



# The Merriam Community News

June 2011 • Volume 19 • Issue 9

## Ed Notes

This is my second year in a row posing the following question to fourteen of our students for the final newsletter. Hope that you enjoy reading their answers as much as I enjoyed talking with them.

“What have you learned at school this year that stands out for you or that you want to remember most?”

I interviewed two students from each grade level at Merriam to get a small sampling of responses to this question (in some cases I needed to explain the question in a little more detail). I was very curious to see what I would find. Here are the answers I received:

### Kindergarten

“I remember when we were learning about medieval times and there was no electricity back then, so they had to use fire.” - Lila

“I remember when I was putting together the marble tracks and the marbles kept falling in the holes. I learned that you have to keep trying when you make marble tracks.” - Eric

### First Grade

“I remember counting the coins. I learned that different coins could be different sizes and they were worth different amounts of money.” - Alissa

“I learned how to write sentences. You have to use upper case at the beginning. I wrote sentences in my journal about the time I went skiing.” - Jerry

### Second Grade

“I remember the play “Friends” that we did for everybody. I learned that friendship is very

important. It’s nice to have someone to talk to.” – Caroline

“We learned fractions in math. We learned how to read fractions and how to write them down. One of three (one third) is a fraction that I like.” - Ryan

### Third Grade

“I learned a lot when we made those birds of prey out of paper. All birds of prey have curved beaks. We wrote haikus and watched videos about birds of prey.” -Kevin

“We did this Pilgrim game, and we learned all the different colonies – and how the Pilgrims got to Plymouth Colony. We worked in groups, we made maps, and it was fun! - Gabriella

### Fourth Grade

“I studied Lou Gehrig and he had a tough time when he was a kid. I think about all the people in the world who are homeless, and I think about us, who are very rich compared to them. We’re lucky that we have a nice life in Acton.” - Abe

“We were studying Native Americans – the Iroquois, the Inuit, and the Navajo. Two of the Iroquois tribes helped the colonists during the Revolutionary War. When the war was won, the Colonists just took away their land and forced the kids to go to school and speak English and become more European. A lot of times we think how great our heroes are, but sometimes they also make mistakes; because they are so powerful their mistakes can even backfire more.” - Emily

### Fifth Grade

“I think I learned that friendships aren’t just about making friends. In order to be a good friend, you need to treat them well and act like you care about them.” - Allison



## Fantastic Send Us' Packin' Raffle Supports 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Trip



Take your chance to win ANY of ten terrific raffle prizes for as little as \$5.00 WHILE you support our 5<sup>th</sup> graders! Funds raised help our 5<sup>th</sup> graders' attend an overnight field trip to Nature's Classroom in Groton, a residential environmental education program.

Ticket buyers choose which prize bucket each of their tickets goes in. To order, return the order form from Friday mail or simply email [marisaandgeorgeolson@comcast.net](mailto:marisaandgeorgeolson@comcast.net) by Friday, June 3. Drawing held at school and winners notified June 6. Ticketholders need not be present to win. THANKS for your support!

### *Choose the prize you most desire:*

- Overnight Stay and Breakfast for two at The Colonial Inn, Concord \*
- Sunday Brunch for two at The Colonial Inn \*\*
- \$50 Stop & Shop, Acton gift card
- \$40 Willow Books, Acton gift certificate
- 90-minute Introductory Acupuncture session with licensed Acupuncturist Dorene Bowe-Shulman at Be Well & Beyond, Acton
- 60-minute full body massage at Be Well & Beyond, Acton
- 55-minute full body massage at Elements Massage, Acton
- 2-week membership, nutrition analysis at Get in Shape \*\*\*
- 60 minutes of IT services from The IT Geek, Acton
- 8 "The Works" washes at Bedford Car Wash, Great Rd, Bedford

*One ticket: \$5 Three tickets: \$10 Eight tickets: \$20*

Thank you to our donors including Merriam parents: Stu Salguero of Colonial Inn, Greg Thompson of Bedford Car Wash, Dorene Bowe-Shulman of Be Well & Beyond, and Steve Rubner of Stop & Shop.

\* Colonial Inn Prizes – Overnight: Valid any Sunday through Thursday except on holidays, or during Sept or Oct. Guest room is in Prescott Wing, added to the Inn in 1970.

\*\* Sunday Brunch: Alcohol and gratuity not included.

\*\*\* Get in Shape Prize: For new members and women only. Must schedule 1<sup>st</sup> appointment for no later than 6/30/11.

## Kids and Parents Have Fun with Merriam's Core Values

On the evening of Wednesday, May 18, Merriam students and their parents had the opportunity to participate in a Core Values Carnival at school. It was estimated that 150 children and parents took part in the evening's activities! There were three events tied to Merriam's core values:

- **Risk-taking.** Dave James and Carolyn Imperato helped kids and parents climb the firecracker ladder, walk the hanging balance beam, and climb the rock wall.
- **Persistence.** Maryann Ayers and Colm McDermott facilitated a game where people had to "cross a river" using strategy and teamwork.
- **Respect.** Tracy Steege and Chris Porth led a lively song and dance to the tune of Aretha Franklin's RESPECT.

