

Stevens Elementary School – Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO)

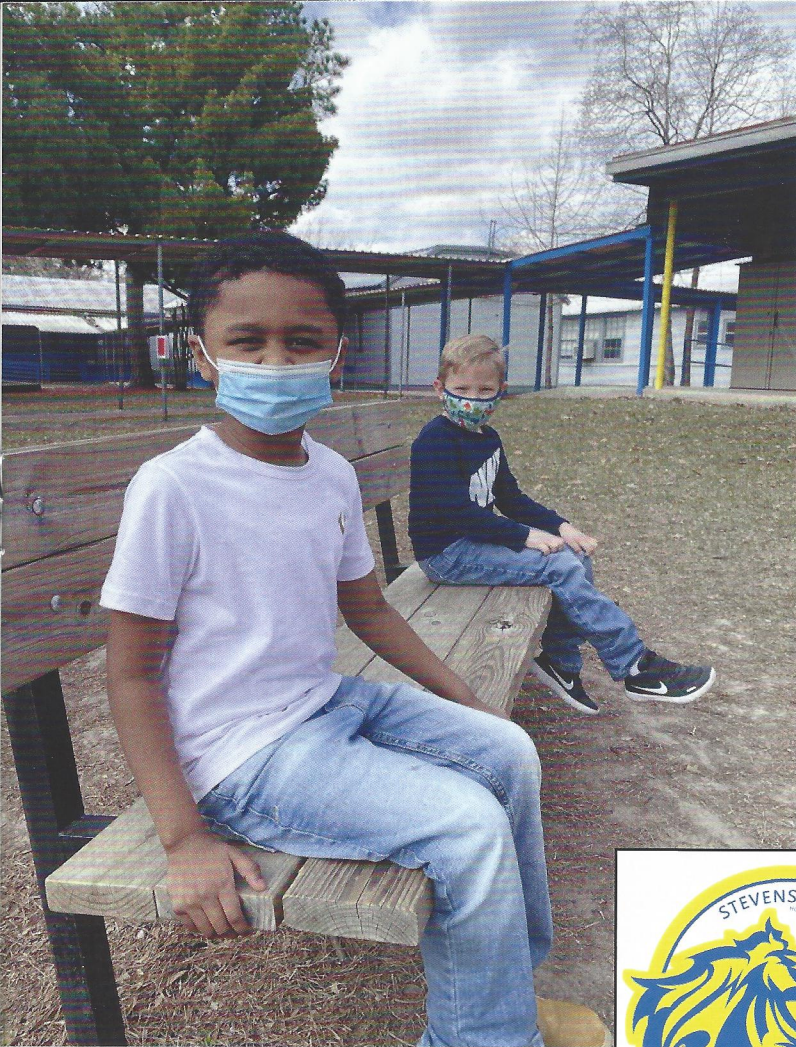
Submitted by Stevens PTCO Officers

It all started with a community meeting in 2018; a post made on a neighborhood social media page gauging interest from the community in getting involved with Stevens Elementary. That initial meeting soon evolved into the registration of the Stevens Elementary School PTO as an official non-profit organization. The organization quickly became known as the Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO) as there was overwhelming engagement and support from community members including parents of children zoned to Stevens who would be school-aged in the next few years. The PTCO is important as it enables students' families to connect with the school, supports programs that might otherwise be unavailable and improves the experience for Stevens Elementary students, faculty and staff. Momentum quickly grew and the PTCO raised \$16,000 in its first year. Fast forward a few



years and the PTCO has grown to over 200 members and raised \$47,000 in sponsorships and donations during the 2020-2021 school year. The success of the PTCO would not be possible without the very strong relationship with school administration including Principal Trent. She has been a strong ally and remains very engaged. Current PTCO Board President Jesus Alcorta has been at the heart of driving PTCO engagement with the Oak Forest community. He not only lives and works in the neighborhood, but grew up here and attended Stevens Elementary School. His daughter is following in his footsteps as a Stevens Stallion.

