



Mantua PTA News

www.mantuapta.org

September 2003

Carole Thomas President's Message

Recently, a friend shared the poem below with me. As I reflected on the poem, I appreciated how it captured the essence of the Parent Teacher Association and the partnership that must exist between parents and teachers if we hope to meet our joint objective of "securing for all children the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education."

Unity

*I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher . . . the tools she/he used were
Books, music and art.
The other was a parent, working with a guiding hand,
And a gentle, loving heart.*

*When at last, their task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold or bought
And each agrees they would have failed
If each had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school
And behind the teacher, the home.*

Author Unknown

Last week many of you attended Back to School night for grades K-3. This week on Thursday, September 25 will be Back to School night for grades 4-6. This is a great opportunity to see how much effort our teachers, specialists and administrators put into developing educational plans and strategies to address our children's needs, as well as working to create such a rich educational environment conducive to learning. By understanding your teacher's approach and plans, you will be much more effective at helping your child learn. By supporting each other, our children will benefit.

Not only have our teachers been diligently working to start our school year off successfully, but our parents have been hard at work as well. We've made significant accomplishments in just a few short weeks:

- Developed and approved a budget.
- Stuffed 1,000 Back to School folders.
- Initiated the PTA membership drive.
- Greeted parents at the Open House offering them the opportunity to join the PTA and validate directory information.
- Hosted a much appreciated Welcome Back Teachers' Breakfast.
- Collected and organized the volunteer information from hundreds of parents.
- Joined the Administration and other staff members to conduct the Newcomers' Social.
- Been hard at work getting PTA sponsored children's enrichment programs up and going, such as FLEX, Drama Club, Reflections, Odyssey of the Mind, and Hands on Science.
- Kicked off the Sally Foster Gift Wrap Sale.
- Completed many of the planning tasks for our fabulous Taste of the Town auction on October 19th at the Kena Temple.
- Updated the PTA website, www.mantuapta.org. Check it out!
- Published the Parent Handbook (the handbook was sent home to new families, is available on request in the school office, or can be downloaded from the PTA website).
- Published issues of the PTA Newsletter and the Alert News.
- Validated over 90% of student directory information in preparation for publishing the Student Directory in October.
- Hosted a fun, fun, fun ice cream social – a great success despite the rain.
- Welcomed parents at the multiple PTA activity tables on Back to School night.
- Planned a Principal's Coffee for this Thursday, September 25th at the home of Barb Suidikas.

Thank you to all of the dedicated parents who enabled us to accomplish all of these wonderful things. What a difference you make in your child's education!

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler **Notes From the Mantua Principals' Office**

Welcome back to another school year and a special welcome to our families new to Mantua! We opened this year with 894 students, a slight decrease in total numbers from last year. The major decreases are in the Deaf/ HOH program and in the GT Center program.

During the summer, some changes around the building are making a significant difference in the safe flow of students. We now have two cafeteria lines, which has significantly reduced the amount of time students are taking to get through the lunch line. The new cafeteria tables that arrived last Spring and the schedule that has one grade level or family at a time in the cafeteria has significantly reduced the noise level and made the cafeteria feel roomier! Feel free to join your child for lunch and enjoy the new and improved Mantua cafeteria!

In the front of the building, you may have noticed our new double sidewalk that allows students to more safely exit at the end of the school day. Behind our school building, we had two of our oldest trailers removed and received a quad (four classroom structure) that this year is housing our fifth grade students.

We would like to welcome new additions to our already dynamic staff. As many of you know, a number of our teachers have taken leave this year to be home with their new babies. On the K-2 team, we welcome Lisa Ariail, Molly Capps, and Abby Jones. Our new member of the fourth grade team is Catherine Blaney. Fifth grade welcomes Vanessa Finneman and Amy Sheridan! New members of the Deaf/HOH team are Heather Coleman, Carrie Harris, Sandee Kester, Jackie Mahler, and Chris ti Slingluff. We have increased the members of the PE and Music teams. New members of the PE team are Karen Sherman and Kay Donnelly. Renee Parkinson is our new half-time Music teacher. Andrew Bawden is an addition to the ESOL team and Catherine Calvert joins our LD team.

