



Palmetto Middle School

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Lisa Noffo, Principal

Melissa Montovino, PTSA President

www.pmsptsa.org

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PMS & PTSA Calendar, March '09

3-8 Taste of Pinecrest

3-10 – 3-17 FCAT Testing

3-17 Rally to Tally!

3-19 PTSA Meeting at 9:15 am, Media Center

3-27 No School/Teacher Planning Day

3-27 8th Grade trip to Islands of Adventure

4-6 through 4-10 Spring Break, No school

PMS is again an **A+** School!!

Message from the PMS PTSA President

Hello Parents, Students, Teachers and Community Members!

Have you noticed the disturbing trend lately? Funding has taken a huge spiral downward, more and more programs are getting cut and it is getting even more difficult to provide the quality education that parents and teachers want and our children deserve. Many of us frequently discuss what we can do to actively, strategically and effectively advocate for positive change? As PTSA leadership we are challenged to educate, empower and inspire our members to take action. How do we accomplish this? Step 1: Gain members. Step 2: Gain momentum.

Step 1: As I've said before, there is power in numbers. When we speak to decision makers and say that we are from such a large PTSA constituent organization, be assured that they listen. Please consider joining the PTSA, it is not too late and we need you! The membership drive for this year ends on March 31. Membership envelopes are available in the main office. Specifically, we are trying to increase our student membership. If your student has not joined, please send \$5 in an envelope with their name, the name of their 1st period teacher and a note that says "PTSA Membership."

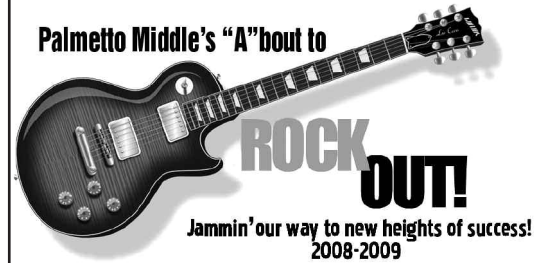
Step 2: Grassroots efforts are a force to be reckoned with. If a group of individuals with a common interest is organized around a clear, concise and important issue, they can make huge changes. Communicating with decision makers is critical if we are to reverse the alarming trend of decreased funding in our schools.

A large group of us are planning to travel to Tallahassee on March 17 for a demonstration in front of our legislature on the 18th. If you have a chance, please call write or e-mail your representative and let them know that additional cuts to education are inappropriate. We need to save public education and need you to help us!

In the meantime, while we try to convince those who control the purse strings to adequately fund education, you all have helped us to fill in gaps at Palmetto Middle School through the Parent Donation program. This year, due to the outstanding success of the Ways and Means Committees under the leadership of Maricel Lam, we have over \$20,000 to spend on special needs at the school. We asked the entire faculty and staff to submit requests for funding for their needs. The PTSA membership voted to put the money to enhancing the learning environment at Palmetto Middle School with technology (SmartBoards), educational tools and health pamphlets. These items will have a direct impact on the learning of our children.

I hope to see you all at our next PTSA meeting on March 19th at 9:15am in the Media Center. We should have a readout from the Rally to Tally at that time. Thank you for your support of the Palmetto Middle School PTSA. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at melissamontovino@yahoo.com.

— *Melissa Montovino*



A Note from Mrs. Noffo

Palmetto Middle School continues to "Jam" to new heights of success. Even with the "flu" season, we were ranked in fourth place out of 55 middle schools in attendance percentage during the second nine-week period of the 2008-2009 school year. Last year at this time we were in first place. I know with the efforts of parents, staff and students we can once again reach that number 1 spot!

Thank you to all the parent support in getting your child to participate in our FCAT tutoring program. Our Saturday morning tutoring has averaged approximately 100 students – that truly ROCKS!!!

Please mark your calendar with the following test dates:
March 10, 2009 - FCAT Reading
March 11, 2009 - FCAT Math
March 16, 2009 - FCAT Science

Parents, please ensure that your children are in attendance on these days. They will need a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast, especially on these test days. The teaching staff has done a wonderful job preparing students. Please let your children know that they are ready for this test, that they will do their very best, and that you are very proud of them. We want all of our students to come to school relaxed and confident!

— *Mrs. Lisa Noffo*



Please e-mail articles, dates and important information for the next Lancer Letter to kfdesign@bellsouth.net with **PMS newsletter** typed into the subject line. Thanks! Kim Foster

Safe Sitter course at PMS a huge success!

