

**PYSO Parents' Association (PYSOPA)
Meeting Minutes for 9/8/2019**

Introduction of 2019-2020 PYSOPA Board Members

President: *Melanie Hommes*

Vice-President: *Ya-Fei Hsu*

Treasurer: *Joy Fanien*

Secretary: *Mary Carr*

What does the Parent Association do?

The objectives of the Parent Association include:

- Provide meals and/or snacks for the students on concert days.
 - The 2019-2020 Meal Coordinators are *Pey-Juan Doong* and *Alexis Southard-Wray*.
 - There are 5 events where dinner and/or snack are provided to the students.
 - **Please notify the Parent Association if your child has a food allergy or special dietary requirements.**
 - The Parent Association will need parent help as volunteers on site during meals and through food donations.
 - Three weeks prior to an event, each family will receive an email directing them to the online sign-up app, **Sign UpGenius**. With this app you can easily see what is needed and sign up to help.
- Provide a yearbook for each PYSO musician.
 - The yearbook is produced and paid for by the Parent Association.
 - It is free to each student.
 - Students will receive their yearbook after returning from the summer Concert Tour.
 - *David Ren* (David's son, Will, is a PYSO Alumni) will again take individual yearbook portraits.
 - *Monica Hertzman* will take candid photos of musicians during rehearsals. These pictures will be included in the yearbook. Monica will also make a video recording of each performance during this concert season.
 - Volunteer(s) are needed to price out and put together the yearbook.
 - DOCUcopies.com is the website used in previous years.
 - Last year, each yearbook cost \$5.50 to produce. This price was so low because PYSOPA had volunteers who put together the yearbook.
 - During the meeting, *Monica Hertzman* volunteered to help with the pricing and layout of the yearbook.
 - Other individuals wishing to help with yearbook preparation are welcome. Contact Melanie Hommes (melanie.hommes@pucs.org) to volunteer
- Provide musicians the opportunity to purchase PYSO apparel.
 - *Liang Chen* will coordinate the PYSO apparel sale this year.
 - Shields Embroidery in Mt. Lebanon is the vendor used by the Parent Association. PYSOPA receives about 20% profit from this sale.
 - Order forms were given to all musicians during rehearsal on 9/8/2019.
 - Order forms can also be found online at pyso.org>For Members>Parent Association>PYSO Apparel Sale.
 - Apparel orders will be accepted through September 29, 2019.
 - Completed order forms with payment should be placed in the APPAREL ORDER BOX located on a table near the 1st floor elevator. (If the musician cannot find the box, he/she should talk to Katie Liu, the coordinator's daughter.)
 - No order will be processed without payment.

- Questions about the apparel sale, contact Liang Chen (liang.chen3@gmail.com)
- Fundraising
 - The PYSOPA budget is approximately \$3000/year.
 - The Parent Association receives \$25 from each musician's membership dues. This money, plus proceeds from other fundraising projects, pays for meals and snacks, the yearbook, a t-shirt during a tour year, etc.
 - Painted Violin Raffle
 - *Maggie Kniola* and *Patrick Gilmore* will coordinate this fundraiser.
 - Unplayable violins are turned into works of art by local artists.
 - 8 "painted violins" were created during the last violin raffle. This year, Joy has already picked up 7 violins for design.
 - Packets (tickets) will be distributed on a date yet to be determined to PYSO members interested in participating in this fundraiser.
 - If a ticket purchaser has designated a PYSO musician as a beneficiary, Eve will credit that person's tour account. If there is no beneficiary, the proceeds will go into the PYSO general tour scholarship fund.
 - Violins will be displayed during concerts on December 9, 2019 and May 8, 2020.
 - Winners of the raffle will be drawn at the end of the May 8th Concert Intermission.
 - PYSO Fundraising mini-Gala
 - If this fundraiser is to occur, information will be forthcoming at a later date.
 - Parents can designate PYSO as their charity of choice at Amazon Smile. PYSO receives quarterly disbursements from Amazon. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/>
- Youth Chamber Connections – YC2
 - Laurie Cunningham, YC2 Manager (email: staff@youthchamberconnection.org)
 - Laurie's son was a member of PYSO looking to become a member of a chamber group. This led to the formation of YC2.
 - Last year 12 of 20 YC2 chamber groups contained members of PYSO.
 - Membership in this group provides the student with chamber music education and playing opportunities. It promotes friendships and teamwork and practices skills the student will use throughout their whole life.
 - Music is taken to places that only a chamber group can go.
 - Different ways to participate in YC2:
 - Students can join for the school year.
 - Each group will practice every Sunday from 4:00-5:45 pm at First Presbyterian Church (6th Ave.) or Saturday at Duquesne University.
 - Each group is assigned a coach from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.
 - Student groups have performed at special events at Heinz Field, the City-County Building, Benedum Center, the Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg, Carnegie Museums, Carnegie Libraries, and many more places.
 - Students can join to participate on a casual or occasional basis.
 - Email staff@youthchamberconnection.org to join the mailing list to hear about special chamber events and opportunities.
 - Current playing opportunities (refer to Laurie's email for details): students can play along racecourse for PSO members running in their 5K race, perform at Carnegie library branches for RAD day, play at a memorial service for the victims of last year's Squirrel Hill tragedy.
 - The music for these opportunities and can be sight-read by most students playing in any of the orchestras associated with YC2.

