



Palmetto Middle School

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www.pms.dadeschools.net

www.pmsptsa.org

Lisa Noffo, Principal

Melissa Montovino, PTSA President

December 2009 Volume 40 Issue 4

Message from the PMS PTSA president:

Hello, parents, students, teachers and community members!

I hope that everybody is enjoying the cooler weather and taking the time to settle down with family for the holidays and reflect on what is most important: being together! While holidays do bring stress, make sure to kick back and relax with your family, either in the comfort of your own home with a board game that hasn't seen anything but the closet, or a bike ride to one of our great Miami-Dade parks. Celebrate having each other and living life to the fullest!

You may have noticed that the newsletter did not come to your doorstep last month. We decided to embrace our trees and save money by publishing the Lancer Letter on a quarterly basis going forward. Do not fear, we will continue to share hot information via the PTSA Link e-blast! If you do not currently receive that and would like to, please let Diana Husson know by contacting her at dianahusson@gmail.com.

We have a lot of very special volunteers at Palmetto Middle School and are fortunate that parents choose to spend free time helping out at the school. Several moms have been critical at various initiatives that we have led: Dawn Ratiner, Carolyn Seckinger, Kelly Foreman, Jakie Wagner, Colleen Beauregard, Kim

Martin and Emy Upshaw. Thank you all for your dedication and support to making this school what it is!

As we head into the new year, the PTSA will be looking to allocate the donation funds toward technology and services necessary at the school. If you have talent, services or time to help, please let Darla March know by contacting her at darla.march@bellsouth.net.

Have a very safe and happy holiday!

- Melissa Montovino

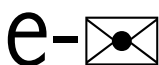
Emerald Garden

The Emerald Garden is in constant need of attention and would appreciate any help it can get!!! The first Wednesday of each month is considered 'Green Wednesday' and the co-chairs will be working in the morning to keep our green space neat and tidy.

Any and all volunteers are welcome. The next official 'Green Wednesday' will be on December 2nd. We really need your help and hope to see you there!

Christian Armstrong, Cyndi Eisenberg, and Sharon Eisenberg
Beautification Committee

Please e-mail articles, dates and important information for the next Lancer Letter by the **15th** of the month to mindinotrika@bellsouth.net with **PMS Newsletter** typed into the subject line. Thanks! Mindi



PMS / PTSA calendar December 2009

- 12/17** Teacher/Staff PTSA Member Holiday Lunch
12/21-1/1 No School/Winter Break
1/21 PTSA Meeting 9:15
1/22 No School
1/28 Early Release

A note from Mrs. Noffo

I am so proud of our students. They continue to meet the challenges of the curriculum that is presented. Please be reminded that your child is part of a "team" that includes a common group of teachers. Each team of teachers is available on Tuesday mornings for team conferences. It takes all of us in Palmetto Middle School's quest to **ROUND UP A Number 9!**



In addition to the Monday and Wednesday after school tutoring, our **tutoring services** will expand to include **Saturday** mornings. Beginning **January 16** and running through **March 6** tutoring in reading, writing and math will be available from **9:00 am to 12:00 pm**. This is a great opportunity for your child to receive that extra assistance as the FCAT approaches.

On behalf of the entire Palmetto Middle School faculty and staff, I want to wish everyone a very relaxing and healthy holiday season. After the break, students will return to school rested and up to the rigorous challenges of academic progress. Our midterm exam schedule is as follows:

Essay Exams – Jan. 11, 12, and 13
Objective Exams – Jan. 14, 15 and 19

A special thank you, as always, to the PTSA for all you do for us throughout the year. Please know that because of your efforts, the students of Palmetto Middle will always remember these middle years as extra special – yee haw, y'all, and happy holidays!

- Mrs. Lisa Noffo

Important tips about influenza

The recent H1N1 outbreak is a strong reminder that influenza is not the common cold. It's a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. While there has been a great deal of focus placed on this strain of influenza, seasonal influenza is a threat every year. The H1N1 virus has been linked to 4,000 deaths so far this year – but seasonal influenza and its complications are responsible for 36,000 deaths every year in the US. In fact, in the Miami-area alone, an estimated 119,000 and 475,000 residents will suffer from seasonal influenza in a given year.

It's important that we all protect ourselves from the seasonal influenza, in addition to H1N1. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent the disease, and is especially important for those who are at high risk of developing serious complications from the disease.

The CDC is recommending vaccination against both forms of influenza this year. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now in the Miami

area and the H1N1 vaccine is available in limited amounts for high-risk groups.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), seasonal influenza immunization is recommended for:

- Anyone who wants to prevent influenza
- Children 6 months through 18 years of age
- People 50 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- People of any age with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, COPD, heart disease or diabetes
- Residents of long-term care or nursing homes
- Close contacts of anyone with a chronic medical condition
- Health care workers

In addition to vaccination, the following everyday actions can be taken to help prevent the spread of influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

To learn more about the latest flu statistics and the benefits of vaccination, check out the *Faces of Influenza* Web site at www.facesofinfluenza.org.

Volunteers wanted

Don't let new procedure discourage you!

Even though a lot of you have signed up to volunteer or have expressed interest in volunteering at Palmetto Middle, only a few of you have gone through the newly instituted approval process (as of the new 2009 school year). Unfortunately, even those of you with a prior approved volunteer number are required to re-register.

I, as the volunteer coordinator, cannot give out names of non-approved volunteers to any committee chair people.

Please make an effort to get re-approved as soon as possible (two

very easy steps), as we really need your help in making Palmetto Middle a better place for our children. If you need help getting re-approved, Mr. Sosa and I are available to walk you through the process. Please don't let the new procedure get in the way of participating as a volunteer and making a difference in our children's lives.

