



McCarthy-Towne Bulletin

February 5, 2010
Volume 39, No 6

February: The Shortest Month

by David Krane, McT Principal

Now is the time when the school year feels like it is accelerating. The days are becoming noticeably longer and we are all starting to think ahead towards spring. As you read this, we are already one week into the month of February. With a week long school vacation coming in only another seven days, this month will fly by and we will suddenly find ourselves in March. Many classrooms are finishing units of study and all of the McT classrooms are phenomenally busy. There is an incredible amount of activity everywhere as teachers and students work hard to close out this chunk of the school year. February break time is a good place to take a breath, check where you are and refine the planning for the seven-week push through spring. There is much still left to start and much to finish.

Our school community is very active in many places outside of the classroom, too. Developing and nurturing a belief system that involves not only our local school community but that also reaches out to the world beyond is another important part of what we do in school. And while we teach that helping out those who have needs within our own community is important, like the sixth graders helping out the Kindergarteners as they move from classroom to bus room or classroom to the office to meet up with families, we teach, too, that we all have global responsibilities. This responsibility is taken seriously. The CASE classrooms recently raised \$135 from

faculty and staff for *Hearts with Haiti*, a program to help rebuild a school for Haitian children with special needs. Two weeks ago, the Student Council raised over \$700 for a variety of causes with Crazy Hat Day. I was impressed by this incredibly successful effort for a number of reasons. First, the money was raised for places that have an enduring need for funds. There is a perceived meaning in the contributions that are made and children are invested in the effort these groups are making over time. UNICEF for Haiti Earthquake Relief, World Wildlife Fund, Make a Wish Foundation, and Homes for Our Troops will all share the donated funds. Secondly, the money was raised in a manner that is a departure from the past. Many of the former student-initiated fundraisers at McT have used snack food for students as the way to generate money. Because of the Wellness Policy and the changes that we are making around food here at McCarthy-Towne, the Student Council came up with a new idea for raising money. Crazy Hat Day was an innovative, creative and inclusive response to the challenge to change how money is raised at school. I am proud of everyone involved in this: the kids at our school for all the wonderful hats, the Student Council for initiating this and, of course, all who donated to these causes. This was an activity that is representative of who we all are as a school community.

Mark Your Calendar

FEBRUARY

6, Saturday
Gamewright Game Day,
2-4 PM

9-24
PDB Lost & Found Fair

10, Wednesday
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

12, Friday
School Spirit Wear
orders due

15-19
NO SCHOOL,
Winter Recess

24, Wednesday
Box Tops due

MARCH

10, Wednesday
PTSO Meeting, 7 PM

13, Saturday
McT Auction, 5:30 PM

23, Tuesday
MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, & 5

24, Wednesday
MCAS Testing, Gr. 3, 4, & 5

Very Important Reminder

The school year is a continuum and teachers work hard on planning curriculum in a sequential way. Children who miss large chunks of this continuum often find it very challenging and somewhat stressful to get back on track. I strongly encourage you to consider this as vacation plans are being made. Being in school every day is very important and we expect children to attend school unless they are sick. The curriculum is not easily portable so please don't ask teachers to prepare content area work to bring on vacation during missed school days. Thanks for joining with us as we send the message that school is an important job that is taken seriously by families and teachers.



by Kim Clark and Tammy Sarnelli, PTSO co-chairs

Wow, can you believe February break is almost here? We have such a busy February! We have the 2nd annual Game afternoon coming up tomorrow, February 6. Come enjoy games for the whole family. We have our Spirit Wear for sale, one of our most popular fundraisers. Check out all the great items (sweatshirts, T-shirts, fleece blankets and more) remember to get your orders in. Plus thanks to everyone who participated in our Book Gifting Program. That was very successful.

We have a few ongoing fundraisers that will be happening in February: Box Tops, Amazon.com, Scrip store cards (please note deadline is next Friday, February 8), OneCause (formerly known as School Pop), and additional Innisbrook gift-wrap orders.

We are also preparing for our upcoming auction that will be held on Saturday, March 13. There are always many ways to help with our biggest fundraiser of the year, including donating an item, help with the planning, selling raffle tickets, helping the day of the event, either before or during the event. Please see page 4 for more details about the auction, or how you can help.

Remember, if you are not sure about the date or details of an event or fundraiser, please visit our website at www.mctptso.org; it is frequently updated.

Butter Braid Breads and Cookie Dough— Arriving in Time for Easter!

