

SHARING POWER

Virgil I. Grissom High School, Huntsville Alabama

The Grissom High School (GHS) PTSA board always shares power among their parents and community. Early in the summer the GHS PTSA gathered for their outgoing/incoming board lunch at a small local business owner's restaurant near GHS. After a nice lunch and meet-and-greet, all current information on each member was exchanged and a draft calendar for the upcoming school year was constructed. At a later board meeting each chairperson received an orange (GHS school colors) folder with the new board information, as well as other valuable information regarding GHS staff, school year calendar and AL State PTA.

To jump start the school year in a fun and uplifting way, the day before school started GHS PTSA Hospitality committee provided and served a delicious Welcome Back lunch to the 140 GHS staff. The membership table was set up for new memberships and goody bags with useful school items were given out. This lunch was just one small way to show the GHS staff and support personnel how much we appreciate what they do for all GHS students.

In October Huntsville city was holding a runoff election within the district of which GHS is located. GHS PTSA took this opportunity to host a Political Forum for the entire city to hear ideas from the four candidates involved, two school board and two city council. Moderator for the evening was the local CBS station (WHNT) morning reporter. The PTSA President and Legislative VP worked closely with the moderator to produce an agenda to follow in order to conduct an unbiased forum. They also coordinated with two GHS Government teachers asking for students' questions for the candidates. Days before the forum, 170 students talked about the issues in class and voted on the questions to be asked by the students. The evening of the forum 25 AP Government students assisted in questioning the candidates, handing out surveys to the 200 audience members and took up questions from the audience to the moderator. The entire forum was broadcast live on ETV and streamed live on WHNT. The next day the students compiled the survey results and posted them at school for all to see. The AP Government teacher said the forum made a great impact on the students' knowledge about campaigns and elections and they still talk about it today. This forum was a splendid way to show the power of community and school helping and serving each other.

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After the new year, the GHS PTSA hosted their 3rd Annual Real Estate Breakfast with over 80 agents in attendance. The Huntsville Area Association of Realtors (HAAR) personnel contacted GHS PTSA President and Legislative VP to learn what all was entailed in organizing this event. GHS PTSA worked closely with HAAR in providing a detailed agenda for the event in order to educate the agents about the current happenings within GHS and the new GHS being built. The GHS PTSA Hospitality committee, along with help from the GHS librarians, provided a fabulous buffet breakfast. GHS students greeted the agents, showed them how to get to the library, set up tables/chairs and clean up. At the end of the breakfast the GHS PTSA President handed out a survey asking how we can make this event even more helpful to the agents in the future. The agents responded back with all positive responses and they truly appreciated all our support for them and want the breakfast to continue in the future.

The GHS PTSA also loves to support the GHS staff. Once a month the GHS PTSA Hospitality committee funds and serves a different themed snack for the entire GHS staff at their staff meeting. Many hours of preparation goes into dreaming and organizing these snacks. It's a small but thoughtful way we try to show our staff how we support them and share in the power of the students and their successes.