



FAMILY & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

WELCOME PACKET



2023-2024

WELCOME



Hi There!

**WELCOME TO GOODWATER MONTESSORI SCHOOL.
WE ARE SO GLAD YOU ARE HERE.**

As Goodwater families and educators, we believe in the work that is being done in our school. We also believe that our school and our students are stronger when we all are connected and contribute our unique and special talents. We have created this informational packet so that you, as Goodwater families, can get plugged into this incredible community.

In it you will find:

- Six Ways to Get Plugged Into Our Community: Page 3
- Why to Get Involved & Advocacy: Pages 4-5
- How to Volunteer and Different Ways to Do So: Pages 6-7
- Recurring Volunteer Opportunities: Pages 8-9
- PTO Information and Board Positions: Pages 10-11
- PTO Committees: Pages 12-13
- As Needed Volunteer Opportunities & Annual Calendar : Pages 14-15
- How to Reach us: Page 16

Let's do this!

GOODWATER PTO

SIX WAYS TO BE PLUGGED INTO OUR COMMUNITY

We live in the age of nonstop news and social media and yet, school communication can get tricky. Here are six ways to make sure you're in the loop at Goodwater so you never miss a beat.

✓ ARE YOU GETTING EMAILS?

Email info@goodwatermontessori.org if you are not receiving communications from the school (include "newsletter" in subject line)

✓ FOLLOW THE FACEBOOK PAGES

There are three Facebook groups that relay information about current events at the school:

1. Goodwater Montessori Families
2. Goodwater PTO
3. Goodwater Montessori Public Charter School

✓ HAVE COFFEE WITH DR. BRUCE VIA ZOOM

We are fortunate to have a Superintendent/CEO who is so accessible to families, and open to receiving feedback from everyone. During this monthly, one hour zoom call, you can hear about the latest school events and ask questions while working or folding endless baskets of laundry.

✓ TAKE TIME TO READ THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS FROM THE SCHOOL AND FROM YOUR GUIDES

Most questions will be answered in this weekly email and reading it is the easiest way to be engaged at the school.

✓ BECOME A PTO MEMBER

It's not a blood oath, we promise, and becoming a member shows you believe in the PTO's mission of supporting our school.

✓ EXTRA CREDIT: YOUR PRESENCE MATTERS

We believe that humans (both young and old) thrive in community and we are intent on creating a supportive and fun community here at Goodwater.

You will find enclosed a calendar for social events for this upcoming school year. It would be such a gift to us if you joined us for our monthly Spirit Nights, TGIF Playground meetups and various community events throughout the year.

The families, students and staff of this beloved school are why we work so hard as your PTO. We cannot wait to meet you!

GETTING INVOLVED: WHY WE NEED YOU AND HOW TO DO IT

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING

Our school needs you, our guides need you, and our students need you. In short, YOU are needed. Also, it is a fun and a great way to make friends.



OUR FUNDING IS DIFFERENT THAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public Charter Schools in Texas are not funded in the same way as traditional public schools, even though we are held to the same standards. This means, on average, our school receives \$900 LESS per student in state taxpayer funding than traditional ISDs. Every volunteer hour adds up to support the incredible and necessary work our community does!



OUR AMAZING GUIDES NEED SUPPORT

If there is anything COVID taught us, it's that teaching is hard work (there are songs about the joy of back to school, aren't there?) Our guides and staff work tirelessly for our children and as the families of Goodwater, we know that they deserve our time and encouragement for all they do for our students.



YOU'LL MAKE CONNECTIONS AND PROBABLY HAVE FUN ALONG THE WAY

Being more plugged into your community and giving back have been shown to increase contentment and happiness for your overall well-being (another reason why COVID was hard for many). You'll get to know your child's teachers better, meet other Goodwater parents, and experience the joy of knowing you are connected to something bigger than yourself.



EXTRA CREDIT: EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

If you work, your company might have an Employee Volunteer Program, awarding extra vacation time or money to those who give back to their communities. It is worth looking into as it's a win-win for everyone!

HAVE WE CONVINCED YOU
YET? GREAT! READ ON!

GETTING INVOLVED: ADVOCACY & THE POWER TO ACTUALLY CREATE CHANGE

Remember that somewhat disheartening fact of charter school students receiving significantly less state taxpayer funding than public school students? It can be hard to not be discouraged or feel helpless to change policy but we, as taxpayers, have much more power than we sometimes realize. We believe that united, we can change the world we live in and the future of our school.

