



# The Merriam Community News

June 2009 - Volume 17 - Issue 10

## A Message from Ed:

Fast food. Fast cars. Do more, and in record time. Grow up quickly. Be the first one in school to finish your homework. Be the first on your block to own a shiny new toy.



Our society has an obsession with doing things quickly. I will admit that I have a counter-reaction to these sorts of things. I like to remind myself to slow down, and that it's important to take my time, and to put thoughtful, careful energy into the things that I do. I'm not a slowpoke by nature. But I do tend to push back against the forces suggesting that everything in the world needs to be on rush order or speed dial.

I've been this way, to some extent, about technology. I was one of the last people I know to get an answering machine. Same with the cell phone. So as we considered new technology at Merriam I was, to no surprise, a bit cautious. I wanted to make sure that we were ready for the changes. I wanted to be sure that our teachers would be adequately trained. I wanted to be certain that proper supports were in place for the kids. I wanted to be sure that we had time to think about how to integrate technology into what we already do, rather than simply adding on more to an already very busy workload for grown-ups and kids. I wanted it to be a thoughtful process.

Fortunately, along with being cautious at times, I'm also optimistic. And my optimism was rewarded. I have been delighted with how the district has supported the new technology in the elementary schools this year. The focus this year was on helping teachers become familiar with all of the things they could do with their new laptops. Teachers are at different places in their own learning with technology, and opportunities were set up so that they could learn at their own pace and level. And at their own pace, teachers have begun to use their new knowledge with their students.

At the PTO meeting on May 19 several of our teachers shared some of the new technology that

we have at Merriam: teacher laptops, Smartboards, In-Focus projectors, Alphasmart keyboards, Elmos, and student laptops. Have no fear if you were unable to attend the workshop and are unfamiliar with some of the aforementioned equipment and how they are being utilized. Next year we will offer additional workshops where we will show you all that we are learning and ways that teachers and students are integrating technology with curriculum.

Karen Cavanagh, our Technology Integration Specialist, has been working with individual teachers and with grade levels, to look at where the curriculum and the technology intersect in a useful and creative way. This has been very helpful to our teachers.

There is a possibility (depending on what happens with the state budget) that we will have a great deal more technology at Merriam next year. This time my first reaction is excitement. I see that the possibilities are endless and absolutely wonderful – that is, as long as we don't rush into things.

## Many Thanks From The International Night Committee

A traditional Maypole Dance heralded in the 3rd annual Parker Damon International Night on Friday, May 1st. The cafetorium was transformed into a beautiful international café and close to 300 people – many wearing ethnic attire - enjoyed a magnificent sampling of food from all over the world, followed by dazzling performances by Merriam and McCarthy-Towne students.

The evening would not have been possible without the help of our very dedicated volunteers from Merriam and McCarthy-Towne. Co-chairs Beth Davis and Reshma Singh would like to thank Merriam parents Vinita Asija , Kam-Lin Lam, Ally Li, Lisa Sajedi, and Jayanthi Srinath; Merriam alumna Anna Taylor; and all the volunteers from McCarthy-Towne.

Our World Craft displays and activities offered an

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## ***International Night – From Page 1***

opportunity to learn more about India, Iran, China, and Korea. Thanks to Ames Hardymon and Padma Kuchmanchi for hosting the India booth; Lisa and Mohammad Sajedi for hosting the Iran booth; and Luke Zhang, Qin Jiang, Danyang Bing, Jianying Shi, and Biyun Zhu for hosting and/or contributing to the China booth.

In an attempt to draw attention to the wide variety of international foods available in Acton, a free raffle was held. Six lucky winners received either a shopping bag filled with international groceries, or a gift certificate to the South Acton Teriyaki Station. The committee is extremely grateful to Brasil Popular, Little Market Indian Grocery, A&M Corner Mart (Chinese grocery), South Acton Teriyaki Station, Donelan's, and Trader Joe's for generously donating raffle items.

Additional thanks go to the Merriam PTO, McCarthy-Towne Student Council, and Parker Damon Building Steering Committee for their generous financial support; the members of Annie Doble's third grade class for performing their beautiful Maypole Dance; to all our student performers; and to Merriam emcee Chris Porth for leading everyone in a spirited May Day carol.

Finally, we'd like to thank our predecessors Beth McKeon and Virginia Taylor for all their assistance, and the Douglas School for letting several members of our committee attend the Douglas/Conant Festival of Cultures to help us gather more ideas for next year's Parker Damon International Night!

