



The Pony Express

President: Catherine Houck

Editor: Kathleen Horr

Mt. Erie PTA
1313 41st St, Anacortes, WA
360-293-9541
www.mteriepta.org
PTA Chapter 8.2.37

Volume 9, Issue 5
JANUARY 2011

PTA Executive Board

President: Catherine Houck
chouck8@msn.com
Vice Pres: Silja Shjarback
shjaresa@fidalgo.net
Secretary: Leslie Tysseling
casaverdegi@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Joan Ockerman
joan@candjos.com

Board of Directors

Family Night/Auction Chair:
Suzy Gilbert
suzygilbert@gmail.com
Hospitality/Teacher
Appreciation:
Megan Atterberry
lucallily@verizon.net
Membership:
Kristen Murphy
vauxmur@frontier.com
Membership Co-chair:
Emily Hylton
emilyhylton@comcast.net
Communication:
Kathleen Horr
kathandruss@msn.com
Website: Sarah Nichols
sarah@aquarianaudio.com
Volunteer Coordinator:
Jessica Notaro
JessicaNotaro@me.com
Dads of Great Students
(DOGS): Silja Shjarback
shjaresa@fidalgo.net
Legislative: Tanya Twete
dttwete@gmail.com
Fundraising: **Open**

Ad-Hoc Committees

Winter Reading Program:
John Dumas
lucallily@verizon.net
Reflections: Kristen Murphy
vauxmur@frontier.com
Reading is Fundamental:
Gina Thomas
ginat123@comcast.net
Missoula Children's Theater
(MCT): Ashley King
ashleydk@gmail.com
and Silja Shjarback
shjaresa@fidalgo.net
Science Discovery Program:
Bob Linder
islandtug@hotmail.com
Box Tops: Sunni Ausland
ausland@comcast.net
and Ellen Kline
ellenkline@comcast.net
eScrip: Beth Holiway
bholiway@comcast.net
T-shirt Sales: Gina Thomas
ginat123@comcast.net
Mustang Points: Amy Sikic
asikic@aol.com
Yearbook: Melinda Moore
mmoore@asd103.org

From the Principal, Mr. Steve Bruland

Thank you to all the parents for your support during the Winter Holiday program. The evening was great fun and offered a wonderful opportunity for our school community to gather and enjoy both the holidays and our children.

If you were at the Winter Program, you had the opportunity to enjoy the introduction of Mr. Donaldson, a long time teacher at Mt. Erie and an administrative intern for our school this year. Mr. Donaldson will receive his Principal's credential once his internship is completed. One of the assignments he has accepted and has been working diligently on is the Professional Learning Team or PLT. This team has been meeting twice a month and involves the entire staff. The objective of the PLT is to improve learning at Mt. Erie and Mr. Donaldson and his team have been doing a great job moving forward with the support of the entire staff.

The PLT has also been working with Scott Poirier from OSPI, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to guide our staff down the path of increased student achievement and improvement. Mr. Donaldson has been the inspiration behind this plan to improve instructional delivery and academic advancement at Mt. Erie and the staff is fully committed. This is what we do well and is a responsibility we take very seriously. We also need all the help we can get and that's where you as parents come in.

We know you lead busy lives and have challenging, jam-packed schedules. We want to be respectful of that. Whenever possible, though, make time with your child--listen to him or her read, ask if they need help with math or science, and encourage them to pay attention to their teachers. Make sure your child is as prepared as possible for the testing window in the spring. Show interest in your child's activities by taking time to read about programs within the school. If your child sees your interest, s/he will also be interested in school. Always approach school and school work with a positive attitude and your child will adopt the same attitude toward learning. Your part in this educational endeavor is to provide positive encouragement to your child. Be supportive and really listen to what your child tells you about school. Being engaged with your child's learning greatly increases the potential for success in this partnership between teachers and parents in the education of each and every child.

Thank you for your help and I look forward to your continued support.

From the President

Welcome to January... a time of renewed resolve--to get in shape, purge the garage, try something new, or become more involved in your children's future! Come to our next General PTA Meeting---this January 18th (Tuesday) at 6:30-7:30 PM in the library.

- Learn about the Anacortes Safe Routes to School program and activities by a distinguished Mt. Erie parent, Polly Dubbel.
- Elect members to the Nominating Committee, the most important committee in PTA. This three-member committee recognizes, recruits, and recommends the most qualified people for leadership positions in PTA (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary). Neither the president nor the principal can serve or influence this committee in anyway.
- Learn about the upcoming Winter Reading Program and all of the great prizes John Dumas has in store!
- Converse with other parents, get out of the house, seek the light...

Refreshments will be delicious and **childcare is provided** by the Americorps teachers and 6th grade service club members. See you there!

Watch D.O.G.S

Thank you to all the fathers who have spent a day at school as a Watch DOG since November. The students love seeing you and the Mt. Erie staff is thrilled to have the extra set of hands and eyes! There are still spots available. Let's fill the days so every

day has a dad at school!

