



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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January 4, 2008

Don't miss page 5!

Dates To Remember

Mark you 2008 calendars with the following important dates:

Monday, January 21... NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King, Jr Day observed

Monday, January 28... Kindergarten Switch Day

February 18 - 22..... NO SCHOOL - Winter Recess

Saturday, March 1.....McCarthy-Towne Auction

Friday, March 21.....NO SCHOOL - Good Friday

April 21 - 25.....NO SCHOOL - Spring Recess

Monday, May 26.....NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day

Wednesday, June 25....Last Day of School (with 5 snow days)

Wednesday, September 3, 2008.....First Day of School, 2008-2009



Tidbits from Tina

by Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

Again, I'm presenting information from *Positive Discipline A-Z* by Jane Nelsen.

Tool #6: Improve Your Communication.

We are soooo good at talking to our children, or many times talking "at" them. I often wonder why we are surprised when they don't listen to us! Jane Nelsen agrees, and gives tips on how parents can become better listeners.

Asking "curiosity" questions is one technique she recommends. Instead of telling children what happened and what they should think, it is better to ask them what happened and how they feel about the event. Such questions improve their thinking skills and show them that we value their ideas. Comments like, "Tell me more" or "Anything else?" are also great ways to continue a conversation rather than end it.

"Reflective listening" is another communication tool. Your job is to reflect back what you have heard, with understanding and without judgment! If you can master this skill, your child will feel safe with you and share his or her thoughts and struggles.

A fun piece of advice that I totally support is the "listen with your lips closed" suggestion. As Jane Nelsen notes, "You may be surprised how much more your children will talk, when you talk less."



Everyone is welcome at PTSO Meetings!

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

1/16, 2/13, 3/19, 4/16, 5/21, 6/18

Bring your questions and your ideas!

PTSO News

by Suzi Yarin, PTSO Chair

Amazon update: Thank you to everyone who went to www.mctptso.org and clicked on the Amazon link! As of 12/28, McT folks bought \$1500 worth of "stuff"! We've earned \$75 so far. Every little bit helps! Please keep up the good work!

Also, thank you to everyone who used the Schoolpop link on our website! Total purchases for the year were \$8500; we earned \$233! Keep it up! If you haven't tried it, and you shop online, please consider—it's very easy, safe and secure! Just register your credit card, as you would with any online store, at Schoolpop.com and shop hundreds of stores—we get a percentage of every purchase. It's "free money" for the school—at no cost to you!

Scrip Gift Card Program

We would like to thank all the families that ordered Scrips in the month of December.

Now that the New Year is here and the holidays are behind us, it is time to slow down and enjoy each day. We will continue to offer the Scrip program monthly until the end of the school year. Scrips are NOT just for the holidays. They are still a great way to help the school raise money without having to "buy" anything additional. Attached at the back of the bulletin is the order form with all of the participating vendors.

The January orders are due on Wednesday, January 16th. Please contact Lynne Densen at lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978.266.2952 or Maureen Jones at maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978.266.2874 with any questions.

Helping Your Child Deal with Anxiety

Is your child frequently exhibiting anxious behavior? Are you wondering whether your child's stress level is normal or if it is something that you should seek help for?

Come and hear the answers to these questions as Dr. Rachel Hundley from Children's Hospital teaches us practical ways to help our children cope with anxiety. On Thursday, January 31, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Library, Dr. Rachel Hundley will be leading a hands-on discussion about anxiety in children. She will talk about the signs to look for and when to seek further evaluation and treatment. She will introduce many practical applications for working with a child's anxiety using real -life examples.

Dr. Hundley has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from The University of Memphis. She is currently working as a pediatric psychologist in the Developmental Medicine Center at Children's Hospital, Boston. Clinically, Dr. Hundley specializes in psychological assessment of childhood problems and developmental disorders. Her research has focused on social development, children's friendships, and autism spectrum disorders.

In addition to hosting this meeting, ABPCC—Acton Boxborough Support Group for Parents of Children with Challenges—will also have our monthly morning meeting at 9:30 a.m. on January 16th at ABRHS in room 121 East. We will discuss this topic in addition to our general open session. For further information on our group, contact Francesca Ricciardi at fmr08@verizon.net or Lynn Armstrong at lynn.armstrong2@verizon.net.

Early Priority Kindergarten Registration

Early Priority Kindergarten Registration for students entering kindergarten in September 2008 will be held this month. Siblings of McCarthy-Towne students who will be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2008 are given priority registration status to be placed at McT. Priority registration will be held on Tuesday, January 22 from 9 AM - 12 noon and 7 PM - 9 PM, and Wednesday, January 23 from 9 AM - 12 noon at R. J. Grey Junior High School. You must bring a copy of your child(ren)'s birth certificate(s) or passport(s), most recent physical examination(s) and immunization record(s).