### **Merriam Auction Committee: Thanks To All Involved**

It is because of the incredible generosity of the Merriam community of parents and teachers that we were able to hold such a successful auction this year. Your individual donations and the effort that goes into creating each donation is what helps make up the heart of the auction. Each year we are amazed at the talents, artistic ability, and creativity that go into each donation. Each community donation is greatly appreciated and will be enjoyed by the recipients now and throughout the year. I would like to thank the following teachers, parents, and students for once again going above and beyond in their generosity and offering the auction such wonderful community donations:

Kristy and Mike Paratore, Christo Tsiaras, The Al-Atraqchi Family, The Fahey Family, Judy and James Nolan, Chiuling and Joe Campo, Ed Kaufman, Karen Drake, Peter and Beth McKeon, Steve and Kathy Jackson, Dorene and Mary Bowe-Shulman, Orna Shohet, Jane Logozzo, Colleen and Jason White, Nina and John Englander, Kristin Norwood, Kimberly McCormick and Shawn Ohler, Karen and Mike Brandstein, Shimon and Ronit Ben-Shir, Sandeep and Reena Verma, The Murphy Family, Deb Friedman, Stephanie Cox Suarez, Beth and Colin Browning, Lisa and Steve Pratt, Linda and Norm Strahle, Susie and Joe Alex, Judy and James Nolan, The Bloch Mamlet Family, Lori Locascio and Richard Poyner, Andrea and Marc Fidler, Janet Moore, Diane Johnson and Steve Walton, Franny Osman and Bill Freeman, The Sixth Grade Assistants, The First Grade Assistants, Anne Kress, Kim Ward, Leah Richardson, Dave James, Karen Sonner, Linda McMullon, Sara Dawley and Linda Carroll, Luke Zhang and Hanqi Cai, Sue and Jim Salem, Jennifer and Bill Brown, Gia Gagnon, Laura and Gary Wordsworth, The Longwell Family, The Rubin Family, Catherine and Steve Smith, Griet Boyd-Dehandschutter, Kathleen and George Iglesias, Andrea and Peter Hewitt, Franny Osman and Bill Freeman, Ernie and Karyn Camposano, Donna and Scott German, The Morse Family, Amy Herrick, Renee Hill, Tricia Kaminsky, Ginny Conway, Jen Washburn, Carolyn Imperato, Betty Mazzone, The Armstrong Family, Whitney and Frank Heavey, The Rychlik Family, Mary O'Brien, Tracy Steege and Framily, Bern Haan, Karen Sonner, Adrienne McAllister, Amante Gaines, Carol Leandro, Jessica Beer, Lena Jarostchuk, Leah Richardson, Linda Strahle, Kristin Indge, McCormick Family, Ohler Family and the Blasi Family, Kathy Simmons and Al Caruso, Susan and Richard Ward, Pam Shields, Katy Frey, Rajni Kyal, Diane Cooke, Sarah Dawley, Judy LaFrancis, The Bischoff Family, The Cring Family, Dave James, Tom Sidley, David Ljungberg, Lisa and Scott Robb, Ann and Dermot O'Grady, Annie Doble, Michele Pruett, Leah Richardson, Allison Nicolle, Fran Strohm, Jenny and Warren Paterson and all of our wonderful Merriam students who worked so hard on the beautiful artwork!

If for any reason your name is not on this list and you made a donation to the auction please let us know. We want to make sure that we thank each one of you, as every donation is important to the success of the auction. Thank you once again!!!

*- The Donations Team, Auction 2009*

## **Lots to Know from the PTO: The Year in Review**

We would like to thank the Merriam Community for their continued support as we look back over this past year and recognize the many accomplishments our organization of dedicated volunteers has achieved! Congratulations to all our fundraising chairs and their hardworking committees. Apparel, note cards, Innisbrook and our book fair. Willow Books night, SCRIPS, Target, Donalen's, box tops and directory ads. And our two largest fundraisers - the record breaking Camp Fair and the extremely successful Auction.

Our year was also highlighted by several community building social events - the 5k Oktoberfest Run, Disco Dance party, Chinese Social and International Night. These shared experiences contribute to our school in immeasurable ways! And where would we be without all of our behind-the-scenes committees such as school directory team - how many times did you reach for the blue school directory this year?! Our Friday mail team, always keeping us informed and thoughtfully reminded. Pointing and clicking through our website, receiving a PTO weekly email, or reading a jam-packed-with-information monthly newsletter.