The first PTCO program introduced in 2018 was the Stevens Superheroes program where students who showed positive behaviors in the classroom were selected by their teachers to participate in a special event. The monthly events were sponsored by community members and included a range of fun



There is a growing team of people helping build programming and increase awareness and participation with the PTCO. Numerous members serve on the PTCO board and many more lead and volunteer across various PTCO programs including Staff Appreciation, Campus Beautification, PTCO Communications, Fundraising and more. At the forefront is current PTCO Treasurer Coree Laabs. She has worn many hats within the PTCO and supported every event that has happened since the first meeting in 2018. The PTCO success would not be what it is today without her astounding dedication and leadership.

Another great addition to the PTCO board has been the Fundraising VP Xochitl Trujillo. She helped to formalize the sponsorship program last summer. With her leadership and the dedication of the Fundraising Committee, the PTCO engaged more local businesses and community members for sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, the PTCO was recently awarded two grants to support the school's Science and PE programs. The success of the PTCO speaks to the amazing community we have here in Oak Forest and surrounding neighborhoods. We have been overwhelmed with the love and support by our sponsors and community members who have made our PTCO programs possible.

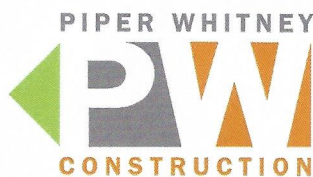
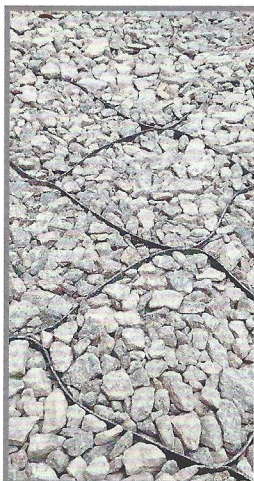
It was no exception for Stevens Elementary that there were challenges in this last school year due to COVID. The school principal, administration and faculty were amazing in their transition to online learning. Through a generous donation from a Stevens parent, the PTCO was able to provide headsets for staff to enable them to successfully manage virtual learning. When the school returned to in-person learning, a new PTCO Faculty Grant Program was introduced to enable the purchase of classroom supplies to support teachers' needs. Eleven teachers were awarded a grant during the spring semester for whom the PTCO purchased supplies including student headphones, play therapy items, art and science materials and new classroom chairs.

You might see our families and friends displaying their Stevens Stallion pride around the neighborhood; this is due to the new school spirit shop developed by PTCO Secretary Terra Snow. She has also been key in the development of a program to expand Steven's playground facilitates in partnership with a generous donor. In the fall, the PTCO is leading the upgrade and instillation of \$30,000 of playground equipment for the kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade playgrounds. We know the students are going to love playing on the new equipment.

We cannot say enough about our amazing PTCO family, friends and volunteers. Their time and dedication have been important to building the PTCO into what it is today. We thank each and every one of them and look forward to working together to continue to grow support for our amazing Stevens Stallions. If you would like to find out a way to get involved or sign up for the PTCO newsletter, please send an email to stevenspto.hou@gmail.com.



activities such as a bounce house, magician and glow stick party. The success with the Stevens Superhero program paved the way for the PTCO to sponsor its first annual Stevens Read-A-Thon fundraiser. The Stevens Read-A-Thon is a great event which focuses on the importance of literacy. Pledges and donations are made by friends and families to encourage students to spend time reading and improving their literacy skills. The kids had so much fun with the theme days throughout the event. Additionally, the classrooms with most minutes read were rewarded with a 'Silly String the Science Teacher Ms. Ricketts' and 'Pie Principal Trent' events. The 2021 Read-A-Thon, led by Fundraising Committee member Nicole Potter, raised \$4,500 in donations which has been important to supporting PTCO programming during the 2020-2021 school year.



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