RITCHIE PARK ES

PTA NEW­SLET­TER

2011-2012 RPES PTA Officers

**Rachel Hicks, President**

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PTA Board of Directors *also includes the following members:*

**Jennifer Young, Delegate to MoCo Council of PTAs and Past President**

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WWW.MONTGOMERYSCHOOLSMD.ORG/SCHOOLS/RITCHIEPARKES/PAR­ENTS

### **December 23, 2011**

# 2011 Scholastic Book Fair Best Ever!

Our generous RPES families ended up donating over 100 books. During Storytelling Night, cash registers were smoking but the lines remained manage­able as we pulled in over 25% of the total week's sales in just those three hours. We grossed over $16,000 (our highest total yet!) which will translate to roughly $4100 in cash for the PTA (this goes to­ward the general operating budget) and $1200 in new books for our Media Cen­ter.

# ****Sort Through Those Pictures For the Yearbook****

Help us capture memories of our children to last a lifetime! Keep emailing your photographs of the school year to Michelle Logsdon, michelle.logsdon@verizon.net. The more pictures we have the better!  Send in your pictures from school events--Halloween parties, Pizza Bingo, International Night, Scholastic book fair, assemblies, concerts, etc.!! Also, Michelle still needs volun­teers to assist with the yearbook in Marketing and Sales.

# School Directory App

All PTA members have free access to our secure, password-pro­tected School Directory App.  The App will have the most up-to-date di­rectory in­forma­tion and will be accessible via smartphones and com­puter!  You should have re­ceived an email with login and password in­formation. Then go to www.schooldirectoryupdate.com/desktop/login.php/ to download the App. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Young (see sidebar).

# FUNDRAISING FORUM

Need a charitable tax deduction before the end of the year? Please con­sider donating to the ELMO Fund. When we began the school year we needed 10 ELMO’s to put an ELMO in Every Classroom. So far, we have raised funds to purchase 3 additional ELMOs. If we raise $3,000 before the end of the year we can purchase 2 additional ELMOs and reach half our goal. Help en­hance the educational experience of our children on a regular and consistent basis, make your donation TODAY!

Ever wonder where your PTA dues and fundraising dollars go? RPES PTA funds many activities and provides funds for needed supplies to our school. Items such as Proud Panther stickers, copy paper, laminating film, ink car­tridges, cultural arts programs, the Media Center Reading Pro­gram, a Principal’s pledge which allows Ms. Long to pur­chase items the school needs, fun commu­nity building activities, teacher reimbursements for out of pocket classroom ex­penses, gifts for the staff such as a Coffee Maker and utensils for the teachers’ lounge, and so much more.  **If you are looking for a charitable tax deduction and don’t want to ear mark your do­nation for the ELMO Fund**, we would so ap­preciate a contribu­tion to the PTA. Your help will enable us to continue to support our wonderful school in so many ways! Send your donations to school in an envelope marked "PTA Donations." Steve Schuck, PTA Treasurer, can provide a tax receipt to you for your donation.  Any questions, contact Sharri Freedman, VP Fundraising (see sidebar).

**Corporate Donations:** Also, there are many opportunities for RPES to receive funds from corporations such as Capitol One Bank. We are still looking for a volunteer to spearhead this campaign.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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| **Jan. 3&4, 6:45-8:30 p.m.** | Preview of Acts for Variety Show |
| **Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m.** | MCCPTA MOE Forum at Carver Auditorium |
| **Jan. 11** | Restaurant Night at Potomac Pizza |
| **Jan. 11&18** | BOE hearing RE: Operating Budget |
| **Jan. 12, 7 p.m.** | Math Night |

# MARK YOUR CA­LEN­DARS

**Restaurant Night** is on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at Potomac Pizza, Traville location.  Dine-in, carry-out, or order deli­very.

The **RPES Variety Show** will be held on Jan. 20, 2012 at Richard Montgomery High School in the auditorium. **The Preview of Acts will be Jan. 3 and 4 from 6:45-8:30 p.m. in the RPES All Purpose Room.** If your child or group plans to wear a costume of any sort, plan to wear it to the Preview. Bring any music needed, burned on to a CD for the sound tech to keep until the night of the show. (Once we have stored the music, we can return it to you.) You can also e-mail your music to Tonya Greenspan, tonyagreenspan@ymail.com, before the Preview of Acts. Perfor­mances are preferably no longer than 3½ minutes and a maximum of 4 minutes. To sign up for the Preview of Acts, log onto www.signupgenious.com/go/ritchie, password: varietyshow2012

**Important rules:** Everyone will be limited to one act, unless also performing with a teacher group. NO EXCEPTIONS.We want to give as many children as possible a chance to be in the show. Any ques­tions contact Tonya Greenspan, tonyagreenspan@ymail.com.

There is **no PTA Meeting in January**. See you all on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the Media Center for the February PTA Meeting.

# ADVOCACY CORNER

During the fall, we talked a lot about MCPS’ proposed Capital Improvements Program Budget that involved the construction of a new elementary school and an addition to the middle school in the RM Cluster.  In January, our atten­tion will turn to the Operating Budget.  This is the funding that pays our teachers, maintains our building and funds our programs.  On Dec. 7, Superintendent Starr announced the proposed FY 2013 Operating Budget.  You can find a copy of the Budget here www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/.  The $2.13 billion budget request represents a 2% ($41 million) increase over last year's budget, and is the lowest requested increase in more than a decade. The budget meets the state's "Maintenance of Effort" (MOE) law, which imposes a penalty if a county fails to fund education at the same per pupil level as the year before (taking into account increases in enrollment).  While the County contri­butes most of the funding to MCPS, the amount of the local contribution has been on the decline.  In terms of actual dollars, the local contribution to this budget of $1.37 billion is at the lowest level since 2006. Since just 2009, the local per pupil contribution has fallen by 9.5%, down from $11,249 to $9,759 per pupil, and the County failed to fund its main­tenance of effort last year.  If you want to find out more about how maintenance of effort works, MCCPTA is sponsoring an MOE forum on Jan. 4 at Carver Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. at which sev­eral state, local, and school board officials will be sharing their views.  It is crucial that the County fund its portion of the Operating Budget this year.  The Board of Educa­tion will hold hearings on the Superintendent's proposed Operat­ing Budget on Jan. 11 and Jan. 18. Cluster Coordinators will testify at the hearings, and we will need the support of Ritchie Park parents on the night that the RM Cluster Coordi­nator testifies.

# A BIG THANK YOU TO…

**Parking Space Auction Winner:**  The Greenspan family is our winner for Dec.-Feb. Please DO NOT park in the Auction Winner space.  The RPES families that won the auction paid to have the space available at all times.

* The Grade Reps. and Room Parents for coordinating the Teacher Holiday gift collection. Gifts were pre­sented to teachers this week. Thanks also to all the fam­ilies who contributed.
* Karla Berggren, Karen Watson, and Steve Schuck for coordinating the Staff Holi­day Fund collection. Thank you also to every­one who con­tributed. The PTA was able to buy a gift card for all 35 non-classroom staff members and they were distributed this week.
* The 5th Grade Promotion Committee who has been working hard on fundraising and plans for a great celebra­tion this year!