



Merriam Community News

Notes from Ed

I bet we all can remember multiple times in our elementary school years when we were asked to write some sort of essay about “How I Spent My Summer Vacation” on the first day of school. It’s a natural bridge from summer to fall, easing the transition back to school by sharing some of the positive memories from summer. I’m sure that many of our Merriam students either talked or wrote about their summer experiences when they arrived back in school on August 30.

It’s in that spirit that I want to share one of the great experiences of my summer. I went to a three day conference in July that left me feeling inspired, nourished, and part of a wonderful

professional community. The “Courage to Lead” Institute, held in New Hampshire for about 35 school administrators in the Northeast, is actually part of a larger organization. “Since 1997, the national Center for Courage & Renewal has helped foster personal and professional renewal through retreats that offer the time and space to reflect on life and work. These retreats, called Courage to Teach, Courage to Lead, or Circles of Trust, are led by skilled facilitators... Developed with author, educator, and activist Parker J. Palmer, Ph.D., and the Fetzer Institute, this approach was initially created to renew, sustain, and inspire public school teachers. Educators are at the heart of its mission...” (Quote is from

the Courage literature).

Two of the main Courage facilitators in Massachusetts, Pamela Seigle and Chip Wood, are involved in other important activities. Pamela was one of the founders of Open Circle, a social skills program utilized in every classroom at Merriam School. Chip helped to develop the Responsive Classroom approach, another very useful program that many of us are familiar with.

The administrators who I met in those three days were generous with their ideas and their spirit. It was so helpful to hear the perspectives of my colleagues in other districts; we realized that we could be important resources for one another. I’ll be hosting a meeting at Merriam in late September

Volume 20, Issue 1

September 1, 2011

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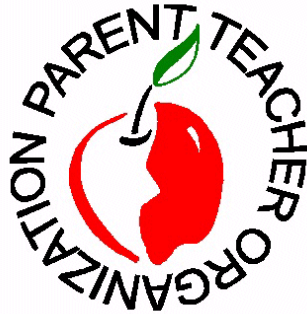
for eight of these school leaders who work fairly close by. I will be visiting several of these administrators’ schools throughout the year and will bring back all sorts of things for us to think and talk about at Merriam.

After a great summer, I’m looking forward to a great year with you and your children at Merriam.

Respect . Persistence . Risk Taking

News from the Parent Teacher Organization

Welcome new families and welcome back returning families! The Merriam Community Parent Teacher Organization, or Merriam PTO, is made up of all legal guardians of Merriam School students as well as Merriam School faculty and staff. There are no fees or forms needed to join the PTO and everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate in all that we do! The purpose of the Merriam PTO is to promote and facilitate parent and faculty communication, advocate for Merriam students, encourage parent involvement in the Merriam community, enhance Merriam community relations, and



raise funds to enrich the educational experience at Merriam School.

Thanks to the generosity of the Merriam community, the PTO raised \$90,000 last year! The money raised by the PTO is used to fund our invaluable classroom teaching assistants and benefits all students at Merriam School. Our fundraising goal for this year is

\$88,000 and we are counting on your support to reach this goal.

In addition to our longstanding events such as the Merriam Auction, (March 17, 2012), and the Camp Fair

(January 26, 2012), we are introducing the Merriam Fall Fair this school year. Envision booths with games for children of all ages, caramel apples, cotton candy, barbecue, square dancing, and a cake walk to add up to an afternoon of good old-fashioned family fun. Please save the date and join us on October 15 from 4–7 PM. At the fair you will also have a chance to order premium quality Merriam Wear, offered only once every three or four years.

For more information about the PTO please look for our weekly Sunday e-mails (Merriam PTO N2K — Need to Know) or visit the PTO website, www.merriampto.org.

Volunteer Opportunities

Help Us Design a New Logo

You may have noticed that we are trying out a new look for the Merriam Community News. We need new images to match the look. If you're interested in creating a new logo for this newsletter, please contact Jen (jbizzo@hotmail.com).

Friday Mail

Join a group of fun and friendly parents at 8:30 AM Friday mornings to assemble weekly information packets for home. Contact Karen Brandstein (kmwb@yahoo.com).

Photocopying Help

One parent needed, Thursday mornings, every other week. Contact Karen Brandstein (kmwb@yahoo.com).

School Directory

Enthusiastic, detail-oriented person needed to join this team. Contact neenaarora@aol.com.

Basketball Game Fundraiser

Coordinator wanted to organize this wildly popular PTO vs. Teachers basketball game. Contact neenaarora@aol.com.

Office Help

One morning, every other week. Contact Dianna McNeish (mcneish4@verizon.net).

Book Fair

Coordinator needed to join this team. Contact neenaarora@aol.com.

Room Parents Needed

This can be a great way to get involved with your child's class. See flyer in the Friday folder for typical Room Parent responsibilities. If interested, contact Lauren Pollak at lpollak@partners.org.

