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SY25-26 ENEWSLETTER

PTO DISTRIBUTED NEWSLETTER
STAY UP TO DATE REGARDING PTO
MEETINGS & EVENTS AS WELL AS
OTHER COMMUNITY UPDATES.

This communication is developed and distributed by Friends of Ray Board Members. These communications are not reviewed and/or edited by the staff at William H. Ray Elementary School.

www.friendsofrayschool.com



This communication is developed and distributed by Friends of Ray School Board of Directors. This newsletter is not edited and/or reviewed by the staff at Ray Elementary. Please visit the [Ray school website](#) for direct communication and updates from the school.

CPS Calendar



GENERAL UPDATES



Self-Care Awareness for Parents & Students

Taking care of ourselves is just as important as taking care of schoolwork, sports, and family responsibilities. Here are a few simple ways students and parents can practice self-care every day:

For Students:

- Take brain breaks during homework or study time.
- Play, run, or move your body for at least an hour daily.
- Talk to a parent, teacher, or friend when you're stressed.
- Try calming activities like deep breathing, journaling, or drawing.
- Get 9–12 hours of sleep each night to stay focused and energized.

For Parents:

- Prioritize rest—even short breaks can reset your energy.
- Keep healthy routines with balanced meals, movement, and sleep.
- Stay connected with friends and loved ones to ease stress.
- Model self-care for your children—they learn by watching you.
- Give yourself grace.

Remember: Self-care isn't selfish. When parents and students feel balanced and supported, the whole family

HEALTHY RAY WARRIOR PRACTICES

1 ESTABLISH SET ROUTINES

- Aim for 9–12 hours of sleep each night.
- Go to bed and wake up around the same time daily.

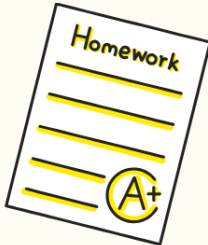


2 BE ON TIME

- Arrive at school ready to learn—being on time helps you start the day calm and prepared.
- Pack your backpack the night before with homework, lunch, and supplies.

3 KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET

- Practice sharing, listening, and being kind to friends.
- Try deep breaths or drawing when feeling upset.



4 HOMEWORK HABITS

- Use a folder or planner for homework and reminders.
- Do homework in a quiet spot with few distractions.
- Break tasks into smaller steps if they feel big.

5 ASK FOR HELP

- If something is hard, ask your teacher or parent—learning is about growing, not being perfect.



CELEBRATE EVERY WIN, NO MATTER HOW SMALL

6 CELEBRATE ALL WINS

- Finishing a reading chapter or solving a tough math problem deserves a high five!
- No goal achieved is too small.
- Always celebrate your progress!



WILLIAM H. RAY
ELEMENTARY
SY 2025

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FRIENDS OF RAY SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT



Annual Report Purpose

This report provides a summary of our efforts over the past year, giving our members and the community insight into our contributions to the students and families of William H. Ray Elementary School in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, as well as our financial stewardship practices.

About Us

Friends of Ray School PTO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports the students, faculty, and administration of William H. Ray Elementary School through fundraising and organizing community-building events throughout the year.

Visit our website to learn more.

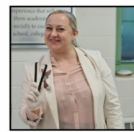


www.friendsofrayschool.com



Mission

Our mission is to foster collaboration between parents, teachers, and school staff to enhance the educational experience for all Ray students. We aim to support the school community by organizing events, raising funds for programs and supplies, and encouraging family involvement.



SY 2025 Board Members (Last School Year)

The Board of Directors serving during SY25 includes Michelle Jefferson, President; Arielle Thompson, Vice-President; Rebecca Gorges, Treasurer; Rebecca Incledon, Fundraising Co-Chair; Kathryn Smous, Fundraising Co-Chair; Anne Collard, Membership Chair; Toshio Booker, Volunteer Chair; School Administration Representatives, Principal Gayle Neely and Assistant Principal Chandra Garcia; and Staff Representatives Vianette Harrell, Heather Hall, and Stacy Horgan.

Enhanced Teacher Partnerships

This year, Friends of Ray School partnered closely with our dedicated teachers to strengthen family and community engagement. Teachers played an active role in supporting our mission by participating in school events and contributing to fundraising efforts, helping us create a more connected and thriving school community.

Thank You - Michelle J. & Kathryn S.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to former PTO President Michelle Jefferson and Fundraising Chair Kathryn Smous for their years of leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to Friends of Ray School. Their passion and hard work have strengthened our community and laid the foundation for continued success.

