

Stephen Knolls Newsletter

Information for Parents of Stephen Knolls Students

February 2009

Calendar Updates

For calendar information you can go to the MCPS website and click on **School Calendars under Short Cuts.** <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/calendars/>

Note From the PSA President

I hope everyone had a pleasant holiday break. We have some exciting things planned for the Spring. Our **Annual Spring Yard Sale and Community Fair** is fast approaching. I wanted to remind everyone to save your items to sell either for your own table or to donate to the PSA table. We'll have more fun activities this year and I know we'll have a lot more people. We'll have the cake walk (lots of fun for everyone, especially me!) and of course the great food. New this year will be face painting and a variety of games that the whole family can enjoy.

We also will have our **Staff Appreciation Breakfast** in May. This is our chance to thank all the people who help our children in so many ways. Whether it's in the classroom, pool or transportation (just to name a few). Each staff member is critical to the education of our children in his or her own way and each is extremely important to the success of our children. We'll be announcing the dates for our events in the next newsletter.

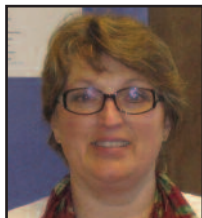
I would like to take a moment to thank **Carrie Smith**. She has put together a school directory for Stephen Knolls. This has been a goal of ours for years. If you haven't received yours already, you should be getting it very soon. It contains helpful information about school calendars, closings and class lists. This should prove helpful in filling out those Valentine's cards!

One last item is our **PSA Meeting** on Thursday, February 12th at 9:30am. Please come join us! If you have any PSA questions, please feel free to contact me at samcampbelldesign@comcast.net or 301-530-2353.

Best,
Sam Campbell
Stephen Knolls PSA President

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Stephen Knolls Families,



We have completed our first semester for the 2008-2009 school year and mid-year updates will be coming home soon. If you have any questions, please make sure you call your child's teacher. You are an important part of your child's team. Please make sure you are talking with your child's teacher to give input and feedback. We want to make sure that your child is making progress and learning.

As a reminder, when your child is sick or can't attend school, please call the office and let them know that your child will be absent. It is important to send in a note the next day as to why your child was absent. We are including a short form at the end of the newsletter that you can use for absences.

We would like to get your feedback out our newsletter. What would you like to see in the Stephen Knolls School Newsletter? More pictures? More articles? What kind? Please complete the short survey at the end of this newsletter so we can continue to make improvements.

We have had some exciting days recently with the water main breaks in the area and now snow days. Please make sure that you keep the school updated with any additional phone numbers where we could contact you in case on an emergency. It is very important to have an alternate plan in case the school system closes early. If you have another phone number or any new information where we could reach you, please send it in with your child. We want to make the day go as smoothly as possible for your child.

We have several special events coming up in the next couple of months. On February 18th, the entire building will be participating in "Science Day." Each classroom will have a science experiment or display for the other classes to see. We will have each classroom visit all of the stations and hopefully learn a few more scientific facts. March 2nd thru March 6th will be our "Read Across America" week. We are inviting 'readers' to come to each classroom and read to students. On March 13th all students will be participating in our "Math Day." More information will be coming home as we get closer to the date.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call the school.

Sincerely,
Tina Shrewsbury
Coordinator

The Classroom Corner

Preschool Update

The preschool classes are busy as usual learning and having an enjoyable school experience. The many holidays at this time of the year lead to even more excitement when learning concepts. In Language, all preschoolers enjoy their weekly visit to the Media Center where they listen to stories and complete a



follow-up activity. Everyday preschoolers listen to stories in their classrooms. In the Pre-K/ PEP Collaborative classes (Ms. Varner/ Ms. Garrett), the Pre-K Edition of the Weekly Reader Newspaper is also read. All classes are learning the letter of the week by naming and writing it, finding items that begin with the letter, and/or making letter books. Other Language activities include reading holiday sight words in Ms. Rosenfeld's PEP Classic class and reading recipes for cooking in Ms. Skelly's, Beginnings' class. Most classes are also learning/reviewing rhyming words and beginning sounds. We finished the "Farm" Unit. Pre-K/PEP Collaborative made a class book about the farm to send home with each child to read with his/her family. Most of the classes are now studying the "Store" Unit.

