

Stephen Knolls Newsletter

Information for Parents of Stephen Knolls Students

November 2008

School Safety

National School Bus Safety Week

The Board of Education proclaimed Oct. 20th thru 24th as National School Bus Safety Week and expressed its continued support for the MCPS Ride by the Rules campaign. Under the direction of Lucy Nolan, Physical Therapist, Stephen Knolls held the annual "Front Door Bus Evacuation Drill" on Thursday, October 16th. All staff participated in this training. Marion Haupt and Sue White from the Transportation Safety and Training Unit directed staff in how to safely remove students from the front door of the bus in the case of an emergency.



Front Door Bus Evacuation Drill

Parent/Child Reunification

You should have received a form that addresses the Parent/Child Reunification (PCR) process. **Please fill out and return the form as quickly as possible.** This form will be kept with your child's information and will only be used in case of an emergency or crisis. The people you list on the form will be for emergency use and not as alternative individuals authorized to pick up your child on a day-to-day basis. The location of our indoor on-campus pick-up area for pre-school students will be the back of the building by the cafeteria. The school-aged students' pick-up area will be the Senior Kitchen (door located at the end of the Remembrance Garden). In the case where we would need to be relocated, our off-campus parent/child reunification area is: Oakland Terrace Elementary School, 2720 Pliers Mill Road, Silver Spring, MD, 20902 (phone: 301-929-2161). If an emergency situation should arise, families would be contacted by phone through Connect Ed using the phone numbers you have placed on file with the school. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact the school.

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Families of Stephen Knolls School:

I hope you enjoyed our first newsletter and our Connect Ed phone messages. We are trying to make sure that you learn about all the exciting events your child is experiencing at school. The staff have been busy with instruction and the children have been busy learning!

It was wonderful to see the increased turn-out for the November Parent Staff Association meeting. We hope to see more of you in the future. We value your input! Our next meeting will be in early December. A flyer will be sent home with the date and time.

As I mentioned at Back-to-School Night, we have formed a partnership with Longview School. Our school-aged teachers are collaborating to share ideas, develop lessons and increase their knowledge of the curriculum. Ms. Sarah Riffle, elementary teacher, had the professional development opportunity to visit several of the Longview classrooms and meet with their teachers. She shared her reflections with our school-aged teachers. We are hoping to have more of our staff be able to continue this process. Ms. Adriana Friedman, Staff Development Teacher, has arranged two trainings for both Longview and Stephen Knolls teachers in the areas of math and science. Our pre-school teachers also have been setting up visits with general kindergarten classrooms to assist with transitioning our pre-kindergarten students to the next level.

We know how busy everyone is with day-to-day routines. If you have some special information for the school, please take a minute to call the school or e-mail your teacher. We want to make sure we are getting the correct information to the correct person (teacher, nurse, etc).

The next Educational Leadership meeting will be November 17th at 3:30 pm. We will have a guest speaker, Ms. Brenda Browne, Academic Achievement Specialist, to present information on our upcoming peer review. On December 5th, our School Improvement Plan (SIP) will be reviewed by a team of central office personnel as well as representatives from other areas. Over the next month we will be refining the SIP and would appreciate volunteers from the community to assist with this process.

To those of you who attended the Family Movie Night, we hope you had a great time. It was good pizza, good popcorn and a fun movie.

Sincerely,
Tina Shrewsbury
Coordinator

The Classroom Corner

Preschool Update

In the **preschool**, we are all working on the topics of home, farm, and self. Some of the books we are reading include: *Pumpkin, Pumpkin, The Three Little Pigs*, and the *Home and Farm* unit books from the literacy curriculum that we use with all of the preschool students. To follow up with the Farm unit, we took a trip to Sharp's Farm on October 22nd and visited farm animals, picked pumpkins, and saw different food items that grow on the farm. All of the children enjoyed the trip to the farm. In addition to the literacy items mentioned above, many of the classes are also working on letter identification and identifying their name and the names of their classmates.