- Tuition is charged to participate in YC2, however, scholarships are available to students in need. No student is turned away!
 - Chautauqua Music Camps, Chautauqua Music Camps
 - For experienced musicians (intermediate to advanced level), completing grades 7–12 this year
 - A full week of music making
 - Chaperoned-housing, all meals, additional programming, performances, and educational activities
- Information from Craig Johnson and Eve Goodman
- Parents can listen to rehearsal anytime. No permission is needed.
 - Sign Heinz Hall Visitor sign in sheet at entry desk.
 - Sit in the auditorium or in 4th floor hallway, depending on where rehearsal is being held.
 - The Wi-Fi code for Heinz Hall is 18orchestra96.
 - Administrative Staff: *Craig Johnson*, PYSO Executive Director and *Eve Goodman*, PYSO Program Director
 - PYSO hired *Bridget McKenna* as a Communications Coordinator to improve the quality of the website and blog.
 - Bridget graduated from an art school in Philadelphia with a background in filming and photography.
 - She will take photos during rehearsal and interview the student musicians.
 - If your child should participate in a competition or win an award, let PYSO know. Bridget will feature them in the website/blog.
 - *Earl Lee*, Music Director
 - Earl is very accessible. Please feel free to email him with any questions you may have.
 - *Georgina Gutierrez*, Tour Manager
 - Gina has been the tour manager on 4 of the last 5 tours.
 - She was on a tour when she was a member of PYSO.
 - Gina’s primary job as Tour Manager is to organize the chaperones and keep the chain of command flowing smoothly.
- PYSO Baltic/Scandinavia 2020 Tour – information presented by Craig Johnson and Gina Gutierrez
- Itinerary handout (Craig)
 - Condensed, “bare bones” version of the itinerary.
 - Flights not confirmed, much more to be done yet.
 - Will receive email(s) as details become confirmed.
 - Craig and Gina doing sight visits of hotels, restaurants, venues, etc. to limit “surprises” during the actual trip
 - Refer to PYSO website (pyso.org>What’s Happening>Tour Itinerary) for a copy of the itinerary.
 - Description of Tour and Tour Chaperone handout (Gina)
 - Gina
 - Gina is an interpreter at the State Jail
 - Gina has all clearances, at the highest levels.
 - Role: in charge of logistics, everybody at the right place at the right time and ready to perform.
 - Musicians’ safety and comfort highest priority.
 - The tour company will manage all activities in Europe.
 - Craig has been working with this company for years.
 - Tour adults: Craig (staff), Eve (staff), Gina (staff) and 8-10 chaperones.

- 8-10 student musicians per chaperone. This seems to be a manageable size group.
- On the ground in Europe each bus will have one staff member, one courier (tour company employee who speaks the language of the country being visited), and chaperones.
- Companions are anyone who wants to go on the trip but are not part of the tour. They have no tour responsibilities.
- Tour will consist of three main types of activities (in order of importance)
 - Concerts/rehearsals-non-negotiable, students must participate
 - Sightseeing
 - Free time-not a lot of free time, organized, chaperones involved
 - Pace of tour is rigorous, 10 days with 2 days travel.
- Email with questions
 - Craig Johnson: craig@pyso.org
 - Eve Goodman: Eve@pyso.org
 - Georgina Gutierrez: pysotour@pyso.org
- Questions about tour from parents

Q: What happens if anyone gets sick/seasick?

A: We travel with medical personnel, a doctor and a nurse.

 - Any parents with medical training let Gina know.
 - Parents should send medications for known sicknesses.
 - Site visit includes check for hospitals/medical facilities
 - When student musicians fill out tour registration form, they will indicate their medical history/needs.
 - Chaperones will be in touch with parents prior to the trip. Parents give chaperones only what information they feel necessary. (Main point of contact: chaperone to child.)