Keep your eye open next month for the Butter Braid Breads fundraiser. Order forms will go out the first of March with orders being delivered by the end of March.

Butter Braid is great for after school snacks, dinner deserts, holidays, Sunday mornings and more! Cookies can be cooked in 10 minutes and breads in 25 minutes!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jill DeFoe (978-263-4848 or defoe@verizon.net).

Shop at Donelan's and Crosby's to Show Your Love for Your Family AND Your School



Will you be baking special treats or creating a memorable meal this Valentine's Day? If so, support McT by shopping at Donelan's or Crosby's for the ingredients! The receipts for your groceries can be turned into free educational equipment for McT.

All you have to do is save your receipts and send them in with your child or drop them in the collection box in the McCarthy-Towne office yourself. Please do NOT cut your receipts. In order to submit them, we must have the entire receipt, showing the store name and location, as well as the items purchased.

Receipts dated September 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010 are eligible. If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Schaad (ws.schaad@gmail.com).

Scrip Gift Card Program



Thanks to all the families who ordered Scrips in the month of January. Scrips continues to be a great way to help the school raise money without having to "buy" anything in addition to your usual purchases, so we will continue to offer the Scrip program on a monthly basis until the end of the school year. We have raised over \$3,200 ytd.

Order forms went out last week and can be found at www.mctptso.org/fundraising/scrip. **Please note the next deadline for orders is early—Monday, February 8. Cards will go home by Friday, February 12, before February break.** Please contact either Lynne Densen (lynne.densen@verizon.net or 978-266-2952 or Maureen Jones (maureen.jones1@verizon.net or 978-266-2874) with any questions.

February Lost & Found Fair

Please stop by this months Lost & Found Fair, which will be set up outside the multi-purpose room from Wednesday February 9 through Wednesday February 24. There are many unclaimed items from gloves to hats to warm winter jackets! Unlabeled, unclaimed items will be washed and donated to charity after the 24th so please stop by and check it out!

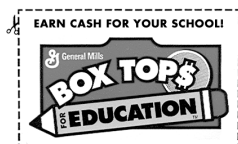
Game Day Tomorrow! Have Fun and Stock Up for February Break

This Saturday, February 6 from 2-4 PM, please join us in the Parker-Damon Cafetorium for Gamewright Game Day. Come play terrific games like Go Nuts!, Say Cheese!, Three of a Crime, Scrambled States, and Boochie—all for FREE. Buy games to bring home, and 1/2 the purchase price will go to McCarthy-Towne!

You can play as many games as you have time for. We've got games for all ages, preschool to adult. Games make great gifts and are a fun way to enjoy cold, stormy days. There will also be teacher wish lists if you want to purchase games for your child's classroom.

This event is FREE—please bring your friends! Parents must attend with their children, however; this is NOT a drop-off event. If you have any questions, please email Sarah Auerbach (sbauerbach@gmail.com).

Box Tops Collection in February



We have not yet met our Box Tops goal for the school year. **The next collection due date is February 24.** This is an easy way we raise money each year for our school. Last year we earned \$1,400 and it would be great to beat it! Right now we are just over \$700.

Box Tops can be found on many General Mills, Betty Crocker, Juicy Juice, Pillsbury, Green Giant, Old el Paso, Ziploc, Kleenex, Hefty, Saran, Viva, Huggies, Scott, Cottonelle and Kotex products. Clip and tape/glue Box Tops on to a collection sheet. There are collection sheets in front lobby, outside of the main office. You may also collect them in a Ziploc bag loosely.

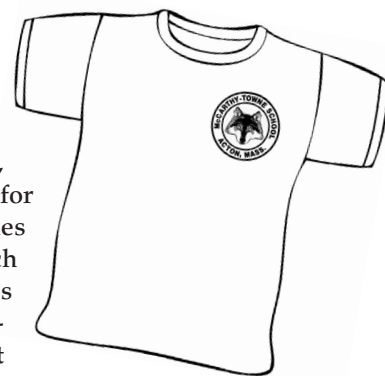
Send them to school with your child or drop collection sheets in the collection box inside the main office. Be sure to label the collection sheet, bag or envelope with your child's name, grade and teacher. This important information is used to keep track of rewards and the classroom contest! You can also drop them in a bin labeled "McCarthy-Towne Box Tops" at either Roche Bros. or Donelan's supermarket.

