

The Advocate

Mount Daniel Elementary — Grades K-1

SEPTEMBER 2007

Thomas Jefferson Elementary — Grades 2-4

Welcome Back!

President, Catherine Beddow

I hope these greetings find everyone rested and relaxed after a fun summer and ready to start the new school year with lots of energy and enthusiasm. It will certainly be a busy one!

For our new families, we welcome you to our wonderful school system. We are so fortunate to have such talented and dedicated teachers, administrators, and staff and a community which truly values its educational system. The Elementary PTA is a vital component of this community, and you will find your involvement to be interesting, enriching, and fun. It is a great opportunity to learn about our schools, meet other parents, and share your talents and time.

This month, plan to attend the Information Fair and Ice Cream Social on Tuesday, Sept. 11 to learn more about extracurricular activities available to our K-4 students in our schools and community. Bring the whole family for a fun and informative evening. Our first monthly PTA meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 19 at Mount Daniel. Our speakers will include Dr. Lois Berlin, Superintendent of Falls Church City Schools; Kieran Sharpe, our School Board liaison; and Donna Englander, Director of the Falls Church Education Foundation. Childcare will be provided. And mark your calendar now for the Family Movie Night on Friday, Oct. 12.

Your PTA Executive Committee met throughout the summer to draft the 2007-08 budget and plan our programs, fundraisers, and family events for the year. We are all quite excited about the full calendar ahead. We are especially happy to announce that this school year will include both the fabulous Family Party in March and the Home and Garden Tour. Proceeds from the Home and Garden Tour will again fund the ongoing Outdoor Classroom development at both schools. The Spring Fling will become the Fall Fling in 2008.

This fall we introduce *Let's Cook! Recipes for Every Day and Every Occasion*, the Elementary PTA's new cookbook fundraiser. The cookbook includes 250+ recipes from our families, teachers, and friends, and charming artwork and anecdotes from many students. Look

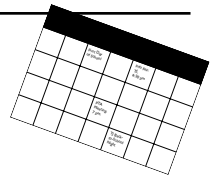
for order forms in your child's backpack soon. Please remember that this fundraiser replaces the Innisbrook wrapping paper program this year, so we need your support and cookbook orders. The cookbooks will arrive in time for gift-giving this holiday season.

As always, the implementation and success of all these plans rests with our talented committee chairs, many volunteers, and membership. So first, please join your Elementary PTA. Your annual dues directly support the many programs and services we provide to our schools, and your membership increases our representation at the Virginia State PTA. For a small school district like Falls Church City, this representation is especially important. As part of your PTA membership you will receive the Student Directory. Secondly, please volunteer. There are countless opportunities to participate for both stay-at-home and working parents; for daytime, evening or weekend volunteering; for one-time or continuing involvement — it is all vital to our success. The volunteer forms have been distributed to all families and are also available online at www.fallschurchpta.org. Contact me or the committee chairs with any questions and please sign up by Friday, Sept. 14.

I look forward to meeting many of you at our September events and working with all of you during this new school year. Please contact me with your ideas, questions, and suggestions at cgbpta@aol.com or 703.538.5519. Until then, welcome back!

Mark Your Calendars

- Sept. 9 — PTA Leadership Meeting, Lee Graham, 7:00 pm
 - Sept. 11 — Information Fair and Ice Cream Social at TJ, 6:30 pm
 - Sept. 17 — Room Parent Orientation, TJ, 7:00 pm
 - Sept. 19 — PTA Meeting at Mount Daniel, 7:00 pm
 - Sept. 27 — Mount Daniel Back to School Night, 7:00 pm
 - Oct. 4 — TJ Back to School Night, 7:00 pm
 - Oct. 10 — TJ Principal's Coffee, 8:45 am
 - Oct. 13 — Family Movie Night in MEH Cafetorium, 6:00 pm
 - Oct. 31 — Mount Daniel Principal's Coffee, 9:00 am
- For the full 2007-08 PTA calendar, go to <http://www.fallschurchpta.org/pta-calendar.html>



News from Mount Daniel Kathy Halayko, Principal



A warm Mount Daniel welcome to our students, families, and staff during this first week of the 2007-08 school year. I hope you all have had a restful, happy summer and are ready to join in the excitement of another new school beginning. At this writing the Mount Daniel staff will greet 120 kindergartners, 130 first graders, and 29 preschoolers and Family Literacy boys and girls.

