

# “RACHEL CARSON HERON HERALD”



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Web Page: [www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/rachelcarsones/](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/rachelcarsones/)

Principal: Larry Chep  
Assistant Principal: Cathy Shinn



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE!



### Rachel Carson Elementary School's Mission Statement

The staff, students, and families of RCES will share responsibility for ensuring that each child demonstrates consistent, measurable progress on the way to reaching his or her potential as a learner and responsible citizen.

## A CHARACTER COUNTS! SCHOOL!

## WELCOME BACK!!!

### THIS WEEK AT RACHEL CARSON SCHOOL SAFETY MONTH

**MONDAY**  
8/31

#### FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Pre-K Home Visits All Week – No Classes

**First Day Parent Information Packet Sent Home**

9:30 a.m. K-2 Assembly for Students

2:00 p.m. 3-5 Assembly for Students

(Welcome, Introductions, Expectations)

**Sally Foster Gift Wrap Sale Begins**



**TUESDAY**  
9/1

**6:30 p.m. New parent Welcome – All-purpose Room**

**7:00 p.m. PTA Meeting – All-purpose Room**

**WEDNESDAY**  
9/2

**THURSDAY**  
9/3

**5:00-7:30 p.m. Back-to-School Picnic**

**FRIDAY**  
9/4

Back-to-School Picnic (rain date)

## WEEKLY FAMILY NEWSLETTER - EARLY EDITION

Every Friday, the Family Newsletter, the "Heron Herald", will be distributed through our electronic mailing Listserv. This is an "early edition" that covers this week's events. Your next newsletter will be distributed on Friday, September 4, 2009. This and all "Heron Herald" newsletters contain important information about special programs and upcoming events that both parents and students need to know. Please make sure you and your child read it together. The "Rachel Carson Heron Herald" is one of the methods the staff and administration use to communicate to parents, and to keep you abreast of upcoming activities. In addition to the Listserv copy, all Heron Herald newsletters will be posted on our school website.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- 9/7 **NO SCHOOL – Labor Day**
- 9/8 \*Summer Reading Assignment Due (Grades 1-5)  
\*Summer Math Assignment Due (Grades 1-5)
- 9/8-9 Pre-K Begins (Staggered Opening)
- 9/9 1:50-2:20 p.m. Grade 4 Instrumental Music “Petting Zoo” Assembly for Students  
2:25-2:55 p.m. Grade 5 Instrumental Music “Petting Zoo” Assembly for Students  
**7:00 p.m. Grades 3-5 Back-To-School Night (Agenda Attached)**  
**6:30 p.m. Instrumental Music \*Parent Meeting – \*(For Parents of Children in Grades 4 & 5)**
- 9/10 **7:00 p.m. Pre-K – Grade 2 Back-To-School Night (Agenda Attached)**
- 9/16 3:10 p.m. **Chess Club Begins**
- 9/18 **8:00 a.m. Dads ‘n Donuts**
- 9/21 **Sally Foster Orders Due**
- 9/23 Chess Club
- 9/28 **NO SCHOOL – Yom Kippur**
- 9/30 Chess Club
- 10/5 Teachers Send Home Interim Reports



### MONTHLY REFRIGERATOR CALENDAR

Once a month (at the end of the preceding month), a monthly calendar page will be attached to the Heron Herald for parents to post on their refrigerators. Hopefully, this will help organize your child's and family's schedules, inform you as to when school is closed, when afternoon activities take place and/or when early release days are scheduled. It's a little more user-friendly than the running calendar on the front page. Of course, throughout the year, there may be changes made during the month, so please be alert to any changes to the weekly, running calendar in case this occurs.

### **WELCOME BACK!! – Mr. Chep**

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! The opening of school is always an exciting time for students, staff, and parents, and that was evident at our Sneak Peek!! The staff is ready for another busy, productive and successful year. Our mission statement is posted on the front cover of this newsletter, and it represents the staff's commitment to provide quality instruction in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning, and to work as partners with our parents to ensure success for all of our children.