Others ways to help: Shop your favorite online stores at the Box Tops Marketplace®—www.boxtops4education.com/marketplace. Up to 15% of your purchase total is donated to our school, at no additional cost to you. Plus, you'll get exclusive Box Tops deals and discounts!

Buy books online through the Reading Room, a partnership between Box Tops and Barnes & Noble. McT receives up to 6% of qualifying purchases. www.boxtops4education.com/earn/readingroom/default.aspx.

McT School Spirit Wear Sale

There is still time to order the VERY POPULAR McT School Spirit Wear! We have many new items this year: string back packs, new T-shirts, basketball shorts (both for boys and girls), new hoodies sweatshirts, knit hats, beach towels, long sleeve shirts and the very popular flannel pants. Want to see what the new items look like? No



problem, samples are available in the office and can be viewed at the PTSO website.

Most items can be personalized for an additional charge. Order forms went home last week, but additional order forms are available in the office or on the PTSO website—www.mctptso.org/store. If you are unsure of a size, it is recommended to order a size larger. Items are not returnable as they are customized for our school.

Orders are due Friday, February 12. Orders will be sent home the week of March 15. Please contact Kerry Bremer (kbremer@mail.ab.mec.edu) with any questions.

McT Yard Sale Coming in May!

As you organize this winter, save your usable items (household goods, clothing, toys, sports gear, bikes, books, furniture, etc.) for the McCarthy-Towne Yard Sale coming on **Saturday, May 1, from 8 AM-Noon**. All donations are tax deductible. If you are interested in helping plan the yard sale, or if you can donate time to set up or work at the sale, please contact either Connie Olden (theoldens@comcast.net) or Brenda Simpson (brendahsimpson@hotmail.com). We will begin our planning sessions at the end of the month.

Tidbits from Tina

from Tina Morgan, McT School Counselor

On Friendship

"A true friend is the most precious of all possessions and the one we take least thought about acquiring." —*La Rochefoucauld*

Perhaps we should be mindful about purposefully teaching each of our children how to be a good friend, just like we purposefully teach them skills like multiplication, playing the piano, kicking a soccer ball. It is just as important, or more!

Take Me Out to the Ball Game!

McCarthy-Towne's 19th Annual Goods and Services Auction is taking place on Saturday, March 13, at the Devens Common Center, Devens, MA at 5:30 PM. It is exciting to once again be at this beautiful location. The theme of the 2010 Auction is "Take Me Out to the Ball Game". The M-CATS band, consisting of members of our own McCarthy-Towne parent community, will be performing during the evening (www.mcatsband.org).

The Auction is our largest fundraiser. In the past, funds raised have supplemented the Acton Public Schools budget to support contracted services such as classroom, reading, and library assistants. With our town facing financial challenges, budget cuts that directly affect our children will occur. McCarthy-Towne will have to maintain its excellent school program with less funding.

Have some fun at the auction and enjoy a social evening with parents and faculty. Enjoy appetizers, drinks and dinner while socializing with friends—both old and new! Bid on lower cost items (many donations are valued under \$30) and maybe even go home with a bargain! Consider bidding on higher priced items such as parties and specialty meals with other families. Enjoy the amazing Classroom Projects! Be a part of the bidding—or watch the live auction process as a spectator!

We still need some folks to work on Auction Night. If you want to find out more information about how you can help or would like to be a part of the Auction Night Team, contact Sandy Billings (978-635-1817).

To stay informed, please visit the Auction website—www.mctptso.org/fundraising/auction2010. Questions? Please contact Heidi Dalaklis (978-264-9982) or Jill Defoe (978-263-4848).

There are 3 key ways that you can help:

1. Donate to the auction

We've received some great donations, but need many more. **The deadline for parent donations is approaching—February 19.** Please consider donating an item, whether small or large, simple or elaborate. The variety is what makes it fun, and creative items often draw intense bidding. Need ideas? Check out last year's copy of the auction catalog at the PTISO website. Submit your donation form as soon as possible. Thank you!

2. Attend the Auction

Participation in the Auction is fun and exciting. The items at the Auction will have something for everyone, whether it's a restaurant gift certificate (Sprigs, Serafina, and Elephant Walk), a chance to try a fun activity (tickets to the Huntington Theater, Jillian's Billiards) or a fun family outing (Storyland, CoCo Key). Considering remodeling? How about bidding on services from Thomas Buckborough Remodeling Design? Have a child's birthday coming up? You could bid on a party from Village Art, Roller Kingdom, the Gymnastics Academy, or GAB.

