

PTO PERSPECTIVE



AN INFORMATION SOURCE FROM THE SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL PTO

WWW.SHSPTO.ORG

FALL 2012

WELCOME

Parents/Guardians of the Class of 2016!

THE PTO AT SHS

If you're like most parents or guardians of incoming freshmen, there are so many new things to learn about Somerville High School – for example, how to navigate the school without getting lost – that you may feel your head spinning. You may be bewildered at the course offerings. You may be trying to remember the names of your child's teachers and the administrative staff. You may be astonished at the scope and number of student activities and athletic offerings.

One of the best ways to quickly get acclimated into high school life is by joining the SHS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). PTO volunteers are dedicated to raising funds and running events for the benefit of all students at SHS. It costs only \$10 a year to join. Anyone can join and all are welcome. This special edition newsletter provides information on what the SHS PTO does and why. ♦

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY IT!

Don't Delay—Join the SHS PTO Now!

It costs only \$10 a year to join the PTO! Register online at shspto.org. Or look for your membership form that is included in this Back to School mailing. All freshman families who join by September 19th (Back to School Night) are automatically entered in a drawing for a "Freshman Survival" gift basket.

This basket is full of 'Ville clothing and other assorted items to ensure stress-free survival. ♦

If you have questions about any aspect of the PTO, please contact...

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|--|--------------------------|
| PTO President – Michele Cross | mjjecross@verizon.net |
| PTO Vice President – Kim Fraser | kfraser21@verizon.net |
| Treasurer – Carolyn Lang | amland618@aol.com |
| Recording Secretary – Sandy Costa | sjsjcosta@hotmail.com |
| Market Day Information – Melissa Looby | melissalooby@verizon.net |

HALLOWEEN IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

Before you purchase your Halloween costumes this year, please consider our Halloween fundraiser that supports SHS Project Graduation. A form will be on the website soon and watch for more details on Power School. Please visit www.wholesalecostumeclub.com, become a member. When placing your order, use the **Promo Code FUN648** (the membership fee will be waived). Shipping is \$5.99. The company will donate 15% of all sales to Project Graduation. Please feel free to share this code with family and friends anywhere in the USA! ♦

What You Should Know About Parental Involvement

Building parental involvement is the single most important thing that parent groups do. Often, it's the most difficult, too. And that's too bad, because there are many compelling and definitive reasons that are backed up by volumes of research as to why all parents should get involved in their child's education. These reasons apply to everyone—regardless of bank balance, ethnicity, work schedule, education level, or anything else. Researchers have been studying the effects of parent attitudes and actions on their children's academic success for more than 30 years. The results are consistent. In their book, *"A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement,"* Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla state that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school, and the schools they go to are better. (www.ptotoday.com) ♦

How can you be involved at school? It's easy—join the PTO!

People say they don't have time, but an hour or two each month is a huge help! People say they don't feel comfortable at school, but we make you feel welcome. We always have fun! Even during the most hectic activities, there's always time to laugh! ♦

When Does the PTO Meet?

The SHS PTO will meet 4 times this year. Meetings are 7-8 PM in the library.

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| Monday | October 29th, 2012 |
| Tuesday | December 11th, 2012 |
| Tuesday | March 19th, 2013 |
| Tuesday | May 14th, 2013 |

If you want to get more involved, there are many subcommittees that run activities throughout the year. Subcommittees usually meet just before or after the regular meeting. ♦

IMPORTANT DATES!!

- Sept. 6 First day of school (full day)
- Sept. 8 Market Day pick up 10-11am, SHS Cafeteria

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- Sept. 19 Back to School night, 7pm, SHS
- Oct. 6 Market Day pick up 10-11am, SHS Cafeteria

IMPORTANT DATES!!

- Oct. 8 No school (staff development)
- Oct. 29 PTO Meeting

Where Does the Money Go?