Our Mount Daniel staff also welcomes several new teachers and paraprofessionals. Teachers Phyllis Kravinsky and Laura Dixon join the first grade team. In our fine arts program, Jan Garrett will be our art teacher and Lauren Hauschildt will be our new music teacher. Wendi Adkins and Ingrid Schoenburg will be our speech language pathologists. New kindergarten paras include Dave Sikora, Rose Sweterlitsch, and Janet McEvoy Price. Susie Larcamp is a new first grade para. Peggy Ball has become the Principal's secretary and Jill Dodson has joined her as our other secretary in the office. Tammy Gorman, Alex Aman, and Kelly Miceli are new special education paras. We are excited to work with such a wonderful group of

staff members; some of whom are former employees at Mount Daniel, substitutes, day care staff, or former students. We are glad you are here!

A delicious staff Welcome Back Breakfast was provided by the PTA Hospitality Committee and its many volunteers on Thursday, Aug. 30. It was the perfect start to a busy day preparing classrooms for the first day of school. Your caring and kindness are most appreciated by all of us. Thank you so much.

Kindergarten students were able to try out the school bus in the driveway of Mount Daniel as they came to school on the first day. Nancy Hendrickson, Director of Transportation, made a bus available for students and parents to climb aboard, sit with a friend, and walk down the aisle. Kindergarten parents also enjoyed coffee at Mount Daniel on Sept. 4 and 5 compliments of the PTA while kindergarten students enjoyed their first days in the classrooms.

A friendly reminder to all families ... the myriad of very important forms and permissions sent to you will need to be returned to your child's teacher as soon as possible. As always, we thank you for your support and cooperation.

News from TJ Trudy Taylor, Principal



I would like to welcome everyone back to a wonderful new year at TJ. I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to all new second grade parents and families new to Falls Church. We are pleased to have you be part of our child-centered learning community and hope that you will soon be able to visit the school if you have not done so already.

We have had a very busy summer preparing new curriculum. Our Curriculum Instructional Resource Teachers have been working with the classroom teachers to develop new units in Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. These "specialists" in curriculum are Steve Knight for Science, Mary Klink for Language Arts, Janet Weber for Math, and Beth Hull for Social Studies. Not only do all of these hardworking people teach full time but also they devote many extra hours making sure our curriculum is in top form.

Mrs. Sheeba Kamran. In addition, Mrs. Ann Divecha will join us as a new playground aide as well as taking on the title of our very first Outdoor Classroom Coordinator. Ms. Lauren Hauschildt will join us as our new band director. We are very excited to have all of our new staff members.

We are in the process of beginning construction on two facets of our Outdoor Classroom. Permits permitting, we hope to soon have the beginning of our outdoor amphitheatre with a stage and our storyteller chair with surrounding seating in both places so that the teachers can take their classrooms outside more often for instruction and enjoyment of the out-of-doors. We have been planning this for several years so it will be very exciting to finally see it happen.

We look forward to seeing all of you around school and at our special events throughout the year. Our Back to School Night will be Oct. 4, so please put that date on your calendars.

As many of you know, we grew by leaps and bounds over the summer and had to add a seventh second grade classroom. Ms. Mary Kay Howard moved from third grade to second grade to work with this new class. We then hired Ms. Kristina Pekowitz from White Plains, New York. She taught both second and third grades for the past six years and we are very fortunate to have her on our staff.

We also have two new Special Education paraprofessionals joining our Inclusion team: Ms. Erin Jenkins and

.....
• The Advocate is the newsletter of the Falls Church Elementary PTA, which supports Thomas Jefferson Elementary, 601 S. Oak St., Falls Church, VA 22046, 703-248-5660; and Mount Daniel Elementary, 2328 N. Oak St., Falls Church, VA 22046, 703-248-5640.
• Laurie S. Clark, Editor (703-237-6637)
• Correspondence for The Advocate should be sent to the Editor, c/o Elementary PTA, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, 601 S. Oak St., Falls Church, VA 22046
• Articles for The Advocate should be submitted by e-mail to sclaurie@aol.com
•