On February 6th, PMS held the Safe Sitter course for our students. We had 41 kids join us and as always they loved



it. This course is designed to teach kids to be "Better Sitters today and Better Parents tomorrow". They learned CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver, how to run a successful babysitting service, how to handle emergencies in the home, basic baby care and much more. Many parents encourage their children to attend this course because it not only prepares kids to babysit but also to be safe when they are home alone or with younger siblings.

This year as in years past, the course would not have been possible without the support of Baptist Children's Hospital. They generously provide the CPR portion of the course. They provide both the manikins and the instructors to make this part of the day possible. So we want to say an extra big thank you to Baptist Children's Hospital.

I would like to thank all of the instructors that generously gave of their time, 10 hours!, to teach our kids. They are John Mouw, Bari Conti, Peggy Williams, Joan Marn, and Nancy Harter. You probably don't recognize these names because none of these people have children at our school, yet they donated their time to teach our kids, AMAZING.

There are several of our own parents that also were amazing. Maricel Lam and Cori Strosnider became instructors to help us out. They were supposed to be "eased" into the role and only observe but... as things always happen they were thrown right in there and had to teach by themselves. They did a great job and the kids said that they were some of their favorite instructors! Finally, Mary Warrell stayed all day to help deliver snacks and juice, run to get things needed and provide coffee for the instructors. They loved it.

So it was a great day and the PTSA was proud to have been able to bring this course to the school for one more year. This is just one of the ways the Parent Donation Program helps our school!

Upcoming Safe Sitter Course at Baptist Health System

PMS held the Safe Sitter Course at PMS on February 6. If your child was not able to attend, Baptist Children's Hospital will be holding a course on March 27, 2009 from 8 am – 5 pm. The fee is \$25.00 and you must pre register. Call 786-596-3812 for registration information and to reserve your spot.

Emerald Garden News



There has been a lot of action going on in the Emerald Garden over the past couple of weeks. A large amount of mulch was delivered and several people have been methodically spreading it in the Garden and around the school. This is the first major mulching since the Garden was re-vitalized back in August of 2007! Weeds have been pulled, plants have been pruned and dead plants replaced. Mr. Kaplan gave the pond a much needed filter upgrade and Mr. Moses has mulched the area in front of the school under the classrooms.

We'd like to send a special thank you to two classes who have come out to lend a hand: Mrs. McCarthy's fourth period 8th grade science students who came armed with muscle and helped carry many bags of mulch for us; Jukeara Brown, Brandon Garcia, Randall Minott, Celeste Martinez and Nicole Torres. And to Mrs. Wallace's 6th and 8th grade Language Arts students who helped weed and mulch on a couple of occasions, Crystal Corona, Kevin Manning, Gabby Perez-Albela, Jennifer Roque (6th gr.) and Gil Almanza, Ziara Aviles, Gina Fiallos, Amanda Fundora, Justin Guelmes, Ryan Guzman, Brian Lopez, Julian Madero, Lauren Martinez, Kyle Pease, April Rodriguez, Devin Spencer, Melissa Wilson, Taryn Wright and Teja Wright (8th grade) They will be planting herbs and spices and look forward to having some taste tests for all to sample in the near future. We are so happy to have students working in the Garden – together we can keep this beautiful space thriving!

– *The Beautification Committee* –

Christian Armstrong, Cyndi Eisenberg & Lauren Mayer

Career Day is April 17, 2009

Do you have an interesting job or know someone who does? We need you to speak to PMS students about your field of work. Volunteers are needed as speakers and behind-the-scenes helpers for this one-day event. To get involved, contact Natalie Lemos at nlemos@leinoffandlemos.com or 786/543-1076.

The Parent Donation Program

WOW – Thanks to the latest group of donations we are now up to total funds raised for PMS at \$22,303 from 192 families. All of that goes to our school PTA budget with no expenses and only the effort from writing your check related to this fundraising!! If you still haven't given the recommended \$30 donation please please write that check and make a difference right now before your forget!

–*Gae Shapiro and Rachelle Schneider,*
Parent Donation Program

Thank you to the following families that donated in 2009!

JEAN-PIERRE JR
MERRILL LYNCH MATCHING
MYERS
PRUDENTIAL MATCHING
QUESDAD/VALDESPINO
SILVERMAN
VEGA

Thank You to our Volunteers

Thanks to the following volunteers for helping to sell tickets for the 8th grade trip: Jakie Wajner, Jeanette Garcia, Diana Husson, Shifra Lipson, Susan Montesino, Melanie Chicalo, Annette McGilvray and Monica Ramos.

