

September

21

2009

# PTO Notes

*Marion Cross School*



## Letter from the Principal: Happy Opening of School!

Marion Cross School opened on August 26 with an enrollment of 285 students. That morning, cheerful students, parents and teachers packed the green as the 8:15 am start of school approached. Friends who had not seen one another since last June exchanged summer stories, the PTO supplied coffee, and children swarmed the play equipment like bees around honey.

The traditional first day schedule included orientation in homerooms, an all school welcoming assembly in the multi, and a walk through of Day 1 of the six-day schedule. MCS welcomed close to 60 new students, the majority in our new "all day" kindergarten program. Thirty-nine children enrolled, at least ten more than expected, resulting in Rick Wilson's move from fourth grade to kindergarten.

We were also pleased to welcome three "new" teachers, all of whom had worked at Marion Cross in some capacity in previous years. Mary Shain, our new Speech and Language teacher, joins us from New London. Mary has close to 20 years of experience, mostly in private practice, as a speech and language pathologist. Due to her specialty in augmentative and alternative communication, Mary had served as a consultant to MCS

in the past. She is our only part time teacher this year, working Monday through Thursday of every week. Due to her Friday absence, it took her a few days to set up a schedule that would insure that all IEP students receive the appropriate amount of service within the 6-day rotation, but she has figured it out and is now our resident 6-day schedule expert!

Joy Blongewicz, our new librarian, is not new to MCS. Joy arrived last year to serve as an ed-assistant in first grade. From Oregon, Joy has 12 years of experience as an elementary school librarian, and over 10 years experience as an elementary school teacher. Many thanks to Susan Voake who spent the summer with Joy "showing her the ropes."

Leslie Dustin returns from a two-year leave of absence to teach fifth grade language arts. Leslie did her student teaching in the fifth grade with Jonathan Fenton, so a return to that level and a partnership with him and Mr. Girard was a natural fit.

New Ed Assistants this year are Donna Mackall and Sydney Smith. Both are very familiar to our community. Donna is an experienced parent and co-chair of the PTO. Sydney, who begins work on October 1, is returning to MCS

## Calendar

**Monday, September 28**  
Special REP, grades 4-6

**Tuesday, September 29**  
6th grade trip to Hulbert

**October 1 – 8**  
Fall NECAP Testing (grades 3-6)

**Sunday, October 4**  
Giving Bowls, 3-5 pm  
The Norwich Green

**Wednesday, October 7**  
Norwich School Board Meeting

**Friday, October 9**  
No School, Teacher In-Service

**Monday, October 12**  
No School, Columbus Day

**Wednesday, October 21**  
Open House, 4:30-6 pm

**Saturday, October 31**  
Halloween Celebration  
Norwich Inn, 3:30 pm

after a year's leave of absence. Welcome back to everyone. I look forward to a great year together!

Thank you, Linda Kelley

If you have any questions or comments for Dr. Kelley, feel free to contact her ([Linda.kelley@marioncross.org](mailto:Linda.kelley@marioncross.org)).

## Giving Bowls 2009 Update



October 4th is fast approaching and plans for Giving Bowls 2009 are in full swing. Our glazing nights were so successful that we have glazed all of the pots we needed to have glazed and will not be having any more evening glazing events.

The remaining pots that still need to be glazed will be done by MCS students during the school day. These bowls will be on display in the MCS multipurpose room on October 1 and 2. Please feel free to stop by between 11:30 am and 1 pm and 4 and 5:30 pm on those days to view their beautiful handiwork (please remember to sign in at the office when you arrive.)

Thanks to all who have made and/or glazed pots and contributed

## Where Did the Sandbox Go?

Our apologies to the families of young children who enjoy playing in the sandbox on the school playground. Due to heavy rains and neighborhood cats, the sandbox harbored bacteria and infestations of ants and other insects. Routine maintenance of covering the sandbox, turning sand to keep it dry, and sifting out foreign objects that are dangerous to kids was impossible for the school to handle. After a great deal of consideration, we decided the sandbox had to be removed for the safety of the children. We hoped to accomplish this before school started but, as with most buildings and grounds projects, we fell behind schedule. Again, please accept our apologies.

napkins and spoons. We still, however, need more help. Sign up sheets to assist on the day of the event, and a few opportunities to help before then, are now up in the MCS lobby. There are many different tasks that need to be done, so hopefully one will fit your availability and interest.

We also still need more napkins and spoons, so keep bringing them in. If you would like to contribute your bowls from Giving Bowls 2007 so that they can be used by others this year, we will be collecting them from Sept. 28 to Oct. 2 in the MCS art room.

