March 2010

Dear Parents,

It does not seem possible that we are looking at spring break in just a few short weeks. The year is passing by quickly. This month many of our students will be participating in state testing. Please be sure your child gets a good night sleep and a good breakfast to start their days.

Perhaps you have heard of the “Fine” effect: “How was school today?” “Fine.” “What did you learn today?” “Nothing.” This scene is repeated daily at countless dinner tables and in the seats of minivans everywhere. Our teachers strive each day to motivate, engage, and educate your children. I’ve often wondered what switch flips in the children after they leave our classrooms and fail to share the excitement of the past six hours. Encourage them to share what they’ve learned by giving clues, “What did you learn in math today?” “How was your Chinese class?”

We are in a daily competition for the attention of your children. Our teachers are excellent at what they do, but in many cases evidence of this excellence does not make it home. Our goal is not to convince you that our school is great, but that by encouraging your children to communicate what they are learning, you may be much more involved and informed about the education of your children.

I wish you all a wonderful spring holiday and restful break.

Sincerely,

Albert P. DuPont, Ed.D.
Principal
Each month we would like to “highlight” some of the great things we do at College Gardens. This month’s focus is on Second Step, our research based social and emotional skills curriculum. The curriculum is pre-school through grade five. The curriculum is designed to promote social competence and reduce children’s social and emotional problems. The student’s learn several skills:

- **Empathy:** identifying emotions in self and others, perspective taking, and responding empathically
- **Impulse control and problem solving:** identify the problem, brainstorm possible solutions, evaluate each solution, select, plan and try the solution, and evaluate whether the solution worked and switch to another solution if needed
- **Anger management:** teaching students to identify and distinguish emotions, both positive and distressing

Second Step lessons are taught during the school day by the student’s classroom teacher. Lessons are very engaging and usually involve role playing and skits.

**IB Corner**

**First Grade Students Explore Red Wigglers GreenKids Lesson**

**IB Theme: How the World Works**

Taking recycling to a new level, first graders learned that in addition to keeping paper, plastic, and glass out of the trash, it’s possible to recycle food scraps. With the help of a compost bin and red wiggler worms, table scraps can be turned into compost, nutrient-rich plant food. The students also had the opportunity to observe adult, and juvenile worms, locate eggs, and a few lucky students saw the worms producing compost. Each student then helped create a compost bin for the classroom. In addition, several students took information about starting a compost bin in their home.

**Chinese Immersion News**

Many thanks to the support our parents and community have provided after the loss of instructional days due to snow. We were sad to cancel our Lunar New Year performances. However, we look forward to having our children perform at Cultural Heritage Night in April. Look for more information soon!

The Immersion Open House for interested parents was a success. We had many families interested in our program. We encourage you to seek out families to join our program in grades four and five for next year. **As a reminder, if you currently have a child in our immersion program (grades kindergarten – four for the 2010-2011 academic year) and have a younger sibling applying for next year, you must complete the Elementary Immersion Interest Form for all students located at:**

If you need support in this process, contact Mr. Dushel via email or phone.

Testing Dates

Below you will find the testing schedule for the students at College Gardens. Please remember NOT to schedule doctor’s appointments and vacations during testing dates.

- Make sure your children are well rested.
- Make sure your children arrive at school on time (9:15 a.m.).
- Encourage your children to do their best. Undoubtedly, the children will do their best when they have had a full night’s rest and arrive at school on time and ready to take their tests. As always, your support is appreciated.

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Information about MSA
If you have questions about MSA testing, visit the following sites:
**Math MSA:**
**Reading MSA:**

Please Note
Student Safety

College Gardens Elementary School in conjunction with the City of Rockville Police Department and the School Safety and Security Team would like to remind you that the safety of all of our students is paramount. Two specific pieces we will be monitoring are:

- No left turns into the kiss and ride driveway during AM drop off
- Making sure everyone is taking advantage of the two crossing guards we have and crossing at the cross walks

Therefore, during the following weeks, we will have the support of these two agencies to enforce the student drop off and crosswalk safety. The police will be giving out citations if necessary. As always, thank you for your support.
Classroom Observations

We love having parents in our building. If you would like to observe your child in class, please contact the teacher at least 24 hours in advance to schedule a time to observe. This enables the teacher to be sure that you will be observing the part of the day you are most interested in seeing. Lunch and recess observations of your child can be arranged through Mrs. Rogovoy, assistant principal.

Kindergarten Orientation

Orientation for students entering Kindergarten in the fall will be held on May 27 and 28. There will be no regular kindergarten classes those two days. Please contact Mrs. Armi Sardarbegians, school secretary, to schedule an appointment.

Student Transfer Season

Student Transfer Application Season is scheduled from February 1, 2010 through April 1, 2010. Parents who wish to request a change in school assignment for their children from their home school may begin the process during the upcoming transfer season.