Kids and parents had a chance to visit all three stations and try what was interesting to them. A few nervous and excited students and parents waited to climb in the gym. Fifth-grader Aliya Diamond, who climbed the hanging balance beam and firecracker ladder, commented that "the hanging balance beam was fun, and a little challenging."

Third-grade teacher Kate Shiebler also walked across the hanging balance beam, and said that "since the kids are all core value experts, it's neat that they can bring their parents to try out some core values activities."

Fifth-grader Leeza Petrov said that she enjoyed singing and dancing with Tracy and Chris because "it was fun" and "I got to make a fool of myself." This was the first time that this event was held, co-sponsored by the PTO and School Council.

-- Lisa Pearson (Merriam parent and School Council member)

## **International Night Committee Extends Thanks**

The Parker Damon International Night



Committee would like to thank everyone involved in making this year's event such a phenomenal success! Once again, the cafetorium was transformed into a beautiful international café. More than

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 wouldn't have been possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers from Merriam and McCarthy-Towne. We'd like to thank Merriam parents Ronit Ben-Shir (and her daughter Yasmine), Neena Arora (and her daughter Marika, Vinita Asija (and her son Samir), Jhum Sarcar, Stephanie Liu, Scott Early, and all the volunteers from McCarthy-Towne. We also would like to thank our High School volunteers for all their great help!

Like last year, Global Village was a big hit. Students enjoyed participating in a variety of interactive activities from all over the world including Origami, playing Marimba (musical instrument from Guatemala), Chinese calligraphy, henna tattooing, Pasta making (fettuccini and gnocchi), traditional wooden puzzles, coloring maps, and more! Many thanks to all the families who contributed to all the spectacular displays and activities:

**America-** Ally Li (and 1 parent from McCarthy-Towne)

**Columbia-** (McCarthy – Towne Family)

**China** – Ally Li, Jianying Shi, Yanni Gou, Yanhua Tang, Ting Chen, Carol Ho, Daquan Liao, Youcun Wu, Wei Sun, Qing Liao

**Czech Republic** –Zuzka Blasi (and 1 parent from McCarthy-Towne)

**Ethiopia-**Elizabeth McGovern and Scott Early

**Guatemala** – (McCarthy-Towne family)

**Greece** – Eleni Digenis-Bury, Maria Sousounis, Christo Tsiaris, Daphne Barbas, Mandy Zervoglos

**India** – Kshama, Jayanthi Srinath (and 3 parents from McCarthy-Towne and 2 from Conant)

**Israel** – Ronit & Shimon Ben-Shir, Yasmine Ben-Shir

**Italy-** Zuzka Blasi

**Japan-** Linda McMullon (Merriam first grade teacher) and her class, Neena Arora

**Peru** – Clelia Solis

**Zimbabwe and Mauritius** – Marc & Tina Humphreys

Our talented student performers put on a wonderful show. Thank you to Merriam students Aneesh Sathaye, Riya Shah, Brian Li, Jack Pearson, Joyce Zhong, Emma Chen, Vivian Shen, Jessica Chen, Aarti Jeslani, Jana Davis, Aryn Leers, Nicole Leers, Shayna Fidler, Sadie Fidler, Michelle Zabarak, Mark Zabarak, Yasmine Ben-Shir, Anagha Venkatesh, Shreya Sarcar, Krish Midha, Nicolas Bury, Basil Sousounis, Christopher Sousounis, Katrina Sousounis, Felicia Huang, Kathryn Gu, Evelyn Gu, Katherine Gu, Bei Qi, Alicia Dai, Elsie Liu, Emily Liu, Emily Ren, Helen Li, Jessica Shen, Alok Marchala, Calvin Benelli, Ryan Luo, Karan, Owen Webster, Allison Perason, Serena Verma, Grace Mackin, Elena Ward, and Zachary Olson

A special thanks to the music teachers Christopher Porth and Kerrin Stewart who ended the night with a high note!!

We would also like to thank the following businesses for generously donating gift certificates:

Spicepepper Garden (at the location formerly occupied by the Ginger Court)

Nu Yu Salon

Debra's Natural Gourmet

Makaha Restaurant

Junior's Pizza

Additional thanks go to the Merriam PTO, McCarthy-Towne PTSO, and Parker Damon Building Steering Committee for their generous financial support. And last but certainly not least, we thank all the families who attended the event for your support and for your delicious food contributions! We look forward to seeing you all next year at the 6th annual Parker Damon International Night!

## Cultural Enrichment News

Our K-6 students enjoyed a performance of Ball in the House at our special afternoon All School Meeting recently and the house rocked! Many thanks to Ronit Ben-Shir for organizing the performance of this five piece cappella group.

We are able to sponsor these marvelous curriculum-based Cultural Enrichment programs for all of our students thanks to YOUR support!

If you have any questions or suggestions concerning Cultural Enrichment at Merriam, or if you wish to join our committee or volunteer your services by previewing or recommending local arts, math, or science shows for our school, especially for 2011-2 program, we welcome you!

