

Rolling Terrace News

A publication of the Rolling Terrace Elementary School PTA

November, 2006

Your PTA on the Web: www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/rollinges/index.shtml

Upcoming Events

November

Wed. 8th - PTA Meeting

New time: 3:15 p.m.

Thu. 9th - Early Release

Parent/teacher conferences

Fri. 10th - Early Release

Parent/teacher conferences

Tue. 21st - Social Action Comm. Meeting.

7 p.m.

Thu. 23rd, Fri. 24th - Thanksgiving Holidays

Thu. 30th - PTA Executive Board Meeting.

7 p.m. All are welcome.

December

Tue. 5th - PTA Meeting, 7 p.m.

Our New Principal, Part 2

In September, we sat down with our new Principal, Ms. Jennifer Ostrowski, to discuss various topics of interest to the school community. We published the first part of that interview last month. Here follows the conclusion.

You've taught for three years at a school in California with a Title 1 program that included classes taught only in Spanish to native Spanish speakers, and you also helped establish an Immersion program in Japanese in nearby Loudoun County, Va. What attracts you to Immersion education?

J.O. What attracts me about the Immersion program is Language Acquisition, and how kids and adults acquire language. My doctoral work has been in English as a Second Language – how non-native English speakers, coming to this country or born here, how they acquire English. Basically, what I've found is, it's about good teaching. My goal is to work with all of the teachers in using instructional strategies that work, whether it be in acquiring English as a second language, or Spanish as a second language.

Rolling Terrace serves a multi-ethnic population. How do you deal with the language barrier here?

J.O. We are continuing to develop our English as a Second Language Program (ESOL). We always say ESOL is the program, LEP (Limited English Proficiency) is the identifying label for students. We are looking at our ESOL program and the delivery of service, and looking at students who have acquired English but just might need some extra support in the general education classroom. We have a wonderful, wonderful ESOL staff, a great group of teachers who have wonderful relationships with the general education teachers. There's a lot of teamwork that's already in place.

Are you thinking of ways to address the minority achievement gap?

J.O. One thing we do as a school staff, is to look at the data to inform our instruction in the classroom. For example, when we monitor students in pre-assessments and post-assessments in Math, we take that data and have conversations with the grade level, and across the school, so we'll know, hopefully, after the post-assessments, what areas are strengths within our school, and what areas we need to continue to focus on. We're looking at individual student data. We have begun a program called STARS (Students Targeted for Aggressive Remediation) in Math -- and if this program is successful we'll use it with reading as well. By focusing on individual students, we're not only going to close the achievement gap, but we're going to look at each student's success.

Please see **Principal, Ostrowski**, page 2

What are some ways you can encourage parents or the community to get more involved at the school?

J.O. What I tried to do this summer when I began, was to focus on something a lot of people know about, that being yard work. We hosted a Saturday work day. I was also out front when pre-school parents dropped off their kids during the summer session. I met the community in a more casual fashion, with my sleeves rolled up. I didn't plan it, I just saw something that needed to be done. It turned out to be a way to reach the community, enlisting the help of others. Mrs. Lacayo, here in the office, came outside and was watching and helping me one morning, and was saying in Spanish to some of the parents, "This is the new Principal, look at her, come over here and help her!" She shares the belief that all families should be involved. That morning we had about 15 kids helping

me and that was incredible. These are families that may not have access to the list-serve, so just by talking to them, and reaching out to the community in that way, they got involved.

We've had our UPS driver to eat lunch with the students. He's someone who drives around and knows everyone in the community. He's shy, but we started talking to him over the summer and he comes in every day. So one day, we had some kids in the office, and we said, "Hey, wouldn't you love it if the UPS driver had lunch with you?" and they said, "Come on Friday, when we have pizza!" So he came for lunch. Kevin is our Postal worker, and he lets us in on the history of the neighborhood. Just reaching out to those informal sources to find out about the history of the school has been helpful.

A Message from Your PTA President

As your PTA President I need to talk about trust. Why trust, you say? Well, here's why.

Each year, RT families entrust their children, their most precious beings, to the school to be educated in a fair, secure, nurturing, and creative environment. Equally, the school trusts that all families will encourage and support their children to participate fully by coming to class prepared and ready to learn. It is an implicit agreement between home and school. This pact implies a clear path for both parties to follow, providing the very best by all our children. The reality, however, is that the path is not always clear. There are many demands on both parents and schools, and sometimes these demands are in competition with each other. The sheer number of requirements can complicate matters until we lose sight of our most important goal -- helping our children grow to be caring, knowledgeable, independent, responsible, and productive adults.