We are looking forward to the continued commitment we receive from our returning parents and look forward to collaborating with our new families. Your support is an essential ingredient in helping your child/ren succeed, as well as one of the main reasons Rachel Carson is such a special school and community.

I urge you to become an active and participating member of our PTA by becoming involved in one or more of the many social and academic activities they sponsor.

Remember, there are countless opportunities to volunteer both in and out of school! The staff and I thank you in advance for your support!

A huge **THANK YOU** goes out to all the parents who helped organize our first day packets and assisted with other tasks during the summer. Special thanks to our PTA president, Mark Ezrin, and our PTA Executive Board for all of their help and support. A special thank you to our building services team for making our building look great!

### **WHO'S NEW AT RCES**

You may have noticed a few new faces around our building this year; we've added several very special people to our staff. Please welcome our new teachers - Grade 2, Johanna Dushek; Grade 3, Stephanie Amodeo and Cheryl Sherstad; Grade 4, Linda Dembrow; Learning Center teacher, Joanne O'Keefe; Grade 5 teacher, Alexa Pilchtchikov; and Speech-Language Pathologist, Dahlia Ellison. They are joining an outstanding group of educators all working to ensure the success of our students/your children.

### **STAFF THANK YOU - Mr. Chep/Ms. Shinn**

I hope you agree that our building and classrooms looked great for our Sneak Peek. We would like to thank all of the teachers and staff for their hard work and dedication in preparation for the 2009-10 school year. We'd also like to recognize Mrs. Long, administrative secretary, for all of her hard work over the summer assisting in the preparation for this school year, as well as Mr. Custis and Mr. Besaw (Building Service Manager and Assistant Manager) and their building service staff for creating a school that *shines!* **THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!**

### **FIRST PTA MEETING**

Our first PTA meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 1, beginning at 7:00 p.m.** Prior to this meeting, we invite parents who are new to RCES to have an opportunity to ask questions to assist them in becoming more familiar with our school. The **new parent meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the All-purpose Room.**

An agenda will be posted on the PTA's website prior to the meeting. During the PTA meeting, the PTA executive board will present the annual PTA budget for approval.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS**

Our **Back-to-School Night** agenda is attached to this Heron Herald. We have two BTSNs, **September 9, Grades 3-5 (including the 3-5 Learning Center classes)**, and **September 10, Grades Pre-K-2 (including the K-2 Learning Centers classes)**. We hope everyone will join us for these very informative nights.

### **HERON HERALD LISTSERV**

Please complete the Heron Herald Listserv form located in your summer mailing and submit it to your child's teacher ASAP. **Hard copies will only be distributed to families that do not have internet access.** Distributing the Heron Herald via this method will save us hundreds of dollars, several trees and many hours of precious human resource time.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL PICNIC**

Come join the families of Rachel Carson ES during our first annual Back-to-School Picnic. Meet new families and enjoy the company of some old friends on **Thursday, September 3, beginning at 5:00 p.m.** Bring your own dinner or take advantage of the pizza, subs, salads, shaved ice and soft drinks that will be available for purchase. There will be fun and games for the children as well.

### **\*\*PIZZA DINNER AND BINGO NIGHT – DATE CHANGE!**

Mark your calendars for Pizza Dinner and Bingo Family Night! Please join us on **Thursday, October 8, at 6:30 p.m.**—RCES cafeteria. We will be serving pizza, salad, drinks, and dessert, followed by bingo with some guest Bingo callers. Hope you can join us for a fun evening.

### **DADS AND DONUTS**

*Dads and Donuts* is being held **Friday, September 18, at 8:00 a.m.** in the All Purpose Room. All dads, step dads and granddads are invited to have breakfast with their kids at school. Donuts and coffee will be served (sponsored by the PTA).

