



THE HOWLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SHADY GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL PTA • FALL 2009 ISSUE

Register your cards to help the school

Last year, Giant Grocery stores handed Shady Grove Middle School \$2,822.04. The school did nothing. Parents spent no extra money. It was absolutely free money for the school. Let's see if we can out do that amount this year. Giant isn't currently letting shoppers register their cards, at least not until the school year starts. But, if you send your card number to my email address (SGMSPTAPres@gmail.com), I'll register you as soon as we are able to.

You can also register your Safeway card at www.backtoschools.escrip.com if you shop at Safeway.

Sign Up for E-Mail News

We will be using the listserv this year as much as possible. There are 2 ways to sign up:

1. go to groups.yahoo.com and search for "SGMSNews". Follow the links for signing up to receive the SGMSNews e-mails. If you already have a yahoo account, it is pretty easy.
2. Send an e-mail to SGMSPTAPres@gmail.com and you will be added to the listserv.

From the desk of Edward Owusu...

Welcome to all new students and parents and a joyous 'Welcome Back' to returning 7th and 8th grade families. My summer reading list included a book called *Outliers*, by Malcom Gladwell. The book accounts the factors that separate people from each other - leading to positive and sometimes negative occurrences. Certain people become the subgroup where seemingly normal rules do not apply. They become 'outliers' from the norm. What is evident upon reading the book is that results are predictable once you probe deeper into the history and events that shape individuals. Basically the chaos theory of inordinate and random events can actually be carefully aligned to create sequences of experiences that create the 'perfect storm' of events that lead to success.

This leads me to the middle school student! This adolescent resides in your home, eats your food, and resembles you! At times they may seem hard to predict, may be random in thought and action, are proverbial balls of emotion and sometimes stubborn will ...and at other times may be gentle, caring earthlings that have the future in the palm of their hands. This year, as in previous years, the community that is Shady Grove Middle School, will work together to continue to raise the standards of academic excellence to prepare all students for the changing landscape that the future represents. But looking deeper we can see a pattern...

For example, since 2003 Shady Grove Middle School has exceeded or matched the percentage of students proficient or advanced on the Reading and Math state tests. This is a product of hard work and diligence by students, parents, and teachers. More students have been prepared, enrolled, and supported to move into higher level and rigorous Math and English courses. Our levels of students that have previously earned D's or E's have dramatically dropped across the board in all subjects, as students once borderline academically are meeting the standards daily in classrooms. (A by-product of positive relationships, technology, interventions, immediate communication, and partnerships by parents and teachers.) School pride has been on the rise as more students are involved within intramural and athletic events in higher numbers, and our drama and musical performances resemble the work of professional thespians and musicians. Therefore when I read, and re-read the school vision statement, which is.....

Support the success of every student by insisting on high standards of academic achievement;
Generate a strong sense of student pride, character, and self discipline;
Maintain a safe learning environment which promotes positive social interactions and good citizenship; and sustain the involvement of staff, parents, and community throughout the middle school years.

I am giddy with excitement as I begin my first year as Principal. A special thanks to Mrs. Lance Dempsey for her leadership during her tenure at this fine school. This year we will continue to do so many positive things as we, the community of Shady Grove Middle School, raise the next generation of students to higher levels of academic and social levels of success. Our students are Outliers. They will go beyond expectations.

All the best,

Edward Owusu, Acting Principal and Eighth Grade Administrator

President's Corner

By Curt Janota (SGMS PTA President)

Welcome to another exciting school year. Our children are entering a new grade. They will have new teachers. Their schedule will change. They will, of course, be learning new things. Some of their friends will change. Some are brand new to the school, the community, the state, and maybe even the country. Those students who are returning will see a new principal, a new security officer, and a new administrative secretary. The PTA has a new executive board. Change is everywhere.

But, change does not have to be a bad thing. Take the PTA for instance--several of the executive board members were involved in the PTA last year yet, several of the board members are new. New ideas spring forth from change. As a vice-president for the past two years, I had ideas. Now, as the president, I see the PTA from a different perspective and have new ideas. We have board members who are new to Shady Grove. They have a totally new and unique perspective.