Merriam School Council Elections

All schools in Massachusetts are required to have a School Council. As defined by the Education Reform Act, the School Council meets on a regular basis to assist the principal in:

- Identifying educational needs of students
- Reviewing the annual budget
- Formulating the school improvement plan and educational goals and tracking progress toward



those goals

Our School Council members include the principal, four parent representatives, three teacher representatives and at least one community member. The Council typically meets 6:00 to 7:30 PM on the second Tuesday of most months throughout the school year. In addition to meeting attendance, members may be responsible for subcommittee work.

The Merriam PTO is responsible for conducting the School Council election. There are currently two openings for parent representatives. If you are interested in serving a three-year term on the Merriam School Council, please send the following information to Neena Arora (neenaarora@aol.com) or Kristina Rychlik (krychlik@mac.com) by e-mail or via backpack to school by Sept. 16:

Your name, grade of youngest child, phone number, e-mail address, and a short statement about your interest in serving as a parent representative on the Merriam School Council.

Health News: Important Information Regarding Medications

Medication administration is an important issue in schools. Some students require medications at school to survive. Others need medications to learn. Occasionally, students require antibiotics during the day following a bacterial infection.

The goal of your School Nurse is to administer only those medications that are absolutely necessary during the school day. All other medications should be given at home either before or after school.

State law requires a written order by a licensed prescriber and written

parental permission before any medication can be administered to students, including over-the-counter medications. You can obtain these forms from the School Nurse, most Health Care Providers, or from the School Nurses website <http://teacherweb.com/MA/ActonBoxboroughSchools/Nurses>.

All medication **MUST** be in the original labeled container and be labeled with the student's name. The School Nurse will not administer expired medications, medications delivered in unlabeled containers,

and medications in inappropriate containers, such as zip-loc bags.



For the safety of all elementary school students, no medications are to be carried to school by students. Exceptions exist for Junior High and High School students who may carry inhalers or Epi-pens after meeting certain requirements.

Feel free to contact the Merriam School Nurse, Betty Mazzone RN, at 978-264-3372 with any questions.

Schedule of Upcoming Events at Merriam

- 9/9 Friday — School Picnic 5:30–7:30 PM, Merriam Playground
- 9/12 Monday — New Parent Coffee 8:30–9:30 AM
- 9/13 Tuesday — Open House 7:00–8:30 PM (K 6:00 PM)
- 9/14 Wednesday — August Birthday lunch
- 9/16 Friday — Deadline to submit information to run for School Council Parent Representative
- 9/17, 9/18 Saturday/Sunday — Family Portraits Fundraiser (Rain Dates 9/24, 9/25)
- 9/18 Sunday — Auction kick-off meeting
- 9/21 Wednesday — September Birthday lunch
- 9/26 Monday — PTO Meeting 7:30 PM
- 9/30 Friday — School Pictures
- 10/7 Friday — Community Day
- 10/11 Tuesday — School Council Meeting 6:00–7:30 PM
- 10/15 Saturday — Merriam Fall Fair 4:00–7:00 PM

Merriam Elementary School

11 Charter Road
Acton, MA

Phone: 978-264-3371

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

Merriam Community News

Editor: Joe Campo
Production: Jennifer Izzo

The next newsletter will be published on Friday, October 7. Email articles by September 30 to Joe at jb_campo@yahoo.com.

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

Food Service News

Lunch prices: Acton Public \$2.35 (\$.10 increase). A la Carte Milk \$.50 (remains the same price). Acton-Boxborough \$2.10-\$3.00 (Tiered pricing based on menu offerings).

We have exciting things happening this year in the Food Service Department!

• We now offer Gluten Free Lunches at all schools. See menu for details. We require advance notice for these lunches, which are available in mid-September.

Link to menus: <http://ab.mec.edu/departments/food/foodmenus.shtml>. Click the menu links to see alternate choices.

• We are again offering local farm fresh apples from Carlson Orchards this fall.

• Mass Harvest to Schools week: September 19–23 will be full of fun! We offer farm-fresh corn on the cob that students can help husk.

We will additionally offer a fruit and vegetable tasting, which will give students a chance to sample food items they may not have tried before. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Pat Barry (Food Service office). We are looking for parent volunteers (CORI required) to help serve the fruit and vegetable samples. Pat's e-mail:



pbarry@mail.ab.mec.edu. Please specify your availability in the email.

The fruit and vegetable sampling is funded through the Northwest Suburban Health Alliance/CHNA 15 DoN Funds from Lahey Clinic.

• We are implementing a point of sale system to become in effective on October 7. Visit our website for details: <http://ab.mec.edu/departments/food/pdf/2011-2012fall-food-service-news.pdf>.

• Free and reduced lunch application and family qualifications: <http://ab.mec.edu/departments/food/foodmenus.shtml>.

Kirsten Nelson, Food Service Director, knelson@mail.ab.mec.edu.