There is a Mexican saying, "No puedes tapar el sol con un dedo." Literally it means you cannot cover the sun with one finger. Figuratively, it means you cannot hide the truth. The truth is that there are families in our community who feel that their children are not being challenged enough. Other families feel that the school sacrifices the needs of the majority in favor of the Spanish Immersion program. Some teachers are able to bring the MCPS curriculum alive in creative and engaging ways to all their students. Newer teachers also honor their students but may still be warming to the demands of multicultural education. (This is one profession you can only learn on the job!)

But by and large, parents value their children's experiences here and, for the most part, feel the school is doing right by them. Teachers value and appreciate the support that parents offer. When you weave all these points together, you find a vision of our school—of what it is and what it can become.

In order to move our school forward, however, we must speak about trust. It all begins and ends with trust. So, I am asking our entire school community to take a huge leap of faith with me. I am asking you to forget and forgive any time you felt the school failed your children, and begin anew today. I am also asking teachers to wipe their slates clean and also begin anew. Should we blindly trust both school and community? No. Trust takes time. It takes commitment to our mission. I also know that trust requires us to bank multiple positive experiences together. Let's start now.

There are seven months left in this school year -- many days to build positive experiences with our children's teachers and school staff and for them to build positive experiences with us. The best way for families to enact their vision of the school is by getting involved in the classroom, from your home, or in the extra curricular activities we host. Our school is a wealth of programs, committees, volunteer opportunities, and last but not least—meetings! Come share your vision, your talents, and your concern for your children with your school community. If you haven't found your place at the school or the PTA in the past, please give us another try. Building trust requires taking risks, but you are not alone. There are many of us here willing and happy to help. Please feel free to call me or write an email and share your thoughts with me. You can reach me at 301-592-0341 or noraicartland@starpower.net. Together we can make RT into a better place for ALL our children.

*Sincerely,
Nora Cartland, PTA President*

STRANGELY DRAWN TO MAGNET PROGRAMS?

County to Hold Information Sessions on Academic Magnet Programs

Families of all 3rd and 5th graders should be receiving in their homes a mailing from MCPS containing general information and dates for Parent Information sessions for some of the magnet programs available to these age groups. For info, visit www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/specialprograms.

The dates are:

(All meetings begin at 7 p.m.)

For grade 3 students interested in the Highly Gifted Centers:

Nov.8 at Churchill High School (English & Spanish)

Nov.9 at Northwest High School (English & Spanish)

For grade 5 students interested in Middle School magnets:

Nov. 13 at Eastern Middle School (Humanities & Communication) snowdate: Nov.28

Nov. 15 at Takoma Park Middle School (Math , Science & Computer Science). Snowdate: Nov. 29

For grade 5 students interested in Middle School Magnet Consortium schools:

Nov.8 at Kennedy High School (English & Spanish)

Nov.16 at Walter Johnson High School (English & Spanish)

Nov.20 at Rockville High School (English & Spanish)

Nov.28 at Parkland Middle School for Aerospace Technology

Nov.29 at Argyle Middle School for Information technology

Nov.30 at Loiederman Middle School for Creative and Performing Arts

Application Workshops for non-consortium magnets:

Nov.30 at Gaithersburg High School

Dec.4 at Wheaton High school

APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR ALL PROGRAMS: DECEMBER 8, 2006

It Takes Work...

R.T. Fall Gardening Day is November 9, from 12:30 - 3:00. Come pull some weeds, dig in the dirt, and make RT a more beautiful place! See you in front of the school on the 9th! Contact Ruth, Landscaping Committee, 301-949-8415, ruth4sons@aol.com

...To Win All These Blue Ribbons!

Rolling Terrace's front garden won an award for the Keep Montgomery County Beautiful Program. *This is the 7th year we entered and the 7th year we've won!* The Award will be hung along side the other in the front hallway.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING FOR US?

The Rolling Terrace PTA Newsletter committee welcomes your submissions and ideas, in English or in Spanish. Please contact Jenny Apostol DiPaul, editor, 301-891-2385, japostol@ngs.org

Our translations editor is Gretta K. Siebentritt, with assistance from Shana and Parry Wilson.

Our distribution coordinator is Debra Brink. Steve Hendrix is in charge of format and type-setting.

