



Mason Ridge

Messenger

February, 2009

Dear Mason Ridge Families,

Sometimes I get the best ideas from parents!

One morning a very special Mom lent me the book *The Price of Privilege* by Madeline Levine. She had just finished the book and found it to be very insightful about the challenges we face today raising children in an affluent area. After reviewing the book with our counselor, Joan Lebon, we made a resolution to use this book as the basis for a discussion group. It is more than just another parenting book. The book begins with startling research on the rise in affluent areas of unhappy children with problems ranging from anxiety, depression, and eating disorders to suicide. The author says, "I had assumed that involvement, opportunity and money would help safeguard the emotional health of children. Yet, my appointment book forced me to consider quite the opposite: some aspects of affluence and parental involvement might be contributing to the unhappiness and fragility of my privileged patients." Fortunately, the book finishes with researched, effective practices.

In order to provide the school support needed for happy, well adjusted children, it is critical to maintain our home-school connection. We have always been proud of the partnership between home and school that exists at Mason Ridge, and more than ever we need to share a common vision of what is best for the children—just as it is for Mom and Dad to share common values at home. Discussion (around a book) is the best way I know of clarifying our thinking and coming to an agreement. For example, at a PTO meeting we discussed the budget for the carnival. A significant amount of money is spent on prizes. With fundraising profits down, do we make budget cuts? Disagreement often stems from our different beliefs about what is best for the children. The same could be said about many decisions we make at school. *The Price of Privilege* offers some interesting insights. I have no doubt that whatever this community agrees is important for the children's well being will become a priority for both staff and parents.

You are invited to join Joan and myself to discuss the choices we make when raising affluent children. Hopefully a number of parents will have reviewed the book. (There are two copies in the school library.) A salad will be provided for lunch.

I will bring chocolate for Moms and peanut brittle for Dads. Mrs. Wait has volunteered to bake cookies!

Please join us in the Science Lab (#513) on Wednesday, March 4, at 11:45 for lunch and conversation. An RSVP to 314-415-6452 will be helpful.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mueller, Principal



2008-09 SPELLING BEE

After having classroom spelling contests, the following 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students progressed to the school wide spelling bee which was held on January 22:

Third Grade

Victor F.
Trent G.
Aerin K.
Tim K.
Peter M.
Aris M.
Colleen S.
Mary S.

Fourth Grade

Sydney D.
Joe F.
Harinh L.
Evan M.
Claire P.
Kentaurus R.
Greg S.
Ellie W.

Fifth Grade

Brendan C.
Ryan L.
Joseph M.
Will M.
Lily M.
Matt P.
Elizabeth R.
Rebecca S.

Matt P. was our runner-up and Lily M. was the winner of this year's Spelling Bee and will represent Mason Ridge at Maryville University on Saturday, March 7, at 9:15 a.m. Congratulations to all the students who participated.

MOSAICS

MOSAICS students have been busy researching and thinking critically. On January 8, 2009, second and third grade students participated in Gifted Resource Council's Creative Convention, which was held at Washington University. This competition tests students' creative problem solving and teamwork ability. Approximately 235 students across the St. Louis area participated. Only five medals of overall excellence were awarded to a possible 47 outstanding teams. Two of those medals were awarded to Mason Ridge! All three of our teams made Mason Ridge and Ms. Webb proud as they demonstrated that respect, maturity and teamwork are the keys to success!

STRINGS UPDATE

Happy New Year Parents! I hope all of you are staying warm during these cold winter days. All of the third grade classes performed quite well for their December/January string presentations. They have their first performance under their belts and are eagerly awaiting their next. They will be working on a more advanced bow hold and performing more advanced music in the next several weeks.

Also, I have received several questions regarding renting and purchasing instruments. Of course, as a strings teacher, I think it would be great for all students in third grade to have an instrument at home; however, this is not required. If your child seems exceptionally interested in practicing at home, I would be happy to speak with you about your options for renting or purchasing an instrument. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have any questions.