In the area of math, we are working on color and number identification and rote counting. We are doing this through daily calendar activities, counting the number of items given at snack time, counting the number of items in books, and other math activities. The students also are learning a variety of new math vocabulary and their meaning in their environment such as tall/short, big/small, same/different.



Ms. Varner's preschool class

We are all so excited with the excellent transitions the children have made to school and the progress that they have shown so far. Keep up the good work preschoolers!

Elementary School Update

In **Mrs. Riffle's** and **Mrs. Weiss'** classes, the students and staff have discovered a winning combination as they are working together during academic blocks throughout the week on lessons in Social Studies, Math

and Reading. They also will be working together on such fun activities as cooking, music, computer projects, and community activities. Everyone enjoys working together and they look forward to continuing this fabulous collaboration.

Middle School Update

The Promethean board in **Mr. Tarloff's** class is getting quite a workout as the students are learning to compare the values of fractions using the concepts of less than (<), greater than (>), and equal to (=). The Promethean Board is also being utilized to learn about sequencing of events, rhyming words, and patterns (numbers, shapes, pictures, and tactile items). In science, they are learning about forces and friction all around us.

Mrs. Robinson's class is busy learning about weather phenomenon in science class. In math class, they are collecting data to analyze. In English class, they are working with the book "The Giver" and learning about democracy and citizenship in social studies class.

High School Update

Ms. Donnally's class held a Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th- October 15th) celebration in the beginning of October. Both staff members and students contributed to a tantalizing buffet of delectable dishes from many different countries such as tortillas, fried plantains, and vegetable rice. The main coordinator of this event, Ms. Gladys Remy, prepared a succulent dish of chicken, chorizo (sausage), and rice which she accompanied by handmade tortillas. By using their voice output devices, the students were able to identify the various dishes and indicate which ones they wanted to taste. They also created wonderful scenery as a backdrop for displaying beautiful artifacts brought in by Hispanic staff from their native countries. Frankie Almendares and his family made a lovely poster representing Honduras. The classroom staff wore traditional attire from Hispanic countries, and the lively music played from Mexico, Cuba, Panama, Honduras, Puerto Rico, and El Salvador even motivated a few to dance. The staff and students wish to thank everyone who helped to make this celebration such a very enjoyable and educational experience for all.

In **Mrs. Moore's** senior class, the students have been very busy this fall! Along with baking and selling Otis Spunkmeyer cookies at Back-to-School Night and at school, they have officially begun their vocational work programs at the Social Security Administration and Old Navy. At Social Security, they work hard at



Frankie and Ms. Donnally

shredding documents, and, at Old Navy, they greet customers and stock shelves. Their job coaches help them learn many vocational skills such as signing in/out, sorting, counting, greeting co-workers and communicating at work.

In all the Senior High Classes:

This semester the students are reading the adapted version of *The Red Badge of Courage* in Ms. Reed's and Ms. Moore's classes; *The Glass Menagerie* in Ms. White's class; and the *Odyssey* in Ms. Donnally's class.

Mapping the world around them has helped the students to understand Geometry. They are learning about points, line segments and planes. They are using maps of the school, grocery store and mall to help them travel from one point to another to form lines and planes. Parents can help by using these terms when navigating from place to place within the house and neighborhood. It's fun!

Apologies are in order because your child may come home "dirty" from time to time. This may be because s/he is studying about soil in the Biology unit. The students have collected soil samples from around the school and made predictions about what may be found in them. In the community, they have walked around the pond at the Rio, examined the soil and the plants growing in it, and learned about living and non-living things within the habitat. Back at school, they have watched an interesting video on the computer about the different properties of soil.

The students and staff enjoyed the field trip to Sharp's Farm in Howard County where they learned about beekeeping, farm animals and crops. After a fall hayride, they picked pumpkins and shopped at the farmer's market. What a nice way to spend a fall day!

The Media Connection

Staff Focus: Each month we will feature members of our staff. Since this month we are holding our Barnes and Noble Fundraiser, it is only appropriate to feature our Media Team.