### **SCHOOL SPIRIT MERCHANDISE**

Rachel Carson Spirit wear and merchandise will be sold at both Back to School Nights, during Pizza/Bingo Night and the first PTA meeting. Get it while it lasts. We will have new shirts this year. Contact Jamie Emmert at [jamie\\_henry\\_2002@yahoo.com](mailto:jamie_henry_2002@yahoo.com), or Sue Moran at [smoran814@comcast.net](mailto:smoran814@comcast.net), with any questions.

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS NEEDED**

Your help is needed! Committee/Event chairs are still needed to help with various activities throughout the year. Please check the PTA website frequently for volunteer needs.

### **SUMMER READING & MATH ASSIGNMENTS**

Students in grades 1-5 are encouraged to return their completed Summer Reading and Math assignments to their teachers to receive the offered incentives. The **math and reading assignments are due no later than Tuesday, September 8**. These assignments can be submitted prior to these dates!

### **HANDS UP FOR CHARACTER – RESPONSIBILITY**

Every six weeks, beginning August 31, the staff will be reinforcing one of the six pillars of character (responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, citizenship, caring, and fairness). The first pillar we will be reinforcing is Responsibility (August 31-October 9) – *A Responsible Student: Is a good role model to others. Sets goals and works to achieve them. Makes wise choices.* Our teachers will be looking for students in their classrooms who best exemplify the characteristics and will nominate 2-3 children from each class to be recognized at our Hands Ups ceremony. These children will place their handprints on our front hallway pillars and receive a certificate. Please reinforce these pillars and characteristics with your children, so they can be recognized by our staff.

### **MCPS CONNECT-ED COMMUNICATION**

Most of you experienced our new computerized telephone calling system, which allowed me to notify our entire school community with just one phone call. This system, MCPS Connect-ED, is designed to enhance school communications and increase parent participation in school activities. MCPS Connect-ED allows principals to telephone parents and staff quickly and efficiently by sending a recorded message to designated phone numbers of families and staff members.

The speed with which MCPS Connect-ED can provide information to families throughout our school community is an important feature of this system. MCPS Connect-ED can provide reliable and timely information to parents and staff in case of emergencies and enhance communication about school events and important issues relating to our school and school system.

If you have any questions about this service, please direct your questions to Mr. Chep.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

The school day for Grades K through 5 students is 8:50 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. If your child arrives at school at 8:50 a.m., he/she will be late and marked tardy. If a child is tardy, his/her parent **MUST** bring him/her to the office to sign in and obtain a tardy slip.

Parents who transport their children must get their children to school no later than **8:40 a.m.** (a student is considered tardy if he/she is not **in his/her classroom** by 8:50 a.m.). For safety reasons, children should arrive no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Please make sure your child arrives on time.

Supervision of students will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the gym. Please plan to drop your child off, if he/she does not ride the bus, as close to this time as possible to make sure your child is in his/her class on time.

Leaving school early also hinders a child's success. Many times, a student misses important information or the closure of a lesson, or doesn't have time to write his/her assignments down. This has an impact on other classmates as well. Please allow your child to finish his/her school day. If you must pick your child up early, you must submit a note informing the classroom teacher and office of your plans to take your child prior to the end of the school day.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in school is essential to your child's success! Research has proven that students who attend school on a regular basis have greater success than those who have interruptions to their education. Please make sure your child is in school every day, unless he/she is sick. **Vacations should be taken during scheduled school vacation dates.** Absence for the purpose of a vacation is considered an **unexcused absence**.