Our fourth grade students are preparing for an upcoming performance with the entire district: **Parkway Fourth Grade String Day on February 7th**. The performance will be at the Central High School gymnasium at 3:45pm. Students should arrive at 3:00pm for tuning and a short rehearsal. Parents should have received a permission slip for your student. Please be sure it is returned on time to have your child participate.

The fifth grade played great at the winter concert in December. For the next several weeks, they will be practicing music for the **All-District Orchestra Concert on March 26th**. More information about this performance will be coming home soon. They will also give a full concert on May 6th at Mason Ridge.

A note about practicing: Shinichi Suzuki, the famous violin teacher, joked with his young students in saying that, "You should only practice on days that you eat." While that would be ideal, my realistic recommendation is that students practice their age plus five minutes five days a week; for example, a 9 year old would practice about 14 minutes Monday - Friday. Please encourage your student to practice daily. Leaps and bounds can be seen in students' playing when they practice with such motivation.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me.

Benji Wilson, Strings Teacher
314-415-6450, x. 54478
jwilson@pkwy.k12.mo.us

CONGRATULATIONS MRS. BINDER - TEACHER OF THE YEAR



This year Mrs. Connie Binder was chosen by her colleagues as "Teacher of the Year." Mrs. Binder is respected by other staff members for her commitment to students and her on-going dedication to teaching. She is always upbeat and volunteers to help teachers as well as students. Mrs. Binder participates on many school and District committees, and has built a reputation as an expert in the area of technology.

Mrs. Binder is furthering her own education by earning a certificate in Classroom Technology. She brings her new skills back to her students who are learning via technology with ePals in France and the Ukraine. The students are also enjoying their class website and blog. We are proud of Mrs. Binder for representing Mason Ridge as a presenter at this year's Midwest Education Technology Conference.

As much as Mrs. Binder has accomplished, she still takes time to reflect on her daily instruction and the needs of her students. The goal of her continuing professional development and hard work is to reach all children.

WHAT ARE KIDS UP TO!!!

Mrs. Mueller has begun a new initiative and she announces the students' accomplishments outside the school. You can see some of their plaques and trophies in the display cabinet in the front lobby.

Victoria F. has progressed to Level 2 after only five months of hard work in gymnastics.

Celine S. placed 2nd and **Courtney N.** placed 5th in the all-around competition which includes combined scores on the vault, bars, beam and floor exercises at the Gateway Gymnastics Championships.

Dejah C. received a certificate of achievement for exceptional performance in mathematics presented by Emilie Grimi.

Abby S. recently competed in the Meet Me In St. Louis competition and placed 2nd in the all-around competition, 3rd in beam, 3rd in floor exercise, and 1st in bars.



Alexis N. placed 7th in the all-around competition with her participation in vault, bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

Aerin K. scored a 38.45 at her gymnastics meet placing first overall and received the best score in ten years at her club.

Jake T. won his yellow slash/black belt after taking lessons for only one year.

Galen, Shannon and **Trevor A.** all competed in the Meet Me In St. Louis competition. **Galen** received 6th place for rings and parallel bars and 8th in the all-arounds. **Shannon** received 9th place in the balance beam, 12th place on the vault and 12th place in all-arounds. **Trevor** received 2nd place for rings, high bar and parallel bars, 3rd place for vault, and 3rd place for all-around.

MUSICAL NEWS FROM MRS. BROYLES

We are off to a terrific musical start for the 2009 new year!! The kids are learning many musical concepts and preparing for upcoming performances!

The Kind Kindergarten Classes are focusing on pitch patterns of high and low vocally and instrumentally.

First Graders are working with new rhythm patterns (tah, ti ti, rest) and preparing to add a new pitch to their solfege scale, which will be La.

Next, Second Grade Classes are focusing on the Half Note and preparing for their upcoming performance called "The Wonders Of The Earth." Everyone who attended this performance was blown away. All the students did such a great job.

