



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

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April 4, 2008

Connecting to the Visual World

by Kate Fitzmaurice, principal intern and Marni Kaplan-Earle, art integration specialist

At a recent school council meeting Marni made a presentation about art integration at McCarthy-Towne. These kinds of meetings happen often as we, the McT community, review and update how we are doing as a school on meeting the goals listed in our school improvement plan. One of these goals always has to do with the arts. Marni brought two tables full of examples of student work to share. She explained what each project involved and detailed the steps to learning that took place in the classroom. The parents on the council seemed particularly interested in the process. One long-time McT parent commented on the fact that even after many years at the school it still amazes her just how much effort goes into each project and just how important the process is to learning. This made us think that others in the community may want an update, as well! Here you will find two wonderful examples from Marni of what is going on right now in school, with a bit of added information to help illustrate why we do what we do.

“The art making process at McT allows students to make rich connections across the curriculum. It gives them an opportunity to use visual language to develop skills in literacy, writing, social studies, math, and science. Toward this end, art requires children to exercise their critical thinking and problem solving skills while they grow their own intellectual voice. This process is an in-depth way for students to demonstrate their understanding of the work academically.” *(continued on page 2)*

Class Placement Process

By Marcia FitzGerald, MCT Principal

Each spring, I write about our student class placement process. This is an attempt to help parents understand how classes for the next school year are created. As in the past, our goal is to make the best possible placements for the students at McCarthy-Towne. We believe that the best way to do this is to create heterogeneous and balanced classes. Creating these groupings for each grade level is a complex process. Our entire professional staff spends a great deal of time carefully weighing each student’s academic, social and emotional needs as well as more individual issues such as those regarding particular peer relationships, neighborhood situations, or siblings’ experiences. The sending and receiving teachers and the special education specialists meet as a team to create three balanced classes. Finally, a teacher is assigned to each of the classes that has been created.

Each teacher brings a unique style to his/her classroom, thus ensuring a variety of teaching strategies within the framework of the curriculum and the philosophy of the school. Nevertheless, in recent years a number of parents have chosen to write letters requesting their child be placed or not placed in a specific teacher’s room or with or not with particular children. We cannot honor these requests. I will return to you any letter that includes a specific teacher’s or student’s name.

However, we do pay attention to them insofar as they discuss a child’s learning style, needs and interests. As a result, you should be aware that your letters are always shown to the teachers at both the sending and receiving grade levels.

In today’s world, it is important that our students learn to relate to many different people. We hope that you will support your child in his/her endeavor to discover how to work well with a broad range of students and teaching styles. This is an important aspect of your child’s education.

If you do choose to write me a letter, please so so by Friday, May 2.

(Visual World, continued from p. 1) Here are two examples of how a child might experience the integration of art and the curriculum at McT:

One 3rd grade project is a paint mixing exercise, a warm-up to the study of France and impressionism. Using tempera, the challenge is to create three colors that connect pure white and another primary color. The process includes observing color as it exists in the reference painting, estimating quantities and proportions, experimenting with materials, and then working with word choice and creative writing to describe the colors they have made.

Another project, this one in 2nd grade, is a mixed media piece connected to the study of Ghana. It starts with a question: What does Ghana look like: the land, the people, the animals? Drawing upon their previous learning, the children make visual "guesses" using watercolor, collage and cray-pas. These pieces are gradually informed by the course of study and stand as a reference point throughout the unit. The process requires students to integrate new information about the greater world while they build on their observation and research skills. As they develop a picture of Ghana's people and culture, they have an opportunity to revisit and revise their assumptions. This work is supported by exploring other hands-on and visual connections. Students render artifacts in pencil, scratchboard and other materials. They make hand-bound books of their Ghanain stories and learn about the culture and values of Ghana by stamping Adinkra cloth.

These are just two examples of how art integration happens in the classrooms at McT. At McT, the process of making art is an invaluable tool that combines experiential and traditional learning in a rich, fun and uniquely effective process for students and teachers alike."

