

John A. Bishop School
Parent Teacher Organization

Annual Report
2011-2012

Bishop PTO by the numbers...

104 Students walked in the Walkathon

1000+ Popsicles sold over the year

23 Crock pots of chili at the Chili Cook-off

\$10,330 Raised for the Annual Fund

279 Bishop t-shirts sold

30,736 Tickets sold at the Bishop Fair

1700 Bear Bucks distributed

300 Volunteers at the Bishop Fair

21 Craft Fair booths

33% Exceeded Annual Fund goal (\$7,500)

79lbs Weight of the giant pumpkin at the Pumpkin Sale

50 Tables at the Bishop Fair

2,463 Bishop Fair raffle tickets sold

102 Donors to the Annual Fund

20 International booths presented at the Art & International Night

1059 Laps in the Walkathon

500+ Volunteer hours throughout the entire school year

85 Items auctioned-off in the Bishop Fair Silent Auction

110 Cakes in the Bishop Fair cake walk

John A. Bishop School Parent Teacher Organization

Executive Committee Officers 2011-2012

Senior President:	Mary Ellen Aronow
Junior President:	Brecky Peabody
Treasurer:	Catherine Hoffman
Corresponding Secretary:	Usha Iyer
Recording Secretary:	Alixé Bonardi
Fundraising Coordinator:	Ann Gerrietts

2011–2012 Annual Report

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Senior President's Report

A look back on the 2011/2012 school year highlights the strength and dedication of our Parent Teacher Organization.

By [Mary Ellen Aronow](#)

Bishop parents and teachers came together this year to promote our children in school and community. Together they accomplished this with outstanding financial and volunteer support.

This year, our school community raised over 55 thousand dollars, with our two biggest fundraisers, the Annual Fund and the Bishop Fair breaking historical records in both dollars brought in and family participation. Our financial success allowed a fully-funded enrichment program, semi-annual no-strings-attached teacher and staff checks, and the purchase of LCD projectors for the school. We watched as our funds helped the 5th grade leave a memory mural for future grades to enjoy on the walls of Bishop. And, the generous financial support by families this year has positioned Bishop with a ready store of additional funds for the exciting technology changes ahead.

We faced changes and challenges this year, yet we drew on what seemed like endless resources to integrate, accept, and adapt. Changes occurring at the District level were met with an incredible tenacity and sense of community at Bishop. The decision to rebuild the Thompson school brought the Arlington community together and brought the Thompson 5th grade families into the Bishop community. A team of parents, teachers, and administrators worked pro-actively together to help the 5th grade transition into five blended Thompson/Bishop classrooms. Parents like Sheila Ward and Jane Biondi, teachers like Anne Hess-Mahan and Katie Armstrong, and staff like Vicki Ford were instrumental in making a smooth transition.

Bishop families came together in voice as our geographic district boundaries were challenged during the Administration's redistricting process this year. We are grateful to parent Tsachi Avrahami who represented Bishop families with tireless advocacy, communicating with us, and for us, throughout the process.

We adapted to the Health Department's strict adherence to safety rules this year - affecting how and which food we could sell or serve at school-related functions. Parents like Suzi Lubar, who made our Chili Cook Off run smoothly worked to understand the restrictions and adapt this family-loved event.

Our community welcomed a new Principal this year. Principal McAneny infused Bishop's core values - Respect, Regard, and Responsibility - with new energy, spending time asking questions, getting to know parents and teachers, and sharing his vision for progress. Bishop families worked with Mr. McAneny to brainstorm creative ways to bring in technology by way of grants, private sector funds, and tapping into parent skill-sets in an effort to prioritize technology advancement at Bishop.

The strength of the PTO lies in the energy and attention given by Bishop families and teachers. This year, changes in the PTO Officers, with veteran parents moving off the board and parents new to Bishop moving on, forced a quick climb on a steep learning curve. We brainstormed and took risks. We tried new things. We introduced Bear Bucks – given out in two ways, as a thank you for an annual fund contribution and as a way to equalize the ability of all families to participate in PTO fundraisers and events as teachers and Mr. McAneny handed Bear Bucks to students.