As many of you know, Ms. Wellner is now principal of Clearview Elementary and we wish her well in this new adventure. We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Cheryl Thompson as our new general education assistant principal! Ms. Thompson has been at Mantua for 13 years but has over 25 years of teaching experience. She is very familiar with the mission, vision and history of our school! We are thrilled to have her on our administrative team!

During this school year, in an effort to communicate information that you as parents want to know, I encourage you to send me questions or topics that you would like to read about in the monthly newsletter. You may email me at Jan-Marie.Fernandez@fcps.edu and please use the words **PTA Newsletter** in the subject of the email. I will address answers to your questions in future *Notes from the Principals' Office*.

I look forward to another exciting year of working with parents as partners!

Counselor's Corner

It has been really great seeing your children again for the 2003-2004 school year! We welcome our new students and families to Mantua! Teresa McConnel (K-3) and Rebecca Jones (4-6) will be joined this semester by Shira Brothers, our counseling intern from George Washington University. We are all here to help and support students and families for the best year possible. Besides monthly guidance lessons in each classroom, the counselors frequently meet students for fun, informal lunches. Individual and small group counseling is available with parental consent. Please let us know if you think your child could benefit by working on some of the following issues: social and friendship skills; anger and stress management; study skills; changing family situations. The counselors are available to meet with parents/guardians about your concerns about your children.

Each year, the counselors and the PTA offer parent education workshops for our families. This year we are also offering a 6 session course called "Active Parenting." This series of classes uses videos and a parent handbook to explore many important aspects of communication and discipline for families. Please be on the lookout for a flyer coming soon to announce the details of this program.

From Mantua's Reading Specialist

Georgiana Beverly

Read Naturally New to our reading program this year is school-wide use of the Read Naturally materials to improve students' reading fluency. Correlated with fluency is improvement in comprehension which, of course, is the heart of reading. Thanks to the PTA, three complete sets of the materials, walkmen tape players, and timers to implement this program have been purchased. To use Read Naturally students are timed reading orally for one minute to determine a fluency rate. Then, on their own, they practice reading while listening to a tape. This practice improves their fluency, as they will see when they time themselves again on the same passage and graph their progress. Comprehension questions follow the oral reading. Over a six to eight week period of time we expect to see students' fluency and comprehension go up and up! Classroom teachers, the reading specialist, the ESOL teachers, and the special ed teachers will all use this program with students they think need the extra practice to improve their reading.

Congratulations to Sixth Grade Summer Readers! During the first week of school eleven of our sixth graders turned in completed summer reading bingo cards. For their efforts they were awarded a five dollar gift certificate to Borders Books funded by the PTA. Their challenge was to read enough books, magazines, and newspapers to fill in all twenty-four spaces on their bingo cards during the summer. In addition, nineteen other students turned in cards showing they had also done a lot of summer reading. They received bookmarks or pens for their efforts. Congratulations to all of our summer readers! Bingo Gift Card Recipients: Joy Vander Clute, Mahamed Abdilleh, Alex May, Stephanie Lin, Lani Furbank, Aaron Koenig, Dionca Winner, Robert Ulrey, Lisa Gross, Joe Choi, Anna Stapleton. Honorable Mention: Lisa Hill, June Han, Anthony Hong, Julia Mazina, Jee Yoon Kim, Sarah Mills, Brigitte Torrise, Jazz Weller, Dilan Bellinghoven, Kelle Esherick, Lizzie Fisher, Austin Lahiff, Morgan Hedden, Sasha Post, Debra Miller, PJ Granum, Alex Hosenball, Patrick Snead, Shaquil Njovens.

Get Hooked on Sally Foster!