PTSA Link

Weekly News and Your Link to Important School Information

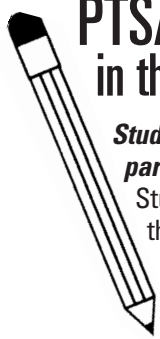
Do you know what's going on at your child's school? To stay current, make sure to sign up for PTSA Link and join the nearly 800 members of the PMS family that receives school news via e-mail. Our weekly e-newsletter provides you with up-to-date information, as well as links to our monthly mailings, Lancer Letter and much more. By signing up for PTSA Link and opting out of our monthly hard-copy mailer, you also aid our efforts to "go green" and help save as much as \$800 each month that can directly support academics and activities for our children. To sign up, visit www.pms.org and click on PTSA Link, or send an e-mail to ptsalink@bellsouth.net with PTSA Link/Opt-out Hardcopy in the Subject.

Teacher and Staff Appreciation

The PTSA is always trying to show our wonderful teachers and staff our appreciation for all they do!!! For Valentine's Day, we decorated their lounge and gave each a goodie bag filled with treats. Many thanks to the following for all their help: Christian Armstrong, Etienne Choiseul, Marcia Choiseul, Chris Fisk and Leia Schwartz

Susan Montesino and Laura Schwartz (Co-Chairs, Teacher/Staff Appreciation)

PTSA School Store open Fridays, 8:20-8:50 am in the school cafeteria



Students MUST wear the official Palmetto Middle School T-Shirt to participate in the 8TH GRADE FIELD TRIP to ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE!

Students will NOT be allowed to go on the trip if they are not wearing the official PMS T-shirt. Orange shirt with former design is \$7 and the grey shirt with the new design \$10. T-shirts are on sale at the school store and will be on sale in the breezeway in the morning on March 23, 24, 25, and 26.

Becoming a Listener

Are you looking for a meaningful volunteer experience? Do you have an hour a week to devote to a child? Would you like to make a real difference?

Look into the Listener's Program. Contact Linda Diamond @ 305-661-1946 or Ldiamond26@aol.com

Tips to help your student prepare for FCAT

FCAT is here again. Here are some tips to help your child be ready to take the test.

- Prior to the day of the test, teach your child relaxation techniques such as slow deep breathing. Encourage them to utilize these techniques during the exam.
- Be sure your child is present on test day. Students taking tests on make up days tend to score lower.
- Have your child eat a good breakfast. Hunger can lead to poor performance.
- Make sure your child has at least two #2 pencils sharpened and ready to go.
- Encourage your child to relax! Remind them that all of the hard work is done. Now is just the time to prove what they have been working so hard on all year.
- Get to school on time. Being late makes your child nervous and out of sorts
- Have your child drink enough water so he/she will not get dehydrated. A dehydrated body will lead to poor performance.
- Encourage your child to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and ask questions about those directions that are not clear.
- Tell your child to think positively. They can do this. They are well prepared.

Volunteer of the Month is Marcia Choiseul

Marcia spends countless hours at the school. Not only does she chair our copy committee (all hail the copy queen!!), she also helps out wherever and whenever she is needed. She has done everything from Teacher/Staff Appreciation committee to Membership and the Monthly Mailer and then some. All this while juggling 4 kids in 3 different schools and helping her sister with her jewelry business— WOW!

Marcia, and her husband Paul, are the parents of Etienne (7th grade), Juliette (6th grade), Jean-Luc (2nd grade at Howard Drive Elementary) and Danny (Junior at F.I.U.).

Not surprisingly, Marcia's professional focus is being a great wife and mother first. She also enjoys volunteering, playing tennis and music, amongst many other things. She really does enjoy life! Her motto is "If you want something done right, do it yourself". Maybe that's why she is so good at multi-tasking and taking on so many things!!!



8th Grade Dance Requests

The 8th grade dance is on Friday, May 8. The theme is "Hollywood," with black and gold colors. Parents with any decorations that would fit this theme should please contact Mrs. Iturmendi. Also needed is a helium tank to blow up the balloons. Parents will be needed to assist with decorations on the day of the dance. The next meeting for the event is on 3/13/09, in the media center, at 9:00 a.m.

Advertise in *The Lancer*,

our student produced newspaper, read in over 1500 homes

No. of Issues	One	Two	Three	Four
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Contact: B. Harrison 305-238-3911

Email: bach1123@dadeschools.net