



Perry Hall Middle School PTSA



PANTHER BEAT

PTSA Web site: www.perryhallmiddleschoolptsa.org

November 2006

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A Message From the President

First quarter report cards will be coming out in a few short weeks and before you know it...it's Thanksgiving.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents and family members, teachers, students, and administrators who joined the Perry Hall Middle School PTSA already. This is a great school. Our membership drive was a huge success. While our overall student enrollment has been about the same over the years, we've had

more PTSA members this year than any other year since 2002/2003. We've already exceeded last year membership totals by 20%. Ms. Deacon's class was the first homeroom in over three years to achieve 100 percent membership and win a pizza party—and Ms. Scott and Mrs. Heer's homerooms were a close second and third place. Congratulations to these homerooms and all of Perry Hall Middle School. Remember...with a successful PTSA mem-

bership drive like this, everybody wins!

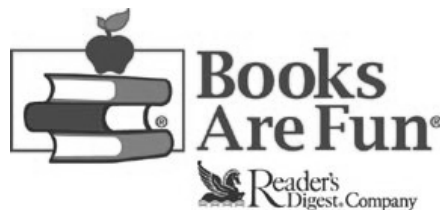
By joining our local unit you are automatically members of the Maryland and National PTA. A portion of the dues collected from our membership drive will go toward supporting many national, state, county, and community initiatives. The National and Maryland PTA are working hard on behalf of our kids on issues such as safe schools, childhood obesity, the No Child Left Behind Act, and many issues that promote public

education and support parent involvement. These organizations work to support public education and to improve children's health and safety. PTAs speak on behalf of children—who can't effect change for themselves—at local, state and national government levels.

Together we have a powerful voice.

Thanks for your continued support.

November 2006



Perry Hall Middle School will be hosting a mini book fair, sponsored by Books Are Fun, in one of the library classrooms during American Education Week.

This will not be a book fair that is visited by every English class, like the spring one from Scholastic. This book fair is primarily for parent visitation.

Family Bingo Nights Cancelled

Due to school construction, which is scheduled to begin at any time, **all PTSA Family Bingo Nights for the remainder of the school year will be cancelled unless otherwise noted.**

Please check future school newsletters for information on any changes which may occur concerning this matter.

Thank you,
Karen Brown



The Six Pillars of Character

These six core ethical values form the foundation of the CHARACTER COUNTS! youth-ethics initiative.

More detailed discussion of the Six Pillars is included in Making Ethical Decisions, a Josephson Institute booklet available online.



TRUSTWORTHINESS

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country

RESPECT

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

RESPONSIBILITY

Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be

self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices

FAIRNESS

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly

CARING

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

CITIZENSHIP

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

Six Pillar Mnemonics

To help young people remember the Pillars, some educators employ these creative devices.

Color Scheme

Each of the Six Pillars is associated with a certain color.

- Trustworthiness: Blue — like

"True Blue"

- Respect: Yellow or Gold — like the Golden Rule
- Responsibility: Green — as in being responsible for a garden or finances; or as in being solid and reliable like an oak
- Fairness: Orange — like dividing an orange into equal sections to share fairly with friends
- Caring: Red — like a heart
- Citizenship: Purple — as in the regal purple representing the state

TRRFCC

Use this acronym to help you remember that people with good character are terrific:

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

Reprinted with permission from National PTA: "The Six Pillars of Character". October 2006, National PTA Web site, www.pta.org



Friday Morning Coffee Service

Parents/Guardians/Grandparents:

Thank you to all who sent in Friday Morning Coffee Service donations. Donations are still being accepted. You may send in your donation to the sixth-grade office marked for the "Friday Morning Coffee Service".

Thanks again for your help,
Sue Crispens

Attention Volunteers

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to volunteer at Perry Hall Middle School. We are still in need of a few people to chair or co-chair the following positions. **No experience is necessary!**

- Market Day monthly volunteers
- Ways & Means / Fundraising co-chair
- Sunshine Committee: volunteers for Winter Concerts in December

If you feel you would be interested in any of these positions, please e-mail our Volunteer Chairperson, Terri Sierakowski, at terri.siera@verizon.net.

Thank you.

Market Day - 147 Orders and a Free Freezer

The combined efforts of the middle and high schools gave us an awesome October sale! Market Day is our PTSA-sponsored monthly fundraiser, selling restaurant-quality frozen food. Please see the flyer your student brings home each month or visit the Web site, www.marketday.com. Our account number is 12331.

If you can't place your order over the

Internet, it would be best to call our chairperson with your order each month; however, order sheets can be brought to the sixth grade office (please do not attach payments to the order sheet). Payment of cash or check should be brought with you to the sales, which are held in the school cafeteria. Credit card payments are accepted for Internet orders ONLY (prepaid orders are en-

couraged!).

If you have questions or wish to place an order, please contact Laurie Finckel at 410.661.1338, lfinckel@printmanage.com.

Your PTSA thanks you for your support!