The benefit of art being integrated into the curriculum every day here at McCarthy-Towne is that we are helping our students to look at the world around them in a whole new way. The idea that everything we do is a process, from math to reading to writing to science, is key to our vision of ourselves as a learning community. This recursive process means that we are always re-thinking our work and assessing what we do in a creative way. We learn how to make connections through this process. It strengthens our ability to communicate effectively with those around us. It also creates in us the confidence to be risk-takers. We are better at being self-starters and, once started, stick with our task until it is complete. This process keeps us engaged. This process keeps us thoughtful and connects us as a community.

The next time you are looking at one of the many displays hanging on a McT bulletin board, take a moment to think about the work that went in to that final product. Or, the next time your child brings home a project at the end of a unit, take a moment to ask about what went into that final piece. You'll be pleased that you did!

PTSO Positions Open

The PTSO is looking for people to fill several positions for the 2008-2009 school year.

- Co-chair (this is a two-year position)
- International Liaison - Serve as a liaison to the international community. Involved in planning and executing International Night with Merriam School.
- Parker Damon Building Steering Committee Rep - Attend regular meetings (less than one/month) to address concerns and interests of both schools in the building.
- Nominations - Recruit volunteers for open positions.
- PTSO Fundraising Liaison - Coordinate events such as Learning Express night.
- Box Tops for Education Coordinators - Publicize and coordinate the General Mills Box Tops fundraiser. Recruit a friend!
- Snack Sale coordinator - Coordinate sale of snacks at Saturday basketball games at the PDB. Perfect for parents of 3rd and 4th grade basketball players.
- Yard sale coordinator - plans, publicizes, executes yard sale with other parent volunteers

If you are interested in any of these positions, or if you are not sure which position would be the best fit for you and you want to be involved, contact Lynne Densen (lynne.densen@verizon.net) or Betsy Gitelman (betsy.gm@verizon.net).

Spring Clean-Up Is Here!

Get Out Your Gardening Gloves!

Spring Clean-Up is: **Sunday, May 4th from 10:00am - 1:00pm**

We need to get these Parker-Damon Grounds into shape for Spring! With your help we can make them look beautiful! Bring your rakes, weeding tools, trash bags and wheel barrows. . . .

The whole family is welcome - and we need all the help we can get!



Show your school pride and help us out!

All clean up and landscaping of the school grounds is done only by volunteers and we need you!

For more information, or to help with landscaping tasks on other days, please contact: Amanda Lye, Merriam PDB Landscaping Committee co-chair, via email at amandalye1@yahoo.com or by phone at (978) 635-9879.



Landscape Help Needed

by Astrid Trostorff, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Do you ever walk into the school building and wonder who plants the flowers, cleans the flower beds, decides where new plantings should go? It's the Parker Damon Building Landscape Committee.

The Parker Damon Building Steering Committee, a group that brings members of the McCarthy-Towne and Merriam schools together to work on projects and issues affecting both schools, is in need of a parent volunteer to co-chair the Landscape Committee. A Merriam parent has been working alone for the past year and a half.



The springtime should be a busy time for the Landscape Committee, but one person can't do it all alone. The committee chairs should be planning the following:

- Senior Community Service Day (Friday, May 2), when high school seniors spend a morning at the Parker Damon Building cleaning the flowers beds, spreading mulch and digging holes for new plantings;
- Spring Clean-Up Day (Sunday, May 4), when community members spend a weekend day doing more raking, spreading and planting;
- Earth Week, when students from both schools pitch in and help improve our planting beds.

None of this may happen this spring unless the McCarthy-Towne parent community joins in. The Committee needs at least one parent who will co-chair, and as many parents as possible to commit to helping at one or more of these spring events.

If you might be able to help, contact Astrid Trostorff, McCarthy-Towne Parent Involvement Coordinator in the school office, by phone (978-264-4700 ext 3703) or by email (astrostorff@mail.ab.mec.edu).