Mary Ann Carter, who has a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education and a Masters degree in library education, is our new part-time media specialist. She works at Stephen Knolls for two and a half days a week. She also is the proud parent of four children. Ms. Carter collaborates closely with **Marilyn Dodd**, the media assistant, who works the remaining two and a half days a week. Marilyn has a Master's degree in education and a background in technology.

Their schedules help ensure that one of them is available to help students and staff every day.

Each classroom receives a 30 minute lesson every week. These lessons are designed to support the curriculum as well as to assist students in experiencing the joy of reading and the power of other media. For example, the preschool classes learned about "characters" in a story by helping a puppet eat the other characters in, *There Was an*



**Ms. Mary Ann Carter,
Media Specialist**



**Ms. Marilyn Dodd, Media
Assistant**

Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly. The school-aged classes heard the Egyptian version of *Cinderella* to support their study of Egypt and folk tales. They also had the opportunity to locate Egypt on the globe, look at pictures of the Nile River, and clap along with the Cinderella song. One of the Media Center's goals this year is to upgrade their collection with the books donated as a result of the Barnes & Noble fundraiser highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter.

Reaping Earthy Rewards— The Stephen Knolls Greenhouse



Students and staff are off to an exciting start with our greenhouse work! There are a lot of exciting changes taking place. A sensory garden has been started and each class is growing one or two types of herbs. "Grow lights" are being installed so that we also can raise delicious vegetables. Soon, students will have greater access in their use of the greenhouse facilities as we are going to: change the heights of the tables and widen the rows between them to accommodate students' wheelchairs; and, purchase adapted gardening tools and watering equipment to assist them in their fine motor skill development. Once these new vegetables and herbs are ready to harvest, students will open a mini farmers' market to showcase their talent and tempt your appetites!

The Supporting Arts

School-Aged Art

The Stephen Knolls Art Department recently acquired new 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Grade Curriculum Guides and informational posters (with colorful visual illustrations) about art materials, products, procedures, and safety. We also received new sets of art reproductions along with coordinating vocabulary cards and artists' biographies as additional teaching tools. The school aged art program follows national, state, and county art education standards; it supports classroom instruction, as well as, our school's mission and vision statements.

School-Aged Physical Education

We are off to a very exciting start this school year as in addition to the students participating in their usual sports and games in each class; this year they also will benefit from the infusion of academic topics throughout their Physical Education units to support and expand their classroom instruction. Math

concepts such as shapes, counting, and pattern recognition, and science ones such as the effects of force and friction on objects and the nature of cause and effect will be explored. For example, one of the concepts that the students are studying is about the recognition and use of the different parts of their bodies. During our unit on "striking", the students were instructed to use as many body parts as possible to touch or hit balloons that were placed around the gym. They also had to recognize which body part they had used by placing a sticker on a chart with each body part listed.

The students also participated in a fun Halloween themed activity at the end of October as a glow in the dark parachute was used in the completion of a "Halloween Maze." As usual, all of our activities continue to be individually adapted to meet each student's needs and abilities.

The Therapeutic Touch

At Stephen Knolls, our students are on the move! They are able to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity to learn through movement as we use the approach of employing combined therapies to work with teachers and other staff in supporting their academic instruction. We are expanding our mobility program by identifying different rooms in the school by using digital pictures of the staff who work in them as well as sensory images of objects that represent activities that occur in them. These pictures and images will be placed strategically throughout the school to assist the students in learning directionality as staff will use these to instruct students as to where they will be going in the building. This is another way that the students' therapeutic interventions support their instruction in math, social studies, and science.

Announcements & Acknowledgements

Groves Printing Corporation

Stephen Knolls School would like to thank Groves Printing Corporation of Kensington, Maryland, for their generous donation of funds for color copying. Through their ongoing support, the following adapted core reading books were copied in color for classroom use: *Number the Stars* and *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. The adaptation of these core reading books involved the use of simplified texts and picture symbols. Our students and staff will be very busy working with these books.

