



MANTUA PTA NEWS

www.mantuapta.org

November 2003

Carole Thomas President's Message

Parents. The Anti-Drug

Many of you may have noticed the big banner on display at the entrance of the school during the first week of November. That week was Red Ribbon Week, which focused on encouraging our students to be drug and alcohol free. At school many students signed pledges stating they would "say no to drugs and alcohol."

"Parents. The Anti-Drug." How true those words in the commercial are! It is our job as parents to become educated about drugs and how to talk to our children about the dangers of drugs. 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 December 3rd PTA meeting will be alcohol, tobacco, and drug awareness.

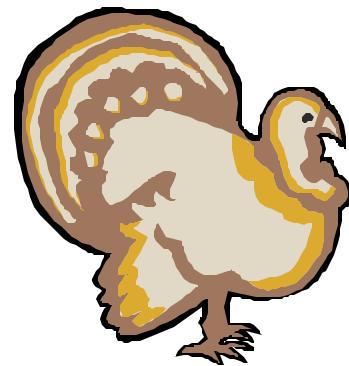
Tanganyika Jackson, a counselor at Falls Church High School and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Liaison for FCPS Cluster III, will give a parent presentation on alcohol, tobacco, and drug awareness using a "show and tell" approach that utilizes a whole suitcase of paraphernalia. Several teachers and counselors have commented how much they learned from this presentation. In addition, Mrs. Jan-Marie Fernandez will share key messages from a recent Fairfax Police seminar on gangs as well as describe the drug awareness/prevention efforts employed at Mantua. No parent believes his or her child will have a drug issue. I encourage you to attend so you can be that "Anti-Drug" for your children.



Safety First

The 4 way stop sign at Kirkland and Southwick Street continues to be an accident waiting to happen. While it is very frustrating waiting for the traffic to move, it is critical for all of us to adhere to the traffic rules with regards to 4 way stop signs. When you get to the stop sign area, please pay attention to the order in which turns are being taken. If the person in front of you has just gone, please allow the people at the other 3 signs to go ahead of you. Let's make this a much safer intersection.

**PTA Board Meeting
Wednesday
December 3
7:00 pm
in the library**



Happy Thanksgiving

Remember
school closes
at 1:30 p.m.
on Wednesday
November 26

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler

Notes From the Mantua Principals' Office

The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Alvin Toffler

Mantua Elementary has been following the priorities of Ernest Boyer's Basic School philosophy since 1997. The term "basic" is used because it gives priority to the early years of a child's education focusing on literacy development, essential knowledge, and identifying best practices that really work in the education of elementary-age students. The Boyer approach employs four priorities: *The School as a Community, A Curriculum with Coherence, A Climate for Learning, and A Commitment to Character.*

Last year, we began to investigate how schools can and should become "Professional Learning Communities"(PLC). As we learned more about PLC, we realized that in our journey with the Boyer philosophy we have many of its features already in place here at Mantua. Our school has a clear mission and vision and has been working in collaborative grade level teams for many years. Teachers serve as leaders as they mentor new teachers, lead cross-grade level teams, and present their ideas at conferences. Parents have been working as partners with our school through their support at home and their numerous volunteer efforts with activities such as the Bag of Books Program and Math Happenings.

The piece missing from the Boyer philosophy was related to ensuring that all students were learning. Using guidelines from PLC, we are excited to develop critical curriculum goals for each grade level and assessments that will allow students to demonstrate understanding of these concepts. Related to these assessments are four questions that teams will be constantly asking in relation to student learning: What do we want students to learn? How will we know if they have learned it? What are we going to do if they do not learn it? What are we going to do if they have already learned it? These questions are based on our belief that all children can learn tying in beautifully with the shared vision of the Basic School, which is excellence for all.

As we move forward with the Boyer philosophy while incorporating the practices that help us to function as a Professional Learning Community, you may be asking what role do parents have in this journey. Parents as partners in their child's learning need to continue to model life-long learning. During the evening hours, rather than asking your child what **they** learned at school today, we encourage **you** to share an anecdote about something you learned today. Children are fascinated that their parents still learn. In one school that functions as a community of learners, parents report this to be the most influential form of involvement available to them for stimulating their child's learning in school (Barth, 2001).

News from the Energy Zone The rise in overweight children means that parents need to take an active role in providing healthy snacks for their children. The Fairfax County Office of Food & Nutrition Services offer these healthy snacking tips:

Keeps snacks small.

Don't eat snacks straight out of the package.

Limit snacks such as brownies and cookies because they are often loaded with calories and sugar.

Snack on fruits and vegetables.

Select snacks from the Food Guide Pyramid.

Quench your thirst with water, fruit juices or milk, not soda pop.

Read food labels carefully—if first ingredient is sugar **avoid it**.