Handel and Hayden Society Vocal Quartet

The McCarthy-Towne Cultural and Performing Arts Committee sponsored two performances by the Handel and Hayden Society Vocal Quartet for students and faculty on March 11th. The students and faculty were transported through historical periods with vibrant songs from many countries. Students participated both on-stage with the actors and off-stage with questions.

Thanks you for your contributions to the McCarthy-Towne PTSO both through user fees and fundraisers which make our Cultural and Performing Arts assemblies possible. Please feel free to contact Julie Greenspan (pgreenspan@comcast.net) or Francesca Riccardi (fmr08@verizon.net) with any questions or feedback regarding the McCarthy-Towne Cultural and Performing Arts Committee.

Spring Yard Sale

McCarthy-Towne Annual Yard Sale - **Saturday, May 17 8 am-1 pm**, Set-up Friday, May 16 4-9 pm. Drop off Friday 4-8 pm or 1-4 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room. Please remember to set aside this date and your great stuff to benefit our school. We're still looking for:

- 1) Volunteers for short- 2 hour shifts during set-up and/or the event, and people willing to make 1 trip to Goodwill/Transfer Station during clean-up on Saturday afternoon;
- 2) Great Stuff - Gently used indoor and outdoor toys, videos/DVD's, sports gear, housewares, kids outer-wear, small pieces of furniture, collectibles and better clothing for the new "Boutique" section. No TV, computers or CRT's please.
- 3) Lots of big spenders on May 17!

Tax Deduction Forms also available. . Volunteers please contact Brenda Simpson at (978)266-1136 brendahsimpson@hotmail.com. Other questions? Please contact Co-Chairs - Maureen Ryan-Friend at (978)635-1520, friendz@verizon.net or Wendy Schaad at (978)266-1670, ws.schaad@gmail.com

Tidbits from Tina

by Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

Tool #10: Establish Routines

Having routines in our lives is the third way that parents can set limits with their children. As you can read in *Positive Discipline A-Z*, sometimes the routines we create are not what we really want (ie when the parent ends up lying in bed while the child falls asleep; when the bedtime routine includes 3 drinks of water). We need to design routines that are purposeful and clear, and we can do it with our children's participation. When a child has helped design a routine, he/she is more likely to follow it. Jane Nelsen gives the example of a bedtime routine where the child decides what needs to be done and in what order. Once the routine is established, and followed in a firm and kind way, the routine is the master and it becomes a calming and secure way to end the day.

Thanks!

Thank you to the families that helped at the basketball snack sale table on Saturdays this winter.

McT Spirit Wear a Huge Success!

by Kerry Bremer

The recent McT Spirit Wear sale was a huge success! Thank you so much to everyone who made purchases. We sold a total of 304 items and realized a profit of over \$1500 for the PTSO. Astrid, Jean and Robyn helped make this sale so wonderful by displaying the samples in the office and showing their enthusiasm to everyone who inquired. They also helped with the bookkeeping aspect as did Lynne Densen.

I would like to say a very special thanks to the student council who displayed the spirit wear at their movie night and had a mini fashion show at our last assembly. They looked terrific!

We expect the orders to go home before April vacation. The owner of Embroid Me in Chelmsford reports that this is the largest school spirit order he has filled. GO MCT! I, for one, cannot wait to see all of the blue and gray on the kids, parents and teachers of the McT community.

International Night

REMINDER: Parker Damon International Night is **Friday, April 11th, 6:30-8:30** in the Cafetorium. Please join families from McCarthy Towne and Merriam to celebrate our diverse culture at the Parker Damon Building.

6:30 International potluck (bring a dish to share, labeled with all ingredients and your name please)

7:30 International entertainment by students of McCarthy Towne and Merriam Schools

Coffee and soft drinks provided by Trader Joe's of Acton. All families are encouraged to participate! Please email jane.ceraso@paragon-c.com with any questions.

Welcome

Please welcome the following new students and add them to your McCarthy-Towne Directory.