As a reminder, Giving Bowls 2009 will take place on Oct. 4, 2009, from 3 to 5 pm on the Norwich Green. Suggested donations are \$10.00. All proceeds will go to Willing Hands and Sustainable Harvest International. To volunteer or get more information, please contact Tracy Smith ([tracy.smith@marioncross.org](mailto:tracy.smith@marioncross.org) or 649-1703 ext. 225) or Julie Choi ([mmeclimentine@yahoo.com](mailto:mmeclimentine@yahoo.com) or 649-8592). Thanks!

## Celebrate with a Book for the MCS Library

What do your child's birthday, a favorite teacher, the start of a new school year, a new sibling, and a love of poetry have in common?

They have all inspired generous MCS families to give Celebration Books to our school's library. Giving a Celebration Book is easy: find the letter that came home in your child's backpack or pick one up in the

## "Parenting Our Teens" Talks

Everyone is invited to participate in an adult education series entitled "Parenting Our Teens." Sessions will take place in the Parish Hall of the Norwich Congregational Church, UCC, on Sundays at 7 pm, and Q&A and refreshments will follow each presentation.

The schedule is as follows:

- September 20: Susie Hastings: "Effective Parenting: Listen So Your Kids Will Talk, Talk So Your Kids Will Listen & Resolve Conflicts in a Win/Win Way"
- September 27: Aine Donovan: "Raising 'Good' Kids: Challenges and Opportunities in the Moral Maze"
- October 4: Charles Lindner: "Sex, Drugs, Alcohol, and Cars: Navigating the Big Challenges of Adolescence"
- October 11: Parents Sharing Resources

school office, then fill it out and return the form with your check to the main office.

We will help your child select a book and the entire school will benefit. Questions? Contact Anne Day (649-2344, [annewday@yahoo.com](mailto:annewday@yahoo.com)) or Laura Osborn (649-2569, [lsosborn@comcast.net](mailto:lsosborn@comcast.net)).



## Be a Fundraiser for Marion Cross School!

Support MCS by simply shopping, using specific web sites, or a direct donation. We are partnered with Price Chopper, GoodSearch.com and GoodShop.com, Greenraising.com, and Box Tops for Education.

### PRICE CHOPPER PROGRAM:

Tools for Schools is a fantastic Price Chopper program that enables non-profits, like MCS, to earn money for school supplies. To enroll, "link" your Advantage card (available through the store) with our school. MCS's code is 13962. The website is <[www.pricechopper.com](http://www.pricechopper.com)> or sign up in the office and I will enroll you. When you shop, your purchases automatically earn credit for MCS.

### GOODSEARCH.COM AND GOODSHOP.COM:

GoodSearch.com, a Yahoo-powered search engine, donates a portion of their advertising revenue to registered non-profit organizations. In addition, their shopping site, GoodShop.com, donates a portion of all sales from vendors linked through the site. There are hundreds of vendors represented, including Amazon, Best Buy, Dell, LL Bean, iTunes, Expedia, Gap, Target, and many more. MCS has received over \$70.00 dollars since last spring from your use of these sites!

To get started:

1. Simply go to <[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) or <[www.goodshop.com](http://www.goodshop.com)>
2. Select Marion Cross PTO from the list of organizations, and start searching, or select an online store.
3. Then bookmark the links and add them to your favorites tool bar so you use this search instead of the 'others'.
4. You can also use these links with the MCS id.

GoodSearch.com:

<http://www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=889085>



GoodShop.com:

<http://www.goodshop.com/?charityid=889085>

**GREENRAISING.COM:** Looking for lunchtime solutions (waste-free lunch kits, water bottles) and other ideas that are good choices for our planet's health and Marion Cross? Shop [Greenraising.com](http://www.greenraising.com) (<<http://www.greenraising.com/>>) and select Marion Cross PTO to receive a portion of your purchases. We have raised \$20.00 from this site.

**BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION:** We continue to collect box tops for education in the boxes in the office of MCS and at the Norwich Public Library. Last year we raised over \$200.00 from this program!

**DIRECT DONATION:** We continue to accept donations. All donations are tax-deductible and confidential. Please make your check payable to "MCS PTO" and either mail it to Marion Cross School PTO, P.O. Box 567, Norwich, VT, 05055 or leave it in the PTO Box in the front office.

Remember: EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS! We are working on partnerships with Shaw's Supermarkets, Amazon.com, and Market America and will share updates. Email or call me if you need help linking your cards or with anything else. Megan Brendel ([megan.brendel@valley.net](mailto:megan.brendel@valley.net), 649-2603).

