



MANTUA PTA NEWS

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December 2003

Carole Thomas President's Message

You Hold the Key to Your Child's Academic Success

In the Notes from the Mantua Principals' Office newsletter article last month, the principals discussed the "Ernest Boyer's Basic School" philosophy that is employed at Mantua. The article also stated that "the missing piece" of the Boyer Philosophy was related to assessment and feedback of how well the students are learning. Mantua is using the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to help fill that missing piece. In keeping with the PTA's goal of making the PTA meetings not only an opportunity to conduct our business, but also an opportunity to educate and inform parents about school and child issues, the topic of the January 7th PTA meeting will be Professional Learning Communities and specifically about parents' role in PLCs.

We all instinctively know that getting involved in our child's education is important, but perhaps we don't realize just how important. In the book Professional Learning Communities at Work, by DuFour and Eaker, the authors quote the most comprehensive survey of research on parental involvement (from publications developed by Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla). The following conclusions represent just some of the findings from that research:

- When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parent's education level.
- The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior, are more likely to graduate, and are more likely to attend post-secondary education.
- The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the early years; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels.
- The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is the extent to which that student's family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and (3) become involved in their children's education.

As the United States Department of Education concludes, "Thirty years of research make it clear: parents and families are pivotal to children's learning". I urge you to attend the next PTA meeting to learn more about Professional Learning Communities and the most effective ways for you to be involved in your child's education. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you "involved" parents who have supported your children at home on their educational journey and especially those who have supported the PTA with your countless hours helping us achieve our many objectives. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a very happy and healthy new year.

 * **The Mantua Office will be closed over the winter break, December 22 to January 2.** *

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler

Notes From the Mantua Principals' Office

We are so very proud to congratulate Mrs. Ronnie Hanpeter, ESOL teacher, and Mrs. Susan Kaplan, 3-4 GT Teacher, as this year's Mantua Elementary School Nominees for Teacher of the Year 2004 and the Washington Post Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award. Both Ronnie and Susan are outstanding teacher leaders at Mantua! They Co-Chair our Steering Committee, have mentored numerous teachers, and they do a wonderful job modeling life-long learning for staff and students. As teachers, their enthusiasm, compassion, and thoughtful planning are evident in all of their work with students.

As part of the nomination packet, the nominees are asked to write a statement regarding their philosophy of education. We wanted to share some excerpts from Ronnie and Susan's philosophy of education. Their writings will help each of you to understand why both of these talented teachers deserve special recognition for the impact they have on their students.

One paragraph within Ronnie's very poignant essay states . . . *The first step was building a net around my students. We treated one another with respect. We established an order to each day, which was a great comfort to children whose lives had been disrupted by displacement. By encouraging students to speak and write about the things that were important to them, I learned their stories. I read about the day Tariq's grandmother and aunt were killed by a bomb in Afghanistan. Quyen wrote that the sound of the dove's cooing in the predawn hours was the voice of her dead mother bringing solace to her and her little brother. Gustavo related the day his mother went to the store to buy a shirt and came home instead with a toy for him. He ended with her quote – "Now my son will have a Christmas." We learned to listen. We learned compassion.*

Susan's essay highlights Dr. Boyer's themes of community and compassion. . . . *Every fall, I look out on a class of bright, eager faces, eyes alight with the anticipation and excitement of new experiences, new knowledge, new beginnings. Who am I to these young ones? A guide, a cheerleader, a mentor, a teacher, it is my role to help each and every child find his or her place in our community, to help them build a community that is welcoming, nurturing, and stimulating. . .*

I pick them up when they fall and help them focus on their successes and learn from their failures. I give the children a safety net as they learn to take risks without fear. They encounter a few scrapes and bruises along the way, but their self-esteem grows as they see themselves rise to challenges and overcome obstacles.

Congratulations to Ronnie and Susan as Mantua's Teachers of the Year, and thanks to every teacher at Mantua for their dedication, compassion, and excitement for facilitating learning!

During the holiday season, we wish for each of you special times with your families and friends! We look forward to continuing Mantua's learning journey in January with re-energized teachers, students and parents.

Counselor's Corner

With winter break approaching, many families and children are preparing for special religious and secular holidays, many involving the giving and receiving of gifts. This is an important time of year to re-emphasize the responsibility of giving and contributing to other people. At school, there are many community service projects going on to help others, and these remind the children that there are many people less fortunate than we are when it comes to food, clothing and shelter. The Guidance lessons this month throughout the grades, will focus on thinking and learning more about the Core Virtues, especially Compassion and Giving, and how they lead to community service.

The sixth grade students are scheduled to receive a visit from the Woodson "Power Team." This group of high school students comes to Mantua each year to talk and interact with the 6th graders about the issues of peer pressure and decision-making. In the following months, 6th graders and their parents will be receiving more information about the transition to middle school. By the time this move finally takes place, we hope that both students and parents will feel well prepared for this next great adventure!

Earn money for Mantua simply by making your normal grocery purchases. Here's how:

Giant Food A+ Bonus Bucks

- sign up at your local Giant Food or register online at www.giantfood.com
- Mantua School Code is **1887**

Harris Teeter's Together in Education

- sign up at Harris Teeter's (simply tell the cashier our school code to register!)
- Mantua School Code is **4458**

Remember—you must register each fall to participate in the programs at Giant and Harris Teeter!