Marcia Choiseul
305-338-1086
Volunteer Coordinator

(Cyberbullying cont.)

and willing to come to you whenever they experience something unpleasant or distressing in cyberspace. Victims of cyberbullying (and the bystanders who observe it) must know for sure that the adults who they tell will intervene rationally and logically, and not make the situation worse.

10. Teach and reinforce positive morals and values about how others should be treated with respect and dignity.

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Together, they lecture across the United States on the causes and consequences of cyberbullying and offer comprehensive workshops addressing and preventing online aggression. For more information, visit <http://www.cyberbullying.us>. © 2009 Cyberbullying Research Center - Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin

**WANTED:
VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH**

This issue's Volunteers of the Month are **Colleen Beauregard, Kim Martin and Emy Upshaw**. The Lancer Letter nosed its way into their lives and queried them on their family highlights, something we didn't know about them and their mottoes. Here they are:

Kim has a wonderful husband whom she's known since high school, and twin daughters, sixth graders Kaelyn and Madison. We now know that she loves Broadway musicals and her motto, which is "Never let your past define who you are today," is one we can all use.

Emy has two daughters, Lexi and Madi, and their big brother Jamie. Emy now admits that she is terrified of frogs. Her motto is "Do what you HAVE to do so you can do what you WANT to do."

Colleen has a 12 year old daughter named Megan (7th grader) and was a surrogate for her sister, so she has a 5 year old "sort of ½ daughter" named Penny. We never knew that she loves doing home improvement projects and bought herself her first little red tool box at 16 years old. She has since upgraded to the tall professional kind that would make any man jealous. Plumbing and electrical jobs don't scare her one bit.

Colleen's motto: "If you don't have something nice to say, then lie to me."

Box Tops for Education

I would like to congratulate the winners of the 1st 9 weeks Box Tops contest:

- 1st place Ms. O'Hara
- 2nd place Ms. Figueiras
- 3rd place Ms. Albert

Honorable mention to all of the teachers who participated: Angiillo, Charles, Gordon, Laughlin, Hopta, Schaefer, Iturmendi, and Medina.

Parents and students, please continue to collect and cut your BoxTops and send them in to your teachers.

Thanks to all of you, the PMS PTSA should receive a check for over \$1500.00 in December. The next contest will run until January 20, 2010.

Cori Strosnider

PMS PTSA Box Tops Coordinator



Close Up Trip to Washington, D.C.

Our yearly trip to Washington, D.C., Jamestown, and Williamsburg is open to 7th and 8th grade students only. Any student interested in attending, please pick up an application with Ms. Iturmendi in room 714. The trip will take place during the week of April 11, 2010 – April 15, 2010. Students will participate in a week long curriculum based program approved by Miami Dade County Public Schools. Students will have the opportunity to participate along with other students from across the country and attend workshops while exploring DC's famous monuments & memorials. The Close-Up Foundation provides a rigorous curriculum allowing students to see their history books come alive.



The deadline to submit the application is November 30, 2009. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Iturmendi via email citurmendi@dadeschools.net or visit www.closeup.org.

The Close Up Foundation is a nonprofit organization; therefore any donations made towards a student's program is tax-deductible. If you are willing to make a donation on behalf of an underprivileged child please contact Ms. Iturmendi.

*Cindy Iturmendi
Palmetto Middle School
Social Studies Dept.
(305)238-3911 Ext. 2332*

FACTS.org helps students plan

FACTS.org is Florida's Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students. Sponsored by the Department of Education and the Florida Center for Advising & Academic Support, this free online advising website helps students plan and track their education progress from middle school through college. All 8th grade students will open accounts this year!

There is great information for middle school students and high school students. Don't wait until senior year to discover graduation requirements, become overwhelmed with college admissions, or learn the first steps on a career path!

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Ivette Toledo at itolego@dadeschools.net and make sure to check it out at www.facts.org.

Preventing Cyberbullying -Top Ten Tips for Parents

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D., Cyberbullying Research Center

1. Establish that all rules for interacting with people in real life also apply for interacting online or through cell phones. Convey that cyberbullying inflicts harm and causes pain in the real world as well as in cyberspace.

2. Make sure your school has Internet Safety educational programming in place. This should not solely cover the threat of sexual predators, but also how to prevent and respond to online peer harassment, interact wisely through social networking sites, and engage in responsible and ethical online communications.

3. Educate your children about appropriate Internet-based behaviors. Explain to them the problems that can be created when technology is misused (e.g., damaging their reputation, getting in trouble at school or with the police).

4. Model appropriate technology usage. Don't harass or joke about others while online, especially around your children. Don't text while driving. Your kids are watching and learning.

5. Monitor your child's activities while they are online. This can be done informally (through active participation in, and supervision of, your child's online experience) and formally (through software). Use discretion when covertly spying on your kids. This could cause more harm than good if your child feels their privacy has been violated. They may go completely underground with their online behaviors and deliberately work to hide their actions from you.

6. Use filtering and blocking software as a part of a *comprehensive* approach to online safety, but understand software programs *alone* will not keep kids safe or prevent them from bullying others or accessing inappropriate

content. Most tech-savvy youth can figure out ways around filters very quickly.

7. Look for warning signs that something abnormal is going on with respect to their technology usage. If your child becomes withdrawn or their Internet use becomes obsessive, they could either be a victim or a perpetrator of cyberbullying.

8. Utilize an "Internet Use Contract" and a "Cell Phone Use Contract" to foster a crystal-clear understanding about what is appropriate and what is not with respect to the use of communications technology. To remind the child of this pledged commitment, we recommend that these contracts be posted in a highly visible place (e.g., next to the computer).

9. Cultivate and maintain an open, candid line of communication with your children, so that they are ready

(Continued on P. 2)