

Merriam Community News

Notes from Ed

Excerpts from My Open House Talk. (Visit [http://www.merriampto.org/Ed's Comments.htm](http://www.merriampto.org/Ed's%20Comments.htm) for the complete speech.)

I've started a tradition on Open House evening, telling stories about some of the precious things your children have said to me at the beginning of the year...

On the first day I visited all of the classes to welcome the children back to school. In a first grade class one of the boys said, "I'm very glad to see you, Ed. Do you want to know why?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Because I forgot to give you something last year." In my mind I was thinking, "Is this a joke?" Or perhaps there was some special object or souvenir that this youngster had meant to give me the year before. My curiosity got the better of me and I responded, "Really, what did you forget to give me?" His simple response made me smile. He said, "A compliment."

It was one of the first days of school and a second grade girl approached me in the hallway. I was waiting for a comment about my tie, but instead

she asked, pointing to my left ear, "Is that an earring?" "Yes, it is," I responded. "Are principals allowed to wear earrings?" was her follow-up question. I secretly wondered whether she really meant to ask, "Are male principals permitted to wear earrings?" I told her that indeed principals could wear earrings. Then I told her the story of how I'd accompanied my older daughter to get her ears pierced for her seventh birthday. She became very nervous at the last second and said that she'd feel much better about the whole thing if I'd get one of my ears pierced as well—the rest is history!

For the more serious part of my talk, I'm going to continue with some storytelling...I was an extremely shy youngster and when my family moved from one suburb of NYC to another in between my first and second grade years, I was terrified about what to expect. A week before school started, I met my new teacher, Mrs. Frye, who smiled, put her hand on my shoulder, and told me that everything was going to be alright. After school started, she

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Inside this issue:

PTO News	2
Volunteers Wanted	2
Health News	3
Merriam Fall Fair	3
Food Service News	4
Upcoming Events	4

checked in with me often and always gave me a big smile. She matched me up with a buddy named Charlie—who wound up being one of my closest elementary school friends...I still cannot thank this teacher enough for helping me ease my way into a new school....

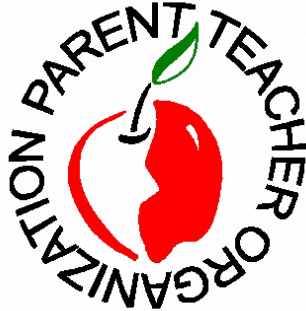
There are many stories...of a teacher who made a huge difference in our lives. The job that the folks behind me do with your children—guiding them, inspiring them, connecting with them, and believing in them—will create memories for your kids that will last a lifetime. My hope is that the coming year creates many more of those stories.

Respect . Persistence . Risk Taking

News from the Parent Teacher Organization

On September 27, we kicked off our series of five PTO meetings. Each meeting has a similar format. We briefly review PTO business, our teacher representatives provide grade-level reports, and we have a “Community Conversation” on a relevant topic. This time we discussed confidentiality at Merriam, and Ed led us through a series of tricky situations resulting in a thoughtful group discussion. For more information on honoring confidentiality at Merriam, please review page 34 of the School Handbook located at <http://merriam.ab.mec.edu/pdf/handbook.pdf>.

Many thanks to our teacher representatives Alyson, Kate, and Christy for sharing your time and thoughts with us, and to Ed for guiding an interesting and challenging discussion. We hope to see many of you next



time, Wednesday November 2 at 6 PM. Babysitting will be available for your school-aged children. Our topic is to be determined.

All of our fundraising goes to help pay for our classroom assistants. Every three or four years, we sell “Merriam Wear,” clothing and other items with the Merriam logo. This year we are targeting Octo-

ber 15th as our kickoff date. Look for samples at the Fall Fair that day. Orders will be taken into November.

You’ll be hearing more about other fundraising events as they come up, but we wanted to let you know of a few ongoing fundraisers:

BoxTops for Education

Many food and household items have the small BoxTops for Education stamp on them. Clip the stamps and send them to school with your child. We turn them in for cash throughout the year.

Donelan’s Receipts

Save your cash register receipts from September 1 to March 31, and send them to school with your child. This program has provided a sound system and other school equipment for Merriam.

Target REDcard

If you have a Target credit card, you can choose to have a percentage of your purchases go to Merriam as part of Target’s Take Charge of Education program. For more information, see <http://sites.target.com/site/en/corporate/page.jsp?contentId=PRD03-005157>.

SCRIP

The SCRIP program is a way to sell gift cards with a percentage of the proceeds going towards the school. Stores include Roche Bros., CVS, Land’s End, and many others. The first SCRIP order form will be sent home October 7.

Bookmark us: <http://www.merriampto.org> and <http://merriam.ab.mec.edu>

Volunteer Opportunities

Fall Fair: Merriam’s Fall Fair is Saturday, October 15. If you can spare time to help sell tickets, serve food, set up, clean up, or just keep an eye on things, please contact Danielle Fredericks (daniellefredericks@yahoo.com).

Hospitality: Merriam’s Hospitality

Committee provides refreshments for a number of events throughout the school year, including a fabulous teacher appreciation lunch planned for November 1 this year. To help, contact Ali Stanton and Claire McCarthy (merriamptohospitality@yahoo.com).