Spring 2008 MCAS Test Dates

Parents of students in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6: please note the dates for MCAS testing at your child's grade level and avoid scheduling trips or appointments during school hours.

Tuesday, March 25:

Grades 3, 5 & 6 - Reading Comprehension Session 1
Grade 4 - ELA Composition

Wednesday, March 26:

Grades 3, 5 & 6 - Reading Comprehension Session 2
Grade 4 - Reading Comprehension Session 1

Thursday, March 27:

Grades 3, 5 & 6 - Reading Comprehension Session 3
Grade 4 - Reading Comprehension Session 2

Friday, March 28:

Grade 4 - Reading Comprehension Session 3

Tuesday, May 13:

Grades 3, 4, 5, & 6 - Mathematics Session 1

Wednesday, May 14:

Grades 3, 4, 5, & 6 - Mathematics Session 2

Tuesday, May 20:

Grade 5 - Science & Tech./Engineering Session 1

Wednesday, May 21:

Grade 5 - Science & Tech./Engineering Session 2

Thursday, May 22:

Grade 5 - Social Studies Session 1

Friday, May 23:

Grade 5 - Social Studies Session 2

Winter-Spring 2008 PIP Elementary Math and Science Events

PIP Family Domino Night "Fun" draiser and PIP Showcase at O'Naturals on Tuesday, January 29 between 4pm and 8pm. Domino math games are a fun and inexpensive way for students in grades K – 12 to practice estimation skills and number facts. PIP receives 10% of meals and gift cards.

5th Grade Market Math at Roche Bros on Tues., Feb. 12th. Open House from 4:30pm 7:30pm. An extravaganza of hands-on grocery math activities helps children better understand how classroom math concepts apply to the real world. Fifth graders and parents should plan on spending an hour to make math-market connections.

***Save the dates for 3rd Grade Market Math on Wednesday April 2nd and the 4th Grade Star Party on March 3 (with cloud dates March 4, 5, 6) More details in February ***

Parent and students (grades 7 to 12): volunteers are needed (about a 2 hour commitment) to help run these signature PIP events. Please e-mail actonpip@yahoo.com or call PIP Co-Chair John Petersen at 263-6144 to volunteer. See the PIP web site at www.actonpip.org for more information about upcoming PIP events and resources. Acton PIP appreciates your support in helping make our elementary programs an ongoing success.

Thank You

by Astrid Trostorff, Parent Involvement/Community Outreach Coordinator

- Thank you to all the members of our school community who volunteer in so many ways to make McCarthy-Towne such a special place including (but not limited to):
- Darlene Butler and Amanda Dindal for counting the money collected by students in the Treat-or-Treat for UNICEF program.
- Julie L'Heureux, Marie Clougher, Jane Grover, Julie Jannke, Paul Gearan, Lisa Gundlach, Mary Beilman, Stacy Harris, Laura Barry, Maria Ledebouer-Cid, Kristen Durand, Ebit Speers and Joan McCaffrey for helping school nurse Betty Johns with annual health screenings.
- All the Thursday Snack Sale Parent Supervisors who have helped so far this year, including Laura Williams, Wendy Oltsik, Susan Miller, Eleanne Roosenburg, Maria Ledebouer-Cid, Yaso Aravintan, Emese Badics, Sandy Billings, and Julie L'Heureux.
- Cathy Griffin for organizing and assisting with the 6th Grade archaeological dig.
- Amanda Dindal for organizing the PDB Lost & Found, training volunteers and running the Lost & Found Fairs.

UNICEF Donation

This year our students collected \$985.49 on Halloween for Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF. Thank you to all the students who participated.

One Thousand Chickens

Catherine's fourth grade classroom completed a fund raising campaign for Heifer International. The students raised money to donate over one thousand chickens. This donation helps families around the world find a way to quickly escape extreme poverty. Heifer International is a nonprofit organization which donates livestock to families in need. They teach people how to care for the animals, and the families agree to PASS ON the gift by giving some of their animal's offspring to other needy people. It is a gift that keeps giving. It is a gift of hope.

This project provided learning opportunities for art, math, and community service. The class counted \$520 in collection envelopes. This money bought twenty-six flocks of chickens. Twenty-six flocks multiplied by 40 chickens in each flock totals 1,040 chickens. An adult hen can lay approximately 200 eggs a year. 1,040 chickens multiplied by 200 eggs equals 208,000 eggs each year. That's nothing to yolk (joke) about!

The students completed two art projects and asked families and friends for monetary donations to Heifer International in exchange for the art. Students worked with Sculpey clay to make miniature models of chickens, ducks, geese, and other birds. They also used clay to make "clay paintings" of roosters.

Food Service News

Kid-friendly Salad Fixings

Keeping salad interesting night after night is a challenge: here are some easy, fun ideas to try.

- Chopped romaine lettuce, orange slices & dried cranberries.
- Mixed baby salad greens, chopped apple & shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese.
- Baby spinach, raspberries or sliced strawberries & shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese.
- Mixed baby salad greens, shredded carrots, raisins & sunflower seeds.