Barnes & Noble-Bethesda Store-Fundraiser for Stephen Knolls

Give the joy of reading as a gift to your family and friends this holiday season! Get your holiday shopping lists ready and come down on Thursday, November 20, 2008, to the second annual Stephen Knolls School Barnes & Noble bookstore fundraiser at their store located in Bethesda at the corner of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues. Just give the cashier

who rings up your purchases the Stephen Knolls voucher that was just sent home via student backpacks. Vouchers will also be available from the cashiers when you visit the store and 20% of the total sales credited to Stephen Knolls will be donated to the school. With the support of the friends and families of our students, last year's fundraiser netted enough money to cover the cost of purchasing over 100 books for the Media Center. These books supported the curriculum for all grade levels in the areas of Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies. Let's see if we can raise the number of books our Stephen Knolls community purchases so that we can increase the donation to our Media Center to 150 books this year. More information will be forthcoming so keep checking those backpacks for further updates. Should you have any questions, please call us at 301-929-2151 and ask to speak to Mary Ann Carter, Adriana Friedman, or Regina Robinson.

Claire's Bakery Fundraiser

The bake sale results were just coming in as this was going to print. Sierra Hunter in Mrs. Varner's class won the \$100 first prize for sales.

At-home Volunteers

We need parent/family volunteers to assist with counting and monitoring of community resources:

- Box Tops (General Mills)
- Labels for Education (Campbells)
- Bonus Bucks (Giant)
- Safeway points
- Take Charge of Education (Target)

If interested in helping with any of these, please either call the school or send a note to Regina Robinson, Room D-11.

My Favorite Teacher Award

The Gazette is running "My Favorite Teacher" Award. Go to www.favoriteteacher.net to vote for your favorite Montgomery County teacher. Voting began on Oct. 22nd.

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: November 19, 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.

A Healthy Perspective

If you are the parent of a child in a special education pre-school program, kindergarten or the first grade, you should have received a cover letter and the **Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Blood Lead Testing Certificate** form to complete for your child. The State is requiring the parents/guardians of students in those grades to complete the certificate form. If you have not already done so, you may complete it or have your child's physician do so as soon as possible. If you have not received the form or have any questions about lead poisoning or completing the certificate form, please call the school nurse and she will assist you. The back of the certificate form has a listing of the zip codes the State of Maryland has targeted because of housing built before 1950 which may have lead paint that can cause lead poisoning. If you have already completed a Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Blood Lead Testing Certificate and your child does not and never has lived in an "at risk" zip code, you do not need to complete it again.

Community Connections

Upcoming Workshops

Nov. 5, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Communicating with Your Child's Teacher. Montgomery Knolls Elementary School, 807 Daleview Dr., Silver Spring. MCPS Parent Academy Workshop, 301-517-5940, 301-279-3100, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy>

Nov. 12, 5:30 - 7:30 PM. Help Me Grow: Early Care and Education- Annual Meeting. Keynote speaker Dr. Thomas Moore. Universities at Shady Grove, Bldg. II, 9630 Gudelsky Dr., Rockville. Sponsored by the MC Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, 301-610-0147, denise.ridgely@collaborationcouncil.org, <http://www.collaborationcouncil.org/News/savethedate.pdf>.

Nov. 12, 7:00 - 8:15 PM. Planning for The Future: Financial Issues and Trust Management. Workshops focused on planning for family members with disabilities. JSSA, 200 Wood Hill Rd., Rockville. Offered by the Jewish Social Services Agency, Kate Wissman, LCSW-C, 301-610-8360.

Nov. 12, 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Next Step Series Workshop - Postsecondary Education. Presentation for parents of children ages 14 who receive special education services planning to pursue college or other programs leading to a degree or career certification upon high school graduation. Hear about the opportunities of continued education after high school from MCPS graduate, parent, MCPS Career Information Coordinator and Transition Support Teacher. Earle B. Wood Middle School, Cafeteria, 14615 Bauer Dr., Rockville. Sponsored by the MCPS Transition Services, 301-517-8278, Spanish language & sign language interpreters available if requested by Oct. 24.

