



# Mantua PTA News

[www.mantuapta.org](http://www.mantuapta.org)

June 2005

## *John Jennison .... President's Message*

### **RIGHT NOW**

When the school year began, I read an email from one of America's sons serving under the American flag for freedom in Iraq. The soldier said he was living in RIGHT NOW. He could not think of today, tonight or tomorrow because his right now needed all of his attention. The right now point of reference is important to understand as we all share it, but thanks to God, at a point of much lesser consequence. Even our children had their own right now moments-all year long.

So as you have watched our student children matriculate one more year, as they passed through one day at a time, through the weeks, months, seasons, and grading periods, can you say you lived some of those right now moments with them. Were you there at those moments when they learned how to draw a number, to add, to subtract, to multiply, to divide, or to pick up on fractions? Were you there when they learned to draw letters, to recite the alphabet, or to string those letters together, to form words and sentences, to drop everything and read?

Or maybe their right now moments were waiting at the bus stop, walking to school, sitting at the lunch table, exercising on the playground, performing in a play or recital, playing in the house league or going on a field trip? Think back on their school year, and then place yourself. Were you there, right there, at some of their right now moments? I hope so. We can't make them all, some they have to experience on their own, but for some they wanted us with them. If you volunteered at school, met your parental service hours, chances are that you caught some of those right now moments with them-and you know it.

If you didn't, I hope you weren't too busy. It was, after all, a long year that we passed through one day at a time. However, for our elementary students there is tomorrow, and with it the next school year brings more opportunities to help out, to volunteer, and to share some of those right now moments.

## Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler...

### Message from the Mantua Principal's Office

*Community is, without question, the glue that holds an effective school together.*

—Dr. Ernest Boyer

The first priority of the Basic School is, *community*. As we reflect on the 2004-2005 school year there were many community-building events that occurred this year. We would first like to thank our parents, because it is your volunteer efforts that allow these activities to become special memories for our students. Special thanks to the parents who served as PTA officers for this school year; John Jennison; President, Nathan Merrells; First Vice President, Carole Thomas, Second Vice President, Cheryl May; Treasurer, and Nancy Robinson; Secretary. Working together with all the members of the PTA, they organized and ran many exciting community building activities. In addition, many of these activities raised money for our school. This money has been used to purchase projectors for our classrooms, laser printers for sections of the school, replacement equipment for the Distance Learning Center and specific materials for each grade level team and specialists.

We would like to highlight the work of three members of the PTA. The first is Jennifer Cooper, who as you know for many years has tirelessly organized and run the *Kids Care Club*, the *Annual Care to Share Talent Show*, and the *Annual Raccoon Run*. Jennifer, in March, was awarded the Citation of Merit at the Annual Banquet for the Fairfax Citizen of the Year Awards Ceremony.

Rob Mead and Beth Whitehead were celebrated at the FCPS Volunteer Recognition Reception in April. Rob Mead has served as Commissioner for the Mantua Basketball League for a number of years and working with a team of parents, he has created athletic memories for many of our third through sixth grade students each year! Beth Whitehead has served as Artistic Director for the Mantua Drama Club for a number of years and together with a team of parents has worked with our first through sixth grade students to create outstanding Drama Festivals!

We would also like to celebrate the PTA's nomination of Ms. Cheryl Thompson, Assistant Principal, for a *Support Employee of the Year Award*. Ms. Thompson was instrumental this year in building some wonderful memories for our students. Ms. Thompson provided DJ services for many of the PTA's evening and weekend events. She was the guiding force in setting up the special appearances of *Rocky Raccoon* at the Spirit Parade, Winter Sing-Along, Mantua Staff/PTA Basketball Game and the Raccoon Run. Ms. Thompson worked closely with one of our parents, Mrs. Delores Gehr, to set up the famous December 16<sup>th</sup> event when the entire school formed the letters and numbers: MANTUA 04-05 on the field while the Fairfax Emergency Rescue Helicopter snapped a picture of this moment. During the past two years, Ms Thompson has run a *Homework Club*, after school, to provide academic guidance for specific students. We appreciate the many things that Ms. Thompson does and thank her for being a very special member of our community!