Q: Will the musicians take their own instruments?

A: Yes, they take their own instruments; however, some will be rented.

 - Rented instruments include: large percussion instruments, harps, keyboard, piano, bases, cellos, tuba
 - PYSO takes a contrabassoon, bass clarinet, and small percussion instruments.
 - Rental instruments will be at site upon arrival. Student musicians will tryout the instruments, choose one, and then keep that instrument throughout the tour.

Q: Will PYSO drive to Newark then fly?

A: We don't know yet. It's possible.

 - TRYPO flew out of Newark last year.
 - PYSO has driven to Dulles Airport before.
 - Have one bid from Lufthansa Airlines out of Newark. Looking for a better option.
 - Thought about flying out of Pittsburgh, but must divide into subgroups that can lead to separation of the group.
 - Moving 100+ people. The more stops, the more chances for mistakes.

Q: What was the time frame for leaving Pittsburgh and driving to Newark? (TRYPO trip)

A: About 7 hours. We left Pittsburgh at 6:00 a.m. and had a 4:00 p.m. flight.

- Chaperone responsibilities
 - Responsibilities begin before the trip. You will contact each family to learn if your student musician has any special needs, such as homesickness, takes medication, etc.
 - Essentially, as chaperone, you will make sure your students adhere to the code of conduct, are at the right place at the right time, get enough sleep, and eat enough. You will know where your students are at all times, even during free time. You will do bed checks. You will also attend chaperone meetings in order to keep all adults informed. You are your students' "parent" away from home.
 - As chaperone, you are discouraged from drinking in front of student musicians.
 - Student musicians are not permitted to drink alcoholic beverages while on the tour regardless of the country's drinking age.
 - PYSO discourages parents acting as their child's chaperone.
 - Child needs freedom.
 - Chaperones are asked to impose certain codes which is difficult, in certain circumstances, for a parent with their own child.
 - Refer to PYSO website for a copy of the Description of Tour Chaperone handout. (pyso.org>What's Happening>Tour Chaperone-Description of Duties and Responsibilities)

- How do you become a chaperone?
 - The application to become a chaperone can be found on the PYSO website. (pyso.org>What's Happening>Download a Tour Chaperone Application)
 - PYSO will hold interviews to choose chaperones on October 20 and October 27.
 - International travel experience is helpful.
 - Speaking the language of the countries being toured also helpful.
 - By January, chaperones will be selected.
 - Chaperone will need to obtain certain clearance prior to the tour.
 - Chaperones will begin to have sporadic meetings.
 - Information and trip details will begin to be disseminated.
 - If not chosen as a chaperone, consider accompanying the tour as a companion.

- Questions and Comments

Q: What is the cost for the chaperones to attend?

A: Student fee: \$3250, subsidized by fundraising and grants/donations

Companion: no subsidy, don't have figures right now

Chaperone: trip fee less than student's fee.

- WhatsApp used on last trip. Helped to communicate with and keep track of students.
- Students paired up.
- Chaperones also paired up. This way chaperones can give support and relief to each other. (2 groups)
 - 1 chaperone : 8-10 students, 2 chaperones : 16-20 students
 - 2 chaperones room together.
 - Chaperones together on buses, as well.
- Wi-Fi box helpful when out of coverage area.
 - Another aspect of the site visit is to determine what type of communication system is used in the countries to be visited.
- Renting a hotspot is easy as well. Allows chaperones to check in while on the buses, etc. Had hotspot at the hotel the first day then it was returned to the hotel on the last day.

Q: Outside of the chaperones, how many parents usually accompany the tour?

A: About 20, limited because PYSO rents 3 motor coaches which have a finite number of seats.

- Currently don't know how big the coaches will be. Also, the size may differ between countries.
- Some parents choose to shadow the group. They get the itinerary, then book their own flights and hotels. They are there but totally separate from the group.

Q: If a companion wants to stay longer in Europe with their child, is this possible?

A: Yes, but the students always have to begin the trip with PYSO.

Chaperones must accompany the group both ways.

- Deviation: when a student does not accompany the group back to the US.
 - Sometimes students go to camps in Europe.
 - You will be given more information on how to do this.

Q: When is the place-to-place itinerary locked down?

A: January at the latest, but probably sooner.

Q: If we are going on the trip, how can we plan for tickets for the concerts?

A: We will let you know the dates. Sometimes we can get comp tickets for the people who are shadowing the group. Can't promise this – it happens, but not often.

Q: How many students per room.

A: Usually 2 students per room. Hotels in Europe are very small.