### **ASSIGNMENT BOOKS**

All of our students in Grades \*2-5 will receive a 2009-10 Assignment Book to record daily homework assignments. Please look through this book with your child; it contains a lot of great information and instructional strategies for children to use. Please check and sign your child's assignment book on a daily basis to ensure that he/she is completing his/her work. **\*Grade 2 will be utilizing the assignment books during the second semester only.** Thank you to the following businesses that purchased an ad in our assignment books to help lower the cost to our students – **Mike Aubrey – Remax, Conquest Security, Inc., Benefit Planning Group.**

### **INSURANCE INFORMATION**

An Accident Insurance Protection pamphlet is included in your child's first day packet. Please review this pamphlet. It will provide you with information on how to purchase additional insurance in case an accident occurs at school.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

After school activities, "The Hopping Heron Clubs," will again be offered this year. We will have several new and returning club offerings. Look for "The Hopping Heron Clubs" brochure within the next two-three weeks. Once again, we will be conducting registration on a quarterly basis. Remember - these activities will fill quickly, and they are on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are willing and able to sponsor a club of your own, please call Mr. Chep or Ms. Shinn, ASAP at 301-840-5333. In the past, we have had parents lead sign language, games, French, and engineering clubs. (The PTA will be offering a variety of extracurricular activities as well.)

### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PARENT MEETING**

Ms. Moraca, our instrumental music teacher, will be holding a parent meeting at RCES on **Wednesday, September 9, beginning at 6:30 p.m.** prior to Back-to-School Night. If your fourth or fifth grade child is interested in playing an instrument this year, you are encouraged to attend.

### **LABEL...LABEL...LABEL**

Each year children forget or lose many items of clothing. When these items are brought to the lost and found, children do not recognize their property and we are unable to return these items to their owner. Please label all clothing (coats, hats, gloves, etc.), so we can help return these items to your children.

### **BEHAVIOR, BUSES, FIRE DRILLS**

It's a new year, so please discuss safety with your child. Safety issues to discuss with your child should include bus safety, fire drills, playground safety, and appropriate language and behavior. The staff and Mr. Chep will be addressing safety and behavior, but it is essential that parents reinforce safety rules and discuss appropriate behavior (see *Discipline Policy* in this first day packet).

### **TENNIS BALLS NEEDED**

Do you have old tennis balls that you can donate to our school? Please send in your old tennis balls, so we can place them on the legs of our student chairs and desks. The tennis balls help protect our classroom floors, and decrease the noise when chairs are moved.

### **HOMEWORK AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

Please make sure you read and review the Homework and Discipline Policies included in this first day packet. Parents should review the Discipline Policy with their children, then sign and return the bottom portion of the discipline policy cover letter.

**It is also essential that the yellow emergency cards are filled out and returned to school as soon as possible!!!**

### **PROCEDURES FOR INSUFFICIENT LUNCH ACCOUNTS**

The following are the county procedures to be followed if a student does not have sufficient money for meals. Please make sure your child has sufficient funds throughout the school year to ensure that he/she gets to order the lunch he/she prefers.

1. Students will receive a letter informing parents when their account balances go lower than \$5.00.
2. The student account will be allowed to reach a maximum of (-\$ 10.00).
3. If \$-10.00 is reached, the student will receive a cheese sandwich (made in the cafeteria), and the student will be billed 25¢.

### **PRINCIPAL'S TEA**

Once a month, Mr. Chep will schedule a Principal's Tea to discuss topics of interest with parents. These informal meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. (prior to each PTA meeting), and last for approximately 30 minutes. The Principal's Tea is designed to help parents become more knowledgeable about county and school issues, and answer questions about programs and school functions. The dates and times of these meetings will be posted in the Heron Herald each month. The first Principal's Tea is scheduled for **October 6**. To better meet the interests of parents, Mr. Chep is asking for parents to make suggestions for the topics of these meetings. Below are a few examples:

**\*\*Testing Information, Gifted & Talented Screening/Instruction, Accelerated Math, Seven Keys to College Readiness, Special Education Process\*\***

These are only suggestions. Mr. Chep looks forward to your ideas. Please email Mr. Chep any topic or topics you would like discussed. The topic for each meeting will also be posted monthly.