Thank you to those who have attended our immensely informative PTO Community Conversations. We will keep you posted on dates and times for next year's hot topics and Community Conversations. We are working hard to streamline communication between the PTO, school, and Merriam families and we appreciate the time many of you took to answer and comment on our Communications survey (look for the results in this month's newsletter). We look forward to continuing to strive to keep you informed about school events while we keep an eye on the PTO's "carbon footprint" on our planet.

We are always searching for enthusiastic and energetic people to brainstorm and execute new ideas for the future. Please see our "PTO Volunteers Needed" flyer included in this mail packet to see how you can help us achieve our goals for next year. It will be a worthwhile experience and a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

A HUGE thanks goes to Lynn Armstrong, who will be stepping down from her enormous role as PTO Chair! Always pleasant, always organized, always forward thinking, and always fun to be

around, we will miss her tremendously at the helm of our organization!!

And a final word from our treasurer, Lisa Pratt - Despite a harsh economic climate, the Merriam Community continued to rally around the PTO mission of raising money to fund teaching assistants in each classroom. When the magnitude of the financial events of this past fall became clear, we made the decision to stick to our original fundraising plan. The chairs, committees, and volunteers for each fundraiser worked extra hard and the community-at-large participated in the fundraisers generously. As a result, we have been able to achieve our annual fundraising goal of \$85,000. Thank you to everyone who helped to achieve this goal.

## **Over 130 Responses to the Communications Survey!**

Thank you to everyone who shared their communications and fundraising preferences and ideas in the recent survey. The feedback was very valuable, and we were overwhelmed with how many people responded and the time everyone took to complete the survey and offer comments. Over 100 responses came in on-line and over 25 responses came back to the school in paper format.

The results of the survey and the comments will help guide our 2009/10 communications plan and fundraising approach and will reflect what the majority of Merriam parents prefer.

- 94% of respondents use the weekly PTO e-mails to keep informed of school events & activities
- 87% of respondents would be willing to read the calendar portion of the newsletter on-line (we did that with this issue! Check it out at [www.merriampto.org](http://www.merriampto.org))
- The following fundraisers received the highest votes: auction, camp fair, Donelan's receipts, Scholastic Book Fair, Willow Book Night

If you have additional questions about the survey results, please contact Kim McCormick at [kim@mcc-group.com](mailto:kim@mcc-group.com).

**Check out event details and PTO  
information at [merriampto.org](http://merriampto.org).**

## **Thanks for Supporting the Direct Appeal**

The PTO's Annual Direct Appeal letter was sent home to every family earlier in the month. This is the last fundraiser of the school year. We would like to thank all the Merriam families who have already made direct donations. As a result of your support, we have raised more than \$3,400 to help fund teaching assistants in every classroom for next year!

There is still time to contribute - we welcome any donations you can make to the Direct Appeal. Checks payable to the Merriam Community PTO can be sent to the attention of Lisa Pratt, the PTO Treasurer via the Merriam Office. Check our website, [www.merriampto.org](http://www.merriampto.org), for details and a contribution form.

The Merriam Community PTO is a non-profit organization (i.e. 501c3), so you may be eligible to have your donation matched, or even doubled, by your employer. We are excited to have received matching corporate donations from such companies as Fidelity, Sun Microsystems, Raytheon and Siena Corporation. Check with your personnel office today to see if your company offers this great benefit.

Thanks again for your generosity and support!

## **Parent Volunteer Reception Planned for June 8**

The PTO has had a wonderful year, thanks to the efforts of the entire Merriam community. We would like to extend a warm and heartfelt "thank you" to all our parents, staff and students for your help with the long list of PTO-sponsored social and fundraising events, as well as your support with community-building and communications.

Everyone has helped in some way, big and small! You have attended, organized, and staffed events. You have donated time, talent, money, goods, services, and delicious food. You have read, sent, and replied to emails, flyers, and newsletters. You have volunteered in classrooms, on field trips, at the library, on theme days, in the office, at the Auction, on committees, and more. And thanks to your generous participation and contributions, we've been able to meet our fundraising goal of \$85,000. This incredible achievement will benefit an amazing school -- thanks to all of you!

And for every parent who has volunteered in any way this year, please allow Merriam staff and

students to express their appreciation, too. Join them at the Parent Volunteer Reception, Monday, June 8, at 9:30 a.m., in the Cafetorium. They will honor and thank parents with special student performances during All School Meeting, followed by a reception in the lobby.