The executive board has had all summer to toss around these new ideas, to refine old concepts and to consider future ideas as well. Some of our ideas include:

- Having guest speakers at more of the PTA meetings
- Inviting staff members to a Pre-PTA meeting, informal meet and greet (expect to see more on this in the next couple weeks)
- Increasing the academic grants for teachers by a third
- Encouraging the community, and not just the SGMS parents, to help raise funds for the school by scheduling a restaurant "Spirit Night" each month.
- Increasing communication via: an increased web presence, Increased use of the listserv, and quarterly newsletters
- Assuring that a student directory gets out this year
- Purchasing a popcorn popper for all school events, clubs and organizations to have ready access to use
- Returning the phenomenally successful Winter Carnival
- And, as always, continuing to look for other ways in which the PTA can directly improve the learning environment for our children

We are always looking for ideas for guest speakers. If you have any ideas or any contacts who may prove useful as a guest speaker, please contact any of the executive board members. Our contact information is available elsewhere in this newsletter.

Join the largest volunteer organization in the country. Join the PTA. Get first hand information about what is happening at the school. Meet other parents who all share at least one thing in common: they all care about their children's education. Please plan on attending the monthly PTA meetings which are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00. Most meetings run until about 8:30.

Letter to Seventh Grade Parents

Seventh grade students and families, welcome back to your second year at Shady Grove Middle School! I am eager to begin our sophomore year together and continue the journey through middle school.

Students, sixth grade proved to be a tremendous year. You showed great tenacity as you navigated through the social transition from elementary to middle school, exhibited high levels of citizenship, collaboratively worked to ensure each person reached their highest level of academic success, and distinguished yourselves as true leaders in the Shady Grove student body. You have truly left a positive impression on the staff, students and parents of this school community. While sixth grade is the year for social transition, seventh grade will be the year for academic transition. As you begin seventh grade, you will be embarking upon new and exciting horizons. This coming year, over 80% of the seventh grade class is scheduled to take more than two honors courses, many of you will be enrolled in high school credit courses (algebra, geometry and foreign languages), and there is an increased opportunity to take new computer/ engineering based electives. With the plethora of options and the greatness for new possibilities, there is no doubt in my or your teachers' minds that you are more than adequately prepared to- *Go Beyond Expectations*.

Parents, over the next ten months your child will spend more time at Shady Grove than they will at home. My commitment to you is to provide your child with a positive seventh grade educational experience and ensure their academic growth this year. Fluid communication between the school and home helps your child see us as a team, working together for their academic and personal success. If you have questions or concerns during the school year, please feel free to contact me via email, [Dana E Davison@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Dana_E_Davison@mcpsmd.org), or phone, 301-548-7540.

Seventh graders, I look forward to greeting each of you and hearing about your summer vacations on the first day of school. Until August 31st, relax, be safe, get plenty of rest and get ready for a wonderful year!

Mrs. Davison, Principal Intern & Seventh Grade Administrator

Letter to Sixth Grade Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your child to our Shady Grove Middle School (SGMS) family. SGMS is a remarkable school that continues to demonstrate the levels of academic success that can be achieved by all students when a dedicated staff works collaboratively with its stakeholders. Our data speaks for itself. Our students perform well on county and state mandated tests. We have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four consecutive years and our Maryland School Assessment (MSA) scores continue to highlight a decreasing achievement gap. SGMS is committed to preparing our students for the academic and professional challenges of the 21st century.

Sixth grade is a pivotal year in students' academic development. In addition to the challenges presented by rigorous academic courses, students also will be presented with the opportunities to grow in their social interactions with new students, meeting the expectations of seven different teachers, navigating the halls (and lockers 😊) of a middle school, and managing their time and prioritizing their responsibilities on a daily basis. We believe that this year will be critical in establishing the habits and routines that will pave the road for future academic experiences in high school and beyond. As such, I invite you to take a very active role in working with us to support our students' acquisition of these essential skills.

The transition from elementary to middle school can be daunting for some students. I want to reassure you that the sixth grade team has worked hard to plan and prepare an engaging and challenging year for all our incoming sixth grade students. Mrs. Moore and Ms. Teixeira are the sixth grade team leaders and are committed to helping your child make a smooth transition to middle school. Ms. May is the sixth grade counselor and is always available to counsel with students regarding academic or social challenges. The sixth grade team of teachers is a strong team that is adept at identifying students' strengths and identifying strategies to support growth areas. Together, we are excited about the opportunity to reach every one of our students.

I want to conclude by restating our commitment to you and your child. We welcome your support as well as any questions or suggestions you may have. We value open and honest communication and will do our best to be proactive in communicating with you in a timely manner—via email, personal phone calls, Edline and Connect Ed phone calls. As partners, we look forward to working collaboratively with you to help each and every student achieve his or her academic potential.

If you have any questions, you may contact me by phone at 301 – 548 – 7540 or by email at [Paul T Ajamian@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Paul.T.Ajamian@mcpsmd.org).

