

October

7

2009

# PTO Notes

Marion Cross School



## Calendar

### October 5 – 16

Haven Lunchbox Food Drive

### Monday, October 5

New Parent Meeting, 6:30 pm  
MCS Library

### Tuesday, October 6

Dresden School Forum, 7 – 8:30 pm  
Hanover High School Cafeteria

### Wednesday, October 7

Inspiring Kids Begins (p. 2)  
Norwich School Board Mtng., 7 pm  
MCS Library

### Friday, October 9

Faculty Inservice (no school)

### Monday, October 12

Columbus Day (no school)

### Wednesday, October 14

Dresden School Forum, 12 – 1:30 pm  
Howe Library, Murray Room

### Thursday, October 15

Breakfast/Pizza with the Principal  
8 am/6:30 pm, MCS Office

### Tuesday, October 20

Dresden School Forum, 12 – 1:30 pm  
Tracy Hall, Multipurpose Room

### Wednesday, October 21

MCS Open House, 4:30 – 6 pm

### Thursday, October 29

Dresden School Forum, 7 – 8:30 pm  
Marion Cross School Library

### Saturday, October 31

Halloween Celebration, 3:30 pm  
Norwich Inn

## Letter from the Principal: Thank You!

This fall, morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up have been particularly stressful due to various unanticipated and converging situations. The first is the fact that all day kindergarten has added 39 new children to our ranks. Last year, there were fewer kindergarteners and they arrived later and left earlier than other students. Now that their schedule is the same as everyone else's, so is their traffic.

Also, in an effort to support the town in its needs, we agreed to store the cupola of the dis-assembled bandstand in our back parking lot when citizens requested that it be conserved. We also agreed to respect the Episcopal Church's property (and our students' safety) by asking parents to find parking elsewhere while they wait for after school pick-up.

Finally, as a result of the state paving project, parents and staff have lost at least 7 parking spaces on Main and Church Streets. The paving process, itself, has tied traffic up since the opening of school.

Marion Cross has attempted to

make adjustments to accommodate these shifts in school life. By encouraging hourly staff to alter slightly their schedules, we hope to avoid the 3 pm exiting bottleneck at the bus stop. By releasing kindergarten students at the art room/music room door, we have relieved some of the congestion at the bus stop. By asking town businesses if they would allow one teacher to park in their lot, we hope to free up spaces for parents and school visitors who presently cannot find parking at the school.

At one time, our school managed the entrance and exit of approximately 500 students during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. We presently have 300 students. If you remember those earlier days and how traffic around the school was handled, or if you have any suggestions for increasing our parking opportunities, please call. Our number is 649-1703. Thanks for your help!

Linda Kelley  
([linda.kelley@marioncross.org](mailto:linda.kelley@marioncross.org))

## Newsletter Goes Electronic

This may be your last PTO Notes! . . . on paper, that is. Future editions will be sent electronically. Parents have indicated that a paper-less copy will cut down on paper usage and better guarantees that parents actually receive the copy. To read the e-newsletter, you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download from Adobe) that opens the PDF file. If you prefer paper, you can print it out at home or let us know that you prefer a hard copy. Those who have limited or no access to email can receive paper copies. Additional copies will be posted on the PTO bulletin board and kept at the front office. To continue to receive hard copies, please reply to your PTO Class Rep or advise Donna Mackall ([atticusmac@comcast.net](mailto:atticusmac@comcast.net) or 649-3240). Members of the greater community and MCS staff who wish to receive hard copies, please advise Corinne Fenton ([corinne.fenton@marioncross.org](mailto:corinne.fenton@marioncross.org) or 649-1703).

## 2008-2009 Marion Cross School PTO Survey Results



Over 80 families responded to last year's PTO survey! The distribution of responders was fairly even across the grades. We obtained great information that will help guide us with PTO events this year and in future years. Thanks to all who participated.

Many PTO projects and events received high marks. Gift Making Festival, Celebration Books, Food for the Haven, the Directory, and Vermont Author Visits are some of the most popular events/programs.

Events that responders felt should be altered included Kite Day, Norwich Unplugged and fundraising. Kite Day has been cancelled due to safety concerns, so that was an easy fix for us. Norwich Unplugged, formerly known as TV Turn-off Week, will be downsized to include just the contra dance, which will be renamed "Cabin Fever Night."