Mom and Dad Aren't Taking Algebra This Year: Hints to Help Reduce Homework Stress

Homework. Children and parents alike often dread the thought of it. Whether the trouble is a child's lack of homework skills, unclear parental expectations, or simply too much homework, a variety of problems may result: family squabbles, poor grades, and the hindrance of academic progress. If you're a parent whose evening stress level is directly related to how much homework "we" have tonight, there are a number of changes you can make so that homework is more manageable and productive.

If your child has trouble completing homework without help, find out why.

Homework that cannot be done without help is not good homework. Homework stress often comes from the child's frustration and avoidance of tasks that make him or her feel incompetent. If your child cannot complete homework without help, talk with him or her to determine if the assignment is too hard, if the directions are unclear, or if he or she didn't understand the information or skill when it was taught in class. If your child truly doesn't understand the assignment, send it back incomplete and ask that the child not be penalized. Simply write a note to the teacher indicating "Jason didn't understand how to do these problems. Please explain this to him again and allow him to redo the assignment." This action will give the teacher valuable feedback about your child's learning.

Staying caught up with assignments is critical. If your child consistently fails to complete homework, find out how homework is graded and how much it counts in the overall grade. Find out if homework can be turned in late, and ask the teacher to inform you weekly of missing assignments.

Talk with the teacher if you feel homework is excessive.

How much homework is too much? Both National PTA and the National Education Association endorse the 10-minute rule, which states that the maximum amount of homework (all subjects combined) should not exceed 10 minutes per grade level per night. That is, a 1st-grader should have no more than 10 minutes of homework, a 6th-grader no more than 60 minutes, and a 12th-grader no more than two hours.



Unfortunately, children differ in the amount of time it takes them to complete homework. The teacher may think he or she has given a 20-minute assignment, but one child may finish it in 20 minutes while it takes another child an hour. If homework seems excessive, let the teacher know the amount of time your child spends on each assignment.

Ask for individual adaptations for your child.

Most teachers are accustomed to modifying or shortening homework assignments for special education students. But children who take medication for attention deficit disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety, or depression may also have trouble focusing on homework and may need adaptations. Some children without learning problems or special needs simply have no mental energy left at the end of the school day. These children are entitled to adaptations, too.

Individual children also vary from day to day in their ability to complete homework. Sometimes they are too tired or just can't concentrate.

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On those occasions, write a note excusing your child from homework, and expect your wishes to be honored.

Stop putting homework on *your* to-do list.

If your child has an appropriate amount of homework that he or she understands and is capable of doing, this next step should be possible. Weaning your child off your help isn't easy-but it can be done. Even elementary school children can learn to work independently. Start with a straightforward discussion: "It's time for me to quit helping you with your homework" or "Mom's not taking algebra this year." Let your child know you will be available for proofreading, finding simple math mistakes, or writing a note to the teacher if he or she doesn't understand an assignment.

To reinforce that homework is your child's job, not yours, allow your child some control over how, where, and when he or she will do homework. Even very young children can have input in these decisions. Ask questions to encourage your child to take charge of the job: "Where would be a good place to work? What things should be there? Where should you put homework when you are finished?"

Stand up for your right to a balanced family life.

When you add classroom time to homework time, school-age children should not be working longer than an eight-hour day. Children benefit when their time outside of

school includes not only academics but play, productive hobbies, family time, and downtime. You can encourage balance in your child's life in three ways:

- Allow your child some downtime. "Unproductive" activities, such as watching TV, listening to music, or taking an hour to get ready for bed, actually rest the brain while allowing it to process the day's events. Both children and adults need downtime to recharge for the next day.
- Consider limiting your child's outside activities. If you feel your child has no downtime, he or she is probably overscheduled. Maybe homework wouldn't be so stressful if it weren't sandwiched between numerous outside activities. Ask your child to rank the importance of each activity in which he or she is involved and to choose at least one activity to temporarily eliminate.
- Make family time a priority. Most busy parents try to plan quality family time, but often the best family time just happens. It happens when families are not rushed, when there's no agenda. Ask your child's teacher and principal to honor family time by limiting daily homework, especially on weekends and school holidays.

(Reprinted with permission from National PTA: "Mom and Dad Aren't Taking Algebra This Year: Hints to Help Reduce Homework Stress". October 2006, National PTA Web site, www.pta.org)

WANTED

BAKED GOODS

American Education Week (November 13-16) is approaching. The Hospitality Committee is looking for donations. Donated items can include cookies, donuts, muffins, cupcakes, brownies, bagels, or another favorite of yours. Items do not need to be homemade. All donations are greatly appreciated.

Help is also needed for clean up at the end of each day.

Please contact Terri Sierakowski for more information.

Thank you.

Bedtime Routines Help Kids Get Enough Z's

Kid's who follow a bedtime routine most or every night are more likely to get the recommended amount of sleep (9.5 to 10.5 hours per night) and less likely to be tired at school, says a recent KidsHealth KidsPoll of 9-to 13 year-olds.

Below are some suggestions from KidsHealth.org on establishing a bedtime routine.

- ◆ Set a bedtime for school nights and stick to it.
- ◆ Schedule homework so that it won't interfere with your child's bedtime.
- ◆ Begin the bedtime routine 30 minutes before bedtime.
- ◆ Make sure the bedtime routine includes activities that will help your child unwind, such as taking a shower or reading a book.
- ◆ Take a few minutes to talk with your child about the day.
- ◆ Say goodnight and remind your child to stay quiet and in bed.

