



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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September 7, 2007

Welcome

by Marcia FitzGerald, MCT Principal

MCT was a very active place this summer. Along with Merriam School, we hosted several summer school programs that kept us busy in July and much of August. I did have some "downtime" this summer, though. I went with my extended family to my sister's Michigan beach house. For part of the time, the cottage was bursting at the seams! There were as many as 33 people! I am the oldest of seven kids and spending time with all of my siblings, my parents and my nieces and nephews is something I look forward to and enjoy. There is something special about summer nights: adults talking on the deck, "kids" from 10 months to 28 playing in the yard, everyone watching for lightening bugs and falling stars. I feel so lucky!

Now, I am excited about the start of the school year. On behalf of the MCT school community, I welcome everyone, especially our 91 new students (59 in kindergarten, 32 in grades 1-6). Most of all, I look forward to having fun with you as we go about the vital work of elementary school public education.

There are a number of changes in staffing this year, some new faces and some familiar faces in new roles. One new face is Bethany Vinal, who is our new Speech and Language Specialist. We also welcome Velinda (Vin) Wallack, who will be teaching kindergarten. Vin was in kindergarten last year as a long term substitute for Jen Pratt, so you may know her. Karen Shiebler, who has been our Speech and Language specialist for a number of years, is moving to the classroom. She will be teaching one of our fifth grade sections.

Two new classroom assistants and a new kindergarten assistant will be supporting the teachers and students this year. Karen Taylor and Maryellen DiPalo will join the eight current CAs and Caron Goldberg will be in the all day kindergarten classroom. We are glad that we are able to continue to have assistants and thank the parent community for their financial support in this area. The classroom assistants perform a variety of jobs that support the classroom teacher. Some of their responsibilities include working with students in the academic areas, performing clerical tasks, preparing materials for science lessons, accompanying the children to lunch and recess, helping with special projects and, especially, being another caring adult to help the children. We are fortunate to have two assistants working with Sharon Ryan, our reading specialist. Both Jenny Gulliver and Joanne Wiggins are returning to work with Sharon and the students in the reading room.

McCarthy-Towne is a bustling place again. After a 10 week vacation, the school is filled with students, faculty and staff, parents, and visitors. I can feel the excitement and energy in the air and realize how happy we all are to be here. For those of us who work in schools, September is the first month of the year. It is a time of renewal and fresh starts. It is new school supplies and new friends and an almost brand new school. It is the knowledge that another year of growing and learning is about to begin and that we all get to be part of it. I would like to welcome everyone back and invite you to be part of this "new beginning."

Save March 1, 2008 for the Auction!

Saturday, March 1, 2008 is the McCarthy-Towne Annual School Auction. It will be held at the SpringHill Suites, Devens, MA. Not only is this a fun evening, it is also the school's biggest fundraiser. There will be more information about the auction and ways you can help coming soon! Just make sure to save the date: Saturday, March 1, 2008!



PTSO News

Dear Parents,

The PTSO raises about **\$100,000** each year in order to fund the majority of the teaching assistants' salaries, as well as the salaries of Astrid, the Parent Involvement Coordinator and Marni, the Arts Integration Coordinator, who works with the teachers to integrate art into the curriculum. In addition, we sponsor the Cultural & Performing Arts Committee, which brings performers like "Galileo," "Thoreau" and "Scott Joplin" to school assemblies. We also fund extra library hours.

In this issue, you will find many opportunities (see below) to support the PTSO's activities. Please participate! Thanks!

Sincerely,

Suzi Yarin, PTSO Chair: (978) 263-6383 or ssyarin@verizon.net.

Activity	Date
Buy Innisbrook gift wrap and Colorblends bulbs.	Deadline is 9/28.
Buy SCRIP cards monthly.	First deadline is 9/19.
Buy school photos.	Friday, 9/21 (picture day) and at the photographer's website.
Participate in the Family Photo Day.	Sign-up now for Sunday, 10/14.
Come to the Fall Social!	Friday, 10/26.
Recycle paper in green bin in parking lot.	On-going.
Shop online at Schoolpop.com .	On-going.
Register your Target credit card.	On-going.
Recycle cell phones, ink cartridges, etc.	On-going.
Save and submit General Mills BoxTops.	On-going.
Save and submit Donelan's receipts.	Now through March.