Finally fundraising. Several respondents noted that the PTO seems to have too much money in its accounts and that fundraising is not necessary. While this is a fair concern, the PTO Finance Committee wants to ensure everyone that funds are kept in reserve to meet the financial demands for the year, and for several years to come. Last year the PTO received, through dues, fundraisers and grants, approximately \$14,500. Expenditures were approximately \$15,500, leaving a deficit that we

were able to cover only by drawing down on our savings. As pressures build on all of our giving, the expenses have not decreased in any substantial way. For instance, this summer we offered to assist teachers (including specials) with their tightened budgets by providing an across-the-board grant in lieu of our fall granting process. We intend to continue to financially support beloved MCS events such as The Vermont Author Program and The Gift Making Festival with funds derived from income and, as necessary, with our savings. Other

administrative costs (such as the eagerly-awaited School Directory and the spring Teacher Grants) are forthcoming. We will continue to support the school and rely upon fundraising in order to fill both expected and unexpected needs.

We hope that we've responded respectfully to those concerns noted in last year's survey. Please let us know if you have additional questions or comments.

Karen Loring (kgemery@comcast.net) and Donna Mackall (atticusmac@comcast.net), Co-Chairs, MCS PTO

## Inspiring Kids Fundraiser Starts Today

Check your child's backpack for the brown envelopes that will be coming home today. This year's fundraising drives runs through October 23.

Quick Summary: Once again Marion Cross School is working with InspiringKids, Inc. for our annual fundraising campaign. Through InspiringKids we are fundraising in both socially and environmentally responsible ways. The kids will be spending a "rep" period working to green up Marion Cross as a way to raise money for our PTO. Kindergarten through fourth graders will be planting bulbs (daffodils and crocuses) and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be working to green up the nature area adjacent to the school. We are asking friends and family members to consider sponsoring their efforts (much the way an individual would be sponsored to participate in a walk-a-thon).

How to contribute? New this year, it is easier than ever to contribute. You can put cash and checks (payable to: Marion Cross PTO) in the brown envelopes OR you can donate online at [www.inspiringkids.org](http://www.inspiringkids.org). Click the "donate" button located in the upper right hand corner of the homepage,

choose Marion Cross School and donate via Visa or MC (or your paypal account if you have one).

How will the money be spent? Last year, Marion Cross raised a total of \$5,356. More than 50% of that came back to the PTO. This money supports a wide variety of programs including the Student Directory, Vermont Author Visits, Science Enrichment Committee, Art Start, New Parent Night, Supplemental Food Project, Safe Routes to School, PTO Gift Awards, Celebration Books, Staff Appreciation, Gift Making Festival, Community Spelling Bee, Food for the Haven, Community Garden, Halloween Candy Distribution and many others!

One of the things that makes this fundraising program special is that 35% of the money raised will be placed in a "philanthropy account" rather than going back to a product fundraising company. The older students will use the money from this account to support social and environmental causes/projects important to them. They will work with a budget, discuss environmental and social issues, debate, develop arguments, make

*Continued on page 5.*

## MCS News and Information

### Employees Earn \$6050 for MCS

Marion Cross School received a check for \$6050 from the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI) PATHpoints program. PATHpoints is a health promotion program offered by the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust to schools and their employees. Its goal is to have school employees improve their health while building healthy school environments. Individual participants earned up to \$150 with matching funds going to the school district. Since there is only one Vermont school in our district, all matching funds are given to Marion Cross. Many thanks to Rick Newton and Jan Hopkins for coordinating this program.

### NECAP Schedule

#### Grades 3-6, Reading and Math

- Monday, October 5 (Day 4)  
8:30 - 10 and 12:45 - 2:15
- Tuesday, October 6 (Day 5)  
8:30 - 10

#### Grade 5, Writing

- Wednesday, October 7 (Day 6)  
8:30 - 10
- Thursday, October 8 (Day 1)  
8:30 - 10

### Breakfast/Pizza with the Principal

The next Breakfast with the Principal will be held on Thursday, October 15 at 8 a.m. The next Pizza with the Principal will be held the same day at 6:30 p.m. The topic of discussion for both of these events will be "Financial Challenges in the 2010-2011 Budget Building Process." As you know, the school expects Norwich to maintain fiscal economy in our town and school services. Dr. Kelley is seeking parent input in this effort. These meetings take place in the school office where space is limited. If you are interested in attending, please call Corinne Fenton at 649-1703.