Brainstorming for new ideas found us working within a virtual world. Doodle Scheduler, Survey Monkey, Signup Genius, and Google Docs provided ways to not let our busy schedules get in the way of making decisions, organizing events and collecting community feedback. Barbara Dumery showed us just how successful these tools work in running an event – with her amazing coordination of the Bishop Fair.

Bishop teachers offered their creative ideas and time in the form of Silent Auction items, helping to more than triple the money raised this year during the auction and provide students with opportunities outside of the classroom to spend time with their favorite teachers and staff.

The PTO successes this year have us pointed in the right direction for next year. Learning more about the best assets we have – our parents and our teachers – facilitates communication and allows sharing of special talents. We can look forward to a parent and staff run in-house theater program next year, kicked off by a theater-themed enrichment program. We can also look to a retooled Room Parent program next year – developed after listening to the community asking for changes.

Next year will also bring changes and challenges. Challenges, as new mandates on when and where treats can be served at school are put into place. We will find creative ways for these new guidelines in our events, classroom parties, and after-school playground get-togethers. We have changes ahead as wireless technology comes to Bishop School. With the help and direction of Mr. McAneny, our teachers and staff, and our parents, a thoughtful plan is developing for the best use of funds collected this year earmarked for technology next year. We will be resourceful and patient as we put into place a specific technology plan most appropriate for Bishop.

On the heels of an incredibly successful year, exciting plans are being made for next year. The PTO board shifts to make way for new Officers, Jayme Puriton, Celeste Hogan, Adam Lawrence, and Laura Pierce. Returning officers Brecky Peabody, Usha Iyer and Ann Gerrietts will round out the PTO Board for 2012/2013. We are lucky to have such a dedicated group of parent volunteers to lead the PTO.

An enormous THANK YOU to all the volunteers this year. Our strength grows exponentially when we work as a community.

Principal's Report

Over the past twelve years, I have been extremely fortunate to work in three school districts where parent involvement has been an integral piece to their children's academic and personal success. Research throughout the years shows this to be true.

Thank you, Bishop Parents, for everything you do for our community, school, staff, and our students. We cannot do the amazing things we do without your involvement.

This year, the PTO has graciously funded the purchase of six new LCD projectors to bring our upgrade of new projectors to 100 percent of our classrooms being stocked. Our Bishop PTO has funded the Principal Coffee that was held late last winter, and has provided our staff with delicious treats as appreciation for everything they do, day in and day out.

Bishop's first annual Spirit Week was held during the week of February 13th. Without the efforts of Heather Hewitt, Joanne Rutenberg, and Amy Speare, Spirit week would not have happened. This was a community-based week that entailed the selection and naming of the new Bishop Mascot - Buddy; a community bulletin board where students were able to write 'what community meant to them; a community service fundraising project that yielded over \$1,100.00 for Cradles to Crayons; two Bishop Spirit days with classes being nominated for the most spirited class based on how many students wore their Bishop colors; and ending the week with a whole school Den meeting celebrating our efforts, announcing totals, and introducing Buddy the Bear!

I am constantly being asked from the PTO, about ways that they can help out. Future administrative requests will include the purchase of laptops and wireless access points once the District is outfitted to go online.

Being in such a resourceful community is a treat.

Findings from the National PTA Association

1 When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.

2 When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.

To have long-lasting gains for students, parent involvement activities must be well planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.

3 Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.

4 Schools that work well with families have better teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents.

5 School programs that involve parents outperform identical programs without parent and family involvement.

6 Effective programs are led by a team of administrators, educators, and parents and have access to financial resources.

7 When they are treated as partners and given relevant information by people with whom they are comfortable, parents put into practice the involvement strategies they already know are effective but have been hesitant to contribute.

8 Collaboration with families is an essential component of a reform strategy, but it is not a substitute for high-quality education programs or comprehensive school improvement.

Research findings courtesy of the National PTA.

Go to the National PTA's Web site for more information about parent involvement

Enrichment Committee's Report

This year, as always, the Enrichment program was divided between whole school "cultural" events and the grade level "academic" events.