Everyone is welcome at PTSO Meetings!

Wednesdays, 7 pm, Faculty Lounge (top of stairs, top floor).

Mark your calendar now:

9/26, 10/17, 11/14, 12/19, 1/16, 2/13, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21, 6/18

Classroom Potlucks

Stay tuned for information about our McCarthy Towne Classroom Family Potlucks. They are a great way to meet other parents from your child(ren)'s class.

Bulletin Deadlines

The McCarthy-Towne Bulletin is published by the PTSO eleven times per school year. Each family will receive a copy on the first Friday of each month and during the last week of school. Articles should be submitted by email on or before the Monday prior to publication. (For example: submit by 10/1 for the 10/5 issue, submit by 10/29 for 11/2.) Please direct articles, questions or suggestions to Kathie Watt at kathiewatt@yahoo.com.

New McT Direct Phone Numbers

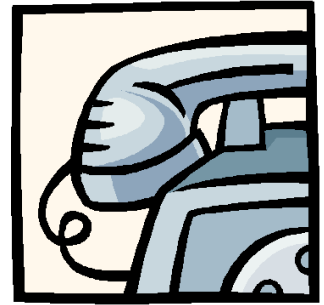
Please note that the McT office and the McT health office now have direct phone numbers.

To reach the McCarthy-Towne Office, call **978-264-3377**.

To reach Betty Johns in the Health Office, call 978-264-3374.

The McT Safe Arrival number is still 978-264-4098.

The school system main number is still 978-264-4700.



McCarthy-Towne Handbook

The McCarthy-Towne Handbook is now available on-line on the McCarthy-Towne website (mct.ab.mec.edu). In an effort to reduce paper usage, we will not be printing and sending the handbook to every family. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the handbook, please send a request to the McCarthy-Towne office.

Safe Arrival Explained

Did you ever wonder how the McCarthy-Towne Safe Arrival system works?

Every morning after the start of the school day (8:30 AM this year), teachers take attendance and send attendance lists to the school office. A parent volunteer goes through the attendance lists, notes the absences, and then listens to the Safe Arrival answer machine messages. The volunteer reconciles the absentee list, the answer machine list and any late arrival check-ins. Then the volunteer tries to reconcile any students who are unaccounted for.

First the classroom teacher is called to confirm the absence; then parents are called (at home/work/cellphone) in the order specified on the Emergency Cards filled out at the beginning of the year; and then emergency contacts (relatives/neighbors/friends) as specified on the card are called.

Most of the time, all of the students are quickly accounted for. Occasionally the Safe Arrival volunteer has to do some extensive calling to determine that a family has forgotten to inform the school of an absence or late arrival. On very rare occasions, a child does not make it to school without the parent's knowledge. Luckily, these incidents have always had happy endings and have reinforced the importance and effectiveness of the Safe Arrival program.

The PTSO sponsors the Safe Arrival program by paying for a special phone line and scheduling volunteers to run it. Please help it function smoothly by remembering to call - day or night - when you know your child will be absent from school or late arriving in school.

MCAS Dates for Spring 2008

Please note the schedule for MCAS test administration next spring. If you have children in grade 3 - 6, please avoid scheduling appointments and travel during MCAS test periods.

English Language Arts, grades 3, 4, 5, 6: March 24 through April 4

English Language Arts Composition, grade 4: March 25

Math, grades 3, 4, 5, 6: May 12-16

Science and History & Social Science, grade 5: May 19-23

McCarthy-Towne Buddy Family Program

Would you like to welcome new families to McCarthy-Towne?

Do you have tips and tricks to share about our school?

Do you have a facility in another language?

If you answered YES to ANY of these questions, please consider becoming a McCarthy-Towne Buddy Family.

The McT Buddy Family program matches veteran McT families to families with children in grades 1 - 6 who are new to McT.

The buddy family is asked to make an initial phone call to the new family and extend a welcome message. When you are new to town or to the school, there are loads of questions. It's nice to have the name and number of someone who might know the answers!

We are always looking for more buddy families to volunteer to help the new families that arrive at McT throughout the year. Providing buddies for families whose first language is not English is especially helpful. If you are interested in signing up to be a buddy family, or if you would just like more details about the program, please contact Marie Clougher at (978) 266-3707 or mjc-fg@verizon.net.