### King Arthur Flour Bakes at MCS

In support of Sunday's Giving Bowls event, Paula Gray of King Arthur Flour visited Monday's REP to teach students how to bake bread. Students were enthralled by her captivating personality and participatory program. Each left the multi with enough King Arthur flour to make two loaves of bread at home, one for Giving Bowls and one for his or her family. Many thanks to Carolyn Keck and Tracy Smith for organizing this assembly.



### New Teacher Association Leaders

Marion Cross School welcomes Ginny Moore and Rick Newton, new co-presidents of the Norwich Teachers Association. This year's contract negotiation team will include the same members as last year: Rick Newton, Ginny Moore, Carolyn Keck and Allison Litten. They look forward to continued positive relations with the administration and school board.

## Food Drive for the Haven: Lunch Box Items Wanted

What do you like for lunch? Help others pack a healthy lunch by bringing in your favorite nonperishable lunch box items October 6-16. The shelves at the Haven are in more need than ever of our support as record numbers of families are in need. This year, the MCS will sponsor four food drives for The Haven. During the year, there will always be a cart in the lobby for additional donations. Here are some suggested items for the kickoff drive:

- Raisins
- Dried fruit
- Cereal bars
- Granola bars
- Trail mix
- Nuts
- Tuna
- Peanut butter
- Jelly/jam
- Crackers
- Meal in can (i.e. mac-n-cheese, stew)
- Canned fruit
- Whole wheat crackers
- Peanut butter/cheese n' cracker
- Fig newtons

Let's fill the shelves at The Haven! Look for a box outside each classroom and bring your donation today!



## Seasonal Flu (Influenza) Vaccination Clinics

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommends yearly flu vaccinations for children (6 months and older) and adults.

DHMC (Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center) has scheduled several seasonal flu vaccination clinics. These are free, and are for children and adults. This makes it easy for family members to be vaccinated at the same time.

Listed below is information from DHMC about the free seasonal flu vaccination clinics. Please note, per the CDC: "Children younger than 9 years of age getting influenza vaccine for the first time - or who got influenza vaccine for the first time last season but got only one dose - should get 2 doses, at least 4 weeks apart, to be protected."

H1N1 flu vaccination clinics for children are expected to be scheduled in a few weeks, but the dates have not been decided on yet. When I am informed about H1N1 flu clinics, I will pass that information on to you.

Thank you, Jan Hopkins (School Nurse)

DHMC 2009 Free Seasonal Flu Clinics for Adults & Families:

- Sunday, October 18
- Sunday, October 25
- Sunday, November 1 (During the Autumn Community Health Fair)
- Saturday, November 14

All flu shot clinics are held 8 am - 1 pm. Come to the main rotunda at DHMC. Adults will be directed to Auditoriums A-D and Fuller Board Room. Families with young children will go to Reception Area 3C.

## Notices, Volunteers Needed, Thanks

### Inspiring Kids Volunteers Needed

We need about 20 volunteers this year to make our service day a success. If you are available from 1:30 to 3 on October 16, please contact Lydia Starosta (lydvet@aol.com or 649-5231). Also GREATLY appreciated are people willing to help solicit local businesses for their support of this fundraising program. Because of the unique nature of this fundraiser, we have been successful in getting business support over the past 2 years. Please contact Lydia (lydvet@aol.com or 649-5231) if you are up to the challenge!



### Successful Bike-to-School

Thanks to all for another safe and fun Bike-to-School Day. Once again the bike parade involved well over 100 bikes and went very well. Thanks so much to the Norwich Police, the crossing guards, and to the MCS staff and parent volunteers who helped out. And remember, even though we won't have another official bike or walk to school day until springtime, it would be great see even more students and parents continue biking or walking to school and work whenever you can. Keep getting those cards punched so that we can eclipse last year's total!

### Girls Scouts News

K and 1st grade girls and parents that would like to have fun as part of the Daisy troop, please join us. Contact Dodi to get involved or if you have any other questions about the Girls Scouts (boots.gsforever@gmail.com).



### Gift Making Festival: Save The Date

The much-loved PTO Gift Making Festival will once again be a part of the fall's schedule of family events. Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 14 in the gym. For those new to MCS, this is a fun-filled day for kids (of all ages!) making crafts and gifts to give - and keep! Volunteers are appreciated (for manning crafts tables, pre-event assembly, cafe workers and dessert table chair). If you can assist in this wonderful event, please let Julie Choi know at (mmeclementine@yahoo.com). Thank you!

