

My name is Ronni Schwartz, and I'm a longtime, involved Tuscan parent. My younger daughter is a rising fourth-grader, and I've been volunteering at the school for eight years now, since my rising eighth-grade daughter was in kindergarten.

Professionally, I'm a Senior VP for one of the largest companies in the U.S. in compensation within Human Resources. I've had many years of experience dealing with confidential matters, fixing broken processes, managing risk, and creating training modules for the bank's HR employees to ensure that its hiring practices are as fair as possible. In short, my career has for some time now been about solving problems, reducing inequities, and teaching others how to do the right thing.

So that's what I *do*, but what do I *stand for*? Equity, community, and excellence in education.

Last Saturday, I co-organized and led the SOMA Family Protest at Maplecrest Park in support of BLM and against police brutality. It took shape because I felt local parents might appreciate an event that helped them teach their kids what this moment and movement are about – what people are demonstrating for, and against, and why it matters. I'm told about 1,000 of us came out. (And thank you all for doing such a great job with the social distancing and mask wearing.)

I served the PTA as treasurer from July 2017 through June 2019 – and the final thing I did in my tenure was write a detailed manual for future PTA treasurers so the job could be handed off smoothly from one to the next in years to come. I was a Tuscan class coordinator for multiple years. I've also volunteered with several SOMSD Board of Education campaigns for candidates (most of them successful) dedicated to the long-term equity improvement the district is working toward. I served on the executive board of Congregation Beth Shalom in Wilmington, Delaware, and the board of the Hebrew school at Congregation Beth El in South Orange. And I'm an active member of SOMA Justice and SOMA Action.

I am passionate about Tuscan and our district community. This past year, though I took a break from the PTA board, I volunteered in the library almost every week. I have been a Tuscan representative on the Parenting Center Committee for Intentional Integration since early 2019. And I'm an administrator for the Tuscan Families Facebook group. My children would laugh at that long volunteering resume, and tell you I organize things for fun. (They'd be right.)

Here's one small example of the values and ideas I've brought to our PTA: When I was Treasurer, my now-co-candidate Jess Horan and I talked about the way the Tuscan community was supporting local families in need at Thanksgiving. Previously, the PTA had asked students' families to contribute food, which the PTA then distributed. We felt a more empowering and dignified approach for everyone involved would be to collect funds and give families grocery store gift cards so that they could shop for what they actually needed and wanted. And then we made that change happen.

I firmly believe that the one of the core functions of the Tuscan PTA should be to contribute to improving equity within our school, our district, and our community. Those efforts will be more than ever as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 crisis and the other challenges this country faces. Of course, we will keep doing all the things that enhance the Tuscan experience for our kids, from paying for field trips and special events to hosting fairs and festivals, and hosting events to help build connections among us parents. But there are higher goals to pursue, and the PTA is in a position to contribute its energy to them.

Jess and I are the leaders who will make that happen. We thank you for your support.