Sign up in the PTA office on the large white calendar or contact the Watch DOGS coordinator, Silja Shjarback, at shjaresa@fidalgo.net or 588-0866. Check out our "Wall of Fame" which is full of photos of kids with the Watch DOG dads when you come into the school.

Tips for Dad

Dads—lots of great parenting tips can be found at fathers.com. Sign up to receive a weekly email of informative and inspirational fathering tips on the home page. Look for "fathers.com weekly".

MCT

Mark your calendars: the Missoula Children's Theatre (MCT) rendition of Pinocchio is coming to Mt. Erie. Children who want to perform must be available every day after school the week of 7-11 March in order to participate.

This year, Thursday and Friday are early release days so rehearsals on those days will be in the afternoon. Performances will be held on Friday evening March 11th and there will be a matinee on Saturday March 12th (exact times still TBD).

MCT auditions will be held after school on March 7th and all ages are welcome. Details will be sent home at the end of February. If you have any questions, contact co-coordinators Silja Shjarback (shjaresa@fidalgo.net) or Ashley King (ashleydk@gmail.com).

January Important Dates

Tue, Jan 11th - PTA Board meeting in the PTA room, 2:15pm
Fri, Jan 14th - Family Game Night, 6:30pm
Mon, Jan 17th - Martin Luther King Day - No School
Tue, Jan 18th - PTA General Membership Mtg 6:30-7:30pm library (**childcare provided**)
Wed Jan 26th - Proactive Parent Meeting, 7:00pm Brodniak Hall

BOXTOPS

Congratulations to the Box Tops classroom "Winner" – Mrs. Petrick/Miller with 14 students collecting 280 BoxTops. There were also six individual winners randomly drawn: Ivylynn Thomas, Elle Baumann, Aiden Brunson, Holly Burlin, Nathan Edgerton, and Linda Kube. Great job to all!



PTA MEMBERSHIP 2010-2011

Month	Members	Goal
December	193	225

Volunteers Needed

We are in need of one or two volunteer homes to house our two Missoula Children's Theatre directors for the week of March 6th. They are very self sufficient and appreciative. Each room must allow privacy and one must be a cat-free home. Please contact Silja Shjarback at 588-0866 or shjaresa@fidalgo.net as soon as possible if you are interested.

The MCT directors are great guests and a lot of fun for your children. The PTA will provide one main meal per day for them while they are at the school and your child's MCT fee will be waived if you host a director. If we cannot find a volunteer home, we have to fund a hotel stay which depletes funds which would otherwise go to student enrichment activities. Please lend a hand!

GO MUSTANGS!

It is great to see so many of you enjoying your new Mt. Erie Mustang Logo Wear. Although we did have a few delays, most of the Logo Wear was distributed in time for the holidays and our Friday spirit days just before the New Year's break. Because of our student, parent, and staff support in buying Mustang t-shirts and sweatshirts, your Mt. Erie PTA was able to raise almost \$900! And of course you all look fabulous in your new Mustang Gear!

The money raised through the t-shirt and sweatshirt sales is given back to students and classrooms by funding special events, sponsoring field trips, and providing many other PTA-funded programs at Mt. Erie Elementary to enrich students lives. Thank you to all of the volunteers who coordinated this effort as well as to T-Shirts By Design for their support in our fundraising efforts and their creativity in producing our Mustang Logo items.

For those of you who missed the initial opportunity to purchase Mt. Erie Mustang Logo wear, we will have another order in February and we still have a few remaining extra items. If you are interested, please contact Gina Thomas at 770-4745 or ginat123@comcast.net.

Get Ready for RIF

Fidalgo Island Reading Is Fundamental has planned our second RIF day at Mt. Erie Elementary for Monday, February 7th, 2011! All students in classes from Kindergarten through 3rd grade will enjoy another opportunity to go home with a free book of their choice.

Our Mt. Erie RIF program will give out over 750 books to students this school year. We would like to thank our many sponsors who make this wonderful program possible: Mt. Erie PTA, Anacortes Noon Kiwanis, Anacortes Noon Rotary, Fidalgo Island Rotary, Soroptimist International of Anacortes, Soroptimist International of Fidalgo Island, Fidalgo Island PTA, Whitney School PTA, Island View PTA, Friends of the Anacortes Public Library, and contributions from generous individuals.

If you have any questions, or are interested in volunteering during distribution day, please contact Gina Thomas 360-770-4745, or at ginat123@comcast.net. See you at RIF!

Student WOWs

Don't forget to keep collecting your WOWS! Students can win great prizes for their class! When submitting your WOWs, please include your room number or teacher's name. Parents and family members who volunteer can also add mustang points to their child's class. The top four classes will receive a special prize at the end of the first quarter.