By Alison Vaishnaw

For the whole school events we wanted to reinforce the School theme of respect, responsibility and regard for others, and welcome many new members of our community, both staff, students and family members. The International theme was adopted to celebrate our diverse Bishop/Thompson community and to coordinate both with this year's Thompson/Hardy International Festival, and the Bishop Art program (through with each class has created a piece of permanent artwork for the school, that reflects their social studies curriculum). It was therefore also adopted as the theme for Art Night, at which all the artwork was unveiled, and there were cultural booths and hands-on activities celebrating many different cultures.

Whole school assemblies

Bamidele brought African dance and drumming that provided the start to an additional "International" theme to events from March-June.

Rob Surette, with his amazing "Be Somebody" presentation was an uplifting start to the year.



Odds Bodkin the accomplished storyteller presented assemblies, that combined both of our themes, using folk tales from around the world to illustrate the "Golden Rule".

Deanna's Educational Theater gave two age-appropriate performances for K-2 and 3-5, as part of a broader anti-bullying program that also included in-classrooms visits and other follow-up activities.

Grade level events in support of academic curricula

Kindergarten

New England Aquarium Tidepool
Mass. Audubon, Habitat, “Frogs and Toads”

Grade 1

New England Aquarium Tidepool
Mass. Audubon, Habitat, “Soil”

Grade 2

Motoko: Japan
(double program with both assembly and workshops)

Grade 3

Plymouth Plantation: Wampanoag culture
Bay Colony Educators;

Grade 4

Museum of Science: Weather program
Mad Science: Mineral mania

Grade 5

Bay Colony Educators;
Museum of Science: States of Matter

The Enrichment program also provides the 3rd grade with a new script for their annual play and Math/Origami workshops for grades 3-5, supporting the fractions and geometry curricula. And, Ruth Herman Cohen kindly visited all grades k-4 with her “Art goes to School” art appreciation program.

We are busy planning an exciting program for 2012-3, that will have a new whole school theme of “Theater”, and many returning programs for the different grade levels.

We are only able to offer these programs due to funding by the PTO. As a rule of thumb, costs are:

\$400-500 for one grade level to have an assembly or workshops. \$1000-1500 for “whole school” assemblies, usually in fact a K-2 and a 3-5 assembly. We do work to minimize the cost: benefit ratio, by researching new programs thoroughly, and by taking a whole school and long term view of the overall program. We also coordinate, when constructive, with other schools; use discounts earned from other programs, or early booking; and apply for grant funding whenever available.

Thank you for your support,

The Enrichment committee

Alison Vaishnaw, Betsy Schramm, Justine Bloch and Sarah Sontag



Fundraising Coordinator's Report

Fundraising this year was focused primarily on the two largest components the Annual Fund and the Bishop Fair.

By Ann Gerrietts

In 2011 we introduced a new incentive for the Annual Fund - the Bear Bucks. For every \$50 given to the annual fund, the PTO awarded 10 BB, which were equivalent to \$1. Bear Bucks could be spent on anything the PTO sold directly: Spirit items, food, popsicles, fair tickets, etc. This program was very popular and may be the reason why the Annual Fund was 33 percent over the \$7,500 goal this year - the fund topped out at just over \$10,000 this year. The Bishop Fair was also wildly successful; we had record sales in everything: fair tickets (including food & drinks), raffle tickets, silent auction, used goods, spirit sale, and plant sale. Due to a spectacularly beautiful day, the fair brought in over \$25,000 for the PTO.

Meanwhile, over the course of the year, we had several ongoing fundraising programs which represent a significant portion of the PTO's income. They were: Coffee Pond school photos, Original Works artwork gifts, Shop Wilson Day, Menotomy Beer & Wine, Bishop Dines Out, Amazon.com, Boxtops for Education, Target Red Card, School Pop/One Cause, Shop with Scrip gift cards, and Stop & Shop A+ Card. Together, these "free money" programs brought in over \$4,000 for the PTO this year. Programs like these are good habits to keep, as they require very little effort or volunteer hours and they are additional support for years when we may have a rainy fair or other unforeseen circumstances. They are also opportunities to share with friends or family so that they might chip in if they desire to, as many of these programs are not limited to the Arlington area. In our survey this spring, many people reported that they would continue to participate in these programs again, so look forward to doing some of these again next year.