Library: The library needs volunteers when classes are there as well as other times. For more information or to offer your time, please contact Joan Hilton (jhilton@mail.ab.mec.edu).

Merriam Fall Fair

Fall is in the air and we've been busy planning a new event for the Merriam community. The Fall Fair will be held on Saturday, October 15 from 4–7 PM at the school. It will be an exciting evening full of good old-fashioned fun for the whole family. The cafeteria will be filled with home-made carnival booths that will be put together and run by each class. There will be a cake walk... be the

one standing on the right square when the music stops and win a WHOLE cake or pie! We will take pre-orders for RED BONES barbecue. Hot dogs will be available without pre-order. To finish off your meal, enjoy a caramel apple or some cotton candy! Then burn it off while you do some square-dancing or the Cha-Cha Slide. If you still have some energy left, try the rock wall!

Like all great events, we can't pull it off without lots of help. Please sign up to help serve food, sell tickets, collect admissions, set up (probably on Friday 10/14), or clean up. Together, we can make this an event to remember. Contact Danielle Fredericks at (978) 429-8057 or daniellefredericks@yahoo.com to volunteer.

Attendance at School: Should I keep My Child Home with Illness?

Fever

Fevers are generally a sign of illness/infection. Children should stay home if their TEMPERATURE is 100 F or above. They should not return to school until their temperature has been normal (97–99 F) for at least 24 hours.

Cold, Cough, Sore Throat

Most children can attend school with cold symptoms as long as they do not have a fever. If your children have a cold with a fever over 100 F, they should be kept at home and your healthcare provider should be consulted.

Your children should also stay home if they have greenish nasal discharge or cough production. A sore throat with a fever, swollen glands, headache, stomachache, or rash may indicate strep. You should consult your child's doctor for evaluation. If strep is confirmed, your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics, if they feel better.

Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea

A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept at home until symptoms have resolved for at least 12 hours. Your child also needs to be able to eat and drink normally before returning. Consult your doctor if you suspect dehydration.

Red Eyes

Your children should stay home if they have red eyes that itch and/or have a crusty discharge. Consult your doctor for evaluation of possible conjunctivitis. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

Pain

Earache—Consult your doctor if your child complains of ear pain.

Toothache—Consult your dentist.

Headache—If headaches are frequent you should consult your doctor. Dehydration, stress, and fatigue can cause a headache.

Rash

A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to medication, plants, or chemicals such as soaps or detergents. If your child has an unusual rash or has a rash and fever, contact your doctor.

- * The best way to prevent the spread of infection is good hand washing.
- * Give your child a separate towel and washcloth.
- * Change your child's toothbrush after an illness and every 3 months.
- * Have your children examined annually by their health care provider.
- * School age children require at least 8–10 hours of sleep each night.
- * A healthy diet is important in creating a healthy student.
- * Please call your school nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

Remember—a sick child belongs at home!

Schedule of Upcoming Events at Merriam

Merriam Elementary School

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Acton, MA

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<http://merriam.ab.mec.edu/>

Merriam Community News

Editor: Joe Campo
Production: Jennifer Izzo

The next newsletter will be published on Friday, November 4. Email articles by October 28 to Joe at jb_campo@yahoo.com.

The clip art is licensed from the Clip Art Gallery on Discovery-School.com.

If you are a designer or artist, we'd love your help in creating unique images and logos for the newsletter!

October

10/7 Friday—Community Day

10/10 Monday –Columbus Day—NO SCHOOL

10/11 Tuesday—School Council Meeting (6–7:30 PM)

10/15 Saturday—Fall Fair 4–7 PM

10/26 Wednesday—EARLY DISMISSAL

November

11/1 Tuesday—Professional Day (NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS)

Teacher Appreciation Lunch

11/2 Wednesday—PTO meeting 6:00 PM (w/sitter—Topic: TBD)

11/8 Tuesday—School Council Meeting (6–7:30 PM)

11/11 Friday—Veteran's Day -- NO SCHOOL

11/15 Tuesday—HALF DAY

11/17 Thursday—School Committee Meeting @ Merriam

11/23 Wednesday—EARLY DISMISSAL

11/24 Thursday and 11/25 Friday—NO SCHOOL

11/30 Wednesday—PTO vs. Staff Basketball Game (6 PM)

Top 10 Things to Know About the New Changes in Food Services

10. LUNCH ID, LUNCH ID, LUNCH ID—All students purchasing food/drink from the cafeteria must use their Lunch ID regardless of payment method.

9. A student's confidential Lunch ID can be found in PowerSchool.

8. Students can still pay cash for their lunch each day but must use their Lunch ID to process the purchase.

7. Parents can pre-pay for lunches by creating an account online using a

credit card or by filling out the form and sending in check/cash to cafeteria manager.

6. Tickets will no longer be sold but current tickets will be accepted as payment.

5. Beginning September 30, parents can create an account on Parentonline.net to set-up pre-pay for lunches.

4. Elementary and Junior High students will be allowed to have a negative balance for up to 2

lunches. High School students must have cash or money on account to purchase food.

3. Parents can check online to see summary of what student purchased.

2. Rosters will be available at check-out for students that cannot remember their Lunch ID.

1. All these exciting changes will take place on **October 7**. Please have your child memorize his/her Lunch ID by October 7.