If you would like to join the team – we are looking for a Spanish speaker who can format the Newsletter in Spanish! If you are interested, please contact Jenny

Are You a Bookish Kind of Cat?

Cub Room/ Tiger Room Volunteer needed one –two hours per week to shelve, organize and repair books for Pre-K and 1st grade classrooms. Come any time it fits onto your schedule.

Training is available by the Reading Specialist. If interested please contact:

Missy Salvesen 301-431-7600 or melissa_c.salvesen@mcpsmd.org



Help Our PTA Tiger Earn Its Stripes

We hope you'll become a member of the Rolling Terrace PTA. It's a great way to show support for our school. This year's PTA goal is 150 members – and both families and teachers/staff can join. We're tracking our progress on a PTA Tiger poster in the main school hallway's PTA bulletin board – we fill in more tiger stripes with each additional member so you can check out how we're doing as you pass by. We're almost there, but we need your help to reach our target.

PTA membership lasts for one school year, and families need to join again each fall for the current year. The money we raise through PTA membership dues goes toward the many programs we support at Rolling Terrace; our membership numbers are also one way we show the larger community that we are actively involved in our children's education. (Please note that PTA membership is NOT required to attend PTA meetings or participate in activities).

It's definitely not too late to become a member -- as of October 20th, we have 124 members (112 families and 12 teachers/staff), within roaring distance of our goal. Membership is easy – just complete the half page form and return it with your membership contribution to your child's teacher, the PTA mailbox, or by mail to Becky Smith, 51 Walnut Ave., Takoma Park, 20912. Sign up today!



ENGLISH

Rolling Terrace Elementary School
Annual PTA Membership
2006-2007



Your Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____ (please print carefully)

By providing us with your email address, you will be able to receive notices on the Rolling Terrace PTA Listserv.

Please make checks payable to RT-PTA

Membership Categories: (please circle one)

Regular Member: \$10 Year Contributing Member: \$25 Year Sustaining Member: \$50 Year

How can you help the PTA this year? _____

May we contact you to volunteer with a PTA event or activity? Yes or No _____

Please return to the Rolling Terrace Front Office or mail to Becky Smith, 51 Walnut Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912

Thanks, Rolling Terrace Elementary School PTA

Craft Fair Volunteers Needed

The holiday giftmaking workshop will be Friday, Dec. 1, from 7-8:30 pm. We need volunteers to run "booths" where students can make simple crafts to give as gifts. All you need to do is gather materials for 15-20 children and come teach it that evening. You will be reimbursed up to \$15 for materials (please save receipts). Use of recycled materials is encouraged.

Last year's craft fair was canceled twice(!) due to bad weather. I will be contacting those of you who volunteered to run booths to see if you can try again this year.

We especially welcome crafts reflecting the cultures of our diverse student population. We will be happy to help you brainstorm ideas for your craft project and help you collect needed supplies.

To volunteer, please call Linda Warschoff at 301-434-4591 or send email to lwarschoff@comcast.net. Thank you!

WALK TO PHILLY!

*Or At Least, Walk **FOR** Philly – Nov. 11th 2k Family Fun
Run/Walk Will Raise Money for 5th-Grade Trip To Philadelphia*

When - Saturday, November 11, 2006, 9:00am to 11:30am, rain or shine
Meet at the RT bus drop off zone.

Everyone from the RT community is invited to join us as we run/walk along the Long Branch Creek Parkway to have fun and raise money for the RT fifth grade class.

The cost is \$3.00 for children, \$5.00 for adults, or \$15.00 per family. The first three finishers get a free Rolling Terrace t-shirt. Each participant gets a running bib personally decorated by a 5th grader. Snacks/refreshments will be served before and after the race.

All of the money raised will help pay for the annual fifth grade field trip to Philadelphia. Our goal is to raise enough money to pay the field trip fee for 20 fifth grade students who would not otherwise be able to afford the trip.

For more information contact Liz Moses, fifth grade parent, at lizmoses3@yahoo.com or 301/408-2772 or Bete Yilma, fifth grade teacher, at bete_yilma@mcpsmd.org.

In the spirit of giving...

Cold weather is coming and our children need coats! Please clean out your closets today and donate your **GENTLY USED COATS** to Haydee Puertas in the Family Room at RT anytime over the next few weeks. Recess is so much more fun when you're warm and toasty and can play without feeling cold. THANK YOU!