**Falls Church Elementary PTA
PTA Officers and Committee Chairs 2007-08**

Officers	
President	Catherine Beddow
President Elect	Debbie Schantz-Hiscott
Vice President	Laurie Clark
Treasurer	Rachelle Sharrer
Recording Secretary	Terry Worley
Corresponding Secretary	Megan Schlitt
Committees	
Advocate	Laurie Clark
Art Show (TJ)	Julia Fletchall Amy Casillas
Art Show (MD)	Lisa Henderson
Book Fair (TJ)	Charlotte Hyland Tammy Gorman Sue Neuhart
Book Fair (MD)	Susan Wegmueller Mary Beth MacKinnon Ashleigh Collins
Box Tops	Laura Stricker

Class Basket Raffle	Christina Goodwin Kathy Washa
Cookbook	Catherine Beddow Ellen McRae Gisella Schneider
Family Party	Rob & Gretchen Duffett
Fine Arts Assemblies	Terri Tornell Gabriella Abruzzi Lisa Ferguson
Fourth Grade Events	Annette Hennessey OPEN
Grocery Bonus Bucks	Katherine McGuire
Health Screening	Anne Miller
Home & Garden Tour	Andrea Roberson Mary Asel
Hospitality	Gabriella Abruzzi Mechelle Coppock Laurie Clark
Ice Cream Socials	Elizabeth Friel
Info Fair	Jennifer Short
Library (TJ)	Surekha Cohen
Membership/Directory	Kate Nesson Carol Sly
Movie Nights	Judy Lubnow
Odyssey of the Mind	Jill Martin OPEN
Original Art Magnets	Lisa DeHart Nancy Romps April Rollins
Outdoor Classroom (MD)	Jackie Handly Lisa Ferguson
Outdoor Classroom (TJ)	OPEN
Picture Day Help	Alane O'Neill (MD) Cindy Mercado (TJ)
Reflections	Jen Cipriano (TJ) Lisa Lacroix (MD)
Room Parents	Ann Anderson Lisa Henderson
School Supplies	Tracy Warner
Spiritwear	Sue Earman Raphael Pelaez Carey Cannon (Danny shirts)
Spring Plant Sale	Jennifer Short
Teacher/Parent Committee	Nan Hof, Reva Litton
Turn Off TV Week	Kate Nesson
Website	Laurie Clark

Reflections Program 2007:

"I can make a difference by..."

It's time to start working on entries for the annual Reflections Program. This year students can create and submit independent works of art, literature, photography, or music based on the theme: "I can make a difference by ..." Help your children participate by discussing ways in which they might make a difference at home, in the community, in the world at large, or within themselves. This can be a challenging theme for younger children, and we hope you will encourage them to find their own unique interpretation and transform their ideas into an art form.

Students may submit entries in any or all of the media categories: visual art (no sculpture), literature, musical composition, or photography (please limit to one entry per category). The entry deadline is Friday, Nov. 2 to the school offices.

Look for more information and entry forms in your children's backpacks later this month. Rules and applications will be available at the Reflections table at the Information Fair on Sept. 11 and as a download from the PTA website at <http://www.fallschurchpta.org/pta-committee.html> (click on Reflections).

All art and photography entries will be part of Reflections exhibits at the schools beginning in mid-November. Related activities and additional information will be announced in the October *Advocate*. All participants will be invited to attend a special reception at the January PTA meeting.

Questions? Please contact: Jen Cipriano at 703-532-7609, j-cipriano@nga.gov (TJ) or Lisa Lacroix at 703-534-5035, octolacroix@yahoo.com (MD).

September PTA Meeting

Join us for the first 2007-08 PTA Meeting on Sept. 19 at Mount Daniel. The program will include presentations by Dr. Lois Berlin, Superintendent of Falls Church City Schools; Kieran Sharpe, our School Board liaison; and Donna Englander, Executive Director of the Falls Church Education Foundation.

What Century? What Race? Kieran Sharpe, School Board Liaison

There is much good news. First, all of our schools achieved “adequate yearly progress” in 2006-07 in compliance with the national No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This required growth at all levels, but especially at our middle school, where NCLB compliance fell short in 2005-06.

