



Mantua PTA News

www.mantuapta.org

September 2005

Mary Jo Kavjian President's Message

Another School Year is Underway!

Hopefully, you aren't buried under the mounds of paper that comes home those first couple of weeks. Once October comes, the paperwork definitely becomes less burdensome. One way to reduce the volume of paper coming home is to sign up to receive announcements via email. Not only does it reduce your clutter, it saves on our printing costs. Please visit the website for more information or contact me at kavjianPTA@aol.com.

There are many programs offered at Mantua that are parent-run. I urge you to get involved. In the folder you received at the open house, there were two different volunteer forms. If you haven't returned these forms yet, please take a few minutes to consider how you can make a difference. I think you will find the rewards are greater than you imagined.

The Ice Cream Social was a great success! I think we had one of the largest turnouts in recent history. Thanks to Brian Collins for being our DJ. The games and dances kept the children entertained. In order to have more fun events that bring families together, the PTA needs a Community Spirit Chairperson (and a few committee members to give support). Other activities that fall into this category are the t-shirt sale, restaurant nights, and an evening at a sporting event. Please contact me if you would like more information about this fun committee.

If you haven't already done so, please visit the PTA website at www.mantuapta.org. The website is updated regularly and is loaded with helpful information. (I'm not the most computer literate person, and I find the website very easy to navigate). I look forward to meeting and working with you in the upcoming months!

Book Discussion with the Principal

Principal Jan-Marie Fernandez will be hosting a book discussion group on the book "Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids Create and Sustain Lifelong Joy" by Edward M. Hallowell. This book is available for purchase online -- we checked BarnesandNoble.com (if you access barnesandnoble.com via schoolpop.com, Mantua gets a 2.5% rebate) and Amazon.com (no rebate, however). Unfortunately, it is not available through the public library. If you're interested in attending, please visit the PTA web site at www.mantuapta.org for more information.

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler...
Message from the Mantua Principal's Office

Although school has a central role in developing students' character, the most profound impact on students' development comes from their families.

*Berkowitz and Bier
Educational Leadership, Sept. 2005*

Welcome back to another school year! We are excited to be reigniting our focus this year on Dr. Boyer's Core Virtues. For those of our families who are new to Mantua, Dr. Boyer writes about the need for schools to have *a commitment to character*. He outlines seven virtues that all people despite their beliefs can affirm are important. These seven virtues are *honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, perseverance, and giving*. Throughout the school year, your child (ren) will be hearing about these virtues when discussing characters in literature, when following through on class jobs, during class meetings, and when being disciplined. Everyone in the school building will refer to these same virtues in a natural way as children go about their day. They will be posted in every classroom to remind students of what we need to do to treat ourselves and each other well.

Parental involvement is key to a successful character education program. Reinforcing the same core virtues within your homes helps children to understand that virtues are lived across all aspects of their lives. During this school year, staff members will be reflecting on the importance of modeling for our students the core virtues, not only in our interactions with students but in our interactions with other adults. Parents and school staff have the sometimes daunting task of remembering that everything we do in front of children becomes a model for them to replicate. We encourage you to partner with us in this very important task of helping children to live the core virtues. The counselors will be offering a class on *Active Parenting* during this fall semester. In addition, the first Principal's Book Discussion will focus on a wonderful book for parents; *The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids create and Sustain Lifelong Joy* by Dr. Edward Hallowell. Join us for these discussions!

Please take advantage of any volunteer opportunities that you are able to lend your time to, whether it is during the day or during the evenings. As we strive to facilitate development of the "whole child" we not only want to ensure that all of our children master basic math and reading but also develop skills that will enable them to contribute meaningfully to the needs of future societies. We need all members of our school community to help us with this very important endeavor!

MANTUA DRAMA CLUB

We're pleased to announce that the Drama Club will once again be under the artistic direction of Beth Whitehead. The fall theme is Witchy, Wacky and Wild. Come to Oz to meet wacky witches and fairy tale characters. Act, sing and dance!

Public Performances are scheduled for November 18 and 19 and in-school performances for November 21 and 22. To volunteer to help with the PTA Sponsored Drama Club, Contact Beth Whitehead at 703-573-8618 or Donna Cipicchio at TwoD3cpo@verizon.net or 703-426-4272.

KIDS CARE CLUB

JOIN and BE a PART of SOMETHING SPECIAL

The core virtues of the Basic School are taught both by word and deed.

Through the curriculum, through the school climate, and through service, students are encouraged to apply the lessons of the classroom to the world around them.

The KIDS CARE CLUB is all about helping those less fortunate. The program, established in 1997, encourages all Mantua students to participate in community service activities. It empowers them to develop and carry out acts of charity to increase their awareness of the less fortunate and experience the satisfaction of compassion and giving. The KIDS CARE CLUB meets after school about once a month to plan upcoming projects. It is a voluntary organization open to all children in Kindergarten through sixth grade. Adult volunteers are more than welcome too!