In Math, we have been covering the units "1 2 3 4 5" and "Big/Small." Ms. Davin's PEP INC class began Short/Tall/Long and made long and short towers with blocks. In Ms. Klein's PEP Classic class, they learned to make holiday patterns. Most classes are reviewing counting and sorting of colors and various objects. In addition, we have also been reviewing prepositions such as "under, inside of, in front of, on" etc.

In Social Studies, we are learning about holidays around the world. We are also working on positive behavior techniques, and how to get along with others. Science lends itself to observations and experiments, which teach physical and chemical changes. In Ms. Skelly's Beginnings' class, they cooked tasty treats such as mashed potatoes and pumpkin pie.

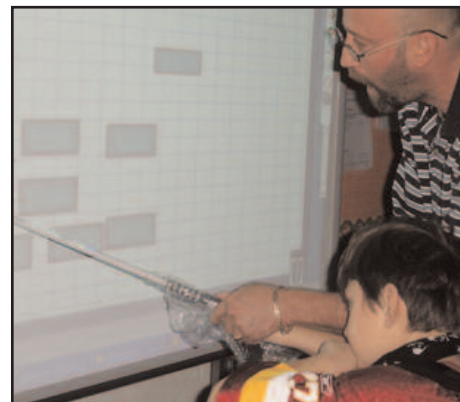
Other Preschool activities include the Pre-K/PEP Collaborative families working on student portfolios, which will be displayed when their child is chosen as "Special Person of the Week." In addition, "The Take Home Library" program began in December.

These are just a few of the many activities happening in the preschool and we invite you to come in and share the fun with us.



Elementary School Update

In all the academic subjects, the elementary team continued to work on goals relating to the Alt-MSA and grade level indicators. The students in Ms. Rowe's and Ms. Riffle's classes conducted observations and experiments with plants in the greenhouse. In Ms. Riffle's class, their community training involved purchasing items for classroom cooking activities, and in Ms. Rowe's class they visited places in the community that supported their Community Helpers unit; their first stop was to the Takoma Park Food Co-op. The students in Ms. Rowe's class explored their new science unit on magnets and magnetic attraction.



Middle School Update

Mr. Tarloff's and Mrs. Robinson's students have been busy collaborating on their continuing scientific investigations. They are exploring many topics including force, motion and friction. They are tying these concepts to relevant topics such as weather formations.

Students in both classes continue to make progress on achieving IEP goals and mastering Alt-MSA mastery objectives. Winter will provide us with different opportunities to experiment with the world around us.

Stay tuned for more updates!

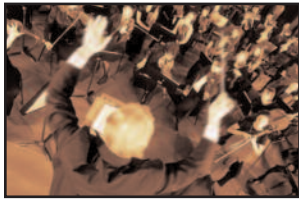
High School Update

In the senior high classes, the students were all business as they put into practice lessons that integrated vocational math, reading and science by running their holiday cookie gram sale as part of their Otis Spunkmeyer cookie business venture. School staff were offered the opportunity to recognize their colleagues by purchasing a cookie to be delivered to the person(s) of their choosing. Students, trying to meet the demand, were kept busy baking, packaging, and delivering the cookie grams. They are now talking about Valentine's Day cookie grams.

The senior high students also were busy studying how government works and elections are run. They hosted a mock election for the school-age students who voted using pictures of the candidates and voice output devices. Each senior class then graphed the results as an extension activity. The results mirrored the national election in that Obama/Biden won over McCain/Palin by 22 votes to 10. Plans to visit the White House are currently in the works for the second semester. In January, the students are scheduled to go on a trip to tour Washington, D.C. It will be an exciting time for them to visit our nation's capital with and a great culminating activity for their study of government and elections.

The Supporting Arts

A Music Update



There have been many exciting developments in the music program at Stephen Knolls this school year. New curriculum and grade level based CD sets and instruments have been introduced. The high school students have been listening to school ensembles performing musical

selections like *El Capitan* by Sousa, *What a Wonderful World* by Weiss, *Canon* by Purcell, *River Come Down* in Calypso style, *Encore* from Stomp, Blue Man Group's *Montage*, and many more. They have explored the role of background music, music in celebration, and in nature sounds, and have responded to the music by playing tone chimes, drums, and other percussion instruments along with the recordings. They have moved to the music using movement aids like balls, ribbons, and scarves.