Students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are assigned to a school on the basis of their place of residence and are expected to attend their home school. Assignment changes of students from one school are permitted under the following limited circumstances:

- Older sibling in the requested school
- Continuation in a feeder pattern from middle school to high school, except when affected by boundary changes
- Admission to Chinese, French, or Spanish immersion programs
- Admission to a center for the highly gifted
- A documented hardship situation

The transfer process begins in the home school, where parents may request a change of school assignment information booklet that describes the process and provides useful information. Assignment change forms and the information booklets are available in schools the first week in February and on the school system Web site at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org. The booklet will be available in both English and Spanish. Special programs that do not fall under the transfer guidelines are listed in the information booklet. Every effort will be made to notify parents of the assignment decision by May 15, 2010.

For more information about the transfer process, parents may contact the school office staff. Non-English speaking parents may receive more information by calling the Spanish hotline at 301-279-3073 or the ESOL parents center at 301-230-0674. Language lines are also available to leave a message for someone to return the call. They are: Spanish 301-230-5403; Cambodian, 301-230-5427; Chinese, 301-230-5428; French, 301-230-5429; Korean, 301-230-5430; and Vietnamese, 301-230-5432.

Pennies for Patients

Many thanks to all the students and their parents for their generous contributions to our Pennies for Patients fundraising activity. A total of $753.92 was raised to help the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to search for a cure.
News From the Media Center
Special Occasion Book Club

Don’t forget that you can donate a new book to the Media Center as a way to celebrate a birthday, holiday, special achievement or to show teacher appreciation. For a minimum donation of $10.00, your child will be able to select a book from one of our new arrivals. A bookplate will be placed inside the front cover identifying the student and occasion being honored. A certificate will be given to the honoree, and the student will be the first person to check out the book. Once it is returned, the book will be available for general circulation. This is a great way to recognize a special occasion or person and also help increase our Media Center collection.

From the Music Department

It's showtime! Please mark your calendars now for the upcoming Spring Musicals.

• The Fifth Grade Plus Fourth Grade Chinese Immersion Chorus will present "Earth Day" on Tuesday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the All Purpose Room.
• The Fourth Grade Chorus will present "Bebop with Aesop" on Tuesday, May 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the All purpose Room.

Please join us! If there are any questions please call Ms. Matuskey at 301-279-8470.

From The Health Room

Head Lice

We would like to keep our school bug free. Please remind your children of the importance of not sharing hats and combs. Also, please continue to check your child’s hair for head lice or nits. Please inform us if you find any lice or nits.


Stress is just a normal part of life. Stress very simply is how you perceive certain events and how your body reacts to them. Children react to stress in many different ways. Small children with under-developed communication skills display stress differently than adults. Often kids’ stress is internalized and most noticeable in physical symptoms such as headache, stomachache, and even nausea. Some regress to behaviors like bedwetting, clinging, and frequent crying. Others may exhibit extreme behavioral symptoms from listlessness, to hyperactivity. There are many ways parents/guardians can help their children reduce stress. These include:

1. Eating nutritious healthy meals regularly, particularly breakfast, and including snacks.
2. Encourage exercise and physical activity. Limit TV and video-game playing.
3. Be clear in setting rules and consistent with discipline.
4. Gentle touch is a great healer. Sometimes a hug is worth more than a thousand words.
5. Maintain a stable home environment if possible. Routines can be comforting.
6. Strengthen relationships. Make your child feel wanted and accepted unconditionally.
7. Teach your kids that everyone (including you) makes mistakes.
8. Teach coping skills and positive self-talk. Resist the temptation to always intervene.
9. Learn to be a good listener. Make time to talk without interruptions.
10. Teach relaxation and breathing techniques. Sometimes we all need to slow down.

From the Cafeteria

Please have your phone number, your child’s pin number (4 digits) and full name (not nickname) on
lunch money checks. The telephone number is required by the Food Services department. If you give your child lunch money or a check, please have them bring it to the cafeteria first thing in the morning.

Please be sure to put money into your child’s lunch account on a regular basis. Parents can view and deposit money into their child’s lunch accounts by going to www.mylunchmoney.com.

From the C-Team

Did you know thousands of people waste tons of energy? That’s right! The Conservation Team (C-Team) makes sure our school is not wasting energy. During C-Team meetings we brainstorm ideas and think of ways to save energy. We check classrooms after school to be sure all lights are off. We do not care only about our school but part of our goal is to inform everyone about saving energy. You should always turn off lights when no one is home and use solar energy especially when there is a lot of sunlight. That is why we are creating a play to share with everyone the need to conserve energy and the importance of recycling. We are very excited to share the play with you later in the spring. Remember, always conserve energy.

Lost and Found

All lost and found items not claimed by spring break will be donated to charity. Please have your child check the lost and found boxes located on the ramp to the stage in the all purpose room.

Dates to Remember

March
10   MSA Grade 5
   Community Dinner – Red Hot & Blue 5 pm
11   MSA Grade 5
12   MSA Grade 3 & 4
15   MSA Grade 3 & 4
15-19 Jump Rope for Heart during PE classes
16   MSA Grade 5
17   MSA Grade 5
18-23 MSA Make up days
25   Richard Montgomery Cluster Concert 7 pm
26   End of third marking period