Reflections: Together We Can

Congratulations to all of the students who submitted *Reflections* entries for this year's competition. All submissions were wonderful and everyone did a great job! Be sure to check out the upper display case where all of the student art work is on display. The winners in each division are:

- Middle/Junior 6th grade Literature: 1st place Tie – Ruby Browning and Sally Vaux
- Intermediate 5th grade Literature: 1st place – Dakota Robb-Bryan
- Intermediate 3rd grade Visual Arts: 1st place – Garrett Kennedy
2nd place – Hannah Gleason
3rd place – Kody Hargett
- Primary 2nd grade Visual Arts: 1st place – Jillian Porter
- Primary Kindergarten Visual Arts: 1st place – Zinne Jackson
- Intermediate Filmography: 1st place – Elizabeth Koals

The above entries will all be submitted to the WSPTA State Competition. Again, congratulations and great job to all the students who participated this year! Yes, Together We Can!

Friday Family Night

Our next Family Night for Mt Erie families is January 14th starting at 6:30 pm. Family Game Night will be a fun filled evening of games for children young and old. Bring your own games or choose from our wide assortment of board games including favorites like Scrabble, Pictionary, and Yahtzee. Or try a new game like Two Bridges or Locale. Board games will be set up in the library.

If you are in the mood for something more active, hit the gym for a pickup game of basketball or volleyball (moms against daughters anyone?). There is something for everyone at Family Night! As always, Family Nights are free and fun for the whole family!

If you have questions or suggestions or wish to volunteer to help out at Family Night, please email Suzy Gilbert at suzygilbert@gmail.com or call 588-8380. See you there!

Membership Update

Membership directories were distributed the day before Christmas break and all PTA members received one directory per family. If you are a PTA member and did not receive your copy, please contact Emily Hylton (293-7097) or Kristen Murphy (708-5747). Also, there are additional directories available for \$5 each if folks are interested.

It's not too late to join Mt Erie PTA. If you haven't done so yet, please complete the membership form at www.mteriepta.org and turn it in to the school office with your check. We'll send you a receipt, a directory, and an Anacortes coupon book with lots of deals at local businesses. Questions? Contact Emily or Kristen. Your membership is important to Mt. Erie staff and students!

Proactive Parent Meeting

January 26th, 7:00 pm in Brodniak Hall, a proactive parent presentation will be given by Trooper Scott Betts of the Washington State Patrol. The topic will be drug awareness for parents and family members. Officer Betts will team up with narcotics K9 handler Trooper Knott. They will be speaking to parents about what to look for if they think their children are using drugs.

There will be a PowerPoint presentation as well as a question and answer session at the end. Parents grades 5-12 are encouraged to attend and it promises to enlighten and educate. You will leave empowered.

Healthy School Meals Project Update

What happened:

On December 14th at 2:00 pm the representatives from the Anacortes schools and concerned parents met with Chris Borgan, Superintendent, Paula Lindbo, Director of food services, and Lisa Matthews, Director of Finance to discuss the movement for healthier lunches. It was an open forum where information was shared about what the parents want and what the district is already doing and is trying to do. The mood was upbeat and positive.

Chris Borgan informed us that there has been a study commissioned by the county about creating a healthier menu using local food sources. The study will look at the feasibility of doing this as a collective county to help spread costs and efforts in addition to the sustainability of a program of this magnitude. This study is being conducted by Mark Campbell who has worked with Chef Tom French in the past and is very aware of his practices and meal plans. The first part of the report was just in before this meeting. The second part is due in January. Paula Lindbo informed the group that she has already been working with local farms and providers to bring in fresh produce and would love to see this expand.

All in all, everyone on the administration side seemed very eager to provide our students with healthier lunches and welcomed parent involvement in this movement. I think they especially liked the fact that we parents are willing to help raise the funds needed to make this change.

Where we are now:

There were a few definite agreements that arose from this meeting. First, we are all on the same page. Second, we need to find the best way for this change to occur, whether it is Tom French or another avenue. Third, we all understand that this program is only going to be as good as we, the community, make it. If we as a collective don't buy into the program then this will never take off. In other words, we need to make these changes permanent in the system and sustain this effort by buying lunches. Finally, we all agreed that Anacortes School District has been a leading district for making improvements in our area and this would be yet another improvement that would make our district great. This is perfect timing with the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 just arriving which will provide federal dollars to schools for choosing healthier options. To find more information in a quick fact sheet go to www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/child_Nutrition_Fact_Sheet_12_10_10.pdf.

What's next:

School representatives and district officials will meet again in January to discuss the second part of the report from Mr. Campbell that contains the sustainability of this program. We hope to begin an outline for making changes so that we can start this process. If you would like to be a part of this committee to organize and steer this movement, please contact Tanya at DTTwete@gmail.com as soon as possible to get the date and time for this meeting. In order to make these meetings as efficient as possible we feel it would be best to have the same few people as committee members that are up to date on the current events with the food project that can then disseminate information to each of the schools.