Indoor recess needs help! You can send in **GAMES, CARDS, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ITEMS FOR INDOOR RECESS TIME**. Indoor recess happens when it's too rainy to play outside. The kids need a break from school work and they LOVE playing games. If you can send in games, activities, etc. that are appropriate for the kids to do on these messy days, everyone benefits. Ms. Abushaikha will collect these items. THANK YOU!

Ms. Karen Mendez needs **SIDEWALK CHALK!** Please pick up a few extra boxes for RT on your next shopping outing. This keeps many kids happy during their recess break. Playground balls are good too! Send in these items anytime to Ms. Mendez! Thanks so much!

The Health Room needs **GENTLY USED CLOTHING** for emergency situations. Please send in pants, shirts and other clothing items that can be used when accidents happen. **UNDERWEAR** is especially needed -- pick up an extra bag or two at Target and send them in to RT! Muchas Gracias!

Check in with your teacher and/or Room Rep to see what your child's classroom might need. Winter is coming and many classrooms need **KLEENEX TISSUE** for running noses. Extra pencils are always appreciated. **CLOROX WIPES** can always be used to keep things clean and keep germs away. Send in a "goodie bag" to your teacher(s) -- they'll love you for it!

*It's never too late to donate time to Rolling Terrace! If you would like to volunteer, but are not sure how, contact Ruth Schilling. She can find just the right project for you. 301/949.8415 ruth4sons@aol.com
Everyone can make a difference!*

REPORT STRESSES PLAY NEEDED FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

In October, the American Academy of Pediatrics released the following report. It sounds obvious – children need to play! But our busy calendars sometimes leave little time for what many kids love best.

A new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says free and unstructured play is healthy and - in fact - essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient.

The report, "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds," is written in defense of play and in response to forces threatening free play and unscheduled time. These forces include changes in family structure, the increasingly competitive college admissions process, and federal education policies that have led to reduced recess and physical education in many schools.

Whereas play protects children's emotional development, a loss of free time in combination with a hurried lifestyle can be a source of stress, anxiety and may even contribute to depression for many children, the AAP report states.

The report reaffirms that the most valuable and useful character traits that will prepare children for success come not from extracurricular or academic commitments, but from a firm grounding in parental love, role modeling and guidance.

Still, many parents are afraid to slow their pace for fear their children will fall behind. They feel like they are running on a treadmill, but worry they will not be acting as proper parents if they do not participate in a hurried lifestyle.

The report suggests that reduced time for physical activity may be contributing to the academic differences between boys and girls, as schools with sedentary learning styles become more

difficult settings for some boys to navigate successfully.

Among the specific guidelines, the report suggests:

- Emphasizing the benefits of "true toys", such as blocks and dolls, in which children use their imagination fully over passive toys that require limited imagination;
- Supporting an appropriately challenging academic schedule for each child with a balance of extracurricular activities. This should be based on each child's unique needs and not on competitive community standards or need to gain college admissions;
- Helping parents evaluate claims by marketers and advertisers about products or interventions designed to produce "super-children;"
- Encouraging parents to understand that each young person does not need to excel in multiple areas to be considered successful or prepared to compete in the real world;
- Suggesting families choose childcare and early education programs that meet children's social and emotional developmental needs as well as academic preparedness.

The report recognizes that academic enrichment opportunities are vital for some children's ability to succeed academically, and that participation in organized activities promotes healthy youth development.



"The challenge for society, schools, and parents is to strike the balance that allows all children to reach their potential, without pushing them beyond their personal comfort limits, and while allowing them personal free time," the report states.

To help parents and teens develop resiliency and understand the role of stress in life, the AAP has created a Resiliency Web site.. This site features additional information on stress reduction and coping skills, as well as a stress management plan teens can personalize to fit their personalities and lifestyles. Visit www.aap.org/stress for more information.

Digest of 9/28/06 RT PTA Executive Board Meeting

The Board of the Rolling Terrace Elementary School PTA Executive Board was held on September 28th, in the International Room.

Ms Ostrowski gave her Principal's Report indicating (i) RT enrollment is down, class sizes will shift, and one of the second grade teachers will become the new math specialist, (ii) Dr. Morrison, our Community Superintendent, visited RT demonstrating a new data sharing tool for use by teachers and staff, and (iii) a cafeteria policy goal will be to provide hot meals to students who have forgotten or otherwise do not have their lunch (The board decided to fund again the emergency lunch fund for \$100, with the understanding that follow-up will take place to determine the cause when a child receives funds for lunch, and that the money will be re-paid to the fund).