Twice Baked and Stuffed Potatoes

This Month's Healthy Recipe is from EatingWell.com.

Ease of preparation: Easy.

- 4 medium russet potatoes
- 8 ounces 90%-lean ground beef
- 1 cup broccoli florets, finely chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup reduced-fat Cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 3 scallions, sliced



1. Pierce potatoes all over with a fork. Place in the microwave and cook at 50% power, turning once or twice, until the potatoes are soft, about 20 minutes. (Or, use the "potato setting" on your microwave and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions.) Or bake in oven @350 for 1 hour or until soft.

2. Meanwhile, brown meat in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Drain off any excess fat. Transfer to a large bowl. Increase heat to high, add broccoli and water to the skillet, cover, and cook until tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain the broccoli; add to the meat.

3. Carefully cut off the top third of the cooked potatoes; reserve the tops for another use. Scoop the insides out into a medium bowl. Place the potato shells in a small baking dish. Add 1/2 cup Cheddar, sour cream, salt and pepper to the potato insides and mash with a fork or potato masher. Add scallions and the potato mixture to the broccoli and meat; stir to combine.

4. Evenly divide the potato mixture among the potato shells and top with the remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Microwave on high until the filling is hot and the cheese is melted, 2 to 4 minutes.

Nutritional information: Per serving: 366 calories; 12 g fat (6 g sat, 4 g mono); 54 mg cholesterol; 41 g carbohydrate; 24 g protein; 5 g fiber; 535 mg sodium.



Schedule A Sitter And Find Your Love Beads!

McCarthy-Towne's 17th Annual Goods and Services Auction is taking place on **Saturday, March 1st, 2008** at the Devens Common Center, Devens, MA at 5:30 pm. It is exciting to once again be at this new and beautiful location. The theme of the 2008 Auction is "The 60's". The M-CATS band, consisting of members of our own McCarthy-Towne parent community, will be performing during the Silent Auction part of the evening (www.mcatsband.org).

Find your old tie dyes, Birkenstocks and love beads! Have some fun at the auction and enjoy a social evening with parents and faculty. Enjoy appetizers, drinks and dinner while socializing with friends-both old and new! Bid on lower cost items (many donations are valued under \$30) and maybe even go home with a bargain! Consider bidding on higher priced items such as parties and specialty meals with other families. Enjoy the amazing Classroom Projects! Be a part of the bidding – or watch the live auction process as a spectator!

As always, the Auction is our largest fund raiser. In the past, these funds have supplemented the Acton Public Schools budget to support contracted services such as classroom, reading, and library assistants. With our town facing significant financial challenges, budget cuts that directly affect our children will occur. McCarthy-Towne will have to maintain its excellent school program with less funding.

There are 3 key ways that you can help:

1. Donate to the auction.

We've already received some great donations, but need many more. The deadline for parent donations is approaching: January 31st. Give some thought this weekend to donating an item, whether small or large, simple or elaborate. The variety is what makes it fun, and creative items often draw intense bidding. Need ideas? See the "Donations" page on the website (www.mctauction.com) for examples. Submit your donation form as soon as possible. Thank you!

2. Attend the Auction.

Participation in the Auction is fun and exciting. The items at the Auction will have something for everyone, whether it's a gift certificate to a restaurant or favorite shop, a chance to try a fun activity like learning to knit, bead, or speak a new language, or a fun family outing like attending a play, sporting event or museum. There are "big" ticket items such as vacations as well. Watch the website to see the latest donations!

The PTSO does not make any money from the ticket purchases; they only cover the cost of the hotel meal. You should only reserve a ticket if you are going to attend. If you would like to make a cash donation, write a check made out to the MCT PTSO (Memo: Auction), complete the donation form and send it to the office. This money is used to purchase special live auction items (such as a gift certificate to a restaurant or hotel to complete an overnight package) or to purchase raffle items.

Look for the ticket reservation form in backpack mail on Friday, January 11th. The deadline for ticket reservations is Tuesday, February 26th.

3. Help your child sell raffle tickets.

Raffle tickets will be going home to students on Friday, January 11th. Every student will be getting two books of tickets. Students are encouraged but not obligated to sell raffle tickets. Volunteer an hour of your time selling raffle tickets on February weekends at local venues. It's easy and fun. If you want to volunteer, please contact Amy Miles (978) 266-1340 or Tammy Sarnelli (978) 266-1422.

See the Auction website (www.mctauction.com) for forms and to stay tuned for the latest information!

Last, but not least, we still need some folks to work on Auction Night. If you want to find out more information about how you can help or would like to be a part of the Auction Night Team, contact Sandy Billings (978-635-1817).

Questions? Call Carolyn Imperato (978-264-9982) or Susan Lerner (978-263-0049).