legislative session. With the exception of cuts to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), there were few made to public education.

2012 Legislative Session: The 60-day legislative session kicked off on January 9, 2012. This year's session is an interim "short" one in that the 2-year state budget was set last year. With a remaining \$1.5 billion shortfall, this session promised to be action packed and heated with debate about further cuts to essential services. Governor Gregoire is also proposing a ½ cent sales tax increase to "buy back" some of the services proposed to be cut. We will again see discussion about a possible shortened school year. I've heard varying estimates of what might be proposed – ranging from 4 to 10 days cut from the current school year. Stay tuned to the weekly Brier PTA Monday Morning Coffee email for updates coming out of Olympia and information about how you might get involved. In the meantime, if you'd like to compose a quick email to your elected officials, please visit this link: <http://capwiz.com/wastatepta/home/>

Hold the Date! PTA Focus Day: The Washington State PTA will host a day-long lobby event in Olympia on President's Day – February 20th. We'll have more information out via the Monday Morning Coffee email as it comes available. Individual or small-group meetings with legislators can be an effective way to shape what unfolds in the legislative session.

Supreme Court Rules on Public Education Funding: On January 5, 2012 the Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision in the NEWS (McCleary) court case affirming that Washington State is not fulfilling its paramount constitutional duty to amply fund public education. The Court also made it clear that funding public education is the state's highest priority, and that the state Legislature cannot delay or sidestep any longer. The 85-page opinion also notes the Supreme Court will hold lawmakers accountable to ensure they fully implement education reforms by 2018. To read the full ruling, visit this link: <http://www.courts.wa.gov/opinions/pdf/843627.opn.pdf> At this point it is uncertain if or how this ruling will affect potential legislative cuts during the 2012 legislative session.

Legislative Redistricting: The Washington State Legislative Redistricting Commission has approved a plan for approval by the 2012 legislature with new legislative district boundaries. Redistricting comes in response to 2010 Census Data and demographic shifts. Both state legislative districts and congressional districts were reworked – some more significantly than others. To see if you are still in your previous legislative district, visit the state redistricted map at this link: http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/assets/maps/FINAL_010112_Plans/Legislative/LD_Draft_Handout_Ins_ets.pdf To learn more about the overall redistricting effort, including Congressional redistricting, visit this link: http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/maps_final_2011.asp

👏 Help Support Our Kids 👏 - Become a Member!

Join the Brier Elementary PTA

Welcome to the 2011/2012 School year! 😊

Here at Brier Elementary we have a terrific group of teachers & staff, dedicated parents, and awesome volunteers! **Thank You** to all who have supported our PTA and all the great things we do for our school and (especially) ...for our kids!

Please continue that great tradition of support and join the PTA!

- Joining the PTA each year, is the **easiest way** to support your child's school,
- Volunteering & attending meetings is totally **OPTIONAL** and **NOT** a requirement for membership.
- Every Student benefits from a strong PTA membership.
- With Your support, the PTA is able to help provide our school with **much needed** additional financial support for classrooms; Library, Music & P.E. programs; various supplies & equipment; special assemblies; scholarship grants, and much more.
- PTA also provides our school with numerous academic & art programs, as well as many fun social events which our kids & families always enjoy!
- PTA is America's #1 parent involvement resource. By simply becoming a member you get access to valuable online parent resources; special offers and discounts from corporate supporters of PTA. Visit www.pta.org for more info.
- As a member, your voice counts. Attend quarterly General Membership meetings and voice your opinion; make a suggestion and/or have a vote on current PTA issues.

Visit our website for more information www.brierelementarypta.org

2011/2012 Membership Form

Please return this form with cash or check (preferably) to the school office or via your child's teacher.

*Please make all checks payable to "**Brier Elementary PTA**"

2011/2012 Membership Plans

- _____ \$18.00 Family Membership (two members)
- _____ \$10.00 Single Membership (one member)
- _____ \$9.00 Brier Elementary Staff Member



Member #1 _____
 Member #2 _____
 Address _____
 City/Zip _____ Phone # _____
 Email address _____
 Student name _____ Teacher _____
 Student name _____ Teacher _____
 Student name _____ Teahcer _____

_____ \$ I would like to make an additional donation to support PTA programs (tax deductible)
 _____ I would like to join PTA, please grant me a PTA membership scholarship.

_____ Total Payment enclosed

****THANK YOU for supporting Brier Elementary Students!****