Learn more at www.kidshealth.org/media/kidspoll/sleep.html

(Reprinted with permission from the National PTA Magazine, *Our Children*, "Bedtime Routines Help Kids Get Enough Z's". Volume 32, October/November 2006. Page 25)

PTSA Student Recognition Awards, September, 2006



PTSA Student Recognition Awards are given to Perry Hall Middle School students who have shown outstanding achievements or efforts. Each month teachers are asked to nominate students for this award. This month 80 students received a "red bag" award. Congratulations!

Fadaka Adebayo
Helen Akehurt
Mina Al-Salihi
Anthony Alqasem
Kyle Appelt
Jessica Arminio
Seth Bagheri
Taylor Baxley
Cole Berg
Devon Bragg
Tim Brooks
Dominic Brown
Meghan Brush
Liam Casale
Christie Cassell
Gary Coleman
Brittany Crimy
Morgan Dandridge
Molly Deacon
Kavolena Doh
Shea Dorsey
Lacey Esposito
Justin Fisher
Andy Force
Nicholas Fornoff
Brandon Genco
Renee Gilbride

Julia Gluszc
Chevel Gordon
Meagan Hall
Ronald Hamilton
Brendan Huesman
Azra Husain
Mohamed Issa
Belair Jagurski
Lonnie Jones
Kit Kearney
Ashley Kroll
Beth Lauf
Kellie Le
Rachel Lebowitz
Chelsie Lee
Pedro Magarin
Sarah Manik
Dylan Manning
Sean McCay
Samantha McDonald
Jake McGowan
Meghan Miller
Michele Nethkin
Allison Orellana
Erika Orellana
Marco Palmere
Charlie Parker

Thomas Peters
Kassandra Quintanilla
Caitlin Reich
Steven Reidy
Kyle Ritter
Frank Rodriguez
Parker Ross
Alex Rummel
Katie Ryan
Sarah Rybczynski
Emily So
Michelle Stedding
Jason Stump
Saathvika Suresh
Christy Sykes
Justin Thomas
Ian Tierney
Paige Tolson
Casey Toner
Amanda Trombetta
Lorenz Valerio
Amanda Villanueva
Jasmyn Ward
Chante Waters
Sarah Wilson
Brittany Wimple

Thanks Community Business Partners

The PTSA would like to thank the following businesses for their generous donations for our PTSA Bingo held this past month.

Thank You!

Tom's Tropicals
9020 Belair Road

Friendly's
9551 Belair Road

Brunswick Recreation Center
4359 Ebenezer Road

De Santis Pizza Grill
9638 Belair Road

Just as a reminder...

Our next PTSA Executive Board Meeting will be on Tuesday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room.

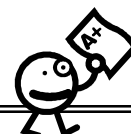


Article Deadline....

for the December/January issue of the *Panther Beat* is November 29, 2006.

Report Cards

go home Monday,
November 20, 2006



Perry Hall Middle School

PTSA[®]
everychild.onevoice.[®]

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PTSA Mission

The mission of the PTSA is threefold:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in our schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children; and
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.



We're on the Web

www.perryhallmiddleschoolptsa.org



2006

The PTSA and Perry Hall Middle School are joining forces with the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys For Tots program to provide needy children with the simple joy of receiving a NEW toy for the holidays. We will start our toy collection by kicking off **American Education Week** on Monday, November 13th. Students, parents and community members can support this worthy cause by donating a NEW, UN-

WRAPPED TOY (Sorry, we CANNOT accept stuffed animals, even if new.)

The drive will run starting **Monday, November 13th through Friday, December 1st, 2006**. Collection boxes will be located in or outside of the Main Office during school hours. Anyone who donates a toy is being asked to fill out a paper ornament with their name and

place it on the tree outside of the Main Office.

Last year we collected over 5 boxes of toys. Let's see if we can surpass that this year! Let's show our great Panther spirit and support again in helping out those less fortunate. We thank you and welcome any and all contributions.

Diana Lewis & Jackie Nelson-Becker
Toys for Tots Chairpersons

PTSA Calendar Dates to Remember

November 2006

November 13th - 17th - American Education Week

Tuesday, November 14 - PTSA Executive Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room

Wednesday, November 15 - NE Area Educational Advisory Council meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Monday, November 20 - Distribution of Report Cards

November 23rd - 24th - Thanksgiving Holiday - Schools Closed

Wednesday, November 29 - Panther Beat Article submission deadline

December 2006

Tuesday, December 5 - PTSA Executive Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room

Wednesday, December 6 - Market Day pick-up, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 12 - Winter Concert, Grade 6

Wednesday, December 13 - Winter Concert, Grade 7

Thursday, December 14 - Winter Concert, Grade 8

Friday, December 22 - Winter Break begins at end of school day

PAGE FOR “OUR CHILDREN”

PAGE FOR “OUR CHILDREN” (2)

PLACE FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK FLYER FROM MRS. CARLINEO

PLACE FOR CALENDAR