Thinking about Summer Camp? There are opportunities from Summer Fenn, Dan Duquette Sports Academy, and the Marcus Lewis Day Camp.

This year, we will also have a signed Red Sox baseball and memorabilia from the Paw Sox and Portland Sea Dogs. Watch the website for the latest donations.

The PTISO does not make any money from the ticket purchases; they cover the cost of the hotel meal. You should only reserve a ticket if you are going to attend. If you would like to make a cash donation, write a check made out to the McT PTISO (Memo: Auction), complete the donation form and send it to the office. This money is used to purchase special live auction items (such as a gift certificate to a restaurant or hotel to complete an overnight package) or to purchase raffle items.

Ticket reservation forms went home with your child on Friday, January 29. If you plan to attend, please send your form in to the school by Monday, March 8.

3. Help your child sell Raffle Tickets.

Raffle tickets will go home with students on Friday, February 5. Each student will get two books of tickets. Students are encouraged, but not obligated to sell tickets. There are cash raffle prize items this year—\$250 for 1st prize, \$150 for 2nd prize, and \$100 for 3rd prize. Volunteer an hour of your time selling raffle tickets on February weekends at local venues. Please contact Tammy Sarnelli (tammy.sarnelli@biogenidec.com) for more information.

Help Make Our Auction Raffle a Success!



We have many dedicated individuals on the Auction committee, but they can't do it all! Volunteers are especially needed on our Raffle Committee.

Raffle Co-chair:

No experience necessary! This year, you'll be working with and learning from the experienced Tammy Sarnelli in preparation to head up this committee next year. Responsibilities include:

- Deciding on and lining up raffle prizes
- Coordinating the ticket booth sales
- Ticket preparation, distribution, and collection

Ticket Sellers:

Volunteer an hour or two of your time on a weekend to sell raffle tickets at local venues. It's easy!

For details on these opportunities, contact Tammy Sarnelli (tammy.sarnelli@biogenidec.com).

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.

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.

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.

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

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

- Excessive urination (frequent trips to the bathroom especially in close sequence, bed wetting)
- Excessive thirst (frequent trips to the water fountain)
- Irritability
- Lack of energy, fatigue, drowsiness
- Rubs eyes, complains of difficulty seeing
- 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 health care professional can provide proper diagnostic tests and treatments.

References

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

Thank You, Thank You!

Student Council Hat Day Thank You, from *Student Council members Olivia Blaufuss and Gus Teran*

We would like to thank everybody who donated, especially to those who gave for the people in the earthquake in Haiti. We decided to do this because January 15 is National Hat Day anyway, so we used this opportunity to donate to some charities we decided on together by voting. The Haiti earthquake collection was not planned, but we decided, when the earthquake happened, to help the survivors. We gathered:

- \$300 for UNICEF for the Haiti earthquake
- \$190 for the World Wildlife Fund
- \$160 for the Make a Wish Foundation
- \$90 for Homes for Our Troops.

In all, that's about \$700! It was fun to see all the hats. We are glad it was such a huge success! Thanks again for the donations—it was a big help!

Book Gifting Program, from *Joanie Davis*

Thank you to all the families who so generously contributed to the Book Gifting program. Our librarian, Julia Milley, was able to purchase 40 books valued at \$528.00, to be placed in the Parker Damon library. These books are available for our children to take home, read and enjoy! Over the school year, one book could go to as many as 35 different homes to be enjoyed! A sincere thanks to all who participated in this program.

The Reading Corner, from *Sharon Ryan*

Sincere thanks to all who contributed to the success of this year's McT Willow Books Event! The McT community enjoyed a fabulous selection of picture books read by staff members, including: Abby, Caitlin, Callie, Carolyn, Cheryl, David Krane, Janet, Jean, Julia, Kelly, Robin, and Vin. Thanks also to Maureen Jones and Lynne Densen for their scheduling and publicity expertise.

Funds raised through this event will be allocated to the "Teachers and Families as Literacy Partners" Program. Two early literacy evenings will be held this spring. The first, **May 3, 7–8 PM, will be geared toward parents of children transitioning from kindergarten to first grade** in the fall. The second evening, **May 24th, 7–8 PM will be geared toward our newest McT families with incoming kindergarteners** in the fall of 2010.