Also, many of our students begin 2007-08 having met their growth goals during our first-ever “mandatory” summer school. Third, we’ve attracted many highly-qualified new teachers, including ones certified in speech and language therapy and fluent in Mandarin Chinese. Fourth, we’ll keep classes small by adding a section each at second and seventh grades, while staying within our adopted budget. Finally, the Falls Church Education Foundation will hold its first certified 5K on Sept. 16 with sponsoring support from Reebok, Commerce Bank, real estate developers Hekemian and Next Realty, and specialty retailers Metro Run and Walk, Pacers, and Georgetown’s The Running Company.

Certainly, from the standpoint of individual growth, these represent very good progress and we should be extremely pleased. However, our recent strategic plan and newly drafted vision statements call us to continuous improvement and a world class education for every student, so that all can successfully meet the challenges of the 21st century.

As I write on Aug. 25, Timberlane, St. James Elementary, and Falls Church High School have begun for 2006-07. They’ve extended the concept of “continuous learning” not just to a small fraction but to all their students, using a calendar aimed at 21st century lifestyles instead of the 19th century. Schools in Arlington and Fairfax began their programs for board-certified teachers and teaching Chinese several years ago; ours begin this year. Schools in Culpeper have already received grant funding from the Staples Foundation; ours has yet to apply. And personally, while I’ve registered for our 5K race, I know I may be too out-of-shape to finish, let alone do well.

Looking at our individual growth is not enough; our children can’t successfully compete unless they meet or exceed the benchmarks set by children elsewhere. Falls Church schools in the 20th century set the pace for others on the IB program, all-day kindergarten, and extended day care; let’s not settle for less than a leadership role in the 21st century. Being a leader means more than just losing some weight and doing a little more to help your community — sometimes you have to ... Run.

School Lunch Prices Increase

In case you missed it in the Falls Church News Press, the cost of school lunches has increased from \$2.00 to \$2.15. Milk will remain 40¢.

Have you heard of the Falls Church Education Foundation?

The Falls Church Education Foundation was established in 2003 to ensure that our students are prepared to effectively meet the challenges of the 21st century. The FCEF’s Board of Directors has set a goal of raising \$10 million to provide supplemental support to the schools. This commitment to educational excellence will guarantee that the unique identity and values of our community will be sustained.

The Falls Church Education Foundation focuses on three key areas of support for the Falls Church City Public Schools — Maintaining High Standards, Supporting Innovation, and Encouraging Creativity. Through the Foundation’s grantmaking program to city teachers and administrators, the Foundation funds projects that closely address these areas, as well as facilitates private gifts for these purposes.

To join the Foundation please go to www.fcedf.org/pdf/2007_FCEF_Membership_Form.pdf or to find out more about the Foundation, visit the Web site at www.fcedf.org.

Will You Be A Buddy?

The Mount Daniel Family Literacy Program and ESOL Program are looking for families willing to be paired with immigrant and second language families at Mount Daniel. We are hoping to match families who have children of the same age or who are in the same class. As a buddy, you and your family would be invited to attend two or three social events during the year. You would also serve as a mentor, keeping the ESOL family informed of upcoming Mount Daniel events, answering any questions they might have, and doing whatever you could to help the family feel welcome in the school and in the community. If this sounds like a program you would be interested in or if you have any questions, please contact Sydney Snyder (Adult Education Coordinator) at 703-248-5640 ext. 3324 or Ann Beckman (ESOL teacher) at ext. 3323 or e-mail us at snyders@fccps.org or beckmana@fccps.org.

Thanks for your help this summer!



Jackie Bossart for distributing the school supplies to the TJ students.

Gabby Abruzzi and Mechelle Coppock for coordinating the Staff Welcome Breakfasts. Catherine Beddow, Heather Capozzi, Alane O’Neill, and

Beth Reusch for helping with the breakfasts.

Sue Earman for support in scheduling the PTA Leadership meeting.

Rachelle Sharrer for planning the 2007-08 budget and performing the GMHS PTA audit with Jill Martin and Debbie Schantz-Hiscott.

Gisella Schneider for indexing and organizing the *Let’s Cook!* cookbook.

The Executive Committee for their work this summer in planning the 2007-08 PTA calendar.