

Philoptochos
McMeen Elementary School Adoption
August 6, 2019

On August 6th, 2019, Niki Mott and Christine Smith met with the principal of McMeen Elementary School, David Adams, and Assistant Principal Mr. Rashad Norman, at 1000 S. Holly Street, Denver, CO 80246. McMeen is described to its students and parents as “a school of excellence in which everyone is safe, respected, and celebrated. Together we create 21st century thinkers who continue to achieve and innovate. With our teachers, parents, and surrounding community we empower culturally aware individuals to become altruistic, compassionate, and intrinsically motivated models for what is truly exceptional.”

McMeen has approximately 550 students, 42 teachers and a total of 80 staff members (aides, food service, custodial staff, etc.)

80% of students are on free or reduced lunch, and all come from the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school, many from apartment complexes.

The student population is comprised of children from 30 different countries and there are 19 languages other than English spoken by students. The school emphasizes global citizenship, respect and honor of all.

Class size averages between 20-25 students per classroom.

38% of students are on grade level academically in grades 3-5. At the primary level, K-2, students are at 41% of grade level proficiency.

The discussion with Mr. Adams centered on what Philoptochos could do to assist in the success of students and the support of faculty and staff. The following ideas emerged:

1. School supply drive – many students require items that their families can't afford. Our ongoing school supply drive will be of great benefit to these families. Mr. Adams requested that we include backpacks, if possible, as they are needed. We will deliver our school supplies immediately following the campaign's conclusion so they may be discretely distributed to the students of greatest need.
2. On August 16th, the school hosts an orientation event called Mustang Meet-up. Mr. Adams requested that we attend that day to meet the children and parents first hand.
3. Book drive – Mr. Norman suggested an award system of books as ‘awards’ for children who complete their reading goals in set periods of time. He asked that we consider supplying these books for distribution to at the end of each reading cycle. The books will be stored in a “Book Closet”

that students could choose from when they have earned the privilege. The librarian of the school will compile a book list of titles that are appropriate and sought after by students.

4. Mentorship – Mr. Adams discussed the need for adults to serve as encouragement of students that require extra emotional support. This would entail individual Philoptochos members being paired with one student to meet once per week during school hours for discussion and friendship. Mr. Adams hoped that we could supply 10 mentors.
5. Storybook Character Day – In lieu of Halloween, the school supports a storybook character day where students can dress as their favorite characters from books. Philoptochos could supply books that feature favorite characters for students to choose from, or assist in other ways that have not yet been fully defined. Maybe we would help students with their costumes, or photograph each of them in dress with their book as a memento. More details on this later.
6. Teacher Appreciation Week – As the parent community may not have the means to provide refreshments or drawing gift cards for teachers, Philoptochos may be able to design a few appreciation events during that week, usually held in early May each year.

If our members have any additional ideas to consider, please let Christine Smith know at cksmith@4edisp.net. McMeen is a wonderful school that needs our care. We welcome all to participate. It will be rewarding to support their efforts while reinforcing the mission of Philoptochos in our community.