Landscaping Committee - We Need You!

Would you like to see some beautiful results to your volunteer work? Join the Landscaping Committee! We plan, and take care of the gardens of the Parker-Damon Grounds. It is a combined effort with both McCarthy-Towne and Merriam Schools cooperating! All of the landscaping for this building depends on our volunteers, so please join us! We are especially in need of a McCarthy-Towne co-chair for this committee!

We will have gardening and meeting days approximately twice a month, starting **Thursday, Sept. 20th at 10** (we will meet outside the front doors and explore and discuss the gardens). We have a large campus and we need to plan our goals and see what we can accomplish!

Our major All-School Fall Clean-up Day will be on **Sunday, October 14, 2007!** Please join us - the whole family is welcome - and bring your gardening gloves, weeding claws, dandelion pullers and the desire to pull a lot of weeds! Help us make the campus shine!

You do not need gardening experience to join! We are looking for anyone willing to spend a little of their time to help out. Even if you can only attend a clean-up or planting day, we'd love to have you join us! Please contact Amanda Lye (978 635-9879) with questions.

Fall Family Photo Day

Our annual Family Photo Day is scheduled for **Sunday, Oct 14**. This year we are very pleased to have Lola Farra of With Clarity Photography (and a McT parent) take our photos. You can check out Lola's website at www.withclarityphotography.com. The photo day will once again be at the Acton Arboretum from 8:30am until 3:00pm. Sittings are scheduled every 10 minutes and the cost per family grouping is \$40.00. The sitting fee includes a free photo and even better, \$35.00 of each sitting fee goes directly to the McT PTSO! Get a jump on those holiday cards and gifts while supporting our school! Check out the McT website for available sitting times. Please email your top 3 choices of times along with your name, phone number and the number of adults/children/pets to be photographed to Sandy Billings at sandybillings@verizon.net or call Sandy at 978 635-1817.

Tidbits from Tina

by Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

As I search bookstores for resources on parenting, I am drawn to a book by Jane Nelsen, Positive Discipline A-Z: 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems. Her extremely practical advice is based on a philosophy of child rearing that is positive, with an emphasis on a balance of firmness and kindness, and it works! Dr. Nelsen bases her suggestions on twenty-seven tools of parenting, as she calls them. She describes each tool in the first section of this book and then addresses 93 specific parenting problems in Part II. This year in "Tidbits from Tina" I will summarize Dr. Nelsen's tools, one at a time, so that parents can build their own tool kits of parenting. For those of you who can't stand the suspense and want to jump ahead, feel free to purchase your own copy of the book. While it's tempting to leap to the second section, searching for the solution to a particular problem you are having with your child, I strongly encourage you to carefully read and absorb Part I first. The tools she presents are key to successfully implementing her later suggestions. And so we begin. . .

Tool #1: Be Kind and Firm

Dr. Nelsen describes three parenting styles: #1-- The Boss; #2--Milquetoast; and #3-- Kind and Firm. The Boss is the parent who has all the power and wants the child simply to obey, since the adult knows best. He/She relies on punishment to control the child. The child learns to depend on the parent to make all the decisions, not feeling confident to decide for him/herself. Milquetoast parents tend to be overprotective, and they feel sorry for their children if something doesn't go well. These parents don't let their children learn from their mistakes and their children don't develop the belief that they are capable. Children of "milquetoast parents" tend to be selfish and irresponsible. A Kind and Firm parent is proactive—observing and thinking before acting. He/She models appropriate problem-solving rather than blaming others, and allows his/her children to suffer the consequences of their decisions. Those children learn to cope and to have confidence in themselves to solve problems.

(Tune in next month for Tools #2 and #3.)

Box Tops For Education

Welcome back everyone! Hopefully you had a terrific summer and while enjoying yourselves you were cutting out Box Tops along the way! For those of you new to MCT we collect the Box Tops found on many different foods and get 10 cents for every box top collected for MCT. We earned over \$1,000 last year but feel like we can do even more!