Thanks again for all your support this year!  
-- *Ed Kaufmann, Donna German, Kim McCormick, Lisa Pratt, and Lynn Armstrong*

## **Save The Date: 6th Grade Graduation Celebration**

Save the date for the Sixth Grade Graduation Celebration. Sixth Grade students and their parents/guardians are invited



to the Parker Damon Cafetorium on Monday, June 22nd from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Space is limited. Please make other arrangements for siblings.

Fifth Grade parent volunteers are needed for set up and clean up. If you are interested in signing up to help, please contact Jill Salamon ([jillsalamon@comcast.net](mailto:jillsalamon@comcast.net)), Beth McKeon ([bethanne.mckeon@verizon.net](mailto:bethanne.mckeon@verizon.net)), or Miriam Smith ([mwsmith@comcast.net](mailto:mwsmith@comcast.net)).

## **Staff Updates: What's Ahead For Next Year?**

As most of you know, MaryAnn Brandt is retiring at the end of this year. We will miss her wisdom, her kindness, her wonderful way of connecting with both students and staff, and of course, her amazing ability to keep us all smiling. Please read the tribute to her in the next issue of the Lamplighter.

Vanessa Mann will be moving to the 5/6 loop next year, teaching fifth grade. There will be a third section of half day kindergarten next year; Myrna Gutfreund will be teaching that class, and will thus have both an a.m. and a p.m. kindergarten class.

## **Spring Clean-Up Thank You**

The Parker Damon Building Landscape Committee would like to thank Brett Murphy and Neena Arora for coming out to help on Spring Clean-up Day! They put in a lot of hard work to make the Merriam front beds look beautiful! We hope that even more families will come out and join us for the fall clean-up too!

## **From Nurse Betty: Sun Safety for Children**

Childhood sunburns can increase your child's risk of developing skin cancer as an adult. Even a suntan can be harmful to children. Tanning is an outward sign of internal skin damage. Research shows that much of the damage to skin is done in the first 18 years of life. Protecting skin and eyes during these early years can reduce the risk of some types of skin cancer by up to 78%. Melanoma is a cancer of younger people and can start as early as adolescence.

### **Youth and Skin Cancer**

- 50% of lifetime exposure to UV light occurs during childhood and adolescence.
- It can take less than 10 minutes for a child's skin to burn.
- Children with severe sunburns are at an increased risk for skin cancer.
- A person born today is twice as likely to develop malignant melanoma compared to someone born only a decade ago and 12 times more likely as someone born 50 years ago.
- Being sun safe is the first step to reduce the chances of getting skin cancer later in life.

### **Teach Children Sun Safe Habits**

Children learn healthy habits best at a young age. It's important to begin protecting your children from the start and to teach them the importance of sun safety. With sun damage accumulating over a person's lifespan, beginning sun safety habits at a young age should be a priority.

- Maximize protection between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear sun-protective, light-colored clothing including long-sleeved shirts and pants made of tightly-woven fabric.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat that protects head, face, ears, and neck. If a baseball cap is worn, make sure to use sunscreen on ears and neck.
- Wear UV-protective sunglasses with 99%-100% UV absorption.
- During peak sun hours (10-4 p.m.) seek shade. Shadow rule-if your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are at their strongest and you should seek shade.
- Encourage children to play in shaded areas, especially during peak sun hours.
- Use a sunscreen of SPF 15+ and apply a generous amount (about a palmful) 30 minutes before going outside.
- Reapply Sunscreen every 90 minutes or after swimming, towel drying or perspiring, even if the label says the product is waterproof. Don't forget the lips and ears-both areas burn easily.

- Strongly discourage the use of tanning beds.

Further information can be found at [www.shadefoundation.org](http://www.shadefoundation.org), [www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/choose](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/choose), and [www.yourcover/guide.htm](http://www.yourcover/guide.htm)

## **Merriam's Cashless Fundraising Opportunities Reap Benefits**

### **Donelan Receipts - Register Tapes for**

**Education 2008-2009:** Thank you to those who sent in Donelan Receipts this year for the Register Tapes for Education. We submitted 111,016 cash value points, surpassing our goal of 100,000. Merriam selected an Azden 221 Sound System, a heavy-duty hole punch, three electric pencil Sharpeners, and a supply of Sharpie markers.

**Target's "Take Charge of Education."** Do you shop regularly at Target and *Target.com*? Do you already have a REDcard? You can easily enroll your REDcard in Target's Take Charge of Education program and choose Merriam School in Acton from their eligible school list. Once enrolled, 1% of your REDcard purchases at Target and *Target.com* are donated to Merriam. More than seven million Target cardholders participate nationwide. For some schools, it adds up to as much as \$10,000 a year.