Acton Public School Committee Report

from Xuan Kong, Chair

The School Committee members wish to thank the many citizens who came to our meeting on January 21. Our next meeting will be a joint budget hearing with the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee on Saturday, February 6 at Jr. High Library (9AM-3PM). Our regular monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, February 25.

The Committee held hearings on the following three topics at their January meeting: COPS in School program, Pupil transportation, and classroom assistant funding.

The COPS in Schools grant program was designed to help law enforcement agencies hire new, additional school resource officers to engage in community policing in and around primary and secondary schools. The federal grant secured jointly by the schools and the town expired a few years ago. The school administration provided the School Committee with a list of tasks performed by the Youth Officer for the five elementary schools totaling about 800 hours. The tasks ranged from the 6th grade D.A.R.E Program (225 hours) to Safe Arrival Residence Checks (156 hours) to Emergency Response Calls (92 hours) to the Halloween Program (20 hours). A survey also revealed that Youth Officers were funded exclusively by towns in 17 communities, jointly between schools and towns in 3 communities like Acton, and via a stipend of about \$3000 in another community. The School Committee will make a decision on the funding level of the Youth Officer as part of the budgeting process.

The Director of Facilities for the schools gave a very informative presentation on the current state of pupil transportation. Twenty-five buses serve APS students' transportation needs and these buses are shared with AB Regional Schools. Twenty-one buses have peak load

percentages (number of students riding a bus divided by the total number of seats on the bus) greater than 60%. While it is desirable to have a higher peak load for all our buses, other factors such as duration of the route may place additional limits on the bus routes. Feasibility of assessing bus fees was also discussed and the benefits and drawbacks of such a fee were examined. It is the consensus of the Committee that APS should not charge bus fees at this time. The Committee acknowledged the efficiency of our bus operations and the effort of the transportation team. The Committee encouraged the administration to continue efforts to optimize bus route planning to meet our students' needs in a most cost effective manner.

Currently each school receives \$26,000 to \$30,000 from the appropriated budget to fund classroom assistants. Furthermore, each school PTO raises varying amounts of money to fund additional assistant hours. Finally, each school will have access to profits of its before and after school programs starting next year. Superintendent Mills and the School Committee acknowledge the tremendous amount of effort by the five PTOs and are grateful for their donations of over a quarter million dollars in classroom assistant funding each year. Working towards equal resource access by all five schools, Dr. Mills recommended that the three schools with newly created after-school programs keep 75% of the net program income. Success of the Douglas and Merriam programs enabled them to fund over 150 hours (per week) of additional assistant time with 100% of the program profit. The School Committee will continue to monitor the assistant funding issues and welcomes input from our parent/guardian community.



Food Service Recipe of the Month

Fruit & Cheese Bites

from Kraft Foods

Ingredients:

- 18 crackers
- 1 pkg. (6 oz.) Sharp Cheddar Cheese
- 3 fresh strawberries, each cut into 3 slices
- 1 kiwi, peeled, cut into 9 slices

Directions:

Top crackers with cheese. Place strawberry slices on half of the crackers and kiwi slices on the remaining crackers. Makes 9 services, 2 topped crackers each.

2010 MCAS Schedule

Students in grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be taking MCAS tests this spring. Please avoid scheduling trips and appointments during the testing periods. Testing begins at the beginning of the school day, so students should avoid late arrival to school. If students after their class begins the test, they will not be able to take the test that day.

English Language Arts Reading Comprehension (grades 3, 5, 6)

Tuesday, March 23 and Wednesday, March 24

English Language Arts Composition (grade 4)

Tuesday, March 23

Mathematics (grades 3, 4, 5, 6)

Tuesday, May 11 and Wednesday, May 12

Science, Technology & Engineering (grade 5)

Tuesday, May 18

McCarthy-Towne School – FEBRUARY 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Gamewright Game Day, Parker-Damon Cafetorium, 2-4 PM
7	8 Scrip orders due	9 PDB Lost & Found Fair Begins (through 2/24)	10 PTSO Meeting, 7 PM	11	12 School Spirit Wear orders due	13
14	15 NO SCHOOL Winter Recess	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Box Tops due PDB Lost & Found Fair Ends	25	26	27
28	MARCH 1	MARCH 2	MARCH 3	MARCH 4	MARCH 5 March McT Bulletin is Published	MARCH 6

Upcoming PTSO Meetings

Mark your calendar now! PTSO meetings are usually held the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the Faculty Lounge (top floor). Everyone is welcome to attend!

February 10th March 10th April 7th May 12th June 9th