Amanda Salles
grade 2 (Susan Silberberg)

Victor Salles
grade 5 (David Rachlin)

1315 Avalon Drive
978-274-2692

parents: Alessandra and Antonio Salles

Scripts

Once again, we would like to thank all the families that ordered Scripts in April, as well as all those families that continue to order Scripts on a monthly basis. It really does make a financial difference for McT!

Don't forget merchants you shop regularly: LL Bean, Land's End, the Gap, TJ Maxx, CVS, Roche Bros., Stop and Shop, the Ninety-Nine restaurant, Blockbuster, etc... Scripts are a great way to help the school raise money without having to "buy" anything additional. As always, you receive the full value of the gift cards, and McT earns a percentage of each gift card you buy. It is that easy! Gift cards also make excellent birthday gifts, especially for loved ones outside of the state. Attached is the order form with all of the participating vendors.

The April orders are due on **Wednesday, April 16th**. Please contact Lynne Densen at lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978.266.2952 or Maureen Jones at maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978.266.2874 with any questions.

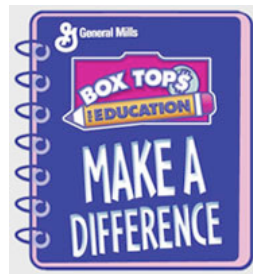
Recycling Fundraiser - Help and Thanks!

When you walk into McCarthy-Towne, you may or may not have noticed a large gray bin sandwiched between the plants. Color it green in your mind, for environmental benefits and dollars for PTSO coffers. That is home to the many cartridges, cell phones and used digital electronics that are being brought in for PTSO recycling fundraiser.

We urge you to add to it, bringing in those old cell phones, old DVDs, digital cameras, laptops, DVD players, game stations, MP3s or Ipods, digital pictures frames and GPS devices. They don't have to be in working order!

If your office provides cell phones and replaces them periodically, we'd love to get our hands on the old ones! And if you work in a large office building, would you help us get a collection box set up? You can also help by bringing into the school any cartridges or phones that have been put in the Water District's or Acton Memorial Library's collection.

Thank you to all the supporters who have been bringing in their inkjet and laser cartridges and cell phones. And a special thank you to Amanda Dindal who has been helping package them up. If you have a half-hour or so per month and are interested in helping with the task, it's appreciated and not an auction-sized commitment! Contact Astrid or Debbie Simon at deb.simon@comcast.net or 978-263-5322.



Box Tops

by Sue Sheehan

The box tops ladies were very busy the last two weeks counting and bagging over 6000 Box Tops! That equals \$600 for our school. This is our best spring collection ever. Thank you! The winning

class was Heather Wilson's with 484. The competition was fierce with Susan's class at 449 and David's 420. Heather's class wins the ice cream treat. Keep saving those Box Tops, we will have one more collection before the end of the school year.

www.boxtops4education.com Sign up today to receive free coupons and other box top related information.

Donelan's Receipts

Don't Forget to Turn in Your Donelan's Receipts By **Wednesday, April 9th!**

Thank you to all who have been shopping at Donelan's Supermarkets and saving receipts. To date we have accumulated over \$70,000 in receipts which translates into 70,000 points toward free educational equipment, including art supplies and books.

The final push is on to collect eligible receipts!

- Eligible Receipts: All Dated Sept 1, 2007 thru March 31, 2008.
- Deadline for Receipt Drop-Off: Wednesday, April 9th
- Receipt Drop-Off Location: McT Office

All eligible receipts must be turned in to the McCarthy-Towne office no later than next Wednesday for us to redeem them. So send your receipts in with your child or drop them off the next time you are at the school.

Thank you for your support!

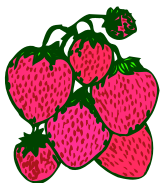
Last Bulletin Notice: Shopping Day

- Cambridgewear Fundraiser at Acton Woods Plaza (at the intersection of 2A/27)
- **Thursday, May 1, 2008** All day (10am-8pm)
- Come see the new Spring fashions! Just in time for Mother's Day!
- No need to mention MCT: all sales count for 10% to MCT.