Mantua Drama Club

Come One, Come All and Enjoy an Evening of Shakespeare for young people. First through Sixth Graders will Sing, Dance and Act in the Shakespearean tradition. Join us Friday and Saturday November 21 & 22 at the hour of 7 p.m. on the stage in the gym. Be there, or the Queen shall take your goat.

Get Hooked on Sally Foster!



Thank you Mantua parents and children for your very generous support of this year's Sally Foster fundraiser. Due to your outstanding sales efforts, in excess of \$17,000 will go directly to our school for many important activities not funded by the Fairfax County Public School System.

In last month's newsletter, we promised to share the name of our Sally Foster gift basket winner. Ann Baum was the lucky recipient of the basket jam-packed with Sally Foster products. Our two runners-up were Jan Pry and Jane Duryea. We'd also like to take this opportunity to give a big Sally Foster congratulations to **Maddie Love** (Stergiou/Grade 3). Maddie was our top Sally Foster seller this year with sales of 88 items totaling \$701. Our second best seller was **Peter Dinh** (Coutcher/Grade 6) with sales of 62 items totaling \$522. Our classroom with the most sales was Ms. Greene's 5th graders with \$1735. Ms. Moore's 4th graders were a close second with \$1696. Thanks to all of our winners for their terrific sales efforts on behalf of Mantua and Sally Foster.

Please remember that you can still order Sally Foster on-line at www.sallyfoster.com through January 15, 2004. Our school account number is 503978. Thank you again for all your support!!!

Counselor's Corner

The counselors have completed their lessons on Bullying and Harassment with grades K-6. If you know of bullying problems that are not "going away," please let us know so that we can address them right away. This month, the K-3 students will be learning about other ways to avoid and deflect teasing. We will use the example of fishing "hooks" (teases) and what to do to so you will not get "hooked." Some of the techniques include: not reacting, agreeing with the tease, changing the subject, making a joke, and staying away from the teaser. The students in grades 4-6 will be exploring good communication skills, including: listening with full attention, understanding what is said as well as the feelings that are being communicated, and responding in appropriate ways.

We would like to alert you to a great website for parents which will soon be included on the Mantua Elementary website. This website is sponsored by The Parent Institute and includes the following features: Today's Tip for Parents; Idea of the Day; Weekly Parent Quiz; Ask the Experts; Timely Topics; and School Success Library. This website may be accessed from the Mantua website by clicking on the Guidance and Counseling category.

The counselors are still looking for a few parents who would be willing to help them periodically with small clerical or material-making jobs. Please let Rebecca or Teresa know if you might be available. THANKS!



SHOW YOUR SCHOOL SPIRIT.....

Wear the Mantua raccoon on a very hip, red and white tie-dyed t-shirt! Short and long sleeved shirts are available. Order forms can be found in the school lobby. The ordering deadline is Friday, November 21st and shirts are guaranteed to be delivered before the winter holidays. Contact Beth Rivelis with any questions at rivelis@cox.net or 703-359-2799.



American Heart Association congratulates Mantua as a winner with Hoops and Jump for the Heart!

Last year, Mantua Elementary raised \$8,862.00 in Hoops for the Heart, and another \$4,430.00 in Jump for the Heart, for a total of **\$13,292.00** for lifesaving medical research! That's incredible! Mantua placed 3rd in the state of Virginia for Hoops for the Heart and 2nd in Fairfax County. The American Heart Association presented Mantua Elementary with a plaque of appreciation. Cardiovascular disease is the number one (#1) cause of death across the United States. More people die from heart disease than the next seven leading causes of death combined including all forms of cancer and AIDS. Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart helps fund vital research and educational program to fight this #1 killer. Thank you for caring about the people in our community by helping to raise funds for the AHA.



KIDS CARE CLUB NEWS



The Kids Care Club would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our projects this year. We had a successful campaign collecting comfort items for the injured troops returning to our area military hospitals. A big thank you to Traci Fisher who organized this project and delivered our items, which were very much needed, and well received at Walter Reed's Red Cross. We collected over 100 pairs of old eyeglasses for the Lenscrafters' / Lion's Club project to repair them and send them to people in need in underdeveloped countries. And leaves have kept us busy in November helping our senior neighbors enjoy the beauty of fall. It's an enthusiastic bunch, always excited to attend the meetings with creative energy for helping others. They have generated some wonderful ideas and made some terrific advertisements visually and verbally on Good Morning Mantua. We are looking forward to helping someone less fortunate for the holidays and continuing our charitable contributions into 2004. Thanks again for your wonderful support. If your child would like to be a part of the Kids Care Club, contact Jennifer Cooper, jalcooper@aol.com or 703-426-2490.

Visits the Book Fair on Tuesday, November 18 with extended hours from 8:30 am - 8:00 pm. Or while you're at school for your child's Thanksgiving luncheon stop by. Book fair hours are from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm on Wednesday, November 19 and Thursday, November 20. The last day for sales is Friday, November 21, from 8:30 am - 12:00 noon.