3

The term advocacy can seem intimidating but there are many groups that are working to change the way funding is distributed to schools nationwide and in Texas. They have loads of information on how to easily get involved and it requires less time than one would think.



For public charter schools specifically: Texas Public Charter Schools Association: <https://txcharterschools.org/>

- London Lawrence is the Director of Regional Advocacy for Central Texas (and also simply a really great person). He spoke to our PTO in March of 2023 and would love to connect with more Goodwater families.
 - llawrence@txcharterschools.org or 512-641-8788



Consider emailing or calling your representative to tell them your personal experience with charter schools. Here are some legislators that may represent you:

- Senator Charles Schwertner represents most of Williamson Country (and more)
 - <https://senate.texas.gov/member.php?d=5>
- Representative Terry Wilson: represents Georgetown, Cedar Park, Leander and Liberty Hill
 - <https://house.texas.gov/members/member-page/?district=2>

Use this link to find all your state and federal representatives; links to contact each of them are included in the results:
<https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>

THE NUTS & BOLTS: HOW DO I VOLUNTEER?



FIRST THINGS FIRST: BACKGROUND CHECK

Student and school safety is of utmost concern here at Goodwater. For the safety of all students, every non-staff person must complete the Raptor background check each school year, prior to volunteering or being on campus. It takes less than five minutes to complete and is very easy to follow. Please note there is a cost of \$5 incurred per individual and your approval is only valid through the end of the school year (May). The QR code to access the background check can be found on the back of this packet.

Important Note: Anyone who plans to be on campus during school hours (not just to volunteer but to be given admission to campus) must have a background check completed.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

As a volunteer in our school, you will have the opportunity to work with different students and be exposed to a variety of situations. We believe that confidentiality is important and extends to the privacy of all students. This means that we do not discuss any students with others outside of the classroom. Please be mindful of what you share outside of the school environment. The Golden Rule is a great guide here: we would not want our own students to be discussed publicly, so we should not discuss any other students publicly either.

Should problems arise regarding confidentiality, a Goodwater administrator may request a private meeting or revoke a volunteer's right to participate. Thanks for helping us maintain our students' confidentiality!



A NOTE ABOUT CONSISTENCY

Our school is so grateful for your time and support, and understands that things come up which may mean you're unable to make it on a particular day. Children can get sick, an unplanned work meeting can crop up, or sometimes we all need a well-deserved vacation.

But please understand that our guides and students look forward to seeing you at the Enrichment Clubs, or the opportunity to get outside and explore our wonderful orchard.

When you sign up to volunteer for anything, please try to keep your commitment, as best as you can. If for any reason you are unable to make it, please communicate as soon as you know so alternate plans can be arranged. You matter and your presence does as well.

THREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE BACK

RECURRING VOLUNTEER

Are you someone who likes to plan ahead? Has consistent availability and wants to really give back to our community? Our recurring volunteers are the biggest blessing that Guides and students can rely on.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE:

- Reading 1x1 or in groups, with students weekly.
- Copying, laminating, cutting documents for guides .
- Keeping our library organized by re-shelving books.
- Tapping into your passion by leading art or STEM club projects
- Leading small groups of students to the orchard weekly.



OUR VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER WILL CONNECT WITH YOU TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT

You can expect to receive information from our volunteer coordinator within one week of passing your background check.

PTO COMMITTEES

Want to really make friends and build community here? Joining a committee is a great way to do that because you get to work with like-minded people towards a common goal. Come give back and meet great people!

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE:

- Helping students make handmade crafts to sell at our Fall Market with our Fundraising Committee
- Baking cookies for our beloved guides with the Sunshine Committee
- Creating digital content to spread awareness about Goodwater for communications
- Watching over the care of our garden and chickens with Outdoor Education



TO JOIN A PTO COMMITTEE, REACH OUT DIRECTLY TO THE PTO BOARD.

You can email with the name of the committee you wish to join, or if you are flexible, just reach out to the PTO and we will connect you with committee with biggest need.

OCCASIONAL & AS NEEDED

Can't commit to regularly scheduled volunteer endeavors? We have short term volunteer opportunities that might last one day or a few weeks, but allow you to help out without a recurring commitment .

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE:

- Decorating our Goodwater parade float twice a year.
- Leading a dance party for the end of our annual Raise Craze fundraiser.
- Helping students find books they'll love at the Book Fair.
- Donating supplies for Teacher Appreciation.
- Engaging with prospective families at our Market Day booths.