[View the Annual Report Here](#)



UPCOMING PTO EVENTS

FRIENDS OF RAY SCHOOL

PRIMARY POD PLAY DATES

Join us for upcoming playdates for Pre-K – 2nd Grade. We look forward to building relationships and having a good time.

BIXLER PARK
5641 S. Kenwood Ave.

Pre-K & Kindergarten
Sunday, September 7

1st & 2nd Grade
Sunday, September 14

TIME: 3:30PM – 5PM

www.friendsofrayschool.com



UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIENDS OF RAY SCHOOL PTO 2025-2026

- AUG 28 MEET & GREET GENERAL MEETING**
4:00 PM RAY SCHOOL NORTH PLAYGROUND
POPCORN & SNO-CONES | BUDGET REVIEW
- PRE K AND K FAMILY PLAY DATE** **SEPT 7**
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM (BIXLER PARK)
- SEPT 14 1ST & 2ND GRADE FAMILY PLAY DATE**
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM (BIXLER PARK)
- GENERAL MEETING** **SEPT 25**
8:00 PM (VIRTUAL) | BUDGET VOTE
Google Meet [SCAN TO JOIN THE MEETING](#)
- GENERAL MEETING**
8:00 PM (VIRTUAL)
Google Meet [SCAN TO JOIN THE MEETING](#)
- CULTURAL HERITAGE & CULINARY COOKING NIGHT** **NOV 6**
4:00 PM | RAY LUNCHROOM | GENERAL MEETING
TENTATIVE DATE MAY CHANGE
- DEC 11 CINEMA & HOT CHOCOLATE GENERAL MEETING**
4:00 PM | RAY AUDITORIUM
TENTATIVE DATE MAY CHANGE

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING FOR EVENTS?
SCAN HERE!

[MORE INFO:](#) WWW.FRIENDSOFRAYSCHOOL.COM

FUNDRAISING UPDATES



Raise a Glass for Ray Committee Kickoff Meeting
Friday Sep 5, 4-5PM
Ray North Playground picnic table

Come learn more about Ray's largest fundraiser and parents-night-out event, Raise a Glass for Ray, and ways to plug in. If you're enthusiastic about building community at Ray and have some time and energy to give back, please join us. Light snacks will be provided to fuel kids while we meet.

Doubting that a PTO event can be fun? Here are photos from last year's event (yes, it was 90's themed): **Raise a Glass for**

Questions or can't make it but want to get involved?

Text Katie Yocum Musisi (202-413-0120) or Bill Housewright (312-550-5065).

[View Photos Here](#)

RAY WARRIOR GEAR & MERCHANDISE



PURCHASE YOUR GEAR TODAY!



PRICE LIST

Short Sleeve Tees	\$17
Long Sleeve Tees	\$23
Trucker Hats	\$23
Yard/Window Sign	\$5

Show Your
RAY WARRIOR
»»»» PRIDE!



SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO ORDER!



Funds collected go towards additional resources and engagement events for William H. Ray School.
www.friendsofrayschool.com

Show Your Ray Warrior Pride!

Families, it's time to represent the Ray Warriors of William H. Ray Elementary with spirit wear that celebrates our amazing school community! We've got a great selection of shirts, hats, and more!

Let's fill the halls (and the neighborhood!) with Ray Warrior spirit. Please complete the form below to order your Ray gear.

A confirmation email with next steps for payment/pick up will be sent once the order form is submitted.

In-Person purchase date: Thursday, August 28th at 4PM

[Order Here](#)



Shop for holiday cards, photo gifts, and more. With code "FUNDRAISEFRIENDS OFRAY", you'll receive a 20% discount and Friends of Ray School will receive 15% back on every purchase.

[Visit our Website](#)

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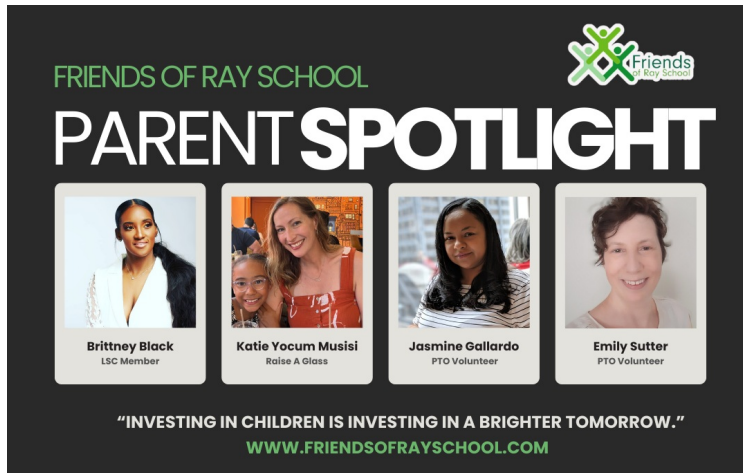
Search for Friends of Ray School PTO. Each order of labels, return address stamps, ornaments, and more, Friends of Ray School will receive 20% of the purchase price.