For the 2012-2013 school year, use the link to subscribe to

<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/bishop/communityFundraising.asp>

In addition to the ongoing programs, we also hosted a few events.

The Walkathon, which took place in early October, was wildly successful and brought in \$2,318. We also hosted a profitable Craft Fair in December, and Chili Cookoff/Games night in late January.

Because of our successful fundraising position, in February, the PTO elected to suspend new fundraising events and programs and just focus on the Bishop Fair.

The traditional spring fundraiser and skating party were tabled for the year. The spring survey results show that the parent community would like to have more school events and buy fewer things. As a result, the PTO voted to have each grade host an event for the school next year. We are currently planning out six school-wide events on the 2012-2013 calendar; the Walkathon and Skating party will return. We are also planning on some new events - including a Bingo night, a Movie Night, and possibly a Talent show on its own night (all popular on the survey). Because of health department regulations concerning crock pots, the Chili Cookoff will probably reappear as another type of dinner - perhaps a Spaghetti or Pancake Supper? Stay tuned!

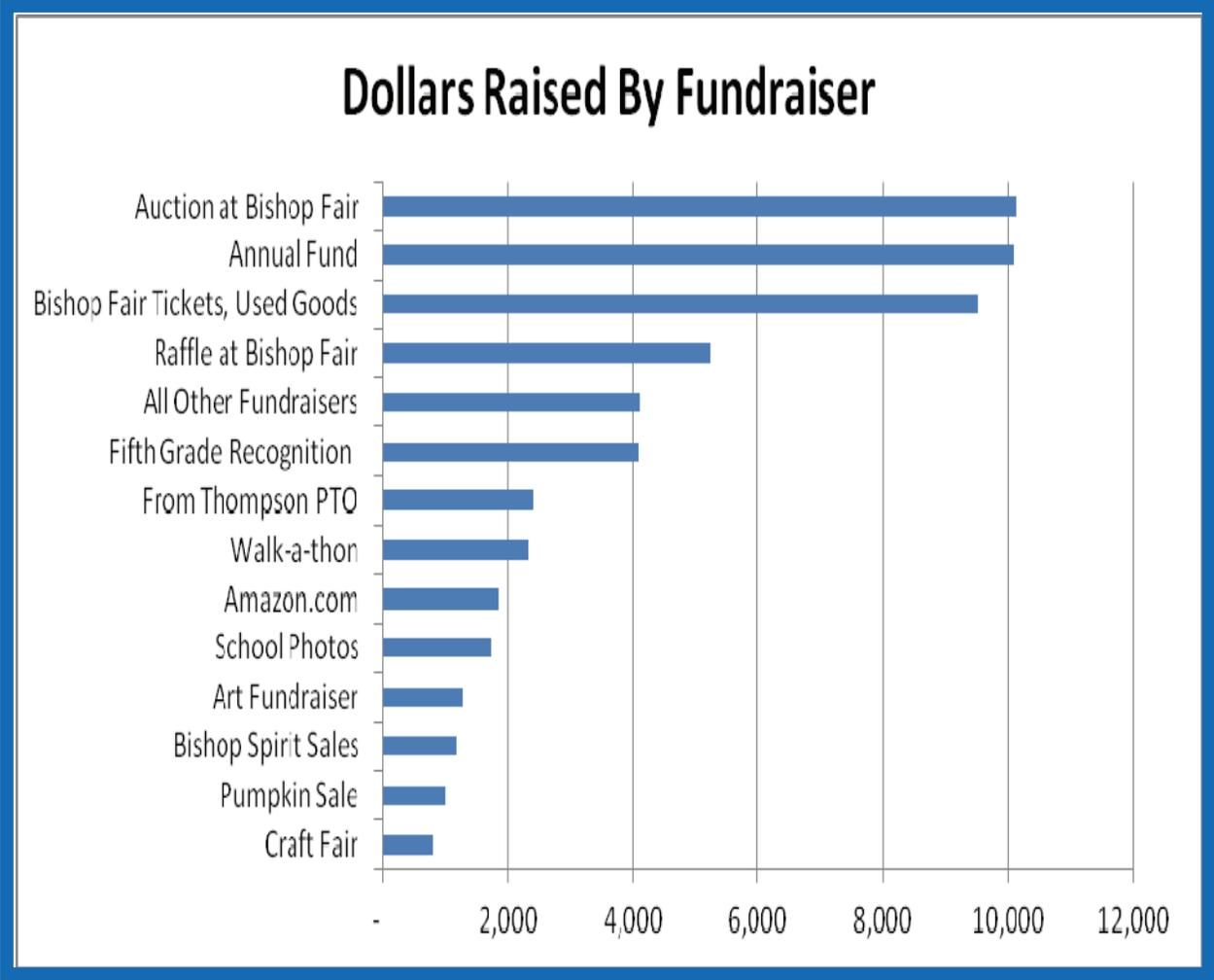
Lastly, our newest fundraising program is **THR!VE Coffee**. This opportunity came to us through Dave & Kiera Gordon, whose friend has developed a coffee roasting company which not only produces delicious coffee, but also pays Central American coffee farmers extremely well - better than any retail coffee brand, including the "fair trade" labels. In addition, through the fundraising program, Bishop will earn \$2 for every bag we sell using the BISHOP code on its website or through direct sales at school. We like this program because it's a great product, it treats people well, presents a unique educational story (farmer to consumer, international product), and it's something that we as parents would buy anyway: coffee. Best of all, it's very low-effort, sales are managed on the website and delivery is straight to your door. And again, it's not limited to Arlington.

