

Churchill Cluster PTA Update

March 2009

The 2008-09 school year continues to be a busy time for student, parents, and staff in the Churchill Cluster. Our PTA and PTSA leaders and members have been actively supporting academic enrichment, advocating on behalf of the needs of our local schools, and searching to grow our cadre of parent leaders and volunteers.

Supporting Academic Enrichment and Community. At our cluster schools, PTA/PTSA is hosting science fairs, providing cultural arts programs, promoting literacy, facilitating communication, and celebrating the diversity of our community. Your PTA membership and support make memorable events such as Wayside Elementary School PTA's Multicultural Festival, Hoover Middle School PTA's *Taste of Hoover*, and Winston Churchill High School PTSA's After-Prom possible.

Our students also had the opportunity to explore the arts through National PTA's Reflections Program and its 2008-09 theme "Wow!" PTA Reflections offers students the chance to express themselves through literature, photography, visual arts, music, and dance. Students from our cluster—from kindergartners to seniors—earned 32 awards from the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA), and three children—from Beverly Farms Elementary School, Potomac Elementary School, and Seven Locks Elementary School—received awards at the Maryland state PTA level.

Advocating for Our Students, Staff, and Schools. With the economic outlook challenging and uncertain, the 2008-09 academic year has been a critical time for PTA/PTSA advocacy on behalf of funding for our schools. PTA/PTSA leaders and our principals have been working together to identify the priorities of our community schools, from staffing to academic supplies to construction needs. Your Churchill Cluster PTA coordinators have addressed these needs before Board of Education hearings, in meetings with local county and state legislators, and most recently before the County Council.

A BIG THANK YOU to the many Churchill Cluster parents and staff who came out on February 10th to support our cluster's testimony on the capital improvement plans for our schools. As noted in the *Potomac Almanac*, the community's presence made a real impact on the Council. Even as we watch a new Bells Mill Elementary School rise, we must continue to push for funding for school modernizations to ensure that work starts this summer on a new Cabin John Middle School, and that we have adequate capacity in this neighborhood for our students. Parent and staff support also will be crucial this spring when testimony is given to the County Council on the MCPS operating budget—the budget that provides teachers and academic programs; watch your PTA/PTSA communications for dates.

Mark your calendars for May 14th! An additional, rare opportunity for each one of you to show how important education is to the Churchill Cluster community is coming on Thursday May 14th. That evening, our PTA/PTSAs will be hosting the members of the

Montgomery County Board of Education at Churchill High School for our quadrennial meeting. This is our opportunity to dialogue with the men and women we elected to determine MCPS policy on everything from gifted and talented education to special needs; from school air quality issues and maintenance to parental involvement; from math curriculum to curricular fees.

What You Can Do. PTA/PTSA nominating committees at each of our schools and at MCCPTA are looking for next year's parent leaders. Seriously consider becoming one of the local or county PTA leaders who make a positive difference in the educational experience of every child. Contact your PTA/PTSA presidents or board members, or us, your Churchill Cluster coordinators, for more information on the many opportunities to get involved. There's something for everyone in PTA.

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MCCPTA Churchill Cluster Coordinators, 2008-09