[Visit our](#)



PARENT SPOTLIGHT

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER THROUGH PARENT SUPPORT



Ray Warrior parents are the heart of our school community. Each event is made brighter and more successful thanks to the time, energy, and care our volunteers give. This spotlight is our way of saying thank you for showing up, pitching in, and helping our students and staff thrive. Together, we make Ray stronger!



MEMBERSHIP UPDATES



Join the Friends of Ray School Parent-Teacher Organization and make a meaningful impact in our school community!

As a member, you'll have the opportunity to connect with other

parents, collaborate with teachers and staff, and support initiatives that directly benefit our students.

While there is a suggested membership donation of \$20, this contribution is not required to join as a general member. However, it is necessary for voting privileges and eligibility to serve on the board.

Your support—financial or otherwise—helps fund essential programs, events, and resources that enrich the educational experience at Ray School.

Get involved and help us make a difference!

[Membership Form Here](#)





LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER PROCESS

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All school volunteers are required to complete the CPS Volunteer Application form.

Interested in volunteering? Scan the QR code and a PTO Board member will reach out with more information to get you started!



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO.
www.friendsofrayschool.com





Interested in volunteering for school-based and/or PTO school events? We would love to have you on our team! Please click the button below to complete the Friends of Ray School Volunteer Interest Form.

Please note that you will also need to complete the CPS Volunteer Application. Once we receive your interest form we will contact you with additional details for the volunteer process.

[Volunteer Interest Form](#)



HYDE PARK SCHOOL OF DANCE

Training
Performance
Community

*Offering inclusive dance
education since 1993*



- ★ Classes for ages
18 months to 60+ years
- ★ From Ballet and Modern
to Breakin' and West
African dance, there's a
class for everyone

- ★ New this year:
Sunday classes
Yoga (Fri, Sun)
Musical Theater (10+)
Intro to Ballet (9+)

- ★ Enroll now to perform in
The Nutcracker (ages 7+)
or holiday pre-show (ages
4-6)



Register now at
hydeparkdance.org



773 493 8498 | 5650 S Woodlawn Ave | admin@hydeparkdance.org

[Visit the Website](https://hydeparkdance.org)

RAY WARRIOR PROUD

LEARN MORE HERE:

www.ray.cps.edu

www.friendsofrayschool.com



WILLIAM H. RAY

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2025 - 2026
Board of Directors

- Arielle A. Thompson
President
Marketing/Communications
- Janasha Eakins
Vice President
- Rebecca Gorges
Treasurer
- Elizabeth Edwards
Secretary
- Rebecca Incledon
Fundraising Co-Chair
- Jantelle Jackson
Fundraising Co-Chair
- Anne Collard
Membership Chair
- Toshia Booker
Volunteer Chair
- Benjamin Walker
Website Co-Manager
- Gayle Harris-Neely
Principal
- Stacy Horgan
Teacher
- Heather Hall
Teacher
- Ciara Weaver
Teacher

FRIENDS OF **RAY**

501 (c) (3) PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

VOLUNTEER | SUPPORT | ENGAGE
HELP US BUILD THE RAY SCHOOL COMMUNITY!

JOIN THE PTO TODAY!

WHAT WE DO:

- Promote Parent Support
- Volunteer for School Events/Initiatives
- Develop Fundraisers
- Raise Funds to Provide Additional Resources/Support
- Enhance Community Engagement & More!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

FOR MORE DETAILS ON HOW
YOU CAN JOIN/SUPPORT!

SCAN HERE



Friends
of Ray School

www.friendsofrayschool.com

Interested in joining the Friends of Ray School Board of Directors? Email us today for more details! We need your support!

STAY CONNECTED

FRIENDS OF RAY SCHOOL

FRIENDSOFRAYSCHOOLPTO

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LIKE. SHARE. FOLLOW.

www.friendsofrayschool.com

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[School Website](#)

[Ray Gear](#)

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Friends of Ray School PTO is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) that supports the students, faculty, and administration of William H. Ray Elementary School through fundraising and organizing community-building events throughout the year.

All Ray families and community members are welcome and encouraged to join the Ray PTO in supporting our school. Our mission is to supplement the limited funding allotted to Ray through the Chicago Public School system. All funds raised are used to support recess, enrich the curriculum at each grade level, purchase classroom supplies, and sponsor community events and meetings.

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