Regards,

Paul Ajamian, Sixth Grade Administrator

SGMS Student Store

The student store at Shady Grove Middle School is a PTA volunteer run operation that provides year round school supplies for kids. The store sells an extensive list of school supplies such as binders, notebooks, loose paper, mechanical pencils, regular pencils, pens, erasers, glue sticks, protractors, folders, highlighters, composition books, etc. Some small toys and holiday items are sold to keep the year interesting. All items are sold at close to cost with many items purchased during the summer sales allowing prices to be beat store prices. The small profit made is turned back into the PTA which uses it to buy the student planners, help with student programs, staff appreciation, and much more to benefit the students. The store is open during the lunch hours from 10:40-1:00 pm. The kids really enjoy visiting the store and this is a great way to meet the staff and students of SGMS. If you would like to the opportunity to help out at the school, save the day for many kids by providing a pencil at the last minute,

or just get to know the kids better, please let me know. Also we need folks willing to be a substitute for days that are regulars are ill or have to stay home with a sick child. This is an exciting way to be an active part of the school without being in the classroom. Call Dee Dee Smith at 301-978-9898 or email me at ddkesmith@yahoo.com. (Wednesdays are the only day we have covered as of now)



We Need You !

Shady Grove needs volunteers to help with a variety of activities, such as homework club, binder help for 6th, 7th & 8th grade, staff appreciation, book fair, spirit events, outdoor Ed and much more. You can help out before, during, or after school hours, once a week, once a month or even once a year. There are so many volunteer activities that can fit into your schedule. Contact Lynn Hughes with questions; 301-721-9711 or lynnhughes99@comcast.net

How does the PTA support the school?

By Curt Janota

We are often asked how the PTA helps the school. Below is a very quick example of some of the many ways the school relies on the parents and the PTA:

The Fall Fundraiser brings in around \$8,000
The membership drive brings in around \$800
The book fairs bring in around \$1,000 each
The Spirit Wear sales bring in around \$500
The School Store brings in around \$800

The student planners cost around \$2,500
The student directories cost around \$300
The membership dues cost around \$500
The insurance/taxes cost around \$1,000
The PTA's office supplies cost around \$400

The Newsletter costs around \$300
The Staff appreciation events cost around \$1,500
The Cultural Arts events cost around \$2,500
The honor Roll Awards cost around \$2,000
The PTA offsets the 8th grade cruise by about \$500
The PTA provides Academic Grants of about \$2,000

Parent/PTA volunteers: chalk up around 10,000 hours per year, chaperone band/choir trips to festival, help students keep their binders organized, attend school planning meetings, and are in the school every day helping on both small and large tasks alike.

For more information, please plan on attending our monthly PTA meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Find out how you can make a difference with just a couple hours of your time.

PTA Executive Board Contact Info

Curt Janota, President	301.330.7339	sgmsptapres@gmail.com
Lori Black, Vice President 1	301.527.8686	black@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
Alex Cooke, Vice President 2	240.398.0558	sgttcooke@gmail.com
Betty Laffan, Treasurer	240.412.5508	Laffan@comcast.net
Lynn Hughes, Recording Secretary	301.721.9711	lynnhughes99@comcast.net
Sophia Wong, Corr. Secretary	301.977.3693	kowhei@verizon.net
DeeDee Smith, MCCPTA Rep	301.978.9898	ddkesmith@yahoo.com
MaryAnne Hardy, MCCPTA Rep	301.963.4512	ma52.hardy@comcast.net
Edward Owusu, Principal	301.548.7540	Edward_k_owusu@mcpsmd.org

Upcoming Events

08 Sept (Tuesday): Fall fundraiser packets sent home with students

08 Sept (Tuesday) 7:00pm: PTA Meeting—"Fast Food Junkies", a talk by Rebecca Davis from Montgomery County's Cooperative Extension; budget presentation/voting

23 Sept (Wednesday) 7:00pm: Back to School Night

28 Sept (Monday): Fall fundraiser orders due

12 Oct (Monday): Open House

13 Oct (Tuesday): PTA Meeting

15 Oct (Thursday): Movie Night

19 Oct - 23 Oct (Monday - Friday): Book Fair

22 Oct (Thursday): Spaghetti Dinner and evening Book Fair hours

10 Nov (Tuesday) 7:00pm: PTA Meeting

11 Nov (Wednesday): Winter Newsletter sent home to parents

04 Dec (Friday): International Night

08 Dec (Tuesday) 7:00pm: PTA Meeting