MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & COMPUTER SCIENCE
UPCOUNTY CENTER PROGRAM

Roberto Clemente Middle School
18808 Waring Station Road
Germantown, MD 20874
(301) 601-0381

June 1, 2009

Dear Students and Parents:

We are excited that you will be joining us in the Math/Science/Computer Science Center Program at Roberto Clemente Middle School. We look forward to an enthusiastic and exciting year!

We understand that leaving a familiar place and going to a new school can be a little scary as well as exciting. With that in mind, we are planning a Center team building field trip, which will occur within the first two weeks of school most likely on a Friday. Look for a permission slip to go out either the first or second day of school. Also, parent chaperones are more than welcome. To put yourself further at ease, take a moment to get acquainted with your new teachers by reading their biographies below.

We hope that you are all having a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

The Upcounty Center Team 6

MATHEMATICS

Center Investigation into Math 6 – Mr. John Fleming - John_S_Fleming@mcpsmd.org
Center magnet Algebra I – Ms. Benae Gibson - Benae_E_Gibson@mcpsmd.org

Mr. Fleming earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, Annapolis, MD. He worked in the commercial construction industry as an estimator, project manager and superintendent for 15 years before getting a Master's degree in Education from the University of Maryland in 1994. He received his secondary math certification in 2008.

Mr. Fleming began teaching in Montgomery County in 1993 at Washington Grove Elementary School. He has been teaching in the Center Program since its inception in 2003.

Ms. Gibson earned her Bachelor of Science degree and Masters of Arts in Teaching Mathematics from California University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Gibson earned her second Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction with Administration and Supervision Certification from McDaniel College. She has taught Math B, Math C, and Magnet Algebra I and II at Roberto Clemente Middle School since 2003.

All students should download a preparatory math packet over the summer from the school website (www.robertoclementems.com). The summer review packet will allow us to see where each student's strengths and weaknesses are and we can plan our instruction throughout the year accordingly. The packet is due the first day of school.

A graphing calculator is required for Algebra I courses. Our teachers use the TI-83+ calculator in the classroom, however, any graphing calculator which has a table of values function will be fine. Your teacher will be sending out forms at the beginning of the year if you need assistance with obtaining a graphing calculator.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Ronald Poker - Ronald_C_Poker@mcpsmd.org

Mr. Poker earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Life Science from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Poker also has a Masters degree in instructional technology from Towson University. Mr. Poker has taught sixth grade Computer Science at Roberto Clemente Middle School since the center program began in 2003.

Below is some information that will help make the transition from your elementary school to the Upcounty Center Program as smooth as possible. Please consider the following items as you prepare for Computer Science 6:

Getting Ready for Computer Science 6

- A home computer will be helpful to complete out of class work. Please do not immediately telephone Dell and order a new computer. As long as your home computer is relatively new, with a modest processor speed and a few gigabytes of hard disc storage capacity, all will be well. If you do not have access to a computer, the county libraries provide computers during their operating hours. Also, at RCMS, the Media Center is available both before school and after school on select days—where you may continue out of class work, if necessary.
- We work extensively with the Microsoft Professional Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher). If you haven't used these applications (already) and have access to them, you may want to start exploring what they can do. If you do not have access to these at home, you will want to check to see if your local library has these applications available. NOTE: RCMS currently has Windows XP Professional, NOT Vista. It is not necessary that you upgrade your home operating system.
- A USB/flash drive of at least 1GB will be sufficient and is the best way to back up your assignments. Virtually every student last year used a flash drive on a day to day basis for several reasons. First, saving your work on a flash drive enables you to continue work on the same item at home (contingent upon having the appropriate software). Second, much of what you learn during the second semester requires a large amount of storage space–more than your allocated server space at RCMS will allow. If you rely primarily on such a storage device, I strongly recommend that you frequently backup your storage device so that you will be able to restore your work immediately should your device malfunction or become lost.
- Other devices and software used during the school year include digital cameras, Inspiration, and Adobe (formerly Macromedia) Professional Suite (Studio 8: Dreamweaver, Fireworks and Flash). Please note that a large portion of the academic year will be devoted to web design and development.

Helpful Information

Computer Science 6 is primarily an applications based course. You will be taught the most appropriate and effective ways to use the above mentioned software pieces to solve real word problems.

- CS6 is a web-instructed course. This means that all assessments, assignments, notes, rubrics, help files, agenda's, etc. will all be made available on-line at http://www.ronpoker.com/.

- I hold you to an extremely high standard, and I am very particular how your work is to be completed. In your future, other computer information science teachers, professors, and supervisors will likely require that your work be done to their specifications as well.

CENTER SCIENCE

Mrs. Traci Fairbairn — Traci_L_Fairbairn@mcpsmd.org

Mrs. Fairbairn holds a bachelor of arts degree in anthropology from the College of William and Mary, a Master's of Arts degree in anthropology from the University of Florida, and a Master's of Education degree from the University of Maryland. She has extensive additional coursework in math, science, and reading.

She has been working in the education field since 1988. She has taught at Seneca Academy, at Jones Lane Elementary, Stone Mill Elementary, and Ridgeview Middle School. She joined the 6th grade center program at Roberto Clemente in 2005.

Mrs. Fairbairn is married and is the proud parent of two children of her own. Rob who attended Takoma Park Middle School, Montgomery Blair High School, and Kenyon College. Catherine attended Ridgeview Middle School, Quince Orchard High School, and Franklin and Marshall College. Both are employed in science fields in the area. Mrs. Fairbairn enjoys helping students to pursue areas of personal interest in their schoolwork and she loves to canoe and spend time on the Chesapeake Bay.

The **Center Science Course** features a connected curriculum in life science, earth science and physical science. Some topics we will be studying include the environment, patterns in nature, genetics & adaptation, force and motion, electricity, energy and magnetism.

Sixth Grade Independent Project

If you would like to think ahead on your **independent science project**, explore the following websites. Each of these projects will be available to students.

Final Frontiers Competition: http:// Final Frontiers is a six event competition in physics and engineering focused on building structures from simple materials. Events include lunar bridge, slow roller, mass driver, the Mystery Event, a team competition, and Newton's Nightmare, a test on Newton's and Kepler's laws. Final frontiers will be the second Saturday in November this year. Below is the web-site for detailed information:

http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/woottonhs/academics/science/finalfront/index.html

MCPS Science Fair details can be found on the following web-site: http://www.sciencemontgomery.org/. This web-site gives excellent advice on how to plan and conduct a good science fair investigation: http://mywebpages.comcast.net/ganthony33

BMI Engineering Challenge: http://www.mcctes.org/mec.htm. The middle school challenges include building straw bridges, MAGLEV trains, and hovercrafts that could complete certain tasks.

Young Inventors: http://www.nsta.org/programs/craftsman. This program challenges students to design and build a tool. The tool must perform a practical function, including (but not limited to) tools that mend, make life easier or safer in some way, entertain, or solve an everyday problem.

MCPS Technology Challenge: http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/teched/challenge2004/msc.html. Last year, students who chose this as their project had to research, design, and create an invention that improved or made life easier.

Knowledge Master Open www.greatauk.org. An "It's academic" type nation competition completed during school hours. Students study to prepare for questions from all subjects areas. The competition is done in real time as a team.

BKFK www.bkfk.org This is an excellent website with many different competitions throughout the year.

National Science Bowl www.nationalsciencebowl.com Students build a hydrogen powered car and study for a team competition answering questions from all areas of science.

Please bring in your parents' email the first week of school to give to your teachers.