Snacks with a Purpose

Healthy snacks offer a mid-meal energetic boost, provide extra fiber and nutrients and help prevent over-eating at mealtime. Take caution, however. Snackers who eat out of the bag or box triple their calorie intake without even knowing it. Remember to always choose fresh or raw snacks and avoid sugary, fattening empty calories. Try these snacks to keep your 100-calorie snacks fresh. Make sure to keep them chilled!

10 Great Snacks Under 100 Calories



- Tropical Fruit: 1/2 medium papaya or mango and 1 medium kiwi - 100 calories
- 1/2 whole grain bagel with 1 tablespoon light cream cheese - 87 calories
- 1/2 cup bran cereal with 1/2 cup blueberries - 100 calories
- 1/2 cup Trail Mix with raw almonds and dried cranberries - 80 calories
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese with 1/2 cup peaches - 95 calories
- 2 Tbs. Hummus spread with 1/4 pita pocket - 93 calories
- 6 medium carrot sticks with 1 tbs. low-fat ranch dressing - 90 calories
- 3 ginger snaps - 89 calories
- 1 medium nectarine - 67 calories
- 1 cup grapes - 100 calories



This information was found on the fit-fresh website @ www.fit-fresh.com/recipes/snacks
If you have any questions or comments about the lunch program please contact
Kirsten Nelson, Food Service Director: Knelson@mail.ab.mec.edu or 978-264-4700x3221.
It is our Pleasure to serve you!

A Mom's Guide to Understanding Sons

Mothering sons means parenting children who are, and always will be, inherently different from you. This presents special challenges and offers satisfying rewards. What makes mothering sons unique? How can we maintain strong connections with our sons while helping them navigate their way to manhood? Come join our discussion led by Betsy Wisch, MA, LMHC on Thursday, May 8th at 7:30 p.m. at the RJ Grey Library in Acton. The topics we will explore include: myths, beliefs and the emotional side of boys; strategies for building strong relationships; and managing the boy code - supporting all sides of our sons.

Betsy Wisch is a psychotherapist and parenting specialist with over twenty years of experience working with parents and children and facilitating workshops. She has a private practice in Concord and is the mother of 2 sons, ages 14 and 11.

In addition to hosting this meeting, our support group, ABPCC – Acton Boxborough Parents of Children with Challenges - will also have monthly morning meetings at 9:30 a.m. on April 3 (topic: take care of yourself) and May 22 (mothering boys) at ABRHS in room 121 east. We will discuss this topic in addition to our general open session. For further information on our group, contact Francesca Ricciardi at fmr08@verizon.net or Lynn Armstrong at lynn.armstrong2@verizon.net



Parent Power

Congratulation to the entire McT community on the success of this year's auction. **Together we raised \$62,000!** This money supports classroom assistants and so much more, making a real difference in our children's education. Thank you!

Art Night--Save the Date!

Join Heidi, McT sloyd teacher, in creating magical fairy houses to take home, on **Wednesday, May 7, from 5:30-7:00** in the sloyd room. Celebrate spring with your child by constructing secret spaces with natural materials such as bark, twigs, grasses, shells, and seeds. Please e-mail Heidi at hkupferman@mail.ab.mec.edu to reserve a place.

Diabetes – Understanding the Warning Signs

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in children. In the United States 1 in every 400-600 children has Type I diabetes. (National Diabetes Education Program)

Type 1 (Insulin Dependent) diabetes is most common in youth.

Type 2 (Insulin Resistance) diabetes is most common in adults but is on the rise in youth.

“Diabetes is a chronic disease that impairs the body's ability to use food properly. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas that is necessary for the body to convert food into energy. In people with diabetes, either the pancreas doesn't make insulin, the body cannot use the insulin properly, or both. Without insulin, glucose (sugar) builds up in the blood.” (American Diabetes Association)

Early detection and knowledge of the warning signs is your greatest weapon against the disease and its complications.

