

the Putnam Pioneer

A Putnam City Schools Foundation Publication

Winter 2017

Happy 30th Anniversary, Putnam City Foundation!

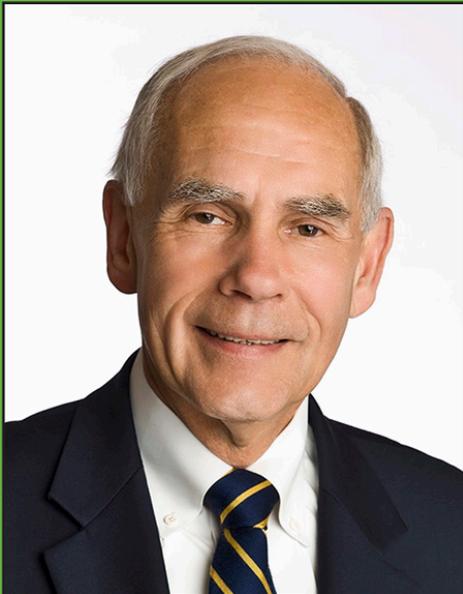
Hopefully when you opened this season's newsletter, you got a little jolt of happiness. After having the same logo for 30 years, the foundation has switched to a fresher design that honors the growth we hope to foster in our children.

Putnam City Schools  Foundation

This change comes as part of our 30th anniversary celebration, and we are grateful to Helen Burton at BCreative for her patience as we revised draft after draft! We hope that someday soon in Putnam City, when you see this bright leaf, you will know that we stand with the staff, teachers, and students of this district with a vision to continue supporting the great public education our children receive.



2017 Wall of Fame Celebration Coming Soon



We hope you'll join us for the 2017 Wall of Fame Celebration, honoring Chief Ross Swimmer, on Thursday, April 13 at the Skirvin Hilton in downtown Oklahoma City.

Swimmer is a 1961 graduate of Putnam City High School who served the Cherokee Nation in several capacities throughout his career, most notably as Principal Chief. He served two U.S. presidents and in 2003 became the first American Indian to serve as Special Trustee for American Indians. Currently, he works as a registered investment advisor in partnership with Native American Fund Advisors, a Tulsa-based investment advising firm specializing in work with American Indian Tribes.

Table and sponsorship information are available at <https://pcf4kids.ejoinme.org/walloffame2017>.

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Mission Focus: STEM

Science and technology have come a long way since students dropped eggs wrapped in various protective materials from the top of the Putnam City stadium bleachers! Today's students still compete in science fairs, but curriculum has a decidedly more career-centered focus.

Many educators have been using the acronym STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering and math, to describe the multifaceted education they are providing our students. Putnam City has had advanced science and math courses for decades, with science labs fully plumbed for gas and water.

This in itself shows the district's commitment to providing students with opportunities to dream big. How to get students interested in science, and build a pipeline to those courses, was a question district leaders tackled several years ago. Those conversations resulted in creating a pilot program of elementary STEM labs.

Teachers designed the lessons and the district provided supplies and even space to host these typically hands-on lessons, which incorporate a high degree of critical thinking. The second year the program grew to six elementary schools.

With budget cuts, the district asked the Putnam City Schools Foundation to assume the cost of expanding and maintaining the program. Now the program is in



nine elementary schools, with a goal of expansion to all who want it.

There are several important aspects of the STEM program of which our donors should be proud. One is the focus on 21st century skills, sometimes called soft skills. STEM lab lessons often involve a lot of creative inquiry, where students are asked what they think the possible outcomes will be.

One exciting lesson asks students what materials should be used to build an earthquake-proof building. Another asks students to design and build a solar oven. These open-ended questions not only engage the students as independent learners, but inspire them for potential careers where they would conduct similar experiments and solve real world problems.

Across the nation, students with STEM knowledge are doing far better in their science and math reasoning, according to several studies. They are able to understand and apply science

concepts in ways they weren't able to do when science was a stand-alone subject. These types of benefits are greater in the elementary level than at all other education levels.

Moreover, with STEM jobs expected to grow faster than any other career group, this program is helping fill the need for STEM-skilled workers. In particular, getting girls interested in STEM fields early increases the chance that they will continue that trajectory, with good-paying jobs waiting for them when they finish.

For all these reasons, the Putnam City Schools Foundation is proud to partner with Putnam City Schools and several donors to make this program a reality for our children. Corporate sponsors such as Whataburger, Staples and ITC Transco have all donated specifically to keep this impactful program in place.

J. Seal

Why We Do It

A letter from CareShare volunteers

WE DID IT! Another successful year of CareShare Christmas is in the books and this year was BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER! Each year, we know the needs will be many. This year we had 389 families and over 1,100 children (the most we've EVER had) – but we know that when we reach out to our families, friends, churches, PTAs, local businesses, schools, PC Administration and the PC Foundation they will want to help because they love Putnam City. THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

We were a little nervous in November when, after matching all of our adopters who help every year with families, we still had over 400 children left to adopt. It turned out we had nothing to worry about because the Putnam City community is filled with people who have BIG HEARTS. We asked, you adopted! THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

We are so BLESSED to have the continued support of so many. Church of the Servant adopts the first 50 families each year and has done so for several years. Other local churches including Christ's Legacy, Church of the Resurrection, Heritage Baptist, and Putnam City Baptist adopt families as well.