We wish all of our families a summer filled with new adventures, time for reading and math review and relaxation!

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**MORE THAN FEW WORDS OF THANKS ARE IN ORDER**

I would be remiss if I didn't say thanks to all of the parents and teachers, administrators and professionals who made the school year one of great accomplishment. There was always a parent or educational professional picking up what had to be done, like Martha Parsons who has cranked out this newsletter. We were able to find public recognition and acknowledgement for some of our greats: Jennifer Cooper and Cheryl. May. Many more didn't receive the accolades they deserve, and there just is not enough space in this article.

I gained greater insight to the commitment of our educational professionals, especially Jan-Marie Fernandez and Cheryl Thompson. I hope they didn't bite their tongues too hard, too many times while reading a few too many emails with less than perfect recommendations and suggestions. Tina Tingler, too, brought me many appreciative smiles, perhaps the largest with her knowledgeable comment that all of our children are gifted and talented.

I was extremely fortunate to share and learn from the entire board as each assumed the responsibility assigned and accomplished it with quiet confidence. However I must brag about this executive board. Nathan Merrils was the soul of the board, showing an innate ability, talent and sense to distill the question to its basics. Carole Thomas was extremely generous with her time, and gave me enough latitude to learn and grab the reins of the board. Nancy Robinson was what any board would want, with perfect minutes and agendas-we always knew where we were going and where we had been. Then of course, there is Laura Mead, the superstar, who wears her knowledge like pearls, not as chains. Cheryl May was the one, who I thank for the long sit-downs, as we followed the money, and there was a lot of it. Her figures were always balanced as was her insight and wisdom. Mr. May is indeed a very fortunate man. Finally, Peter and Loren, Brandman served as a private sounding board, simply immeasurable assistance.

Deep thanks and gratitude to them and all who volunteered, I learned much this year from you all. It was a privilege to serve and try to give back to the school system that does so much for our children. May Mary Jo and the next board have the great fortune of our volunteers with the equal commitment to excellence in our corner of the county!

—John Jennison  
Mantua PTA President  
2004 - 2005

**Announcing..... Reflections 2005/2006 Theme, "I Wonder Why..."**

Looking for something fun to do in the summer? You can get a head start on your Reflections entry for next year. Think about the theme, "I Wonder Why...", then create a piece of artwork, take a photo, write a song, or write a story about it. It'll be fun! See the entry rules and forms on [www.mantuapta.org](http://www.mantuapta.org), under the Activities link. Entries will be due for judging beginning November 2005. For questions, you can contact Deanna at [dtwoo@aol.com](mailto:dtwoo@aol.com)

## Counselors' Corner

For Parents of 6<sup>th</sup> graders: The packet entitled “Moving Up” was recently sent to you in the Tuesday folders. In the packet were tips for parents on helping your child make a successful transition to middle school. Students worry about things like being able to open their lockers, and if they will have any friends. Parents have their own worries, such as, will their children stand up to peer pressure, and increased academic challenges. Even though children seem to be growing up, parents have to find a way to juggle the increased need for independence and the continued need for guidance, support, and communication. We hope you will read the information in the “Moving Up” packet and discuss it with your child. If you did not receive it, please contact Ms. Ayoub for a copy.

Summertime is a great season for getting to do many things that there is not enough time or opportunity for, during the school year. This is a great time for families to spend more time together. Since there is no required homework, the evenings should be more relaxed, with chances for family activities. There is usually better weather and more daylight for outdoor activities and exercise. Beware of TV, videogames, and computer time. Many families decide to limit these things by giving time allotments during the day or week. It is wonderful when children also have additional time to just play with each other outside, or visit at each others' houses.