CHECK OUR MONTHLY CALENDAR FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Each month, our "as needed" volunteer needs will be posted on the PTO Website. These are the perfect chance to give back and get involved without regular commitment.

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: RECURRING VOLUNTEERS

LEAD COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERSLCV'S.....

LCVs support each individual community (classroom) by being a liaison between parents, the guide (teacher) and the PTO. As an LCV, you will be responsible for only 1 community (classroom) throughout the entire school year.

You have likely heard the term “room-parent”; this is a very similar position. You will work and communicate directly with your Guide to find the most adequate time where you can coordinate projects or events for that specific classroom and enlist other parent volunteers from that same community to assist in your duties. You do not need to be available every waking moment to be a wonderful LCV; think of it as making sure your guide is supported and communicating with other parents on how to support them.

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

If you're looking to build a community here at Goodwater, especially relationships with the families of your students' friends. If you want to get to know your student's guide better. If you are good at communicating and are friendly and organized.



ADMINISTRATIVE HELP

When asked what would be the most helpful in terms of volunteering, our guides said material creation and administrative help would be very beneficial. Under the direction of the volunteer coordinator, once a week, you would come to the school to make copies, laminate things (it's actually super fun).

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

If you want to help but large groups of children and people aren't your thing.

GUIDE BREAK VOLUNTEERS

Our guides and their assistants work tirelessly each day. These volunteers come in to give each guide and assistant time to meet and plan during the school day. Suggested 30 min sessions once a week.

If you really want to make guides feel seen and supported. If you want to give back in a big way but with a small time commitment.

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: RECURRING VOLUNTEERS

BOOK WORMS: LIBRARY HELP



Our students love reading and our school library grows that love. Because we don't have the funding for a full time librarian, our adorable library relies on the support of amazing volunteers and there are many ways to get involved that are low time commitment. Volunteering in the library looks like reshelving books, checking in/out books with students, and putting books on hold.

Also, for those who are attentive to detail and enjoy data entry, our library needs help cataloging and repairing books. This is an especially good task for those who have an hour or two of free time during breaks and weekends as you can take the work home with you.

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

If you enjoy watching organizing tiktoks because you love keeping things in order. If you want to volunteer but don't want to be directly in the classroom. If you'd classify yourself as an introvert with a big heart. If you love reading.

THE FUN RECESS MONITOR

Do you feel like a kid at heart? Want to make a big difference in the lives of our guides and have fun in the process? Consider joining us for an hour or two each week during recess to give our guides a proper break.

If you enjoy children and being outside. If watching a game of Gaga Ball while greatly lifting the load of our guides sounds good to you.

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

READING GROUPS

We all have heard what a difference reading to children makes towards their academic growth. Consider this low time commitment opportunity. dedicating an hour or two to reading either one on one or in small groups each week. It is truly amazing to see the growth a student can make over the course of the year.

THIS MIGHT BE FOR YOU IF...

If you want to make a direct change in the lives of our students. If you enjoy reading. If you want to see the pride of learning on a child's face.

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: PTO BOARD POSITIONS

President - Coordinate the work of all officers and committees.

Lead and delegate efforts within the PTO.

2023-2024 President: Michelle Wong

Vice President - Responsible for overseeing Membership and Fundraising.

2023-2024 Vice President: Shauna Schwanky



Recording Secretary - Record the minutes of all Board and Membership Meetings

2023-2024 Recording Secretary: still needed

Treasurer- Custodian of PTOs funds. Keep books of accounts and records.

2023-2024 Treasurer: Deserie Mensch

Communications Secretary - Creates and distributes informational content for PTO.

2023-2024 Communications Secretary: Sara Jefferson

Parliamentarian: oversees bi-laws and organizational procedures

2023-2024 Parliamentarian: Alicia Olivieri



Fundraising Chair Fall - Creates and leads committee for Fall Market.

2023-2024 Fall Fundraising Chair: still needed



Fundraising Chair Spring - Create and lead committee for Spring Gala & Silent Auction.

2023-2024 Spring Fundraising Chair: still needed



Outdoor Education Chair - lead and maintain educational Orchard efforts.

2023-2024 Outdoor Education Chair: still needed



Student Enrichment Chair - Find ways in which to enrich students and their school experience.

2023-2024 Student Enrichment Chair: Valencia Kidd

Parent Enrichment Chair - Create events that educate parents and engage them and build community.