Please share THR!VE coffee with your office and your friends & family. Set up a subscription! Follow this link and use the code "BISHOP". <http://www.thrivefarmers.com/thrivestore/>

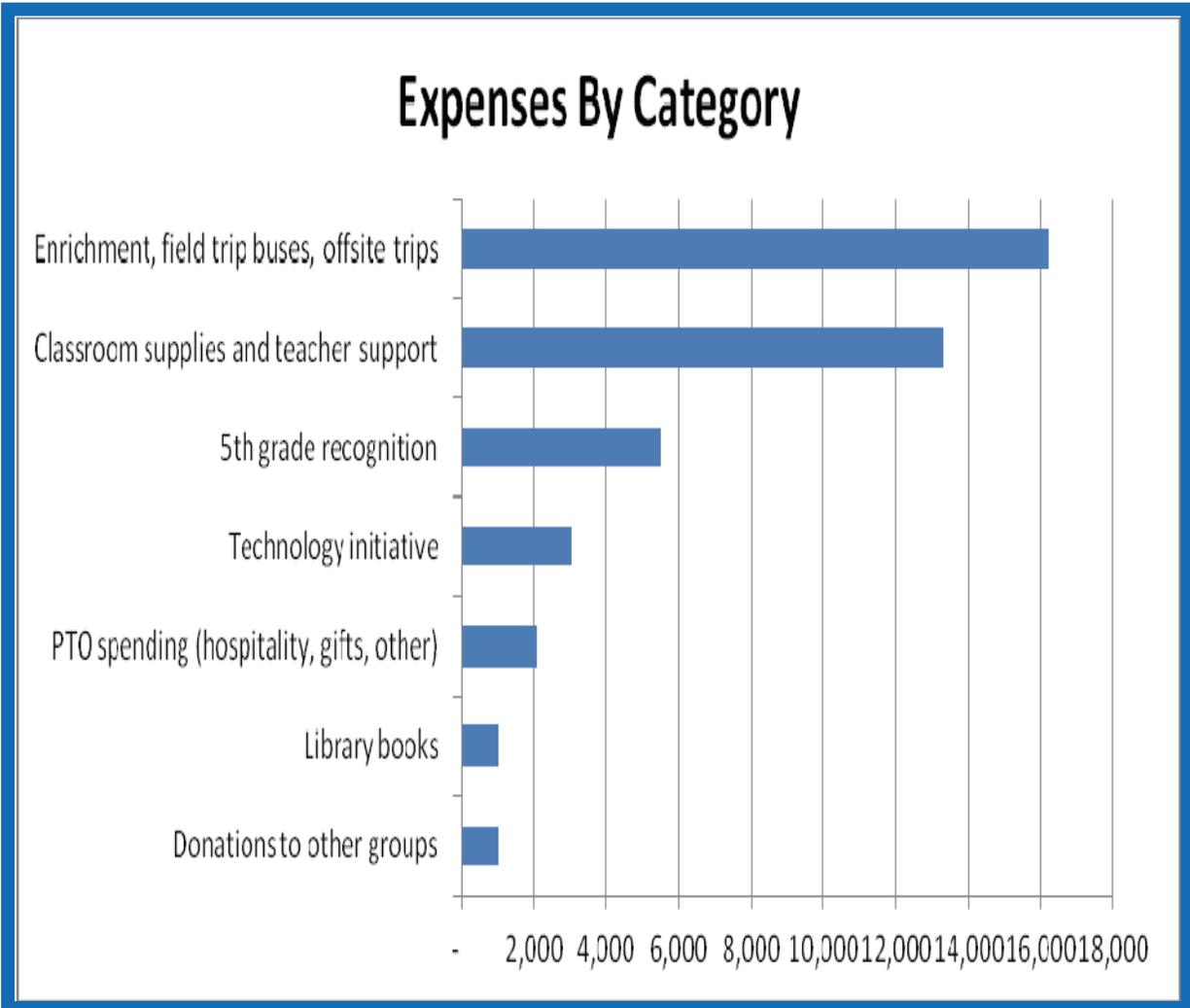
Treasurer's Report

Thank you all for a record-breaking fundraising year!

By Catherine Hoffman



Where are your dollars being spent?



We spent approximately \$95 per student this year!

Junior President's Report

By Brecky Peabody

Dear parents,
I am already looking ahead to next fall, planning our events and fundraising activities so that we may have another successful year of providing the resources and enrichment opportunities to our teachers and students.

It's my pleasure to introduce the **new**

PTO Executive Board for 2012-2013:

Co-Presidents: Jayme Purinton - 2014, and Brecky Peabody 2013

Co-Treasurers: Celeste Hogan - 2013 and Adam Lawrence - 2014

Recording Secretary: Laura Pierce - 2014

Corresponding Secretary: Usha Iyer - 2013

Fundraising Coordinator: Open

One significant change we've made (voted in at the May 30 PTO meeting) is that going forward, each grade will host a popular event for the school.

For example, the 1st grade may host a Bingo night for the school community, for which the parents of 1st graders will be the primary volunteers.

We're hoping that this system will help parents focus on just a few dates per year to give an hour or so of time.

We're excited to see how each grade will come to own their event, infusing their creativity and pride.