**Box Tops for Education** Spread the word to friends and family and enlist their help clipping and saving Box Top coupons for Merriam School. Last year, the school received more than \$900 from the labels sent in by Merriam families. Look for Box Tops for Education labels on some of your favorite products. Send them to school with your children or drop them off in the office. For more information, check out [boxtops4education.com](http://boxtops4education.com) or contact Tricia Forrester at [pvforrester@gmail.com](mailto:pvforrester@gmail.com).

### **End-of-the-Year Picnic!**

Come and join us, Thursday, June 18th from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. for our annual Merriam end-of-the-year picnic! Bring your blanket, your food, your beverages (non-alcoholic, please!) and enjoy a fun-filled evening with your friends. Also, take this opportunity to wish Mary Ann Brandt a "Happy Retirement" during the picnic. Tattoos, games and music! This event will take place in the rear playground at the Parker Damon building. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! If you are interested in helping us organize this fun end-of-the-year event, please contact Lisa Sajedi, Social Chairperson at [lisasajedi@yahoo.com](mailto:lisasajedi@yahoo.com).

## **Where's The Calendar?**

Based on the results of the Merriam PTO Communications Survey, you commented and we listened! For the June newsletter, you can find the June calendar on our PTO website at [merriampto.org](http://merriampto.org). Tell us what you think about this small effort with a big impact on going green and conserving paper.

Don't have access to a computer to read the calendar? Don't worry. Please contact Donna at [donna@obxnj.com](mailto:donna@obxnj.com), and a paper version of the calendar will be sent home with your child.

Thank you for your continuing support!

## **Cultural Enrichment Recaps Busy Year**

Cultural Enrichment has been very busy this year with a full program of exciting performances that enhance, enliven and deepen our children's education. Here is a quick recap of the highlights of our Cultural Enrichment program of 2008-09.

Senegal drumming from artist Joe Sallins, Peter Pan, Aristocats and Cats excerpts performed by the Starz-N-Lights Theater company, and songs from the renowned Pan-Latin group, Sol Y Canto. March literacy week was celebrated at Merriam with two authors, namely Debbie Miller and Mike Knudson, both of whom gave K-6 grade-level workshop presentations as well as readings at Willow Books to our students. In addition, our Willow Books fundraiser was a huge success, raising over \$600 for Cultural Enrichment thanks to the dedication and support of our teachers and parents.

We would like to thank all of the performers, students, parents, teaching and administrative faculty (too numerous to mention!) who have helped make our year of Cultural Enrichment such a success.

Finally, after having done a fantastic job this year, our co-chair of Cultural Enrichment, Andrea Fidler, will be stepping down from this position. Thank you so much Andrea for all that you have done for our school. Therefore, we urgently need YOUR help, particularly with planning for programs this coming fall. If you are interested either in co-chairing or with assisting by finding wonderful performers and artists to showcase for our students, please get in touch with Cath Smith at 978-263-4377 or by email at [cath.a.smith66@gmail.com](mailto:cath.a.smith66@gmail.com).

## **This Week is Earth Week!**

PDB Landscaping Committee has organized Earth Week (May 26, 27, 28). It is a cooperative effort between Merriam and McCarthy-Towne to help in the upkeep of the grounds, and to instill a sense of responsibility in the care of those grounds in the children who use them.

Teachers have signed up their class to do one of the following jobs:

- pick up trash/pull weeds
- spread compost
- plant donated perennials

in specific areas of the grounds. They will be guided in their efforts by volunteers on the Parker Damon Building Landscape Committee.

## **Portrait Fundraiser October 3-4**

The Family Portrait Fundraiser has been scheduled for next fall, the weekend of October 3 and 4 at the Acton Arboretum. Two professional photographers will again donate their time for this PTO fundraiser. The sitting fee will be \$50, with all proceeds going to fund our amazing Merriam assistants. You may purchase prints independently from the photographer.

Look for more details in a Friday flyer before the school year is over. If you have questions, please contact Orissa Lawrence at [merriamportraits@gmail.com](mailto:merriamportraits@gmail.com).

## **June Lost & Found Fair**

The final Parker Damon Building Lost & Found Fair of this school year will be displayed during the final week of school, Wednesday, June 17 through Tuesday, June 23.