At the same time, it will help the children in the long run, to keep up their academic skills, as well as their love of learning new things, if they have some “food for thought” over the summer months. Reading skills are kept up to date and improved by encouraging lots of reading over the summer. Many libraries have programs that encourage children to read lots of books and receive reward coupons at the end of the summer. Children's magazines and newspapers are also of interest to many kids. Some families use a reward system for encouraging their children to keep up on math skills, by rewarding time with flash cards, or doing math problems, with points which can be used to get some reward at the end of each week. Older children who need to improve their keyboarding/typing skills can also be encouraged in this way, e.g., by receiving a point for each 15 minutes that they use a “type to learn” program. Rewards do not have to be expensive, but should be things that you know your child really likes (and will work for). These can be things you were already planning to do or give to your children anyway, like trips to the park, or to the ice cream store.

We have really enjoyed working with your children this year, and look forward to more time with them in the new school year!

Have a great summer! – Mrs. McConnel and Ms. Ayoub



## Announcing..... Reflection Results!

Congratulations to students who participated in this year’s Reflections! 17 students created works of art in the categories of Literature, Visual Arts and Photography to this year’s theme, **“A Different Kind of Hero”**. Great job to all!

- K grade: Jacob DeLange
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade: Taylor Sarlo, Grace Smoot
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Katharine Cox, Hannah Fritzinger, Caroline Taheri
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: Mari Berger, Joshua Smoot, Emily Cox
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade: Jamie Kravitz, Denise Davies, Brian Yudkin
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Johannah Gehman, Hannah Konigsberg, Ethica Burt, Ben Newman, Amanda Woo

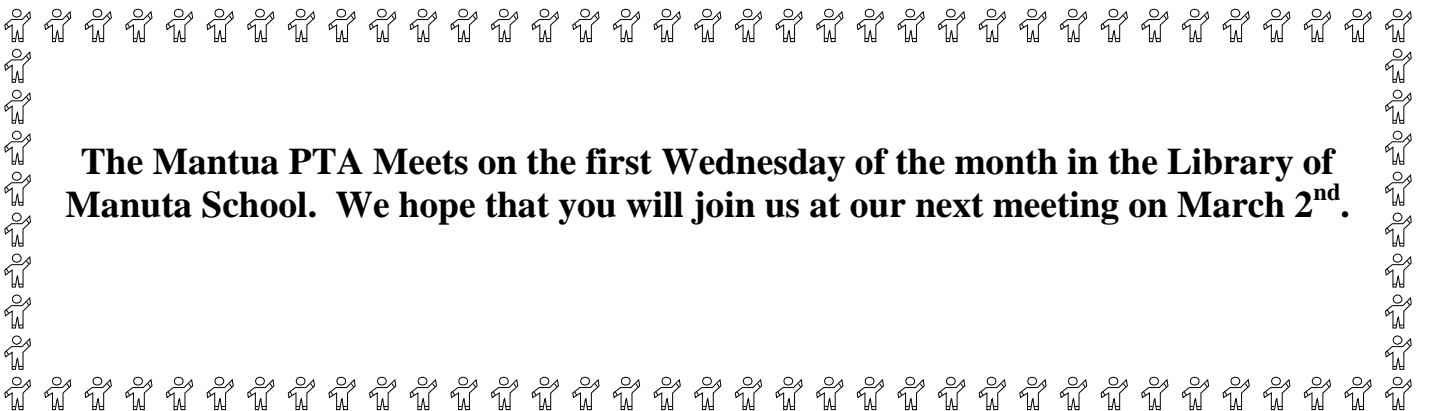
In addition, the following students won 1<sup>st</sup> in their division/category. Their works of art were submitted to the District level of competition held in December.

- Literature/Primary Division (grades k-2): Taylor Sarlo
- Literature/Intermediate Division (grades 3-5): Emily Cox
- Literature/Middle Division (grades 6-8): Ben Newman

- Visual/Primary Division (grades k-2): Grace Smoot
- Visual/Intermediate Division (grades 3-5): Mari Berger
- Visual/Middle Division (grades 6-8): Johannah Gehman

- Photography/Primary Division (grades k-2): Grace Smoot
- Photography/Intermediate Division (grades 3-5): Joshua Smoot

Art work is displayed in the library for all to enjoy. Thank you to the students who participated!



**The Mantua PTA Meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the Library of Manuta School. We hope that you will join us at our next meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

