



2017 Orientation to Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions about the Cherry Chase PTA

1. **What does the Parent Teacher Association do for our children?**

The PTA is made up of parents and school staff that work together to enrich our children's experiences at Cherry Chase Elementary. Volunteers like you supplement in class learning with arts, music, social, and real-world learning, and we have budgeted \$170,000 of your donations to directly support classroom activities and technology. The PTA also enables almost 20 after school programs to enable learning and growth after the school day is officially over. Every child at Cherry Chase benefits from the enrichment your PTA provides.

2. **How is PTA money spent? And who decides?**

You decide how the budget is spent. Currently 76% of our budget goes to activities our children directly experience: in-class & after-school activities, technology, and equipment. The remainder goes to community and school events, fundraising, and the administration required to be a non-profit and a member of the national PTA.

Here are just a few of the wonderful programs we sponsor or pay for to enrich our children's education:

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| 1. Assemblies | 6. Fall Festival |
| 2. Field trips and in-school special programs | 7. Technology: hardware and software |
| 3. Science Camp contribution | 8. 20+ after school programs |
| 4. FAME (Fine Arts Mini Experience) | 9. Outdoor garden experiences |
| 5. 2-week extension to Starting Arts rotation | 10. International Night and Diwali |

3. **How do I receive information on all of the school activities?**

The school newsletter – *Charger News* – is distributed monthly via email, but cannot cover all events and changes in a timely fashion. So, the *Charger eBlast* is produced by the PTA and arrives in your inbox on Thursday of each week during the school year. These are critical tools for communicating with our families about important messages, reminders and last minute updates. Please read them! When you begin at Cherry Chase, your email address will be added to the list for these emails. You have the ability to opt-out by contacting a staff member in the school office. We also encourage you to “Like” us on Facebook at Cherry Chase PTA.

4. **How do I volunteer At Cherry Chase?**

We pride ourselves on our strong volunteerism and have hundreds of opportunities for stay-at-home, part-time, and full-time working parents. We invite you to come to the **Volunteer Faire & Orientation on Friday, August 18, 2017** (the third day of school) from **7:45 until 9:30 am** to learn about and sign up for the various volunteer opportunities available. Everyone will be there! In advance, you can peruse the list of volunteer committees on the PTA website at <http://cherrychasepta.org/> to see what appeals to you. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator VP, Sangeetha Muruganatham, at volunteercoordinator@cherrychasepta.org for more information.

5. **Can I come to school to volunteer in class or visit?**

Yes! We have many classroom volunteer opportunities such as assisting the teacher in the classroom (speak to your classroom teacher about specific times and duties) and yard duty supervision for recess and

lunch (there will be sign-ups at the Volunteer Faire & Orientation). Remember: whenever you come to school, you must always first sign-in at the office and wear a "Volunteer" or "Visitor" sticker.

6. What is FAME?

FAME (Fine Arts Mini Experience) is the PTA's signature art and music program at Cherry Chase led by parent volunteers. There are 6 lessons per year for all students, each lesson consisting of one musician and one artist and their work, with a follow-up art lesson related to the style of the artist for that month. Students keep all their FAME artwork in a special portfolio that they bring home at the end of the school year. A brief overview of the subject matter for this year's lessons can be found on the PTA website <http://cherrychasepta.org/> under the FAME link on the left. To become a FAME docent, please contact Amy Moore at amyLmoore@gmail.com.

7. How can I help with fundraising?

We only have two main sources of fundraising. The goal (which our budget is banking on) is to raise at least \$150,000 annually from these two fundraising efforts.

We will host a Direct Appeal campaign when school begins in the fall (check for matching funds from your employer). We ask for \$150 per student, please. 100% of your donation stays at school, and 100% is tax deductible. Then in the spring, we have the annual Walk-A-Thon & Auction, our largest fundraising community event of the year. Our teachers give their 100% participation, and we ask for our parents to do the same by helping their kids get pledges, participating in and volunteering at the event, and donating to the event and auction. Two additional "effortless" ways to contribute are by saving your Box Tops and by linking to Amazon via the PTA website – Amazon gives us a percentage back for each order you make (it does not increase your cost). Tell your friends and relatives too!

8. When are PTA Meetings and why should I attend?

The PTA meetings is how you influence your PTA ... what it does and how it spends its money. It's also a place to get information: the Principal and our Teacher Representative always give updates on what is happening at the school, and there are frequent updates on school activities and events.

Meetings are typically held the 3rd Tuesday of every other month in the Multi at 7:00 PM. Please refer to the PTA website for specific dates. You are highly encouraged to attend ... this is how you shape your PTA.

9. What are Parent Education Nights?

Parent Education Nights are typically held the 3rd Tuesday of months that alternate with PTA meetings in the Multi with a guest speaker/ educator who discusses a topic that is relevant to parents of elementary age children. This allows sufficient time for topics that inspire thoughtful discussions. Topics/speakers this year included: *A Look at Bullying*, *an author talk with Brad Herzog*, *How to Talk to Your Children*, and *How to Save for College*.

10. Where can I go for more information?

The school website can be found at www.sesd.org and by selecting Cherry Chase from the Schools menu. This site is full of information about our school, including the latest events and copies of school newsletters.

The Cherry Chase PTA is at <http://cherrychasepta.org/>. Here you will find everything you need to know about the PTA and how to help!

11. Who can I contact with questions about the PTA or entering kindergarten?

The following Cherry Chase parents are happy to talk or chat whenever you might be wondering about something. It can be about the school or the PTA – all questions welcome!

Kei Sato, PTA President, Cherry Chase Parent since 2012, president@cherrychasepta.org
Sangeetha Muruganantham, PTA Volunteer Coordinator, volunteercoordinator@cherrychasepta.org