The middle school students have been listening to musical selections like *Step into the Spotlight*, *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*, *The Wind Beneath My Wings*, *Sakura*, *Lion*, *Down by the River Side*, *Mountain Music*, *Yue Liang Wan Wan*, *The Wabash Cannonball*, *Sonata X*, *Orange Blossom Special*, *Conga*, *Concerto for Orchestra*, and much, much more. The students responded to the music by playing percussion instruments like the cabasa, maraca, chimes, drums and tambourine. Visual and movement aids were used to emphasize musical elements.

The elementary students were presented music from the *Sing to Read* series. Music from this series includes *Mr. Sun*, *10 Little Pumpkins*, and *Stop, Look, and Listen*. They listened to *The Jazz Fly* by Golub and Hanke, and *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev to learn about instrument sounds and story-telling through music. Concept songs like *Listen as I Play the Beat*, *Join into the Game*, *You've Gota Sing*, *Dr. Knickerbocker*, *Autumn Leaves*, and *Halloween Looby Loo* has been presented to them for them to work on both music and academic goals. Their communication was facilitated through the use of switch communication and pictures. They responded using facial expressions, sound production, and body movement.

During the month of December, the Music department presented music of celebration to the students. Music has served a role in every documented culture. A thorough study of world culture includes the study of music. Music is very often used to celebrate important events within these cultures. Therefore, they studied the music of Celebration and its function within a society. The students listened to and responded to music in ways that addressed the Four Critical Questions and the National Standards of Music Education. Music related to the following celebrations were presented to the students: the Winter Solstice, Dewali, Ramadan, Hanukah, Christmas, Three Kings Day, Kwanzaa, and New Year celebrations. All of the music presented is part of the MCPS curriculum and is from the MCPS approved instructional series, *Spot Light On Music*.

School-Aged Art

This past semester school-age students focused on line and color analyses in art class. We carefully studied various types of lines - straight, curved, wavy, curly, zigzag, solid, and broken. Line study may be easily reviewed at home or in the community by seeing, touching, and/or discussing the edges of everyday objects and identifying what types of lines they form.



Ms. Thomas, Art Teacher

For color analysis, different shades of colors were explored. The lightness to darkness of individual colors were studied. Review outside of art class can be done by simply distinguishing if an object is a light, medium, or dark shade of a particular color.

Please note that visually impaired students made textural renderings of these projects.

School-Aged Physical Education

Welcome to the holiday season! At the end of October, the students got to experience the awesome visual effects of items that glow in the dark during Halloween week. They also completed a variety of Halloween inspired activities filled with ghosts, flying saucers, bats, and spider webs. During the Thanksgiving holiday they participated in the "Turkey Bowl" along with other activities, including "Stuffing the Turkey" and the "Mini Turkey Bowl". In December and early January, as the weather got colder, the students began to participate in a variety of winter-inspired activities including snowmen bowling, winter sleigh ride, snowball fights, building a snow fort, and making shapes in the snow. Emphasis was to complete each of the activities with a goal toward independence.

Stephen Knolls Students Benefit from Aquatic Activity

Even though it is cold and wintry outside, the students of Stephen Knolls continue to enjoy the benefits of aquatic activity by participating in weekly swimming sessions in the school's therapy tank. The warm water (95 degrees F), plus the buoyancy and resistance that the water offers, combine to create a stimulating environment that facilitates movement and offers freedom from wheelchairs, walkers, braces, etc.

Some benefits of aquatic activity include:

- increased range of motion/flexibility
- increased circulation
- facilitated movement and weight bearing
- sensory stimulation
- relief from effects of gravity (i.e. joint compression)
- increased cardiovascular fitness
- increased strength and muscle tone
- fun and relaxation



Ms. Murphy and Mr. Wenhold, Aquatics Team

Parents are always welcome to stop by the pool to watch or even participate with their child. If you wish to do so, either let your child's classroom teacher know, or contact the aquatics teacher, Jim Wenhold.