2023-2024 Parent Enrichment Chair: Maria Melo



Legislative Chair - Help guide members in how to advocate for their students and their school.

2023-2024 Legislative Chair: still needed

Sunshine Committee Chair - Spread appreciation to faculty and staff throughout the year

2023-2024 Sunshine Committee Chair: Olivia Guerra



Volunteer Organizer - Organize and support volunteers schoolwide

2023-2024 Volunteer Organizer: still needed



Strategic Marketing Chair - Oversees the plan to promote the PTO within the community

2023-2024 Strategic Marketing Chair: Kandace Ayala

Art Club Coordinator: Organize the art club program and its volunteers

2023-2024 Art Club Coordinator: London Breban



NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

WHAT IS THE PTO?

Goodwater PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) works in partnership with families and faculty to build a community of inclusivity to support the whole child through family engagement.

WHAT DOES THE PTO DO?

- Raise money to support many of our initiatives including building school's first playground.
- Facilitate enrichment activities for our students.
- Plan events to build and enrich sense of community among Goodwater families.
- Host teacher & staff appreciation events throughout the year.
- Support the Outdoor Education Program through fundraising and volunteer opportunities.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

Simply joining the PTO is a HUGE help to our school. By becoming a member and paying annual dues, the PTO can support teachers and students. Meetings are not mandatory, and being a member does not mean you automatically have to volunteer. It just means you support our group and believe in what we are doing. You can join [here](#) (QR Code at the back of this packet)

CONCERNED ABOUT THE TIME COMMITTMENT?

It's great that we all have different ways of giving back. We don't need 400 PTO Presidents! Just coming to Spirit Nights or volunteering every few months is a huge help. If you're interested in getting more involved, there are plenty of ways to do it from home on your own schedule.

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: PTO COMMITTEES

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE



Goodwater PTO has a fundraising committee that is responsible for planning and developing fundraising campaigns to support many of our initiatives: playground fund, student enrichment activities, staff appreciation events, outdoor education development, and more! This committee is made up of a few parent volunteers led by the PTO Vice President. They meet a few times throughout the year to come up with different fundraising ideas, as well as help organize and execute community-wide events.

This year, we have a casual Fall Market & Festival to plan; and in the spring, we'll be getting fancy at our 2024 Gala & Silent Auction.

If you are organized and enjoy working with people, love event planning, or have a background in fundraising or non-profits.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE



Support our amazing guides and staff by planning small events like coffee bars, surprise lunches catered & Teacher Appreciation Week to let them know how grateful we are for them.

If you have a Pinterest addiction & love making people feel special.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



Support our efforts for outdoor education by connecting volunteers with Guides & staff to get our kids out in nature on a consistent basis. This could be as simple as leading small groups of students out to the orchard during school hours to assist in gardening, chicken care, taking nature walks, doing yoga, reading outdoors, performing a nature art project, or simply sharing with students in your knowledge to make a positive impact through environmental responsibility. We would love to provide the school more opportunities for becoming Green by being more socially responsible and eco-friendly. Some examples include recycling & composting programs, and growing produce to become more "farm to table" for our community.



If you are a lover of nature and great outdoors, believe that learning can take place outside of a classroom, have a passion for the environment, have a green thumb or are a handy person.


NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: PTO COMMITTEES

ART CLUB COMMITTEE



"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way—things I had no words for."- Georgia O'Keeffe

Art is one of the many ways children express themselves and communicate their feelings. The mission behind Art Club is to guide students through a journey in Art History where they will explore through different mediums the styles of renowned Artists throughout time. Art Club volunteers will visit the classrooms and lead comprehensive lesson plans with the provided supplies to guide students through creative activities.

 If you are a lover of all things art and have an hour to give each week


STEM CLUB COMMITTEE

Calling all lovers of STEM! Introduce and facilitate a hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) activity that helps kids to think outside of the box. Can be a weekly or monthly opportunity

 If you have a love of science, math and/or technology


COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Do you love graphic design, marketing or getting creative on Canva? Assist the Communications secretary by creating content both written and digital, distributing fliers, posting on social media etc.

 If you are a creative introvert who wants to volunteer on your time

SPIRIT WEAR COMMITTEE

Are you filled with school pride? Want to spread the word that Goodwater is an awesome school option here in Georgetown? Show your spirit by helping unite the schools and give them a sense of belonging through our spiritwear program!

 If you were a cheerleader in your past life who wants to share their Dolphin pride

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Throughout the year, Goodwater hosts a number of events, and we would be thrilled to have your help on any or all of them. These are great ways to get involved and give back without an ongoing commitment.