## Community Notices

### Calling All Women

Please consider joining the Norwich Women's Club! Besides a number of enjoyable social events, we are primarily a service organization. The Club supports many community projects, and, most importantly, we fund a significant number of scholarships for Norwich students seeking post-secondary education. Help us help our community and our scholars. Join us for the Fall Meeting on October 7 at 4:30-6:30 pm. Refreshments will be served. Contact Karen Woodward ([Woodward@sover.net](mailto:Woodward@sover.net)) for directions, or with questions about the Club.

### Help Our Community's Children

Children need you! Children of all ages are in need of a caring home, from a day to a lifetime. Vermont Upper Valley residents, contact Courtney McGuire Department of Children and Families (802 -295-8840). NH/VT Upper Valley residents, contact Casey Family Services (800 607 1400).

### Girl Scout News

Norwich has three troops up and running: Daisy (K and 1st grade), Brownies (2 and 3 grade), and 5 and 6 grade girls. All meet on Fridays. Contact Dodi Hill ([boots.gsforever@gmail.com](mailto:boots.gsforever@gmail.com)) if you would like to get involved.

### Basketball Skills

It's never too early to start thinking about and working on your basketball skills. With that in mind, we are offering the opportunity to work on your game on Sundays at the Ray School. All 5th and 6th graders from Hanover, Norwich and Lyme are welcome to attend. Please spread the word. The starting date will be September 27 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm. Times may change each week due to my schedule. Go Future Marauders! Dan O'Rourke ([Daniel.J.O'Rourke@Hitchcock.ORG](mailto:Daniel.J.O'Rourke@Hitchcock.ORG))

## Gender in the Fast Lane

by Jennifer Holladay (from <<http://www.tolerance.org/author/jennifer-holladay>>)

Norwich, VT

**School Phone**  
802-649-1703

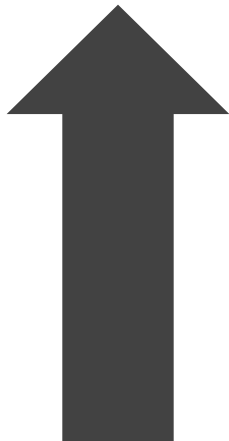
**PTO in the Know**  
Want to stay in the loop?  
Get notice of PTO meetings,  
minutes, and newsletter  
deadlines (no junk) . . . send  
your email address to  
[annewday@yahoo.com](mailto:annewday@yahoo.com).

***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.



“Is that for a boy or a girl?”

This is the question posed to thousands of parents and guardians as they sweep through drive-throughs each day, seeking some quick eats for their children.

For my daughter, these moments are precious treats. We're not big consumers of fast food. And, in all honesty, it's not about the nuggets for her. What she wants — what she really, really wants — is the toy that's always floating in a bubble of plastic inside the kid's meal. A new toy with dinner — really, what could be better to a five-year-old?

I, on the other hand, loathe these moments, because, more often than not, they are an exercise in gender. “A boy or a girl?”

Sometimes, I mix it up and lie. “Boy,” I declare, which universally leads to chants from Zoe in the back seat: “I'm a girl! I'm a girl!”

Such was the case during a recent weekend. The toy my daughter pulled from the bag was a “Dangerous Space” stencil set, brought to us by the authors of *The Dangerous Book for Boys*.

Had I said “girl,” our options — based on *The Daring Book for Girls* — would have been a stencil set of sea animals, a mold-and-clay toy with a flower and a ladybug, and a watercolor set.

Burger King was serving up double servings of gender that day, making all kinds of presumptions about what boys and girls should like. Contrary to their predictions, Zoe loved her space toy. After all, one of the things she wants to be when she grows up is an astronaut.

The experience reminded me yet again of the importance of battling gender stereotyping at home — and in our classrooms. One of my favorite lessons in this regard is “Gendered Beliefs” (available on the Teaching Tolerance web site), which helps young children identify and respond to gender-based stereotypes.

Among the lesson's scenarios: “Sumen is playing in her room with her Barbie doll. Her brother Raj comes in and starts to play with another Barbie doll. Sumen tells Raj that he can't play with the Barbie doll because only girls can play with Barbies. What do we tell Sumen?”

The answer? “I disagree! Sexism is silly to me.”

And that's exactly what we should say to Burger King.

Jennifer Holladay is the former senior adviser for strategic affairs at the Southern Poverty Law Center, and former director of its Teaching Tolerance Project.