We are in the process of planning some exciting improvements to our current swimming pool and pool area made possible through a generous

endowment for this purpose. Our next meeting regarding this project will be held at Stephen Knolls at the pool office on Monday January 12th 3:00-4:00 pm. These are open meetings and interested parents are encouraged to attend. If you will be attending, please notify the school's office personnel in advance so we can arrange for the appropriate number of seats.

The Media Connection



**Ms. Carter and Ms. Dodd,
Media Team**

In the media center, the classes learned about how different cultures celebrated holidays throughout time. The students studied the histories and traditions of Ramadan, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Years celebrations. Next, they will be studying about the Martin Luther King holiday and the presidential Inauguration.

They also began to study about

winter and snow interwoven with practicing basic math concepts such as counting and basic reading concepts such as using picture clues and making predictions about what comes next in the story.

In addition, the media staff want to say a huge thank you to everyone, parents, staff, alumni, and community members, who made the Barnes & Noble fundraiser such a success for the Media Center. So far they have had 62 books donated. This does not include the additional books that they will be able to purchase from their wish lists once Barnes & Noble staff finishes totaling all of the sales. They will keep us posted and report the grand totals in the next newsletter.

Announcements & Acknowledgements



Here's a way to help raise money for Stephen Knolls without spending any additional money of your own! More than likely you are already buying a few products that bear the "Box Tops for Education" logo. Clip the Box Tops for Education coupon off of the products, place them in an unsealed envelope or baggie and send them in your child's backpack. This nation-wide program has helped over

90,000 schools, grades K-8, raise over \$200 million dollars. With this money, schools have been able to buy anything from crayons to playground equipment. Think of what we could do for our students! A flyer was sent home with this information and the participating products. You also may wish to visit the Box Tops Education website for more information. www.boxtops4education.com

Barnes and Noble Update



In addition to the gift card we received from Barnes & Noble, we also receive approximately \$600 in book donations from parents, staff, and community members! Thank you to everyone for supporting this very

successful Book Fair event! Our students will greatly benefit from all the wonderful books that will be purchased.

Reaping Earthy Rewards— The Stephen Knolls Greenhouse

This has been a busy time for the greenhouse! They were awarded a \$500 grant through "Connections Beyond Sight and Sound." This money will be used to purchase more adaptive gardening equipment for the students. Each class participated in the Winter Greenhouse Sale held on December 18th and 19th. The students transplanted, weeded, and pruned to make sure everything looked lovely. Precious Thomas, art teacher, worked with the students to paint decorative pots.

The Therapeutic Touch



The next time you come to Stephen Knolls, please make sure to take time to visit our vocational workroom located next to Room A-7. There you will see the students busy at work improving both their fine motor and vocational skills by sorting items and performing two-handed tasks

such as putting items in containers or envelopes, shredding paper and much more. Students practiced their large motor skills by traveling to the vocational workroom in their gait trainers and wheelchairs. MaryAnn Anderson, para-educator, and Adriana Friedman, transition teacher are continually making up-grades to this room.

Please cut here and return this short but important survey to school with your child.

Stephen Knolls School Newsletter Survey

Please let us know what you like about our newsletter and anything that we can do to improve it. We value your feedback.

We really like _____

We'd like to see more _____

We are really interested in reading about _____

Other comments _____

Please let us know what you think about the Connect Ed phone messages that you receive at home as reminders of PSA meetings, school holidays and events.

Name of student: _____

Teacher: _____

Community Connections

Upcoming Workshops

Feb. 4 - Mar. 11, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Communicating Success to Children, required text \$20 (6 week session).



Parents will learn the purposes of a child's misbehavior and develop effective discipline and encouragement strategies for positively redirecting these behaviors. YMCA Ayr lawn Program Center, 5650 Oakmont Ave., Bethesda. Offered by the YMCA Bethesda Youth & Family Services. Questions or registration with Pam Mintz 301-229-1347, parenting@ymcadc.org.

