RITCHIE PARK ES

PTA NEW­SLET­TER

2011-2012 RPES PTA Officers

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PTA Board of Directors *also includes the following members:*

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### **March 9, 2012**

# Yearbooks! Get Your Yearbooks!!

Order now to ensure a yearbook for your child! The 2011-2012 Ritchie Park ES Yearbook is on sale now! An order form/envelope should have come home with every child in their backpack. (More are available in the office.) This year's yearbook is pre-order only. They must be ordered in advance. There will be a very limited number of books available in June. Send in payment for your yearbook today! **The deadline is Mar. 9 to reserve your copy.**

Each yearbook costs $22 (tax included). Make checks payable to "Lifetouch" and send into the office. Please write a separate check for each child and put each child's order in a separate envelope. This will help with accounting and distribution of the yearbooks to each child's classroom in June. Don't miss out on a great yearbook filled with wonderful memories of the school year. Reserve your copy today!

# Manna Mania Update

Thank you to everyone who came out to "Boogie" at Music & Dance Night, and to those of you who donated to Manna Food Bank.  The double-purpose event was lots of fun and a great success!  We collected 340 pounds of non-perishable food for Manna, which will go to families right here in Montgomery County.  Also, thank you to the parents, students, and middle schoolers who volunteered their time to make this night possible.

# February Cultural Arts Program Happenings

The PTA hosted another terrific Cultural Arts Assembly last month.  **Mary Ann Jung** from **"History Alive!"** (www.historyaliveshows.com) came to Ritchie Park to perform a play about **Margaret** **Brent of Maryland**.

Margaret had a very funny best friend – a book.  The book was very important to Margaret because she knew that it made her smart.  Back in the 1600s, only the very rich could afford books.  Only one in five men was educated, and the ones who were educated got to be in charge of the rest of the people who could not read or write.

They also had some other very strange and unfair rules back then.  There were laws on what clothing people could wear and they were based on whether you were rich or poor, and if you were a male or female.  The only church you were allowed to attend was the English Protestant Church, and all other religions were illegal.  And because Margaret Brent was a devout Catholic, she risked her life to sail to America seeking religious freedom.  Thanks to her friendship with Lord Baltimore, Cecil Calvert, Margaret received land when she arrived in Maryland.  Margaret Brent was the first woman to own land in America and she was also the first woman lawyer.

All was going very well until Margaret Brent stood before the Maryland General Assembly asking for her right to vote.  Margaret argued that she should be allowed to vote since the law stated that if you owned land you may vote.  This caused so much anger within the community that even her friend Lord Baltimore turned his back on Margaret and kicked her out of Maryland.  Because Margaret was very good at developing land and attracting workers, she was able to find a home in Virginia and even ended up with 18,000 acres of land.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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| **Mar. 14, 4 p.m.-close** | Potomac Pizza Restaurant Night |
| **Mar. 18, 12:30-4:30 p.m.** | Barnes and Noble Book Fair |
| **Apr. 18** | Restaurant Night at Mamma Lucia |

We are truly fortunate to be living in the 21st century where we have access to so many wonderful books, great education and equal rights!

# MARK YOUR CA­LEN­DARS

 **Restaurant Night** is on Wednesday, Mar. 14 at Potomac Pizza (9709 Traville Gateway Drive, Rockville). Dine-in, carry-out, or order online for delivery. RPES PTA will receive 20% of the proceeds. In April, Restaurant Night will be at Mamma Lucia (Fallasgrove location) on Wednesday, Apr. 18. The May Restaurant Night will be at Elevation Burger on Wednesday, May 9 from 5-9 p.m.  We receive 10% of total sales. Hope to see you there!

**RPES Book Fair at Barnes and Noble** is coming on Sunday, Mar. 18. This year it will be at the Washingtonian Cen­ter, 21 Grand Corner Ave., Gaithersburg. Volunteers are needed. To sign up, go to www.SignUpGenius.com/go/ 4090544A5AA229-barnes/. For more information, contact Ana at anatungcod@ comcast.net.

# WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

**Lunch and Recess Volunteers Needed!** The Volunteer Spot sign-up has been empty the last few weeks. We love to see volunteers helping out at lunch and recess. If you can help on a regular basis or just drop by on a day that you are free, please come help in the lunchroom. The E-News has a link to sign up or go to www.volunteerspot.com/ login/entry/6523456346936540113/.

# ADVOCACY CORNER: Take a Few Minutes to Make Your Voice Heard

Please remember to send an email to the County Council members asking them to reject the County Executive's recommendation to delay the construction of RMES #5 by two years so that we can have some relief from overcrowding at Ritchie Park. A sample letter is on the PTA page of the Ritchie Park website and you can send it to **county.council@ montgomerycountymd.gov.**

And while you are clicking on websites, please go to www.stoptheshift.com and www.change.org/petitions/no-pension-shift to register your opposition to Governor O'Malley's plan to shift half the cost of teacher and other pensions from the state to the counties. For Montgomery County, the proposed pension shift would cost $47 million in Fiscal Year 2013 and more in subsequent years. The schools, which will have to bear a significant portion of the costs, will be directly negatively affected. The schools have already had to slash more than $400 million from their budget since 2009. These cuts have necessitated increases in class sizes across all grades and required the elimination of 1300 positions. All of these reductions have occurred as our county has seen dramatic growth in student enrollment, now at an all-time high of 146,500 students. While we understand that the state must balance its budget too, it is the state that sets the basic structure of pension benefits and has failed to provide sufficient funding. Counties (and the schools) should not be asked to assume financial responsibility for costs not of their making. Please take only a minute or two to sign the on-line petitions at www.stoptheshift.com created by a coalition of county and school officials and employee organizations throughout the state of Maryland, and at www.change.org/petitions/no-pension-shift sponsored by MCCPTA. For questions, contact Jennifer Young or Rich Hart, MCCPTA Delegates.

# Check the Lost and Found

Last call to claim lost and found items at RPES.  The “lost and found” boxes are in the APR by the stage. Anything not claimed by the end of the day on Mar. 26 will be donated to a local clothing center.

# Parking Space Auction Winner

The Young/ Winchenbach family is our winner from March until the end of the school year. Please DO NOT park in the Auction Winner space.  The RPES families who won the auction paid to have the space available at all times. Thank you!

#  A BIG THANK YOU TO

* Cat Goodyear, Community Service Chair, for heading up Manna Mania month.
* Kristen Swiggett for Chairing a fun Music & Dance Night.
* Julie Baron and Marci Maged for organizing a successful Community Service Night.