

September 23, 2019

MDE Dads,

As has been discussed for many years, a group of us have been working towards incorporating our historically unofficial “MDE Dad’s Club” into an official 501(c)(3) incorporated organization for the benefit of our kids, our community, and their experience as students at Memorial Drive Elementary. The PTA is aware and supportive of this move, and we are now looking for further input and support from all of the Dads that have been strong supporters of MDE over the years.

This has been a long time coming and the steps we are taking now are intended to position our school and facilities to become, and remain, best in class for years to come. Below is a quick summary of what has been discussed and a preview of what to expect over the next few months.

Organizational Structure

- The official name of the Dad’s Club is the Memorial Drive Elementary Community Men’s Association, Inc. (the “MDE CMA”). The MDE-CMA will be set up as a nonprofit corporation organized and to be operated exclusively for charitable and/or educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- The MDE-CMA is intended to operate as a community men’s association in the Memorial Villages to facilitate fellowship among members of the organization and conduct social events for the purpose of providing charitable giving primarily for the benefit of Memorial Drive Elementary and for local community qualified organizations that serve Memorial Drive Elementary.
- The MDE-CMA will be led by seven directors who will each serve a one-year term, not to exceed three consecutive terms. Directors must be active parents of a current student at Memorial Drive Elementary. The minimum annual contribution requirement for a Director position is to be set at \$2,000. The initial Directors are Chad Fargason (President), Richard Whiteley (Secretary), Aaron Thielhorn (At-Large), Matt Rigdon (At-Large), Matt Fuqua (At-Large), Matt Harting (At-Large), and Dana Gompers (At-Large). Josh Sherman is the initial Treasurer for MDE-CMA.
- We anticipate forming additional committees and committee chairs for all those interested in getting involved in the planning and coordinating of our annual events. Ideas for committees include Field and Grounds, Long Range Planning, Fundraising/Membership, and Social Events.
- Annual dues for all members will be set at \$250. Annual dues will cover organizational operating expenses, happy hours, and generally help facilitate the operations of the organization. Dues are not intended to cover 100% of costs associated with participation and there will be additional expenses throughout the year for special events.

Social Events

- We anticipate conducting social and fundraising events throughout the year. In addition to the highly successful “Dad’s All-In” poker event, we are hoping to add an additional Fall event. Ideas that have been discussed include a bowling tournament, cornhole tournament, a sporting clay/skeet shoot, or chili cookoff. **Thanks to Matt Fuqua and Matt Rigdon who have agreed to chair the Fall event!**
- We are planning to institute (4) annual happy hours, two in the Fall and two in the Spring. These will be held within the neighborhood from 6-8pm, mid-week. **Please mark down October 2 for our first Happy Hour at “The Del”. We are seeking a volunteer to chair this Social/Happy Hour Committee.**
- The Dad’s All-In event will continue to operate in the same manner as it has historically. The entry fee for the event will continue to be paid to the PTA at the annual auction like in years past. Rebuys from the event will go to the MDE-CMA and will be distributed by the MDE-CMA for future projects at MDE. Host sponsors will continue to fund the expenses of the event.

Why are We Doing This?

- With the new MDE school construction slated for 2022-2023, we will need to prepare for components that will not be addressed through public school funds. This is not entirely clear at this point, but it is likely that much of the athletic fields will need to be privately funded. Thus, we need to be organized now, accrue adequate reserves, and be involved in the early development planning.
- A separate and distinct 501(c)(3) organization will be easier for participating members to understand where funds are being allocated, especially for multi-year projects. Under the current informal structure of the Dad’s Club, a mechanism to accrue multi-year funds to facilitate larger scale projects in the future does not exist.
- Our non-profit status will allow for flexibility around where funds raised can be implemented for the benefit of MDE students, faculty and staff and in general serve as a vehicle for expanded fundraising for MDE.
- The organization will provide an outlet for social outreach among MDE Dads, especially new families seeking to network and establish new relationships within the community.
- The organization will consider the potential for additional charitable outreach for other community causes directly affecting the MDE community, like the Memorial Villages Police and Fire Departments. One must look no farther than Hurricane Harvey to see the impact that an organization like this could have on the community.

- This separate 501(c)(3) approach is consistent with other area Dad's Clubs such as Wilchester, Bunker Hill, and Hunter's Creek, and implemented for similar reasons.

Fundraising

- At the conclusion each school year, the MDE-CMA Board will consult with the MDE PTA Executive Committee to discuss specific projects and funding requirements for the following school year. The MDE-CMA Board will then make a recommendation on its proposed uses for its annual funds, subject to a member vote.
- No less than 80% of the annual operating income will go directly to MDE requirements (100% until the first \$50,000 has been contributed to MDE) then additional community organizations may be considered. The MDE-CMA has the discretion to "accrue" operating income if it feels its in the best interest of MDE to "save up" for a larger scale project in the future.
- It will be the intention of the MDE-CMA to provide for an "open book" and fully transparent approach to all fundraising, expenses, and annual grants.
- Through the generosity of the group in attendance at our recent kick-off meeting, we have officially raised \$12,000 to kickstart what will be a meaningful capital campaign over the next several years. We are going to ask you for your financial support!

We will look for ways to have a lot of fun together and raise money for the benefit of our kids. If you would like to be on the MDE-CMA email list going forward for events and fundraisers, please let us know. We are working to create a website to use for communicating information about our organization, upcoming events, and collecting donations.

I hope to see you at our first Happy Hour on October 2 at the Del. Anyone wishing to donate can make a check out to: MDE-CMA, Inc. Remember, it's for the kids!

Have a Great School Year!

Chad Fargason
Richard Whiteley
Aaron Thielhorn
Josh Sherman
Dana Gompers
Matt Fuqua
Matt Rigdon
Matt Harting