We will be having another contest this year for early bird collections. Please collect all the Box Tops you can and we will have our first collection in October. Whichever classroom collects the most Box Tops overall will receive an Ice Cream Treat! More information on specific collection dates will follow.

If at all possible, please trim the edges before handing them in--it is greatly appreciated!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Box Tops ladies: Sue Sheehan (andrew_sheehan_1999@yahoo.com) or Maura Champigny (champsfam@yahoo.com). Also, go to the website at: boxtops4education.com for more information about the program.



Recycling Fundraiser Continues, With New Items Eligible!

Do you have old cell phones or printer cartridges? Been collecting them all summer? Now is the time to bring them in to the school office or the bin at the library! McCarthy-Towne sends them in to a recycling program and earns money for them. Last year the PTSO received about \$800 from its cartridge and phone recycling program. And now, we are adding new items to recycle! In addition to cell phones, inkjet and laser cartridges, we are now collecting unwanted DVD movies, DVD video games, portable DVD players, laptop and notebook computers (but no desktop computers), MP3 players, video game consoles, digital cameras, digital picture frames, and portable navigation & GPS devices. It doesn't matter whether they are working or not; we receive something for every item (although more for working items!).

If you would like to set up a collection bin at your office, we'd be thrilled to help you get started. For more information, contact Debbie Simon at 978-263-5322 or deb.simon@comcast.net.

Scrip Gift Card Program

Welcome back to another school year! We will once again be running the Scrip Gift Card Program on a monthly basis. With this program, McT families are able to help raise money needed for the PTSO, which pays for our assistant teachers, without having to purchase anything in addition to their usual shopping.

Just shop as you normally would on a regular basis, but instead of paying with cash or credit card at checkout, pay with your gift cards. Do you shop at Roche Bros. or Stop and Shop weekly? Do you pick up your pharmaceutical needs at CVS? Do you stop at Dunkin Donuts or Starbucks? Do you shop at The Gap, Land's End or TJ Maxx for clothes? Sure you do! Well, why not let McT earn a percentage of what you spend?

Did you know – if each of our 300 families purchased just a \$100 in gift cards a month – for example \$50 a month to Roche Bros. and \$50 a month to CVS – we would bring in \$750 a month, which would be \$7,500 a year. Yes, \$7,500 a year in additional funds to McT, just from our families shopping and dining as usual! Do you know how many more assistants' hours we could get a week for that?

Attached is a list of participating merchants in our area. Please note specials for the month in bold. **The September order deadline is Wednesday, September 19th.** Typically, your gift cards will be in your hands one week after the deadline. Please contact Maureen Jones at the.joneses@verizon.net or 978.266.2874 or Lynne Densen at lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978.266.2952 with any questions. The following order will be due on October 17th.

Fall Fundraiser

The McCarthy-Towne PTSO is holding its Annual Fall Fundraiser. The fundraiser includes the sale of gift wrap, gifts, candy (Innisbrook) and flower bulbs (Colorblends). The money raised helps fund items such as classroom teaching assistants and cultural programs.



- The fundraiser runs from September 5-September 28th. All forms **MUST** be delivered to the school by September 28th..

- Checks **MUST** be made out to McCarthy-Towne PTSO.

If you have any questions, you can reach me either by telephone (978-266-1422) or email tammy.sarnelli@biogenidec.com



Start Collecting Your Donelan's Supermarket Receipts!

The Register Tapes for Education Program was so successful last year that Donelan's Supermarkets will be participating in it again this year! With this program, your grocery receipts help our school! For every dollar spent, McT will earn points redeemable for free educational equipment, including art supplies and books.

Last year, McCarthy-Towne collected over \$72,000 in receipts which translated into over 72,000 points. Those points were redeemed for approximately \$700 worth of art supplies including rotary trimmers, watercolor pencils, wing feathers and much more. These supplies didn't cost McT or the PTSO a cent!

So every time you shop at Donelan's Supermarkets, save your receipts! Simply send in your receipts in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the McCarthy-Towne office. **Receipts dated September 1, 2007 – March 31, 2008 are eligible.**

Even if you aren't a regular shopper at Donelan's consider either shopping there during the promotional period or asking your friends and neighbors to give you their Donelan's receipts.

Remember... The more you spend, the more we earn!

If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Schaad at ws.schaad@gmail.com.