dates already on the calendar

September 6: 1st day Parents Coffee

September 7: Ice Cream Social - Welcome back

September 11: Kindergarten Parents Coffee

September 15: Town Day

October 6: Pumpkin Sale - Hosted by 2nd grade

November 2: Walkathon - Hosted by 3rd grade

December 7: Craft Fair - Parents' Night Out

***January 25:** "Chili Cook-off" with a new type of dinner - TBD - Hosted by 5th grade

***March 1:** Movie Night - Hosted by Kindergarten

***March 29:** Bingo Night - Hosted by 1st grade

April : Skating party - Hosted by 4th grade

May 18 (19): Bishop Bear Fair! - ALL school

June 5: Art Night & Talent Show - ALL school

*** These events currently need coordinators!** If you would like to organize the event, please contact us - bishopschool.pto@gmail.com.

Next year, we're noting some changes with the Room Parents. As you may recall, in late spring, many proposals came out in PTO meetings on how to help the Room Parents work together a little better, or to help coordinate between the PTO and Room Parents' efforts. The solution that eventually took hold will incorporate the following changes:

A letter advertising for Room Parents will go out over the summer in the school district's mailing with classroom assignments. If you're interested in being a Room Parent for your child's teacher, we'll ask you to send in your name by September 1st. If there are more than two people interested in being a room parent for a classroom, we will choose two names with a blind draw at the 1st day Parents Coffee.

