

Minutes of the CHS PTA Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on October 16, 2018

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m. by the Principal, Ms. Isabella Prentice, who led the meeting in saying the Lord's Prayer.

Ms. Prentice welcomed all to the meeting and informed them that there were no minutes as last Academic year [2017-2018] no AGM was held, a result of the passage of Hurricane Maria.

The Principal remarked that due to Hurricane Maria, the 2017-18 academic year was a challenge for CHS - Challenges identified were no textbooks, limited electrical power, limited internet, and food challenges among others. However, students were encouraged to be brave and were reminded that "you can only be strong when strong is your only option"; the school was involuntarily shut down and suffered many difficulties; however, the school has bounced back, not physically, but striving academically. Miss Prentice said that "we are making squash with Maria's limes". The meeting was informed that, due to the damage caused by Maria, we are only making use of 20% of the older, northern building, which is 111 years old and which is slated to be demolished. The rebuilding process is being explored and so far, \$8 000 in survey and design fees have been spent; a plea was made for all hands to be on deck for fundraising. The planned renovation of the southern wing from last summer did not materialise; hopefully it will be done over the 2019 summer.

CSEC Results:

Despite all the challenges, CHS obtained a 96.6% pass rate at the last CSEC exams. Staff, students and parents were congratulated for this achievement; the support given to students by parents and staff paid huge dividends. Further, last year's experiences should have taught our girls that one does not run away from difficulties - challenges must be faced.

Staffing Matters

The meeting was informed of the changes in staff after Hurricane Maria - there were two resignations immediately post Maria; at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, two others went to further their studies; and there was one retirement after 30 years of service to CHS. This academic year saw three new teachers coming on board - Ms. Narrissa Browne, Ms. Inoela

Vital and Ms. Marisol John. The gathering was asked to pray for all teachers, especially the new ones, as teaching a class of 30 different personalities can be challenging.

The meeting was informed that, so far this year, CHS has lost 6 school days due to Tropical storms Isaac and Kirk; creating challenges for all subjects, although some more so than others, e.g. those that only have sessions only once a week.

Form 5 Matters

Parents/ Guardians were informed that CSEC Recommendations were due to come out the week of October 22, and that payments for those who do not have a scholarship or bursary would be due on or before November 7th. Private scholarship holders were advised to take the information to their sponsor.

COR weekend for the fifth formers would be the weekend of November 16th to 18th at CHS. Parents/Guardians of those who are interested in or will be attending COR were invited to a compulsory meeting on November 7th at 4.30 p.m.

For the other students, there will be the regular retreat. Since there was no retreat held last year, the school refunded all the students the \$15.00 paid towards the 2018 retreat.

School Activities:

The Ministry of Education has mandated that all schools should close for the Christmas break on December 19th; report cards will be issued on that day. A tentative exam schedule has been prepared and is being checked by the teachers, the students will be sent a copy when it has been finalised on or about 25 October 2018. Parents were exhorted to help their daughters prepare for the exams, especially the fifth formers, who should think of each exam as a CSEC exam and take it seriously. They should advise their daughters to take their time to complete the exams as, frequently, it is the students who use up all their time who do better in the exams.

Parents of first formers were advised to sit with their children and set a plan so that they can start their revision early so that they will not feel pressured when the exams come around. They were admonished to allow the students to get adequate sleep prior to their exams. Parents were further advised to bring in the stationery for exams the week before the exams in order to avoid rushing in with it on the day of the exam. Parents were asked to ensure that their daughter/ward

has a device as students will be having online exams, in addition to the regular written exams. The use of online exams will be increasing as CXC will be using online exams effective 2020.

The Principal reminded the first Form parents that she had asked them not to give the students cell phones. These cell phones are now being used to contact parents directly during school hours to come and collect them and parents are arriving at school and reporting that their children are in fact calling them during class. This is not acceptable. Cell phones must be used appropriately or else they become a distraction.

Socials

The Principal reminded the meeting that CHS is not only about academics. CHS has been participating in the Independence Cultural activities. Parents were thanked for their cooperation and informed that the students have, so far, performed creditably and have represented the school well. Creole Day will be celebrated at school as usual. Parents were asked to make a distinction between dressing for Creole Day and African Liberation Day in the future. However, for this year, seeing that many parents had already bought the African prints for their daughters' outfits, they would be allowed to wear them so as not to unduly burden anyone.

A table etiquette session had been planned for Oct 25th for the students of 2nd Form and up here at school from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., only for those 36 students who have signed up. It would be hosted by Mrs. Marcella Larocque-Menal, former CHS teacher and Carnival Queen.

Glow Up with Girl Up was being planned for November 10th. Students will wear white. This activity is being organised and executed by the Girl Up group.