Feb. 4, 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Dealing With A Strong Willed Child, donation

accepted. Come learn how to turn your determined, sensitive, argumentative and volatile child's characteristics into positive attributes. Spanish translation available (traducción en español disponible). White Oak Library, 11701 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring. Offered by the YMCA Bethesda Youth & Family Services. Questions or registration with Pam Mintz 301-229-1347, parenting@ymcadc.org.

Feb. 7, 10:00 AM. Montgomery County Transitioning Young Adults (MCTrans) (1st or 2nd Sat, 10 AM). Catriona Johnson, Assistant Director for State and Federal Relations Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration will talk about Community Pathways and New Directions Waivers. MC Arc, 11600 Nebel St., Rockville. Affiliated yahoogroup located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCTrans/> or subscribe by sending message to MCTrans-subscribe@yahoogroup.com. Group co-moderator - Reda Sheinberg, rjsheinberg@yahoo.com, <http://www.mctransitions.org/>

Feb. 8, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Nothing About Us Without Us: Panel Discussion with Transitioning Youth and Adults on the Autistic Spectrum. Youth and adults on the autism spectrum will share their points

of view on issues relating to living on the spectrum in the community, moderated by Ari Ne'eman. B'nai Shalom of Olney, 16401 Burtfield Dr., Olney. Organized by Reda Sheinberg, rjsheinberg@yahoo.com, 301-385-5889.

Feb. 24, 6:30 - 7:30 PM. MCPS Special Education - MCCPTA Delegates Program. Learn more about the special education services provided in MCPS. Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Dr., Rockville. MCCPTA, www.mccpta.net.

Feb. 26, 3:00 - 7:00 PM. Ask MCPS. Drop by for coffee and conversation.



Have your questions answered and pick up tips on how to support learning at home. MCPS Dept. of Family and Community Partnerships, 451 Hungerford Rd., Suite 508, Rockville. Sponsored by the MCPS Office of Communications and Family Outreach, 301-279-3100.

Mar. 7, 10:00 AM. Providing for Children with Special Needs - Montgomery County Transitioning Young Adults (MCTrans) (1st or 2nd Sat, 10 AM). Matt Klein, Financial Services Specialist, Prudential Life Insurance Co, will present. MC Arc, 11600 Nebel St., Rockville. Affiliated yahoogroup located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCTrans/> or subscribe by sending message to MCTrans-subscribe@yahoogroup.com. Group co-moderator - Reda Sheinberg, rjsheinberg@yahoo.com, <http://www.mctransitions.org/>

Mar. 24, 6:30 - 7:30 PM. MCPS Curriculum - MCCPTA Delegates Program. Learn more about the curriculum in MCPS. Carver Educational Services Center, 850 Hungerford Dr., Rockville. MCCPTA, www.mccpta.net.

Transition Times 2008-2009

Transition Times is a group for families of individuals with developmental differences who are transitioning to adult life. This is a joint project of Potomac Community Resources (PCR) and The Arc of Montgomery County. The meetings are held from 7:30-9:30p.m. at the Baughman Conference Center located at 11600 Nebel Street, Rockville, MD 20852. The meetings are held on the following dates: January 21, February 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, and June 17. Come share your expertise and experience, and obtain the information you need. Listed below are the support group's goals and the topics for discussion.



Goals:

- Become informed about the full range of issues facing transitioning youth and their families.
- Learn how other families have faced challenges or solved a problem.
- Networking to find out what opportunities are in the community.
- Support for families and social connections.

Topics:

- Issues proposed by participants
- SSI, DDA, DORS, DHHS, Medicaid, HOC
- Siblings issues and roles
- Marital/family issues
- Sexuality
- Residential and vocational options and issues
- Record-keeping strategies and suggestions
- Peer relationship issues
- Creating a well-rounded life
- Estate and long term planning
- Waiting list for services. How to cope

Reservations, questions, topic suggestions: Please contact either Ms. Haydee De Paula, at The Arc of MC at 301-984-5777, Ext. 275, haydeed@arcmontmd.org or Mr. Seth Duncan, Potomac Community Resources at 301-365-0561, seth@pcr-inc.org. Last minute participants are welcome.

School Absence Form

Date

My child, _____
first and last name

was absent on _____
Date

due to _____
reason why

Parent signature

**Please complete this form and send it in to your child's
teacher after an absence from school.**

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