
PAW PRINTS

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From the Principal's Desk

Catherine Long

The Greatest Show on Earth!

I might be a little biased, but I believe this year's Variety Show at Richard Montgomery High School was one of the greatest variety or talent shows you could possibly find in an elementary school. I am so proud of our students for working so hard and stepping out in front of hundreds of people to perform. Kudos to Mrs. Greenspan for the tremendous amount of time and energy she invested in making this a very special event for all of the Ritchie Park community.

Attention Parents of 5th Grade Students

Please hold the date of Thursday, February 9th at 7:30 PM for an informational meeting for parents of current 5th grade students coming to Julius West Middle School in 2012-2013. The meeting will provide an overview of the school's programs and specific courses for 6th grade students. A letter from JW will be provided to 5th graders on February 2nd.

Valentine's Day Parties

Our Valentine's Day parties will be held on Tuesday, February 14th at 2:00. Thank you to all of the parents who sent in donations towards the costs of the parties. Parents are welcome to attend if you would like, but we ask that you do not bring young children with you. The rooms get very crowded making it difficult to find a safe space for strollers. Pre-school children who are walking, sometimes get into materials not appropriate for young children. I appreciate your help making the parties an enjoyable experience for everyone!

Geography Bee Finalists

Congratulations to our Geography Finalists, Clarissa Halpern and Sophia Kaidi. The next step for these students is to take an exam. Students with the top scores will compete at the state level.

Chinese Immersion Program Open House

You are invited to College Gardens ES on February 7th and 28th from 9:30 to 10:15 to learn about the Chinese Immersion Program. There will be a presentation and a tour of the building. If you would like additional information, please contact Molly Murray, Chinese Immersion Coordinator, at molly_b_murray@mcpsmd.org or 301-279-8470.

Kindergarten Orientation

Do you know anyone who will have a kindergarten student next year? We have selected May 10th & 11th for our Kindergarten Orientation dates. Please call the school office at 301-279-8475 to be added to the list to receive registration information.

Parent Request for a Change of School Assignment (COSA)

Occasionally parents wish to request that their child be assigned to a different school due to some hardship the family is confronting. The most typical reason is the location of child care. If you would like to request a COSA for the 2012-2013 school year, applications must be submitted between February 1st and April 1st. We can provide the form here at school, or you can access it online at:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/forms/335-45.shtm> Completed forms should be returned to Ritchie Park and we will forward them to the appropriate office. Kindergarten-aged children are expected to attend kindergarten orientation at their assigned school. If you have any questions about the process, or our program here at Ritchie Park next year, please do not hesitate to call the school.

From the Media Center:

The newest data is in with the completion of week number 11 in the Reading Incentive Program

“Reading is Enlightening!” As of Winter Break, we have 273 students and 9 staff members who have completed their first “lightning” sheet and are now at various levels of the program! We have new lightning sheets coming in every day. Students have collectively read a total of 384, 600 minutes!

We are wondering if you will reach a half million minutes next month! We are delighted to name our first group of **Greek Gods and Goddesses: Pablo Mazariago, Sara Logsdon, Sydney Weiss, Aashna Singh, Andy Song, Stephen Ofori-Appiah, Eesha Kurella, Natasha Nguyen, Charlie Lapkoff, and Mrs. Sally White.** Look for their pictures to go up on the Greek God and Goddess “Wall of Fame” in the next two weeks. It is not too late to start. “Lightning” sheets and information on the program are available in the Media Center and on the website. **Keep up the great work!**

Upcoming Events

February 7 th	PTA Meeting
February 9 th	County Council Facilities Hearing (delay in the construction of a new elementary school in our neighborhood)
February 6 th -10 th	National School Counselors Week

Meet Sue Petullo *continued*

on satellite radio has definitely made our hectic morning commute a little happier. And my final lesson to share with you that I have learned on my happiness journey is...

3. Make your bed every day.

What does this have to do with learning how to be happy? I’m not sure, but it actually works! I have found that when I take that few extra minutes each morning to make the bed, it somehow just makes me feel better...happier. Try it and see if it makes you even a little happier.

Those are just a few tips to hopefully inspire you if you are interested in walking on the happiness path. I encourage you to check out the happiness project book and website for further inspiration.

Remember: The days are long, but the years are short. Don’t let happiness pass you by.

Meet the Ritchie Park Staff- Lifelong Learners

Each edition of Paw Prints will include a short article by a member of the Ritchie Park staff. They will describe something new they have learned to do over the summer, or since the school year started. The Ritchie Park staff is committed to continuous growth!

Meet Sue Petullo

The days are long, but the years are short... this phrase has stayed with me daily since starting my “Happiness Project” last summer.

I always thought of myself as a happy person, yet found myself needing a refresher “course” after going through some personal setbacks and feeling exhausted as a new mom. My guidebook along this journey of becoming happier has been a book titled “The Happiness Project” by Gretchen Rubin. Her book and website: www.happiness-project.com is filled with tons of suggestions and videos on how to become a happier person.

I will share just a few of my personal “resolutions” with you as I move along my happiness journey:

1. Do the things you loved to do when you were ten years old.

This resolution led me to purchase a new shiny pink bike that I have used throughout the summer and fall, even on colder days, to pedal around our neighborhood. I even had a baby seat installed so that my son, Quin, can enjoy the ride with me. We have fun searching for basketball hoops and ringing the bike bell along the ride.

Another activity I am pursuing again that brought me joy as a child is dancing. I loved taking jazz classes as a ten year old and it still makes me smile. I now set aside at least two hours a week to attend either Zumba or Hip-Hop classes at our local YMCA. I always feel more energized and happier after every class. Next on my list of fond childhood activities to pursue again is ice skating.

2. Sing in the morning.

Sounds silly, but it works! It goes along with the idea that if you act happy, you will feel happier. Most of my current singing involves annoying renditions of “Wheels on the Bus” and other toddler tunes as I attempt to get out the door with my son each morning. It does help to have a few sips of strong coffee first. Occasionally, I’ll try to sneak in a non-toddler song such as a Broadway or a Disney tune. Also, having access to great songs

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