Behaviors a child might exhibit in school that could indicate undiagnosed diabetes are:

- Excessive urination (frequent trips to the bathroom especially in close sequence, bedwetting)
- Excessive thirst (frequent trips to the water fountain)
- Irritability
- Lack of energy, fatigue, drowsiness
- Rubs eyes, complains of difficulty seeing the board
- Difficulty paying attention

Other symptoms may include:

- Sudden vision changes
- Fruity/sweet odor to breath or urine
- Increased appetite
- Rapid or unexplained weight loss
- Nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain
- Tingling or numbness in the legs, feet or fingers
- Frequent infections of the skin, cuts that are slow to heal
- Darker patches of skin usually in neck folds
- Itching of skin and/or genitals

Note - Many of these symptoms can be related to illnesses that are not associated with diabetes. Only a healthcare professional can provide appropriate diagnostic tests and treatments.

References

- American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org
- National Diabetes Education Program at www.ndep.nih.gov.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov

(Summarized by the APS/ABRHS school nurses, 02/08)

Dates To Remember

Monday, April 7.....Acton Town Meeting begins
Thursday, April 10..... "JHS & What to Expect" for 6th gr. parents - 7 pm
Friday, April 11PD Building International Pot Luck - 6:30 pm
April 21 - 25..... NO SCHOOL - Spring Recess
Sunday, May 4.Spring Clean-Up, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Wednesday, May 7..... Art Night - Reservation needed (See p. 7), 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Tues/Wed, May 13/14.....Gr. 3, 4, 5, and 6 Math MCAS
Saturday, May 17..... McT Yard Sale, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm
Tues/Wed, May 20/21.....Gr. 5 Science & Tech./Engineering MCAS
Thurs/Fri, May 22/23.....Gr. 5 Social Studies MCAS
Monday, May 26.....NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day
Wednesday, June 25..... Last Day of School (with 5 snow days)



School Council Meeting

March 26, 2008, 3:00 p.m.

Present: M. FitzGerald, chair; S. Ryan, C. Imperato, S. Silverberg, R. Kynoch,
J. Rowse, K. Fitzmaurice; Guest: H. Kupferman.

I Goal 2-b (please note we discussed Goal 2-a last meeting, not 2-b as the minutes of February 27, 2008 state).

Ms. Kupferman came to the meeting to discuss her Sloyd program and update us since her presentation last May 23rd. Her program is expanding its focus to include artists within the parent community and broaden the students' understanding of what is happening in today's art and architectural world. Some Sloyd projects are coordinated with classroom curriculum, but also examples of fresh new directions in art are presented for the students to use their own imaginations to create 3 dimensional as well as pictorial art. For parents, there is an upcoming Art Night in early May where student and parent pairs may cooperate on a brief art project, such as an imaginative Fairy House. The Sloyd teacher hopes to gain some parent volunteers through this evening session and plans another in mid- school year 2008-2009.

Also planned is a questionnaire to give to parents on Back-to-School Night about interest in helping in the Sloyd classroom. Ms. Kupferman hopes to have information for parents translated to other languages for families whose first language is not English. She is also looking for help in photographing the finished art projects for use in slide shows about the program and for the school's website.

Then we took a guided tour of the work done by the kids, including exhibits in the school library of Eiffel towers made of many materials such as marshmallows, and also hand puppets made of felt and papier mache. In the Sloyd classroom and in wall and glass cabinet exhibits in the hall outside the classroom, we saw examples of wood collage, wallboard bas-relief, weaving, ceramics, cut-paper sculpture and a large array of cats with fancy decorations in a stair exhibit.

II. At 4:35 p.m. , we discussed upcoming reporting of council meetings for this school year and we will have an initial draft available at the next meeting April 30. Also we will discuss goals for the upcoming school year, including one goal of a curriculum subject such as math; one goal about art curriculum including drama; and one other (past ones have included health, English Language Learning and working with other parts of the school system such as Merriam School which shares the building with McT).

Respectfully submitted, John Rowse, community member.