The Thoughtful Third Graders are preparing to begin recorder technique, which they are so excited about. So, Third Grade Parents, please do not buy recorders for your children because I have ordered the kind that I want them to play. They will not need to pay for them until next year.

The Fabulous Fourth Graders are progressing very well on recorders. They are preparing for a Link-Up Concert with the St. Louis Symphony. Several School Districts are chosen throughout the St. Louis area to participate in this exciting experience. On April 28, 2009, the Fourth Graders will play recorder with and listen to the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra at Powell Hall. Also, unfortunately this concert is only for the students!! However, the children will play some of their songs during the Fourth Grade concert in May.

The Fantastic Fifth Graders are learning about the Major Scale, and they are preparing for their "Red, White, and Blue Musical Extravaganza." This performance will be in the Ramsey Center on February 27 at 1:30 p.m.

Finally, the Fourth and Fifth Grade Choir is gearing up for the Spring Concert, which will be here before we know it, on May 6, 2009 in the Gymnasium at 7:00 p.m.

Wow, we have busy and musical fun months ahead!!

Stay tuned,
Mrs. Broyles. Music Teacher

ATTENDANCE LINE CHALLENGE

To report my child's absence, I call 415-6476. **T or F**

It is alright to call the attendance line the night before. **T or F**

If my child is going to be late due to a doctor/dentist appointment, I still need to call the attendance line. **T or F**

If I spoke to my child's teacher to report an absence, I still need to call the attendance line. **T or F**

I am suppose to call in every day my child is sick and state a reason. **T or F**

I should contact the attendance line (415-6476) prior to 9:00 a.m. **T or F**

The attendance line is available 24 hours a day. **T or F**

All the answers above are True.

CUSTODIAN APPRECIATION DAY



Mason Ridge is very fortunate to have three wonderful custodians, Tim Burns, Su Kim, and Keith Butler who work tireless and joyfully to keep our school clean and safe for our students.

As Tim left for the day with his pile of cards the students made for him, he said this was the best place to work.

Once again, thanks for all your hard work.

MATH SUPERSTARS

The following students received medals since our last publication. We would like to thank Diana Dunbar and Kathie Andrews for sponsoring this enrichment program.

Gold Medal

Milan M.
Josh O.

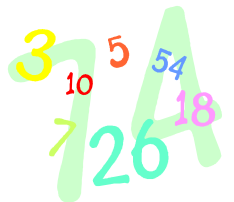
Isabella G.

Erin J.
Aerin K.
Maggie N.

Kent R.
Taylor R.
Vaishali S.
Katy W.

Bronze Medal

Luke D.
Grace F.
Austin G.
Brian M.
Tyler P.
Sameer S.



SCHOOL VOLUNTEER WORKS TO EXPAND TUTORING PROGRAM

Don Larsen, a long time Mason Ridge OASIS tutor, is working hard to have the OASIS program expanded to the middle school level. “The middle school years can be a daunting experience for some young people,” he notes. “It is important for students who are struggling to have one-on-one instruction; however, schools normally don’t have the resources to provide that. Middle school students could benefit tremendously by having an honest connection with an adult who is available to give them extra attention.”

Larsen’s hope is to have more volunteers like him tutoring at the middle school level. He has met with the director of OASIS West County, the reading specialist, guidance counselors and principal at Parkway West Middle, even the national coordinator of OASIS tutoring, to try to make that happen. “The idea is gaining momentum,” he reports.

Larsen admits there can be more challenges working with middle schoolers, given the adolescent issues they face. Personally, he finds it more interesting and has expanded his services beyond the reading emphasis to also include math help and mentoring. Chris White, a guidance counselor at Parkway West, says, “The students not only receive academic help, but there is now one more adult with whom they have a connection and who believes in them.”

Excerpts from an article in *parentlink*

HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids

The Bee Hive is missing. Well, not really! It’s just transforming...into a bucket! Starting the first week of February, our hive will morph into a bucket and our bees will turn into water drops!