### Montshire Preschool Volunteers Needed

The Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich, Vermont has a preschool full of eager, inquisitive young minds, but needs a volunteer to help enrich their experience on Wednesday mornings (9:30-11:30 a.m.). To learn more, please contact Jen Hallmartel (802-649-2200 x218 or volunteer@montshire.org).



## ArtStart is Underway!

ArtStart is underway! The first graders had a great time creating Archimboldo-inspired vegetable sculptures. Look for more photos and information on this fun project soon on the ArtStart bulletin board at school. By the way... if you are interested in helping with this program in any capacity, or just want to learn more about it, contact Amy Neuman ([amy\\_neuman@yahoo.com](mailto:amy_neuman@yahoo.com)) or Karen Wilson ([zakwilson@earthlink.net](mailto:zakwilson@earthlink.net)). No experience necessary!

## Halloween Candy Collection Begins



As the leaves start dropping from the trees and the calendar flips to October, it can mean only one thing: Halloween!

We will be collecting candy again this year to distribute to our downtown Halloween hosts. We

distribute candy to 113 houses; along the top of Elm St, Jones Circle, Church St, Carpenter St, Main St, Trumble Lane, Cliff St and Hazen St. People who live downtown graciously greet those of us who live out of town . . . sometimes having over 500 visitors! With Halloween falling on a Saturday, they are bound to be busy this year.

If you are able to help us ease their burden, please bring several bags of candy to one of the following collection sites by Friday, October 23: Marion Cross School office, Dan and Whit's, Norwich Public Library, Tracy Hall (Town Clerk's area), Norwich Nursery School, or the Willow School.

The candy will be distributed to in-town homes the weekend before Halloween. Thanks for your support.

## Inspiring Kids, Cont'd

presentations, and vote. These activities reinforce their MCS curriculum (social studies, environmental studies, speaking skills, critical thinking, math, etc.) and are considered to be academically valuable.

Looking for more information? To learn more about where students have invested the money from their philanthropy account over the past two years, or about the program in general, please visit [www.inspiringkids.org](http://www.inspiringkids.org). Click on "school sign in" (in the navigation bar or via the button on the chalk board). Our user name is: *mcscom*, and our password is: *marioncross* (one word). Or, please contact Lydia Starosta ([lydvet@aol.com](mailto:lydvet@aol.com) or 649-5231). Thanks in advance for supporting our fall fundraising drive!

## Marion Cross School

Norwich, VT

**School Phone**  
802-649-1703

### **PTO in the Know** **PTO in the Know**

Want to stay in the loop?  
Get notice of PTO meetings,  
minutes, and newsletter  
deadlines (no junk) . . . send  
your email address to  
[kgemery@comcast.net](mailto:kgemery@comcast.net) or  
[atticusmac@comcast.net](mailto:atticusmac@comcast.net)

***The MCS Community  
values a tradition of  
educational excellence  
and is committed to  
nurturing the whole child  
in a climate of respect.***

### **We're on the Web!**

PTO newsletters and more:  
[www.marioncross.org/pto](http://www.marioncross.org/pto)

PTO Notes does not accept  
notices about commercial  
ventures (camps, classes,  
etc.). Flyers can be left in the  
pockets available inside the  
school entrance.

## Dresden School Survey and Forums

The Education Committee of the Dresden School Board, which oversees Hanover High School and the Richmond Middle School, will be conducting a survey and a series of forums to solicit input from the public on the schools' strengths, areas to improve, and future directions.



This information will help inform the Board's budget discussions and decisions in the coming months. Even if you do not yet have children in the middle school or the high school, your children will hopefully go there in the future and this is an opportunity to express what you would like the schools to look like at that time. Further, if you are a Norwich property owner, much of your property tax bill now will be for the budgets for these schools.

You can complete the survey online at:  
<[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=HOJ5YOPfU0gGtOjTdiGMsQ\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=HOJ5YOPfU0gGtOjTdiGMsQ_3d_3d)>  
or paper copies may be obtained in the MCS office or at the forums. The forums will be held as follows:

- Tuesday, Oct. 6, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Hanover High School Cafeteria
- Wednesday, October 14, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Howe Library, Murray Room
- Tuesday, October 20, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Tracy Hall, Multipurpose Room
- Thursday, October 29, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Marion Cross School Library

Please feel free to bring and eat your lunch at the lunch-time meetings. For more information about the survey or the forums, please contact Carol Edwards in the SAU 70 offices at 603-643-6050.

We hope you will attend and let the Board know what you think its priorities should be now and in the future.

Thank you.