All items in the Lost & Found with legible names on them (preferably first and last names) are brought to the school office, and a note is sent to the student to claim them.

Items without identifying names are always displayed in the hallway outside the multi-purpose room at the bottom of the main staircase. Any items not claimed by the end of the fair will be laundered and donated to charity. Please remind your children to check the Lost & Found Fair for items that they may have lost.

Families are also welcome to check the fair/Lost and Found area any time the building is open. When school is in session, please remember to sign in at the school office before going to the fair/Lost and Found area.

## Welcome New Families To Merriam for 2009/2010

Volunteers are needed to welcome new families to the Merriam community. There will be a New Student Orientation on Friday, August 28, 2009 at 2:00 p.m., during which parents meet with the principal and students tour their new school. In addition, there is an ongoing need for "Buddy Families" throughout the school year. The opportunities are:



### New Student Orientation

- Students entering 5th and 6th grades to conduct school tours for the new students.
- Adult volunteers to direct new families, provide refreshments and supervise students.
- Photographer to take pictures of the new students for a welcome display

### Buddy Families

"Buddy Families" help welcome new families to the Merriam community! This simple and meaningful outreach involves just a few phone calls to parents of new students and answering questions, big and small, about Merriam and about being a parent in Acton. Bi-lingual skills are an added plus.

If you are interested, please contact Kelley Vialle at [vialle@att.net](mailto:vialle@att.net).

## Spring Yard Sale a Big Hit!

A million thanks to all who made our spring yard sale a success! Recycling items from our homes and some delicious baking contributed to nearly \$1,000 in profit, funds that will support the sixth grade's impending send-off celebration.

What made this year's yard sale a success? You. Thank you for:

- **Donating great items.** This year we had tons of great sports equipment, children's books and toys, and some of the best yard-sale bargains ever: a brand-new golf bag, a beautiful 35mm camera and leather bar stools fit for the finest decorator showcase. Thank you for donating such good stuff, and making sure it was clean and in good condition.
- **Volunteering:** Many of our volunteer "staff" pitch in year after year, and they are so helpful and fun to work with. We have never been more organized, orderly, and efficient.

- **Baking:** You baked and bought, elevating our proceeds considerably. Special thanks to all our talented bakers and their delicious treats.
- **Coordinating:** School staff and our exceptional PTO leadership were instrumental in making this event run smoothly, as they are every year.
- **Purchasing:** It's always crazy to show up on a spring Saturday, with all that's going on in beautiful Acton, but we had excellent, consistent turnout this year.

Please know that whatever we don't sell, we share with charities such as Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts, local churches, and Goodwill, all of whom share in our thanks.

- Sandy Cummings, Yard Sale Organizer

## Attention Shoppers: Last Day For Scrip Orders Is June 8

Merriam Scrip Shopping Cards orders are due June 8th, 2009.

It's your LAST CHANCE to order Scrip Shopping Cards this school year. Scrip cards are convenient to keep around the house for everyday purchases. They're also great gifts for:

- Birthdays and Father's Day
- Teachers, coaches, and graduates



A proportion of the price of every card you purchase goes back to the Merriam PTO at no cost to you. To buy cards fill out the order form distributed in Friday mail, or download the form from the Merriam PTO website. Send it back to school with a check, payable to "Merriam PTO."

All orders must be received by Monday June 8th, 2009, and cards will be available on June 12th. Any questions, please contact Cathy Castaneda at [cathy\\_castaneda@hotmail.com](mailto:cathy_castaneda@hotmail.com).

### The Merriam Community News

Editor: Joe Campo • Production: Sue Follett

The next issue will be published in September 2009. Have a great summer!

## Spiced Peach Oatmeal Muffins

This month's recipe comes from *AllRecipes.com*.



PREP TIME: 15 Min.  
COOK TIME: 20 Min.

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup quick cooking oats  
1 cup buttermilk  
1/3 cup brown sugar  
1/3 cup applesauce  
1/4 cup molasses  
2 eggs  
1 1/3 cups all purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 1/2 cups pitted and diced fresh peaches  
2 tablespoons white sugar  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon.

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400°. Grease muffins cups or line with paper muffin liners. In a large bowl, mix together oats, buttermilk, brown sugar, applesauce, molasses and eggs. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking soda and baking powder. Stir flour mixture into egg mixture, just until moistened. Fold in peaches. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. While muffins are baking, combine two tablespoons of sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon. After 15 minutes of baking, remove muffins from oven and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Return to oven and continue baking for 3 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.

Yield: One dozen muffins.