Volunteering at these special events often looks like: Setting up, tearing down or facilitating day-of activities. Additionally, there are often signups for donations needed for specific events.

In order to volunteer for these events, you must (like all volunteer positions) have passed the Raptor background check and be an approved volunteer for Goodwater. You **do not** need to be a PTO member or part of a committee to volunteer for these events. You'll find these opportunities listed under our monthly volunteer calendar.

- Fall Market & Festival
- Market Days on the Square
- Christmas Stroll
- Book Fair
- Red Poppy Parade
- Spring Gala
- and more!

NEEDS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY: INNOVATORS & CREATORS

Like all organizations, Goodwater and its supporting PTO will (with luck) change and grow overtime. If you have an idea that you would like to bring to life, please share your ideas with us or the school at large. Here are some wild ideas that we would love help bringing to fruition:

- Cooking Club
- Family Movie Night
- Student Theatre
- Children's Yoga Sessions
- Sewing & Knitting Club
- Community Supper
- Family Board Game Night
- Junior Master Gardener program

2023-2024

YEAR AT A GLANCE

August <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -8/2 PTO Board meeting -8/10 + 8/11 Meet the Teacher Nights -8/15 1st day of school -8/22 School Board Meeting -8/26 Chipotle Spirit Night 	September <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PTO Member Meeting -PEP Talk (Parent Engagement Series) -9/20 Hat Creek Spirit Night -9/26 School Board Meeting 	October <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -10/6 Parent/Teacher Conferences -10/9-10/13 Fall Break -PTO Board meeting -10/18 Agape BBQ Spirit Night -10/24 School Board Meeting -10/27 Fall Market & Festival Fundraiser
November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PTO Member Meeting -11/11 Main Street Social Spirit Night - 11/20-11/24 Thanksgiving Break -11/28 School Board Meeting 	December <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -12/2 Christmas Stroll Parade -PTO Board meeting -PEP Talk (Parent Engagement Series) -Staff Holiday Party -12/21-1/5 Winter Break -12/26 School Board Meeting 	January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School Board Recognition Month -PTO Member Meeting -1/18 Panda Express Spirit Night -1/23 School Board Meeting
February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Raise Craze Begins -2/20 Parent/Teacher Conferences -PTO Board meeting -2/22 Mooyah Spirit Night -2/27 School Board Meeting 	March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Raise Craze Ends -3/11-3/15 Spring Break -PTO Member Meeting -PEP Talk (Parent Engagement Series) -3/21 Pizza Hut Spirit Night -3/26 School Board Meeting 	April <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4/12 Spring Gala & Silent Auction -PTO Board meeting -4/18 - 4/26 STAAR -4/21 Hat Creek Spirit Night -4/23 School Board Meeting -4/27 Red Poppy Parade
May <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -5/2 - 5/3 STAAR -Field Trips -Teacher Appreciation Week -PTO Member Meeting -Bridging Ceremonies -End of Year Celebration -5/28 School Board Meeting 	Summer <p>Happy Summer!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monthly Spirit Nights -Summer Meetups -Orchard Summer Care 	Weekly <p>TGIF Playground Meetups</p> <p>Join us @ Creative Playscape every Friday after dismissal for an informal gathering. Meet other Goodwater families and let kids play!</p>

CLIFF NOTES

Does the weight of this packet make you anxious? Brand new to the school and super overwhelmed by this amount of information? Have no fear, the cliff notes version is here!

Here are 4 things you can do to get plugged in but not read every word in this packet:



Read the weekly newsletters from the school. This will give you all the upcoming events and important information you need to know.



Follow the PTO on Facebook. If you haven't jumped from the Facebook ship yet, follow the Goodwater PTO for all important info about gatherings and ways to get involved.



Complete the Raptor Volunteer Background Check. Even if you aren't sure if you want to volunteer, having this completed will allow you to be on campus should a special event pop up that you want to be a part of.



Check out our monthly calendar every once and a while. Each month we will post short term volunteer opportunities, should you want to dip your toe into volunteering at Goodwater.



Consider a charitable donation to the school. We understand that not all families have the ability to donate their time to the school but can perhaps contribute a monetarily through a donation. This is also a tremendous way to support school efforts.

HOW TO REACH US

USE THIS LINK TO JOIN THE PTO	ACCESS THE VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK HERE	CHECK OUT THE PTO WEBSITE
		