

Dear Families,

We appreciate hearing feedback from parents on our decision to cancel the Chili / Mac 'n' Cheese Cook-Off, and we share in the disappointment that many have expressed. We, too, were very much looking forward to the Cook-Off. Unfortunately, these large events require a huge work force. We saw decreasing volunteer participation in Fall Fest over the last couple of years, which has put increasing pressure on those who are willing to volunteer their time and energy. While many families aren't able to make plans until the last minute, this causes stress for those who are taking on the responsibility of organizing these events.

We have been working on different ways to address this problem. Last year, we rebranded the PTCA as TEAM SRS, and made a huge effort to reach out to families and encourage parents to provide feedback, attend a meeting, or volunteer their time to make our events successful. We devised the Cook-Off as a way to hold a fun fall event that didn't require quite as many volunteers as Fall Fest. However, there are still a considerable amount of volunteers needed to make this event successful; we heard from only 8 families entering recipes when we were hoping to hear from at least 24. We thank all of the parents who responded to the Cook-Off flier and who were willing to offer up their recipe, their support, or both. We want to honor your willingness to participate. However, we do not want to put our steadfast TEAM SRS members (who have already done so much for us) in a position where they would have to pick up the slack, should we not receive the help required.

The decision to cancel was, of course, a difficult one to make. We really want to keep our events. However, we can't put the work of keeping them on just a few people. Our hope is that parents will see this cancellation as a call to involve themselves. We need more support! To become involved with TEAM SRS does not necessarily require regular commitment. If more parents were able to pitch in and help at, say, just one event a year, or even part of an event each year, it would be significant. Attending one meeting is better than not attending any. If we want to keep TEAM SRS alive, we need people who are willing to help do so.

It is great to hear that people enjoy these events and want to see them continue at Swift River. In addition to providing our families with opportunities for fun and socialization, these events provide huge benefits to the school, as proceeds go to our classroom and field trip funds and allow teachers to provide opportunities for their students that they wouldn't be able to otherwise. If you want these events to continue, please consider volunteering some of your time. If even ten parents volunteered one hour each, it could mean the difference between success and cancellation. And we can't have too many volunteers. The more involvement we have, the better our TEAM will run. Please help us and share in the work (and the fun!) of hosting these events and supporting our school.

Thank you,

Kelley Sullivan
Principal