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 December, in time for the holidays, we will give some holiday cheer to a couple of families in need. In February, the Kids Care Club teams up with the Community Spirit Committee to co-host the school-wide talent show. In May, Kids Care Club will host the Raccoon Run, now officially named the Roberta Romano Raccoon Run, in memory of our teacher who lost her battle with cancer in December 2000. 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 send them to our meetings, which will be monthly on Tuesdays or Thursdays right after school. We will discuss our future projects and talk about what we can do to help others. It's a great way for the children to be involved and show that Mantua Kids really do care!

We are currently collecting school supplies to send to elementary schools in Louisiana. These schools were lucky to escape major damage from Katrina, but will be welcoming displaced kids from heavily damaged schools. A collection box has been placed in the entryway of the school building. If you have any excess supplies to contribute, please place them in the box by October 1st. Also, please join us at our first meeting on October 6th in the cafeteria to discuss KIDS CARE CLUB and additional efforts to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina as well as our Fall Leaf Raking Project. Please look for additional information in the Alert News and Tuesday folder, or contact Donna McGrath (703.246.9232 or dsm721@cox.net) or Patti Taheri (703.280.2262 or mptaheri@cox.net).

The Mantua PTA Auction Is Coming——-Bidding Starts in November

The auction is one of our school's largest fundraisers, raising about half of the money used by the PTA to purchase computer equipment, implement programs, and meet other school needs that benefit Mantua and our children. This year's auction will be held online only. Once the auction begins the bidding closing dates are as follows:

Entertainment & Merchandise: 11/30

Getaways & Services: 12/7

Faculty Fun & Restaurants: 12/14

DONATE- We would like the entire community to participate by donating to the auction and by bidding often and generously. We urge local and Mantuan owned businesses to support the auction by becoming auction sponsors. Please consider making a donation to the auction - every family in the neighborhood has something to donate! Check out the Mantua PTA web site at www.MantuaPTA.org. You can tell us about your donation online or by filling out the form sent home. Even if you do not have a child attending Mantua Elementary School, please consider donating to the auction because the PTA supports the community itself in many ways.

Volunteer-The auction needs volunteers, too. Please consider helping us make the auction a success. We need volunteers to help with publicity and to solicit area businesses for donations. If you can help, please contact Carole Thomas (caroleandjay@aol.com or 703-978-6159) or Faye Henris (faye@henrisff.com or 703-280-1080).

Mantua is Sweet on Sally Foster!

It's Sally Foster time again! The Mantua PTA began its annual Sally Foster fundraiser on Wednesday, September 7. Remember that 50% of every sale goes directly to Mantua and pays for important activities (field trips, teacher training, author visits, computer software, etc.) not funded by Fairfax County. Again this year, out-of-town family and friends will be able to order on-line at www.SallyFoster.com and have their products shipped. Your child will receive prize credit for these orders.

Our Sally Foster sale includes the beautiful, high quality gift wrap you've come to expect. In addition, you'll be able to choose from a variety of wrap accessories, unique gift items, delicious chocolates and other delectable goodies! Please stop by the display case in the school lobby to see some of the products and the swatches of gift wrap. Don't miss the tall stack of boxes wrapped using just one roll of Sally Foster gift wrap.

Your friends and family will thank you for the opportunity to order these terrific products. (For safety reasons, only sell to people you know. Never sell to strangers.) The initial Sally Foster sales kit was with your child's Back-to-School folder that you picked up at the September 1 Open House. Your order forms are due back to your child's teacher very soon. You will receive your orders during the Parent-Teacher conferences on November 7 or 8 (in plenty of time for the holidays). If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Richmond [(703)280-0220 or lynnrichmond95@cox.net].

Introductory note from Melinda Hill, MSW

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Melinda Hill and I am the school social worker assigned to Mantua. The holiday season is approaching and for some these are difficult times due to the already existing financial obligations families are experiencing on a day -to-day basis. If you have a child who is attending Mantua and he/she receives free or reduced lunch, your family may be eligible for assistance for Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you are interested in applying for assistance for the holidays, please do not hesitate to contact me or the school counselor. My voice mail number is (703) 246-8225 or you can contact Mantua and speak to me directly at (703) 645-6300 on Mondays and Tuesdays. The application closing date is October 31, 2005.

MANTUA BASKETBALL!!!!

Registration has begun for the 2005-2006 season of *Mantua Basketball*. Our PTA-sponsored basketball league is one of the oldest "house leagues" in the county, and as always, it's open to all Mantua boys and girls in grades 3 - 6. Each year, it's a great experience for students and parents alike!

Information can be found on the PTA web site www.mantuapta.org; just follow the link to the Basketball home page. While you're there, you can register online. Registration will continue until Tuesday, October 25.