RT parent Philip Bregstone presented proposed plans for this year's UNICEF Halloween fundraiser.

Ms. Vas shared her experiences at the William and Mary gifted and talented professional development program and expressed gratitude to the PTA for its financial support for teachers participation in this program.

Parry Wilson distributed the budget which was endorsed unanimously.

Margie Rittman gave her Vice President's report and stated that many safety-related incidents remind us of the need for better lighting.

Nora gave her President's Report indicating (i) interpretation at PTA meetings remains a priority, (ii) babysitting will be limited to 25 kids at meetings, (iii) fund-raising for field trips is encouraged at each grade level.

Committee reports were given.

Kate Bauer is on track with Spanish Immersion, with the help of Sra. Jimenez. The Immersion Extended Day program is resolving some concerns before it begins.

Jenny Apostol needs Spanish-speaking volunteers for the newsletter.

Tom Jacobson briefed the group on his Blair Cluster Representative duties.

Molly Galvin indicated the nutrition committee will continue to look at healthier lunches, with a focus on the "a la carte" (snack) items, and discouragement of candy as incentives.

Minigrants are also on track, thanks to Laura Kriv, who distributed a sample letter and application.

Digest of 10/3/06 General PTA Meeting

A general meeting of the RTPTA took place Tuesday, October 3rd, 2006. Highlights of the agenda included:

Principal's Vision for the School,

Getting to know your PTA,

President and learn about the PTA,
Tiger Awards.

In addition to the above, the following PTA business was conducted:

the 2006-2007 RTPTA budget was unanimously approved

and Margie Rittman was voted in as Vice President unanimously.

Thank You to Johnson's Florist & Garden Centers

We would like to acknowledge and thank Johnson's Florist & Garden Centers for their \$25 gift certificate that they gave to Rolling Terrace's Landscaping Committee. A large clay pot was purchased with this money. It will be used to display seasonal flowers in the front garden or in one of the two interior courtyards. Come see for yourself on Gardening Day, next Thursday, 11/9, 12:35 - 3:00pm. We need your energy -- bring your gloves and tools and get ready to get dirty!

To volunteer, please call Ruth Schilling at 301.949.8415 or send an email to ruth4sons@aol.com

Not Yet Volunteered To Be A Room Parent? Read Here:

We still have openings for the very important and rewarding job of room parent, especially in kindergarten and 1st grade classes but also in the other grades too. If you are interested or have questions, please email me, Judy, directly at jwyman16@yahoo.com.

Already Volunteered To Be A Room Parent? Read Here:

For those of you who have already volunteered, just to be sure that I have your names could you please email me, Judy, directly at jwyman16@yahoo.com and give me your name, the best email address to use, your phone number, the name of the teacher, the grade, and whether it is the a.m. or p.m. class.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING *from the Nutrition Committee*

Stuck in a food rut? Want your kids to eat healthier but don't know where to start? Here is a whole week's worth of suggestions for jazzing up family meals and adding some nutritious options.

Monday -- Try something different for breakfast. If cereal is your mainstay, have scrambled eggs and fruit, or blend up a yogurt smoothy with fresh or frozen fruit.

Tuesday -- Let each of your kids pick a favorite meal for dinner and schedule it in. When their night comes, let them help you write a shopping list, get the items you need, and/or prepare the food. Even very young kids can wash vegetables, pour and mix ingredients, and bring dishes to the table.

Wednesday -- Have the whole family try an "exotic" fruit or vegetable that you don't normally buy, such as papayas, eggplant, kiwi fruit, apricots, beets, cabbage, or radishes. You may find some converts.

Thursday -- Substitute healthier options for old standbys. If your kids love to order pizza, try making your own on whole wheat pita bread or French bread, with low-fat cheese and veggies. Substitute ground turkey or chicken for ground beef in a favorite recipe. Instead of straight juice, mix it with carbonated water to make spritzers.

Friday -- Let your kids pack their own lunches. Provide plenty of healthy options, like whole-wheat bread or wraps for sandwiches, low-fat yogurt, and sliced fruits and veggies.

Saturday -- Prepare a vegetarian meal. It could be a veggie stir-fry, bean burritos, cheese quesadillas, pasta with red sauce ... Use your imagination!

Sunday -- Take your kids to a local farmer's market. Buy something that you can have at dinner that night -- fresh salad, home-made bread, or fruit for dessert.