The annual Sally Foster gift wrap fundraiser is underway. Don't miss out on wonderful, high quality gift wraps, wrap accessories, unique gifts and scrumptious Harry London chocolates. And remember that 50% of every sale goes directly to Mantua. Share your brochures with friends and family. Again this year, out-of-town family and friends will be able to order online and have their products shipped. Your child will receive prize credit for these orders. Your order forms are due back to your child's teacher no later than September 29. You will receive your orders during the Parent-Teacher conferences early in November (in plenty of time for the holidays). If you don't need to replenish your personal gift wrap stock at this time, we will happily accept cash donations. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help with the order processing, please contact Lynn Richmond at 703-280-0220 or lynnrichmond95@cox.net or Jeannine Davies 703-383-1256 or j9davies@cox.net.



The first Principal's Coffee of the year will be held on Thursday, Sept. 25th at 9:30 am at the home of Barb Suidikas. The topic will be "Being Good News Ambassadors". For more info or to rsvp, contact Barb at Suidi-barb@aol.com. The next Principal's Coffee will be November 12th.

Mantua parents do it again!

Our great teachers enjoyed a fabulous display of casseroles, muffins, fruit, juice and breads on the first Friday back to school. Thank you to all the parents who graciously gave time and food to this event! The Welcome Back Breakfast was well attended and well eaten! Teachers expressed thanks and smiles at the lovely spread! Although exhausted after a big week back to school, the teachers appeared rejuvenated by our kindness.

Despite the rain the following Friday, the annual ice cream social had a great turnout. Thanks to our own Ms. Thompson and Brian Collins who kept the place rocking and everybody dancing. And thanks to all of the volunteers who scooped ice cream, sold tickets, water and more to made this event a success.

Don't Miss Pyramid Night at Woodson High School on Friday, October 3. The Woodson Cavalier's football team plays Lee High School starting at 7:30 pm.

Please Remember

For security reasons, no one is allowed in classrooms after 4:15 p.m.! If a student has forgotten their homework, they must contact a classmate. Also, if your child is going home with a friend, both parents have to notify the office. If permission is not received from both parents, then each child will go to their normal destinations after school. Only under extreme circumstances will the office call for permission.

Mantua Auction Taste of the Town— Masquerade



Sunday, October 19th

5:00—10:00 pm

Kena Temple

**Visit www.MantuaPTAuction.org
for more details**

“A TASTE OF THE TOWN” RESTAURANTS INCLUDE
Blue Ocean * Chiengmai Thai * Connaught Place * Coyote Grill *
Il Lupo * Noodles & Co. * Pizzeria Uno... and more!



Kids Care Club Do you like to do nice things for others and help those in need and at the same time have fun? If so, the Kids Care Club is for you! It is all about helping those less fortunate in our school, community, nation and even the world. Starting it's 7th year, the club is open to all Mantua students (K-6th). Meetings are normally once a month to plan and organize projects, make posters to advertise upcoming events, edit scripts for Good Morning Mantua appearances, and possibly make deliveries or visits to our project recipients. It's not necessary to attend the meetings to participate. Everyone can be a part by helping with the collections, donations, or in other areas for each project. Some of the past projects done by the Kids Care Club are collections for coats and sweaters, canned goods, school supplies, holiday gifts, and more. In addition, the Kids Care Club has established some traditional events that occur each year. In November, the children and their parents volunteer to help our senior neighbors by raking their leaves. In February, the Kids Care Club hosts the school-wide Share to Care Talent Show to raise money for our own Mantua Community Care Fund that assists Mantua families with financial needs. And in May, the Kids Care Club will host the 4th annual Raccoon 5K Race and 1-Mile Fun run, in memory of Roberta Romano a Mantua teacher who lost her battle with cancer in December 2000, benefiting Life with Cancer.

The Kids Care club will be doing many other exciting events throughout the year. If your children are interested in sharing their ideas to help others, please have them attend our first meeting of the year on Tuesday, September 30 from 3:30—4:30 in the lower pod. It's a great way for the children to be involved and show that Mantua Kids really do care! Adult volunteers are more than welcome too!!!! Look for additional information in the Alert News and Tuesday folder, or contact Jennifer Cooper, 703-426-2490 or jalcooper@aol.com. **JOIN and BE a PART of SOMETHING SPECIAL!**