On February 2, we will kick off the six week long bucket challenge with a buddy activity. Each class, along with their buddies, will read aloud the book, “Have You Filled a Bucket Today”. This book is based upon the “Bucket Theory” that each of us has an invisible bucket. When our bucket is full we are happy and fill other’s buckets. However, when our bucket is empty we are sad and begin to dip into other’s buckets by doing unkind things.



Each classroom and specialist will have a large drop where the students can write messages to other students, filling their bucket. Because this act follows ALL our Five Bees, we are changing the Bees to Drops and those will be displayed on the bucket in the hall whenever teachers “catch” students following the Five Bees. We will also be singing the song “This Little Bucket of Mine” to the tune of “Old McDonald”. This will be done in the hall after morning announcements to help jumpstart our day!

Encourage your children to sing the song, talk about the book, and fill one another’s buckets even at home! A drop in someone’s bucket could be as simple as saying, “Good Morning”, “Good-Bye”, “Have a nice day!” or a simple, but heartfelt compliment. We hope to bring a little sunshine to the Mason Ridge community, even if the winter clouds hang over our heads!

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

In accordance with No Child Left Behind Act, we must inform parents in this school the following:

Upon request, our district will be happy to supply the following information about the qualifications of your child's teacher(s):

-whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction, whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived, whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications, and what baccalaureate degree major the teacher has and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification.

PARKWAY SOUTH 22nd ANNUAL BASEBALL CLINIC

Where: Parkway South High School - Gyms A, B & C
801 Hanna Road
Manchester, MO 63021

Who: Dave McFarland (314) 415-9715 or Adam Stahl (314) 415-9716

When: Saturday, March 7th, 2009
Grades 1 - 5 9 - 11:00 a.m.
Grades 6 - 8 11:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Cost: \$20 a person
\$15 a person if you bring a team of 8 or more



What to Bring: Baseball glove, bat and indoor workout clothes

What will be Covered: Throwing and Fielding Mechanics and Drills
Basic Hitting and Bunting Fundamentals
General Pitching Mechanics and Fundamentals

The Parkway South coaching staff and varsity baseball players will serve as the instructors.

Coaching packets will be available upon request.

**Payment of cash or check at the door the day of the camp.
Make check payable to Parkway South Baseball**

**Please call to confirm a spot - 314-415-9715
www.parkwaysouthbaseball.com**

CLOTHING DONATIONS



If you have any old outgrown Mason Ridge shirts (long and short sleeves), shorts and sweats, Kathy Merryman, our school nurse, would appreciate the donation. The Mason Ridge shorts and sweats are universal and the kids love them.

MASON RIDGE SUMMER SCHOOL

Mason Ridge will be a site for Summer school this year. We know it is early, but a lot of preparations have already begun to have an enriching Summer School program. A few examples of the courses being offered this year are:

Art Around the World
Cook and Create with Literature
Fabulous Fun Fairy Tales
Get Ready! Get Set! Go to Kindergarten
American Girl
Que Hor Es? Spanish Class
Spike-O-Rama
Sports, Games and Team Building

We are still working on more courses. You should be receiving your Summer School course catalog in late March. Registration will begin on April 7. Classes may fill up quickly so it is recommended to register by bringing your paperwork to Mason Ridge.

The classes are based on a first come first serve basis and your registration will be date stamped.

We are looking forward to a very rewarding summer at Mason Ridge.

Sincerely,

Shara Erdel
Administrator for Summer School

PARKWAY NORTH HOSTS CLINIC Saturday, February 21

Clinic for coaches, trainers and athletes on speed, strength and power for all sports

Strength & Conditioning Coaches from

University of MO & St. Louis U
St. Louis Cardinals Physical Therapist
Former St. Louis Cardinals Trainer
Hall-Of-Fame Track and Field Coach

For Information:

Call Kevin Kinney

At 314-415-5650

Or e-mail at

kkinney@pkwy.k12.mo.us

Cost: \$50 for adults

\$25 for Parkway Staff

\$25 for student-athletes