

GALWAY PTSA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

Welcome back to a new school year – quite unlike any other.

When we said goodbye for a long weekend on March 12, we had no idea what lay ahead. The last six months have been exceptional. We hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy, and relatively sane. It has been a challenge.

Whether you are back in school full time, part time or learning remotely, Galway PTSA is here for you. We have all three of those learning options represented on our board. For those starting school for the first time, how can we even begin to explain this is not normal?

We know how hard it was to suddenly pivot to homeschooling. We understand how difficult it was to choose how to return to school, and to make that work with the rest of our lives. We all have unique circumstances and needs. But as a community, we have this shared experience. As we move forward, we all know this can and will change. We shall do our best to adapt, to evolve and to stay positive.

The PTSA as an organization was obviously affected by all this. We had no meetings for the remainder of the school year. All events were cancelled. We recently had a virtual meeting to elect new officers, almost three months after this would usually happen. Our meetings will continue to be virtual for some time. Many of our upcoming events are cancelled. There will be no Fall Book Fair and Family Fun Night. There will be no Holiday Gift Shop. Coming so soon after the disruption of construction, these cancellations hurt.

While much of 2020 is postponed, some things are happening. There will be Picture Day. Our event coordinator, Christine Davison-Gauss has been working with the photography company since July. There will be fundraising (love it or hate it), because we rely on that to pay for our activities. These include appreciation days for teachers, aides, bus drivers, and custodial staff, and the many financial awards given by PTSA at graduation (whether virtual or in-person).

PTSA does support the school throughout the year and already this month we've ordered yearly planners for teachers, bought water, Gatorade and crackers for the school nurses, and given \$1000 to the school library – prize money from our (five-consecutive-times) National award winning Book Fair. We hope 2021 will be different and are looking ahead to plan events. We are thinking about the Spring Book Fair, school picnics, After Prom and Graduation.

As always, we need volunteers. Yes, if you are familiar with the PTSA, you see many of the same faces at all the events. Yes, by the end of the year we are looking a little frazzled. But no, we are not a cult. No, if you sign up you are not obligated to come to meetings. And if you come to a meeting, no, you do not automatically get stuck on a committee and kiss your social life goodbye. To be honest, I am not entirely sure what you might find yourself doing this year if you volunteer. Just by becoming a member and paying your \$6, you are helping. You will also get notifications about what we are doing and how you can help. And we are open to all and any suggestions of how we can positively impact the lives of our students and the school, while being socially distanced.

We know we cannot do everything we want to, or usually do. We know every year we annoy some of you in ways we have yet to imagine. But please, as with everything this year, be patient, be kind. We are volunteers. We do this because we care about our community and our children. We hope everyone has a good year at school.



Emma Obern, PTSA President.

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<https://www.facebook.com/galwaynyptsa>

PTSA Virtual Meeting. Tuesday, September 22, 2020.

A Google meet code will be posted closer to the date.

MEET OUR NEW OFFICERS

Hi, I'm **Emma Obern**, the new **PTSA President**. If you've been anywhere near the Elementary School in recent years, you'll know me as the Book Fair lady - often seen wearing a ridiculous hat. Or maybe I was your Odyssey of the Mind coach. For any High School volunteer, I'm the one who asked you to make a giant catapult, wear a dinosaur costume, put on inflatable antlers for a ring toss, assist a clown making balloon animals... If you're still unsure, I have an English accent. Although I'm excited to say I became an American citizen in June 2020.

Professionally I'm an artist and illustrator, currently working on the pictures for a children's book. But over the years I've done many things including manage a commercial art gallery in England, worked in restaurants in the UK and USA, a scuba diving shop in New Zealand, landscaping, taught a hand embroidery class, and at some point, found myself on roofs installing solar panels. Life's an adventure.

When I'm not wearing silly hats or painting, I love to kayak, swim, hike, ski and snowshoe. I practice Tai Chi and Qigong, and during lockdown started karate classes on Zoom. Now we're back in the dojo, I love being the old lady in a class full of more experienced Elementary and High School students. I have a big garden and far too many flower beds. And while I've been fortunate over the years to travel around the world, I'm really happy to call Galway home for the last eleven years. My favorite person - my daughter Elizabeth, is in 5th grade.



Hi everyone! My name is **Barbara Mead** and I am proud to say that I am the **PTSA Vice President** this year. My husband Chris, son Wyatt and myself moved to Galway in December of 2016. What a crazy year we are all going into! Our son Wyatt is in fourth grade this year and we are doing remote learning. Just a little bit about myself and family, we are very active equestrians and spend lots of time riding horses. We are animal lovers and our home is always full of furry friends! We also spend a good amount of time fishing and exploring all of the amazing sights our area has to offer. Wyatt and I also enjoy playing video games together.

I have always tried to be active with school events, every opportunity I have gotten I have participated in at the school. Many of your kids may know me as one of the school banking ladies! I have helped with the book fair, picture day, and really any and all events I have been able to help with at the school. Although this year looks very different than any other, I believe we will be able to really do our best to help give the kids any extra support and opportunities we can, whether you are remote or in school. I want to be available for families to reach out to and really help our community come together and make it a great year. I am a huge advocate for communication and will make myself available in every way so our children can have every opportunity as well as create a support system for our community! We got this! -Barb Mead

Next month meet our Treasurer – Amber Eaton, and Secretary – Heather Shellenberger.

SPIRIT WEAR IS AVAILABLE TO ORDER

Online Store <https://galwayptsaspiritwear.cheddarup.com>