General Mills Box Tops for Education

- Save the Box Tops from many, many General Mills food items you purchase (each Box Top is worth 10 cents—they really add up!)
- Box Tops can be sent in to the Main Office at school

Register today and encourage your family and neighbors to sign up too!

Questions or to help with this program, contact Nancy Robinson at 703-352-0510 or mrsrobinson@cox.net.

News from the Energy Zone

GIVE ME 5! COLORS THAT JIVE!

Eating five servings of different colored fruits and vegetables each day is important for better health. No one color provides all the needed nutrients. Research shows families with children under 12 years of age eat less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Fruits and vegetables are easy to prepare, taste good, low in fat and calories, high in minerals, vitamins, and fiber, and cholesterol free. Each month the ENERGY ZONE MENU highlights fruits and vegetables from a specific color in the Give Me 5! Rainbow!

Good Sources By Color Are:

Red: apples, tomatoes, watermelon, grapes, cherries, strawberries, cranberries, and grapefruit

Green: lettuce, spinach, peas, broccoli, celery, cabbage, and grapes

Orange/Yellow: corn, oranges, cantaloupe, peaches, carrots, pineapple, squash

White: potatoes, bananas, cauliflower, and onions

Blue/Purple: raisins, blueberries, eggplant, plums, and grapes

How Much is One Serving?

1 medium piece of fresh fruit

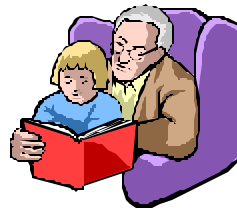
¼ cup dried fruit

½ cup canned or cooked fruit or vegetable

¾ cup fruit or vegetable juice

1-cup salad greens

Remember to select and eat from the Give Me 5! Rainbow Every Day!



Give the Gift of Reading

The best gift parents can give their children is a love of reading. Consider some of the following suggestions as you think about how to help your child develop as a reader.

First, make sure there is time at home available for reading. Reading should include both your reading to your child and your child reading to you. Even in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades your child is not too old to enjoy a story you read to him or her. In twenty years your child will remember fondly those shared reading times and be inspired to pass them on to his or her own family. Let your child see you reading. Children like to do what parents like to do. Make sure there are lots of books in your home to pick from as well as other reading materials such as magazines, brochures, and newspapers. Make reading tempting in your home. Provide a comfortable and quiet place to read. Check out books from the library that match your child's interest. Give the "gift" of staying up past the usual bedtime, if it involves reading. Give books or gift certificates to bookstores on birthdays or other gift-giving occasions. Subscribe to a children's magazine. Your child will love getting mail addressed just to him or her, and will love to read such magazines as Cricket, National Geographic World, 3-2-1 Contact, and Ranger Rick. As you enjoy our winter holiday season, please consider giving the most valuable gift of all to your children, the gift of reading.



KIDS CARE CLUB NEWS

Share to Care--A Talent Show 2004

February 7 at 6:30 PM

The **2004 Talent Show** is going to be extra special this year, because the Kids Care Club is donating all the proceeds to Cameron McClain. Cameron is a first grader in Mrs. McClelland's class that is undergoing treatment for Leukemia, diagnosed in November. All the proceeds from the show will go to Cameron's Cause, a special fund set up through SunTrust Bank to help Cameron and his family. So start planning those special skits, musical pieces, dances and all the assortment of wonderful talents you have to share on this special evening. Turn in your audition forms before winter break and start preparing for a great show! "Auditions" will be held on January 5th and 6th, with make-ups on January 15th. Rehearsals will be held on February 5th and 6th from 3:30-5:30. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Cooper at 703-426-2490 or jalcooper@aol.com.

FYI The 2003 Mantua Book Fair was a great success, earning the library \$6,775.58. Thanks to all of the parents who volunteered to help run the Book Fair. And thanks also to all who purchased books. Remember teachers' wish lists will be available through December. The lists are in a folder in the library office. If you would still like to buy a book for your child's teacher, consult the list and cross off your choice. Our teachers always appreciate books. And new volunteers are needed to run the book fair. If you are interested, please contact Candy Xenos at 703-383-5168 or cxenos@lerosnet.com or Sheri Bulger at 703-426-1837 or bulgersheri@msn.com.

Reflection Results!

Congratulations to the students who participated in the PTA's 2nd Reflections Program. 23 entries from the categories, Visual Arts, Literature and Photography were judged based on this year's theme, "I'm Really Happy When...".

Great job to the following students!

Kindergarten: Sarah Smoot, Kyle Fisher, Yalini Prabhakaran

1st grade: Reese Fisher, Hannah Fritzingler

2nd grade: Mari Berger, Emily Cox

3rd grade: Ariella Richmond, Joseph Novak

4th grade: Rachel Goldstein, Christina Kim

5th grade: Johannah Gehman, Rola Elamin, Cristina Shin,
Amanda Woo

6th grade: Rowan Elamin, Charlyn Castillo

In addition, Sarah Smoot, Mari Berger, Johannah Gehman, Charlyn Castillo, Emily Cox and Christina Kim placed 1st in their category/division. Their entries will be sent to the Council level and will be judged with students from other area schools. These results should be available in February 2004. Reflection entries will be displayed in the Mantua library for all to enjoy!