Thursday, the 18th of October, would be celebrated as Pink Day in empathy with all those who are suffering from cancer. Additionally on Saturday the 20th, a Dancercize for Cancer would be held. All proceeds from both events would go to the Cancer Foundation. The Principal reminded everyone that cancer is no respecter of persons and that one of our former students, a young lady in her twenties, had just passed away from cancer.

The Annual School Dance, once called Pretty In Pink, was carded for December 15th at CHS, this year's colour is Pink.

PTA Executive

The Principal remarked that, because of Hurricane Maria, we have had no PTA Executive. Interested parents were then invited to nominate themselves or volunteer anyone who would wish to serve on the CHS PTA Executive. We would need a President/Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer. The following parents volunteered themselves and were asked to give their full name to Mrs. Harris; email addresses and phone numbers were also taken.

Volunteers:

Ms. Kathy Robinson

Ms. Cee-Ann Lafond

Mrs. Sharon Rolle

Ms Gayle St. Cyr

Ms. Lydia Talbot

Mrs. Angelita Dover

Ms. Lisa Valmond

Deacon Jeffers Paul

Ms. Sherma John

Ms. Avril Coipel

Ms. Tamara Adams

Ms. Deanna Noel

Mr. Joseph Floissac

The Principal asked the volunteers to come up so that the meeting could see them. They were thanked for volunteering themselves to run the affairs of the school's PTA for the 2018-2019 academic year. The meeting was reminded that parents are needed not only to look after the children but also the building. She made mention of Mr. Floissac, who helped us tremendously with the roof repairs during the last academic year. CHS is looking forward to working with the PTA Executive. Ms. Prentice reminded the meeting that CHS is a government assisted school, which merely gets a grant equivalent to most teachers' salaries, but all other expenses e.g. internet, electricity etc. must be met by the school. She informed the meeting that the Internet bill is \$1 500.00 per month; and \$26 000.00 was spent on electricity last year.

Ms. Prentice again thanked the parents who volunteered and told them they would be given a CHS email address to facilitate communication. She then invited any questions or concerns from parents. One parent asked about the upcoming holidays. Ms. Prentice replied that there would be no school on public holidays and reminded parents that November 2nd is a school day except for those participating in the Youth Rally. Another parent asked about the beginning and

ending dates of exams. The meeting was informed that those dates would be from the 27th November to the 11th of December, tentatively. Meanwhile, the hat was passed.

First Form parents were informed by the Principal that the Religion book for Form 1 had just arrived at the Bishop's Office so students would be able to get them during the week. She further commented on the fact that the front gate has to be locked to keep out vagrants who tend to come in and foul the school. She then appealed to anyone who could help with the motorizing of the gate to come forward. A parent did provide information of someone who could be contacted in that regard.

Another parent inquired as to the duration of the school dance and the Principal informed that the normal hours are from 6 pm. to 10 pm. A parent suggested that it could be made to go on until 11 pm.

The Principal apologized for the glitches in the PA system and attributed them to the effects of Hurricane Maria. While the collection was being counted, the Principal repeated important dates, including those relating to the
school exams Nov 27th - 11th Dec;
school dance Dec 15th;
Girl Up Oct 25th and Nov 10th;
Pink Day Oct 18th;
Dancersize Oct 20th;
report cards Dec 19th.

A parent inquired if the students participating in the table etiquette exercise would be missing school on that day. The Principal said that while, technically, they will not be in class, they would still be attending a school sanctioned event where they will learn life skills. Another parent asked about COR and the Principal repeated that it would be held on the weekend of Nov 16th to 18th and reminded parents about the meeting for them on Nov 7th, where they would be given all the details.

The warning to parents not to go directly into their daughter's classroom was repeated and they were admonished not to get into problems between students. Parents should let the children be

children and let them interact with their own peer group and learn to solve their own problems, as sometimes even after they have settled their grievances, the adults are still vexed with each other.

Further advice was given by the Principal about the use of devices, as she explained that with today's technology, one does not need burglar bars, as everything that parents try to keep out is already inside their homes. Parents needing to be in contact with their children for whatever reason should come to the school's Office and go through the Secretary, who would be able to answer most of their questions.

The Principal announced the total collected from the passing of the hat, which was \$483.85. She thanked the parents for their contribution. Ms. Prentice appealed to the parents to allow the students to bring empty plastic shopping bags to school to assist with the garbage situation; this will also help to teach the children how to manage their garbage. She further informed parents and guardians that effective from the day before the meeting, Oct 15th, CHS would not be putting any garbage on the roadside as we have made an arrangement with the Solid Waste Department to come into the school yard on a daily basis to pick up the garbage for a monthly fee of \$175.00.

Form 5 parents were again reminded that CSEC registration would take place during the week of October 22nd and payment would have to be made by November 7th. A copy of the CSEC fees schedule has been put up on the School wall.

Ms Prentice then thanked everyone for coming and wished everyone a great evening. Parents were asked to help to return the chairs to the classrooms. The meeting was ended at 5. 08 p.m.