Room parents will be invited to the first PTO meeting (Wednesday, September 12) where the Room Parent Coordinator will lead an orientation for how to manage classroom funds, go over typical responsibilities for room parents, as well as share ideas for activities, gifts and teacher appreciation.

The Room Parent Coordinator will continue to connect with the Room Parents on activities throughout the year, assist with hosting the Grade Event and Bishop Fair game sign-ups, as well as share information back and forth between Room Parents and the PTO.

As you can see, we have a really fun and busy year planned. I am looking forward to working with you as we make it a success. In September, we'll have more details for activities and volunteer opportunities; can you give us just an hour of your time?

More Bishop PTO by the numbers...

\$400 Paid in mini grants to teachers

\$11,860 Given in classroom support

26 Gifts for Japanese Exchange Students

\$14,000 paid in enrichment programs

\$300 in Nurse's supplies

400 Students rode busses to field trips

19 Enrichment programs funded

6 Classroom projectors purchased

\$95 spent per Bishop student

\$1,000 toward the mural in 5th Grade Hallway

70 Owl pellets dissected by the 1st grade

54 Model moons built by the 2nd grade

\$1,134.54 Raised for Cradles to Crayons during Spirit Week

20 Agenda books purchased

17 Document cameras purchased

100+ Flat Buddies travelling the world this summer

Annual Fund 2012-2013

Dear Parent Community,

Please consider a gift to the PTO's Annual fund for 2012-2013. Our goal this year is \$10,000. The money we will raise with the annual fund is comparable to our teachers' discretionary funds checks, which are given to the teachers twice a year to assist with their classroom needs. The PTO works hard to raise the funds to pay for not only the teachers' discretionary checks, but also the enrichment programs throughout the year, bussing to field trips, supplies for grade-level projects, and supplies for the special teachers, library and nurse's office. In all, the PTO plans to spend close to \$100 per student this year.

This year we will bring back the very popular Bear Bucks! For every \$50 that you give to the Annual Fund, the PTO will give back 10 Bear Bucks, good for everything the PTO sells directly. Bear Bucks can be used at the Bear Fair, admission and food at any of the events, spirit sale items, bake sales, etc. We encourage you to give at your comfort level - every dollar counts!

You may also consider asking grandparents or special family members to make a donation to the Annual Fund as a meaningful way to honor your child. This is a special way for families to be involved in your child's education. To do this, please complete the "it's a present" section on the back so we can generate a letter to your child from that special family member. If your place of business matches charitable gifts, please complete the matching section on the back so that we may send a receipt in your name. The PTO is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, tax ID #E-22319 8215.

A donation to the Annual Fund is the most direct, effective thing you can do for the PTO. There are no middlemen, no things to buy, no third-party companies. We don't have to wait for the return on a fundraising program. With your donation, we can get straight to work.

Thank you so much for your consideration and donation.

Sincerely,

The PTO Executive Board

Breck Peabody & Jayme Purinton, Co-Presidents

Celeste Hogan & Adam Lawrence, Co-Treasurers

Usha Iyer, Corresponding Secretary

Laura Pierce, Recording Secretary

Ann Gerrietts, Fundraising Coordinator

Annual Fund Donation Form

Please return this form with a check or a print-out of your paypal receipt.

PayPal Link:

https://www.paypal.com/us/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_flow&SESSION=vLtf5EMQd2SnlzGTD5JEcOjWPNPiroaMiWH45WVGpO3_E9xjejt7Ip6K4m&dispatch=5885d80a13codb1f8e263663d3faee8d8494db9703d295b4a2116480ee01a05c

Donor's Name	
Gift \$ Amount _____	Check # _____ <input type="checkbox"/> PayPal
Do you want Bear Bucks?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount _____ (10 / \$50)
Child's Name (oldest if multiple):	
Child's Teacher:	
Parents' Mailing address:	
Email Address	
Phone #:	
Date of gift:	

It's a present!	From [how does the child call you?]:
Full Name:	
Mailing address:	
Email address:	

Employer Match:	Company Name:
Finance / HR Officer name	
Mailing address:	
Email address:	

John A. Bishop Elementary School
Parent Teacher Organization

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