### **PTA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS**

The start of the new school year is the time to join the RCES PTA again. Your membership dues provide numerous benefits to our children's educational experience, including financially supporting classroom needs, sponsoring free social events, funding after-school enrichment activities and directly supporting teachers. Regular membership is \$20 per year, or \$15 for single parents. You can join online at the PTA's website (<http://rces-pta.org>) or by filling out the Membership Application found in your summer mailing.

### **PTA WEBSITE**

Check out the RCES PTA website at <http://rces-pta.org>. The PTA site has lots of valuable information and resources to benefit PTA members such as: online payments for your PTA membership dues and renewals, PTA events, and donations to PTA-sponsored programs and fundraisers; an online membership directory; resources such as class rosters, cafeteria menus, school policies, bus schedules, meeting minutes, and much more. We hope you enjoy the new site and find it to be a useful tool this year.

**GET READY FOR SALLY FOSTER AT RACHEL CARSON!**

Sally Foster is the PTA's largest fundraiser of the year. Help us get off to a great start by supporting the Sally Foster fundraiser -- 50% of every purchase goes directly to our school! There's something for everyone: value-priced gift wrap, premium chocolates, and discounted magazines. And everything's \$20 or less. Every purchase counts, no matter what size.

Questions: contact Jaimee Wibberley ([jaimewibberley@verizon.net](mailto:jaimewibberley@verizon.net)), Gretchen Dourgarian ([gdourgarian@yahoo.com](mailto:gdourgarian@yahoo.com)), or Shari Segal ([rexsegal@aol.com](mailto:rexsegal@aol.com)).

**FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has developed an emergency/crisis plan to handle any type of potentially dangerous situation. The plan is tailored to meet the needs of individual schools, so our school will practice safety and security procedures, called "Code Red/Code Blue drills" to ensure that the plan will work in time of need. Similar to fire drills, Code Red/Code Blue drills assure us that everyone will know what to do in an actual emergency. We want you to know that the students are not in any danger during these drills.

**Code Red** is the term used in an emergency/crisis situation that warrants an immediate lockdown of classroom and school facility doors. Code Red alerts staff members and students to imminent danger, for example, that an armed intruder, violent situation, or trespasser behaving in an erratic manner is in or near the building, a situation requiring an immediate lockdown. Students and staff members proceed to a designated safe area away from doors and windows. Lights are turned off, windows are covered, and blinds are closed. Attendance is taken while the staff and students remain quiet, and teachers await further instructions. During Code Red drills students will practice "staying low, staying quiet, and staying still" as the teacher secures the room.

**Code Blue** puts the entire school on alert status when an emergency or crisis situation arises. The types of situations warranting Code Blue status include approaching severe weather, notification by the police that a criminal suspect is in the area, or medical emergencies in or around the school. Code Blue requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. During a Code Blue, classroom instruction continues, and teachers await further instruction.

Because we anticipate that students will be talking about these drills, we want you to call with any questions and/or concerns. While we hope we will not have an actual emergency, we are prepared. The safety and security of every MCPS student and staff member are top priorities.

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NEWS – Terri Moraca, Instrumental Music Teacher**

On September 9, 2009, all 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Rachel Carson Elementary School will have the opportunity to play one or two band or orchestra instruments during a school assembly. This opportunity is being sponsored by Rachel Carson Elementary School and L & L Music and Wind shop. Over 10,000 MCPS 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are members of bands and orchestras in Montgomery County Public Schools. Students will be given sign up forms at the assembly. The instrumental music program at Rachel Carson Elementary provides students with foundational instruction leading towards the development of technical, conceptual and artistic mastery in music performance. I encourage every 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Rachel Carson to join their school band or orchestra.