Please get in touch with co-chairs:

Cath Smith at 978-263-4377;

[cath.a.smith66@gmail.com](mailto:cath.a.smith66@gmail.com) or

Ronit Ben-Shir at 978-263-9872;

[rbenshir@jccgb.org](mailto:rbenshir@jccgb.org)

## Annual End-of-Year Picnic!

Friday, June 17th, 5:30-7:30pm

Parker-Damon back playground



Let's celebrate the end of the school year! Families are invited to gather as a community before the start of summer in this casual tradition. Bring your family's dinner and chairs/blankets. We'll

provide a bit of entertainment and a light snack.

This is not a drop-off event. All children must be accompanied by an adult. No alcohol on school grounds. Questions? Contact Alice at

[alice\\_webb\\_greer@hotmail.com](mailto:alice_webb_greer@hotmail.com)

## Lost and Found Fair June 19

It's time for the last Lost and Found Fair of the year. All Lost and Found items will be displayed in front of the Multi-Purpose Room on the lower level, beginning during the week of June 6 through Friday, June 19. Please stop by or have your children stop by to have a look for any possible lost items.

At the end of the year, all remaining items will be donated to charity. Thank you!

## Spring Garden Clean-Up Second Chance!

Make a Difference to the outdoor Gardens and grounds your children enjoy EVERYDAY!!!!!!

Sunday, June 5th from

1:00pm - 4:00pm!



Merriam Families are important to this effort, and only a few steadfast families have attended in the last several clean-ups! Please do your part to help us this year! We need help cleaning up the garden beds, and grounds around the school and play areas!

Only with your help can we make our school grounds look beautiful! Bring your rakes, weeding tools, and wheel barrows. The whole family is welcome - and we need all the help we can get! The landscaping of the grounds is done only by volunteers and we need you!

Can't help Sunday? Join us on Thursdays around 11:15. We'll be out there weeding or planting!

For more information, please contact: Amanda Lye at [amandalye1@yahoo.com](mailto:amandalye1@yahoo.com) or (978) 635-9879, or Karen Dean, at [dkdean83@gmail.com](mailto:dkdean83@gmail.com) or (978) 274-2084.

## Fundraising Goal Met

**We did it!** The Merriam Community worked together to host several successful social events this school year including picnics, the basketball game, International Night, and more. Together we met our fundraising goal of \$90,000 that goes directly to funding valuable assistants in each classroom at Merriam. We wish to send a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed! In our ever-changing social and economic climate, we are very fortunate to live in a community that values social connections and quality, caring, educational experiences.

- Kim McCormick, Neena Arora, Tricia Forrester,  
Dianna McNeish

## WHO?

The 2011-2012 School year PTO team is already in place!

A very warm welcome to Kristina Rychlik who will join Neena Aurora as co-chair, and Eleni Digenis-Bury as the new secretary. A special thank you goes to Tricia Forrester who served two years as secretary, endlessly taking notes, keeping the board on track, leading communication efforts, and providing assistance and feedback on social and fundraising efforts.



## We're Looking for a Few Volunteers



Many, many families participated in the events and activities this year helping to make our community stronger and to secure Classroom Assistants in each class. We are impressed by the committee organizers and pleased at the support (at all levels) from Merriam parents.

The PTO Board is looking for parent volunteers for several positions for the 2011-2012 school year. If you have a bit of time and could help out, let us know! We are specifically looking for help with:

- Communications (school directory & Friday mail)
- Phone sales (for various events)
- Basketball game organization, ticket sales, snack sales
- Our new carnival in the fall (booths, marketing, day-of activities, etc.)
- The camp fair in the winter (coordination, marketing, day-of activities, etc.)
- The auction in the spring (coordination, event planning, day-of activities, etc.)

**Able to help? Great! Contact Neena: [neenaarora@aol.com](mailto:neenaarora@aol.com)**

## Healthy Recipe: Frozen Lemonade Squares

Ingredients:

- 9 HONEY MAID Low Fat Honey Graham
- 1/3 cup margarine or butter
- 4 cups frozen vanilla yogurt
- 6 oz. frozen lemonade concentrate
- 1/2 cup COOL WHIP LITE Whipped Topping

### PREPARATION

Mix graham crumbs and margarine; press onto bottom of 9-inch square pan.



Beat yogurt and concentrate with mixer until well blended; spread over crust. Freeze 4 hours or until firm. Serve topped with COOL WHIP. Serves 9.

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### Ed Notes — continued from page 1

“I learned to love poetry. My student teacher encouraged us to learn and to love poetry. She read us a really neat book called Love That Dog, and that really inspired me to love poetry.” - Ryan

### Sixth Grade

“The Topics project helped me to dig into the topic I really liked and get information I never knew. My topic was modern architecture. We took a field trip to an architecture firm last year and it really inspired me. Kids might not like all subjects, and with the Topics project they can choose something they really enjoy.” - Dan

“I think doing the Egyptian register was really fun – drawing pictures from the ancient myths. I thought it helped us to realize how different cultures have different beliefs and religions. I thought it was really cool.” – Felicia

### The Merriam Community News

Editor: Joe Campo • Production: Sue Follett

The next Community News will be distributed in September. Enjoy the summer!