The money the PTO raises goes back to all students in one way or another. Here are a few activities the PTO sponsors to benefit our children:

PROJECT GRADUATION This is the biggest SHS PTO project. Project Graduation is an opportunity for all seniors to enjoy a supervised, drug- and alcohol-free, all-night post-graduation celebration at the Rutgers University Sonny Werblin Rec Center. This year, after formal graduation ceremonies were over, seniors who have signed a contract agreeing to follow the rules and be on their best behavior, boarded busses at 9:30pm for the trip to Rutgers. During the evening students enjoyed DJ-led karaoke and dancing. Seniors swam in the Olympic size swimming pool and played basketball, volleyball and racquetball. The inflatable Bungee Run was a huge hit as was the Temporary Tattoo table, three caricaturists, the photo booth and the air brush tshirt booth. Sub sandwiches, beverages and tons of snacks were available all evening. Pizza arrived at 2am and was devoured shortly thereafter! At 2:30am the 2nd annual Project Graduation BINGO game began! Over 200 students participated in eight exciting, suspenseful games of BINGO in order to win great prizes – including 19" TVs purchased by the PTO and 24" and 27" TVs generously donated by two senior families. Each attendee was given a bright orange drawstring bag that holds the traditional Ville boxer shorts, a Project Graduation t-shirt and a TGIFriday's gift certificate. Seniors returned home tired but happy around 5:00am. Project Graduation costs about \$23,000. All funds are raised through donations from businesses and parents as well as various PTO fundraisers throughout the year. Many PTO subcommittee members are needed to organize this terrific event for the seniors.

LOCKER STUFFING As part of Project Graduation, all senior lockers are stuffed 3 times a year with a small treat and a Project Graduation message. PTO members purchase treats and stuff lockers on Halloween, before the winter break, and on Valentine's Day.

SNACKS The PTO provides snacks for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week, for the Junior class after they complete HSPA testing, and when the staff requests. They have also provided a continental breakfast for New Teacher Orientation.

COLLEGE INFORMATION NIGHT Each January, the SHS Guidance Department sponsors an evening for Junior and Senior parents to learn more about college admissions, college athletics, and financial aid. The PTO provides funds to sponsor the Financial Aid expert speaker.

T-SHIRTS The PTO provides a T-shirt to all incoming Freshmen.

SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS The PTO provides scholarships to deserving seniors. A PTO subcommittee evaluates potential recipients based on these criteria: B average or better, participation in school activities, some type of post-high school continuing education, and active parental involvement in the PTO, including membership for at least 2 years. A good reason to join the PTO!

ADMINISTRATION REQUESTS The PTO allocates funds annually (\$1000 or more) for school administrative requests. In past years, PTO funds have been used to support the "One Book, One Community" initiative, to purchase an automated external defibrillator (AED), a portable sound system, a large laminating machine, and to defray the cost of new stage curtains in the auditorium. Other requests include funding to provide assemblies for the students. ♦

PTO Fundraisers

Here is how the PTO earns money to support its activities. If you have any successful fundraising ideas or experiences, we'd love to hear them!

CLOTHING SALE

Start the year off right by purchasing orange and black 'Ville clothing. Items such as blankets, pinnies, sweatshirts, long- and short-sleeved t-shirts, sweatpants, flannel pants, shorts, baseball caps, knit hats and bags are available in a range of sizes. 'Ville clothing makes great holiday or birthday gifts. Order forms are mailed 3 times a year (fall, winter, spring). You can also download an order form right from our website. Visit us at www.shspto.org to start building your 'VILLE wardrobe today! A PTO subcommittee handles clothing orders, sales and distribution. ♦



MARKET DAY

Market Day offers more than 160 convenient and nutritious food products (ie, poultry, meat, seafood, complete meals, appetizers, breakfast items, dessert) at competitive prices. Order online at www.marketday.com or via the order sheet in the progress report packet mailed later in the fall. A percentage of each order is given back to the PTO. Last year more than \$1,700 was raised. Market Day delivers the orders directly to the school, on the first or second Saturday of each month. PTO members receive and sort orders—all you do is pick yours up! ♦

BALLOONS IN JUNE

A sure sign that SHS graduation is close at hand is the bunches of bright orange mylar 'Ville balloons tied to mailboxes and porches all over Somerville and Branchburg! Each June, parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors can honor SHS seniors by ordering balloons (\$5 ea). This annual fundraiser is one of the most visible indicators of the SHS PTO at work—more than 2,000 balloons were delivered for the Class of 2012. Profits from this fundraiser go directly to Project Graduation. PTO members inflate balloons, organize balloon bunches, and deliver the balloons. ♦