# RACHEL CARSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2009**

**(Grades 3-5)**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**

**(Pre-K-Grade 2)**

**7:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.**

Join us **Wednesday, September 9 (Grades 3-5)** and/or **Thursday, September 10 (Pre-K-2)** for Back-to-School Night. Meet your child's teacher and hear about the objectives and activities for this school year. Teachers will present an overview of the curriculum and major units for the year. Remember that this is a time to have general questions answered. If you have specific issues to discuss with a teacher, please ask the teacher to schedule a parent conference, and your teacher will be happy to do so. The evening's schedule will allow you an opportunity to join the PTA, see a slide show of our students and staff, and visit classrooms and teachers. The slide show will **begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.**, so be on time!

**This is a night for parents. We encourage you to come without your child.**

**PLEASE REPORT TO THE ALL-PURPOSE ROOM AS YOU ARRIVE**

**- NOT TO TEACHERS' ROOMS!!**

### SCHEDULE

6:45	Join the PTA & Socialize (All-Purpose Room)
7:00	*Don't Miss Our Slide Show in the AP Room/Gym*
7:15	Mr. Chep, Principal Ms. Shinn, Assistant Principal Welcome, Staff introductions, Goals Mr. Mark Ezrin & PTA
7:55	Transition to classrooms
8:00-8:30	Homeroom Teacher Presentations Session 1 (Teachers' classrooms)
<b>(A second session will follow to accommodate parents with more than one child)</b>	
8:30	Transition to classrooms
8:35-9:05	Homeroom Teacher Presentations Session 2 (Teachers' Classrooms)
9:05-9:10	<b>Open Visitation</b> <i>This is an informal time to visit throughout the school.</i> * Visit with specialists * Visit other teachers
9:10	Goodbye! Thank you for coming

**Specialists will be available in the Media Center throughout the evening. Don't let them be lonely! Come visit them.**

# August/September 2009

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				<b>28</b> <b>Sneak Preview</b> 10:10-11:30 – Grades 3-5  2:00-3:00 – Grades K-2
31 <b>First Day of School</b>  Sally Foster Gift Wrap Fundraiser Begins	1 6:30 p.m. New Parent Welcome – AP Room  7:00 p.m. PTA Mtg. – AP Room	2	3 <b>5:00-7:30 p.m. Back-to-School Picnic</b>	4 <b>Back-to-School Picnic</b> (Rain Date)
7 <b>Labor Day – No School</b>	8	9 6:30 p.m. Instr. Music Parent Mtg. – Grades 4 & 5  7:00 p.m. <b>Back-to-School Night - Grades 3-5</b>	10 <b>7:00 p.m. Back-to-School Night - Grades PreK-2</b>	11
14	15	16 Chess Club Begins	17	18 <b>8:00 a.m. Dads and Donuts</b>
21 Sally Foster Orders Due	22	23 Chess Club	24	25
28 <b>Yom Kippur – No School</b>	29	30 Chess Club		

# Agosto/Septiembre 2009

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				<b>28</b> <b>Conozca al maestro de su hijo</b> 10:10-11:30 – Grados 3-5  2:00-3:00 – Grados K-2
31 <b>Primer día de clases</b>  Sally Foster Envoltura de regalo de Fondos Comienza	1 6:30 p.m. Bienvenido nuevo Padre – AP Room  7:00 p.m. PTA Mtg. – AP Room	2	3 <b>Regreso a la Escuela de Campo</b>	4 <b>Regreso a la Escuela de Campo</b> (Fecha de la lluvia )
7 <b>Labor Day – No Escuela</b>	8	9 6:30 pm Música Instrumental Reunión de padres - Grados 4 y 5  7:00 p.m. <b>Regreso a la Escuela Nocturna - Grados 3-5</b>	10 7:00 p.m. <b>Regreso a la Escuela Nocturna - Grados PreK-2</b>	11
14	15	16 Club de Ajedrez comienza	17	18 8:00 a.m. <b>Papás y Donuts</b>
21 Sally Foster Debido pedidos	22	23 Club de Ajedrez	24	25
28 <b>Yom Kippur – No Escuela</b>	29	30 Club de Ajedrez		