Nov. 16, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Annual Holiday Gift Boutique. More than 20 local artisans will sell their wares from stocking stuffers to gifts. A portion of all sales proceeds will be donated to SEEC, a non-profit providing community based supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities. Chevy Chase Women's Club, 7931 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase (intersection Conn. Ave/East-West Hwy.). Questions? Contact Cathy Dirksen, 301-576-9043, www.seeonline.org.

Nov. 17, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. ADHD in Children. Tilden Middle School, 11211 Old Georgetown Rd., Rockville. MCPS Parent Academy Workshop, 301-517-5940, 301-279-3100, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy>

Nov. 19, 7:00 - 8:15 PM. Planning for The Future: Care Coordination and Advocacy Services. Workshops focused on planning for family members with disabilities. JSSA, 200 Wood Hill Rd., Rockville. Offered by the Jewish Social Services Agency, Kate Wissman, LCSW-C, 301-610-8360.

Nov. 19, 7:00 - 8:30 PM. Introduction to Microsoft Excel. Silver Spring International Middle School, 313 Wayne Ave., Silver Spring. MCPS Parent Academy Workshop, 301-517-5940, 301-279-3100, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy>

Nov. 20, 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Next Step Series Workshop - Integrated Employment and Vocational Training. Presentation for parents of children ages 14 who receive special education services planning to pursue employment and/or vocational training upon graduation. Hear from MCPS graduates, services providers, employer representatives, Division of Rehabilitation Services and Transition Support Teachers about opportunities after graduation. Earle B. Wood Middle School, Cafeteria, 14615 Bauer Dr., Rockville. Sponsored by the MCPS Transition Services, 301-517-8278, Spanish language & sign language interpreters available if requested by Oct. 30.

Nov. 25, 9:00 - 10:30 AM. Books and Breakfast-Encouraging Readers in Grades K-2. Carver Educational Services Center, Auditorium, 850 Hungerford Rd., Rockville. MCPS Parent Academy Workshop, 301-517-5940, 301-279-3100, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy>

Dec. 3, 6:45 - 8:45 PM. Waiver Programs. One of the Educational Seminars for Family Members Caring for Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities. Learn about the waiver program eligibility and application process. Rockville Library, 21 Maryland Ave. Rockville. Sponsored by the Collaborative Outreach & Training Committee - JSSA, Mont. Co. Dept. of HHS Aging and Disability & the Arc of MC, register at 240-777-1216.

Dec. 6, 10:00 AM. Montgomery County Transitioning Young Adults (MCTrans) (1st or 2nd Sat, 10 AM) Beverly Rill, Executive Director of MTRC, Inc., will speak about what happens when you need help advocating for your son or daughter. MC Arc, 11600 Nebel St., Rockville. Affiliated yahoo group located at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MCTrans/> or subscribe by sending message to MCTrans-subscribe@yahoo.com. Group co-moderator - Reda Sheinberg, rjsheinberg@yahoo.com, <http://www.mctransitions.org/>

Dec. 9, 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Next Step Series Workshop - Independent Living, Community Participation, Continuing and Adult Education. Presentation for parents of children ages 14 who receive special education services. MCPS graduates, parents, representatives of METRO and a Community Safety Specialist will discuss what services are available and how to go about obtaining necessary supports after graduation for independent living. Earle B. Wood Middle School, Cafeteria, 14615 Bauer Dr., Rockville. Sponsored by the MCPS Transition Services, 301-517-8278, Spanish language & sign language interpreters available if requested by Nov. 21.

Dec. 10, 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Life Care Plan and Letter of Intent. Speakers from the Washington Group will discuss important planning issues. Arc of MC, 11600 Nebel St., Rockville. Sponsored by the Down Syndrome Network of MC, DSNM info-line, 301-916-4985 (9 am - 10 pm), <http://www.dsnmc.org/>.