Then there's Ed Longadin, owner of Alley Cats Salon, who adopts several families each year, then reaches out to other salons to adopt also. We continue to get help from Coronado Heights, Dennis, Ralph Downs, Harvest Hills, Hefner, Lake Park, Northridge,



PC High, PC North and Will Rogers who adopt kids from other schools, as well as their own. We could NOT do this without their continued support. THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

We post the CareShare story to our Facebook pages asking our friends for help and, of course, they adopt as many children as they can. They also pay it forward by telling their families, coworkers and neighbors who call us wanting to adopt. THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

Our Christmas Miracle this year came in the form of Faith Church. In early December, we were worried because we still had about 50 children who had not been adopted. One of the CareShare volunteers said that someone told her Faith Church in OKC wanted to adopt for CareShare. We were ecstatic when we called and they asked us how many children we had left. We told them we had 50 and they adopted them all. In the days to come, we had additional

children who needed to be adopted and Faith Church happily took them on. In all, they adopted 24 families, including 86 children. THIS IS WHY WE DO IT!

Yes, our needs are great, but our community is GREATER! Although we don't witness the excitement of these children on Christmas morning, we are told by the counselors about the moms who come to retrieve the gifts and how they burst into tears when they see the items purchased for their children.

A sincere THANK YOU to everyone who supports Putnam City CareShare. Because of YOU, almost 400 families, over 1,100 children, experienced the wonder of Christmas this year. At an average of \$75 per child, that's over \$80,000! We COULD NOT DO THIS without the love and support of our wonderful Putnam City community! May you all have a wonderful 2017!

XOXO,
CareShare Volunteers

Check out the PCF Weekly



Keep up with news about the Foundation, happenings around the district and Jennifer's musings about time spent in Putnam City Schools as both a student and teacher. Below is the blog from January 12, 2017.

Please take time to read and comment on them each week!

Visit pcf4kids.org and click on the "About Us" tab to check it out.

The Year of the Teacher

I was sitting at our local coffee shop Higher Grounds the other day and overheard two women discussing education. My ears first perked up when one woman said to the other something about how teachers only work nine months out of the year. I turned around in my seat to see who was spreading such disinformation. A few minutes later though, she dropped the bombshell: "teachers are the biggest bunch of whiners. All they do is complain about their pay." I had to turn around in my seat again so I could shoot her my Look of Incredulity. I came close to getting up and talking with her about how long teachers really do work and why they might have just cause to complain about their pay. Then I thought better of it, and wondered what the deeper problem is here. People must not have a clue what our teachers are doing with their time. They don't have a clear picture of the daily issues that teachers deal with, nor the sheer amount of time put in to preparing to be in front of a class.

So I thought I would try to correct some of that fake news we're all hearing these days. First of all, the teachers I know do not work their contract hours. They

are coming in early to prepare for the day and staying late to grade. Others are going directly to coach a sport, and then maybe home to do some grading. The teachers I know are in trainings in the summer, or attending competitions with their students. They are working second jobs in the summer – and yes they do work more than 9 months of the year.



I'm flabbergasted that people choose not to believe the statistics that are in their faces! Oklahoma teachers have the lowest rate of pay in this region, and are 48th in the nation for teacher pay, according to the National Center for Education Statistics! How can we continue to make excuses for that instead of owning it and making our teachers a priority?

We are dealing with a serious

teacher shortage in our state, and Putnam City is no different. Our leaders are constantly looking for ways we can retain the great teachers we have in the face of declining revenue from the state. When are we going to make education a priority?

Surely people can see the connection between a strong classroom teacher, his or her pay, and the learning that takes place in that classroom. Just like in the private sector, you have to pay for high-quality people or they are more likely to leave for better paying jobs with fewer responsibilities. When are we going to make our children a priority?

I say NOW! Let 2017 be the Year of the Teacher in Oklahoma. Let it be the year we finally own up to our responsibilities as a state, not to mention the constitution of this state, and provide a fair salary for the women and men who dedicate their lives to our children. And they are *our* children – every last one of them has the chance to impact the lives of other Oklahomans for better or worse. Let 2017 be the year we give our teachers, and therefore our children, the chance to have a positive impact on Oklahoma. They deserve no less.

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It's scholarship time again!

Thanks to the generosity of various families over the years, the Putnam City Foundation offers annual scholarships for both students and teachers. The scholarships are named after people who made a difference in our district, and offer their families a way to leave a legacy to their loved ones. Check out our website for a description of each scholarship currently available and how to apply. All applications are due by February 28, 2017. Good luck!



PCF Starts New Tradition with Giving Tuesday

For the first time, the PC Foundation participated in Giving Tuesday, an annual social media fundraising campaign held on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

For our inaugural effort, we asked donors for \$55, which is the cost of one Early Birds Parent Literacy Kit. Early Birds is one of the three main programs the foundation supports, and is a training program of Smart Start Central Oklahoma, which teaches parents how to be their child's first teacher.

Next year's Giving Tuesday is November 28th, 2017, so be ready to help our mission to enhance and enrich the educational opportunities of children in Putnam City Schools once again in this engaging way.



Contact Us!

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