

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021 – WBHS PTA

AGM 14th February 2022

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report of the PTA's activities for 2021. Once again, the PTA's activities were disrupted by the pandemic but we, a small but enthusiastic group of volunteers were still able to be proud of the contributions we made to the school this year.

The Westlake Boys High School PTA serves three main functions to the school community, to provide help where required at school events, to act as a social forum for parents and caregivers of the school, and to raise funds to help enhance facilities at the school. I will cover off each of these areas separately:

### **Supporting Westlake**

Just as in 2020 some events and activities that the PTA are usually involved in did not go ahead in 2021. We started our year, alongside the school, at the "Welcome to Westlake" evening in February. We had a busy night talking to new parents about how they could get involved with the school by joining the PTA. At our first meeting a couple of weeks later we were thrilled to see so many parents we had spoken to come along and then become such active members.

Our next school duty was providing a much-appreciated service at Year 9 Parent/Teacher Interviews evening. We served refreshments and supported the Prefects with their hosting responsibilities. We did this service for each year level.

The biggest event the PTA supports the school is by providing support at the annual Grandparents Day. On a wet rainy day in early August a small army of PTA members we played our usual vital role of manning the refreshment stations and serving endless cups of tea and coffees but we worked alongside the school in the preparation and setup of the morning tea. I was extremely proud of the team that day. We did not falter despite the weather, wet grandparents, uncooked sausage rolls, medical emergencies and fire emergencies we all delivered a wonderful event!

We also provided support and refreshments at the New Enrolment Interview Days. We were the friendly faces at the door welcoming families at the very start on their sons Westlake journeys.

We did not get to complete any further onsite support to the school due to lockdown, however In September we were invited by the school to take part in a Focus group, via Zoom, with other parent groups run by the headmaster. We were able to voice our opinions, on behalf of all parents, on the way that the school was managing remote lessons, and how the school could provide further help to students and families during lockdown periods. Thank you to the PTA members that give their honest feedback and to the school for having such a focus on the boy's mental health during this time.

### **PTA Events**

This year the PTA took the opportunity to reintroduce the "Meet the Leaders" evening back onto our calendar after a break of 5 years. In late March were delighted to host David Ferguson, Headmaster; Andrew Nicoll, Board of Trustees Chairman; Clayton Coplestone, Westlake Foundation Board Chairman; Jeff Knight, Westlakers President; James Houliston, Head Boy 2021.

Over 150 families joined us for an interesting and informative evening to find out what these different groups do and how they fit together to benefit our sons experience at Westlake. We would like to thank, David, Andrew, Clayton, Jeff and James for generously giving up their time for this event.

Following our May meeting we hosted our most popular event, the “Meet the Prefects” evening. Meet the Prefects is a wonderful night where close to 180 junior boys and their families got to know the Senior Prefects just a little better in a more social setting. The Senior Prefects shared their Westlake journeys and the ups and downs they have faced during their time at Westlake. We were very grateful to James, Connor, Fergus, Oliver and Khalan for giving up their time for and inspiring their younger peers.

We would have normally ended the PTA year with a special Thank You Morning Tea for all staff but our efforts to hold this event were literally locked down with no way for families to contribute the food for the morning tea we thought we might have to cancel completely. At our PTA meeting in October, via zoom, we agreed that, on behalf of all parents, we needed to acknowledge the extraordinary effort the staff made for our sons during this very hard year. So, on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, we thanked the staff by delivering a Strawberries & Ice Cream Treat as a tiny gesture of appreciation.

### **Social Events**

Of course, the PTA is not just a fundraising and volunteering group. We also are part of the PTA to make connections with fellow parents and to get to know each other. Every term we try to have a social event and this year was no exception. In April we started with a night of entertaining Bingo, in June we met for our annual mid-winter feast at Mexico restaurant and finally in December we were able to come together again for after work drinks at Fantail & Turtle in Smales Farm.

We also got the chance to do some socializing while upcycling old redundant school uniform at our newly formed “sewing circle”. Thank you to Rachael & Sonja for their expertise with this initiative and a special Thank you to Cathryn for being such a superb social co-ordinator for 2021!

### **Fundraising – PTA Second-Hand Uniform Shop**

The PTA is fortunate to have funds generated by the operation of the Second-hand Uniform Shop. These funds enable us to support school projects that then subsequently benefit the boys and enhance their time while at Westlake. Despite all the disruptions the shop had another successful year in 2021, under the leadership of Robyn Dean. The result was the PTA being able to proudly support the purchase of a new school minivan and the upgrade of hard-tech equipment for the schools engineering workshop this year.

We are so grateful to everyone who volunteered their time to open the shop each Friday lunchtime. We are especially grateful to Robyn Dean and Lyn Cuthbertson for their determination this year to ensure the shop continued to provide a much-needed second hand uniform service to the community in these covid times. During November, December and January while Covid protocols prevented the shop from operating onsite at school Robyn, Lyn and a small team, temporally open a “Pop-Up” shop at Smales Farm in conjunction with the Westlake Girls. This took many, many, many hours of volunteer work and we thank them again for their ti

## **Acknowledgements**

Sadly, leaving us tonight after 5 years of exceptional service to the PTA is Mridula Rajan our Treasurer. It has been an honour to serve on the PTA with Mridula, your professionalism, articulation and measured approach to everything is impressive. You have been extremely patient, calm and supportive to me and previous PIA Presidents. Mridula's legacy will not only be the WBHS PTA Funding Criteria but the high standards she set for us all. We, especially me, will miss you and for one last time...thank you.

Thank you, to Michele Cain, for being our staff representative this year. It has also been great getting to know you as a fellow parent too.

Thank you to Jodie Peters. You are a wonderful ambassador for the school. It has been a pleasure volunteering alongside you and the canteen is lucky to have you!

Thank you to Helen Mason our PTA Secretary. Helen keeps me and us on track. Her super admin skills ensure that there is always a roster of helpers at the ready!

Finally, none of the PTA's activities would be possible without the volunteer input of our committee. We say this every year but every year this remains the same. To each of you thank you for your time, contribution, and enthusiasm for the Westlake PTA. It has been a privilege working with and getting to know you all.

*Tracey Smith*

WBHS PTA President 2021