



CATONSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

(November) 2008

From the Principal

Dear Catonsville Middle School Families,

As always, there are many exciting activities happening at Catonsville Middle School. If you have been to the fields behind the school, then you have surely noticed that the construction crew has broken ground for our new 9-classroom addition. The addition will be located behind the library and between the science hallway and the eighth grade hallway. When it is finished, it will become our seventh grade hallway and will contain eight regular classrooms, one science lab, additional storage, and full-sized girls' and boys' lavatories. The estimated projected completion date is December 2009. Fortunately, the construction site is self-contained and will not disrupt any of our classes this year.

Since the last newsletter, six CMS staff members attended the National Middle School Association (NMSA) Conference in Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Kraus, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Stevenson, Mrs. Willis, and I attended the conference to learn about current trends in middle school

education. However, one of the primary reasons we attended the conference was to hear the keynote address, which was delivered by Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*. Since our school's vision statement—"Where Good Leaders Become Great Leaders"—was inspired by the work of Collins, we were especially interested in hearing his presentation about how to apply the principles of *Good to Great* in an educational setting. During the November 3 professional development day, all six NMSA participants shared what they learned with the rest of the CMS staff in differentiated staff development sessions. Many of the strategies that were shared on November 3 are teaching techniques that teachers can implement right away.

The Vocabulary Smackdown is also in full swing at CMS. In December, we will extend our vocabulary initiative to include physical competitions that incorporate the use of the vocabulary words that our students have been learning. Weekly team competitions in physical education classes will culminate in a school-wide Vocabolympics competition right before the MSA in March 2009. Our initiative is quickly gaining rec-

ognition around the county, and on December 10, the English department chairs from every secondary school in Baltimore County will visit CMS to learn more about how we are making vocabulary instruction more engaging for students.

We have also begun year two of our successful Skill-of-the-Week Action Plan (SWAP). SWAP activities were designed by CMS teachers to help students improve their reading and math skills. For sixteen weeks leading up to the MSA, students will complete SWAP activities (usually as a drill at the beginning of class). The math and reading skills will change each week, so we can address the sixteen skills in reading and the sixteen skills in math that give our students the most difficulty on the MSA. We believe the skill-of-the-week activities were a driving force behind our students' success on the MSA last year.

Since we will only send one newsletter per quarter this year, we want to make sure you are aware of the following upcoming events on the next page:

STAFF

Michael Thorne
Principal

Tina Morroni
Assistant Principal

Michelle Feeney
Assistant Principal

Norma Cunniff
Administrative Secretary

Kim Palacios
Front Desk Secretary

Sue Mike
Counseling Secretary

Christine Fultz
Counseling Chairperson

Deborah Margulies
School Counselor

Kristi Lowman
School Nurse
410-887-1087

Office: 410-887-0803
Fax: 410-887-1036
Guidance: 410-887-0807
Parent Conferences:
410-887-0864

The next PTSA Board Meeting is Wednesday, (January 14) at 7PM

in the library.

All are welcome!

Throughout this coming holiday season, I hope that you and your family will have time to relax and to reflect on all of the blessings that we have as members of this vibrant and close-knit community. The next newsletter will be published in early 2009. As we look ahead to the New Year, I wish you happiness, health, and prosperity. Fortunately, we still have many more fun times ahead of us in the 2008-2009 school year at Catonsville Middle School--where good leaders become great leaders!

Sincerely,
Michael Thorne
Principal

November

- 17-21 American Education Week
- 17 Report Cards Distributed
- 18 American Education Visitation – 6th grade
- 19 American Education Visitation—7th grade
- 20 American Education Visitation—8th grade
Market Day Pickup in CMS Café from 7:00-8:00pm
- 21 American Education Visitation—Grandparents Day
- 24 8th Grade Trip to Mt. Vernon (half of the 8th grade)
- 25 8th Grade Trip to Mt. Vernon (the other half of the 8th grade)
Turkey Trot Mile Run
- 27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday—Schools and Offices Closed

December

- 5 Straight-A Breakfast at 7:30 am in the CMS Café (by invitation)
Second Term Interims Distributed (today)
Willy Wonka, Jr.—CMS Musical at 7:00pm
- 6 *Willy Wonka, Jr.*—CMS Musical at 7:00pm
- 7 *Willy Wonka, Jr.*—CMS Musical at 3:00pm
- 10 Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-5:00pm
Band Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th—7:00pm in the Gym
Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 12 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 15 Chorus Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th—7:00pm in the Gym
BoxTops Contest ends.
- 17 Orchestra Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th—7:00pm in the Gym
- 18 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7:00-8:00pm
- 23 Winter Break Begins at the end of the school day. Happy Holidays!

January

- 5 School reopens
- 8 Gifted & Talented Night at CHS in Library at 7:00pm
- 13 School Improvement Team Mtg(SIT) 3:00pm in the Faculty Room
- 14 PTSA Meeting 7:00pm in CMS Library
- 19 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday Observed—Schools and Offices Closed
- 21 Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 23 Second Marking Period Ends
Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 26 Assessment Day for all Schools– Schools Closed
- 29 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7:00-8:00pm

February

- 9 Report cards distributed
- 10 Area Vocal Concert (CHS, CMS & Arbutus Middle Festival Chorus)
7:30pm at Catonsville High School
- 11 PTSA Meeting at 7:00pm in the CMS Library
- 12 Area Instrumental Concert (CHS, CMS & Arbutus Middle Festival Chorus) 7:30pm at Catonsville High School
- 13 CMS Newsletter information deadline.
- 16 President's Day– Schools Closed
- 18 Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 20 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 26 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7:00-8:00pm
Donuts for Dads at 7:00am in the CMS Gym
Lifetouch Photos will be available for dad and student pictures
- 27 Interims issued this week

PTSA President

Hello everyone. I hope you were able to attend back to school night in September and visit the tables there representing the PTSA and all it has to offer. You would have found information about our membership drive run by Nancy Nicaise. For only \$6 you can still become a member of our PTSA and support the school with your membership fee. Information about our monthly Market Day sales, run by Terisa Carpenter and Patty Riley, was available and they provided samples of their Chocolate Chip Pudding Cake — yum! Did you know CMS is the top selling Market Day program in our area? Please consider supporting this fundraiser and buying some food from Market Day. Julie Perry, Kathy Sadler and Laurie Burinsky were there displaying the products available from our Yankee Candle Sale, which was a huge success. Our PTSA earned over \$6,000 from this sale—THANK YOU all.

By the time you read this newsletter American Education Week will have been celebrated in late November and I want to thank our hospitality committee of Megan Lembach, Kate Delker and Tracey Stuart-Paul for all their hard work. This committee also ran our ice cream social in August and is currently planning the Donuts for Dads event on Thursday, February 26th at 7:00am in the school's gym—mark your calendar now!

December will be a busy month at CMS starting with the annual school musical "Willy Wonka, Jr." with performances on December 5th, 6th and 7th. The music department programs will soon follow with the band, choir and orchestra

concerts. Look for Marian Kennedy and other PTSA parents selling candy at the concerts to benefit the PTSA. Our next organizational workshop, managed by PTSA parent Anne Waters, is scheduled for December 18th. Look for information coming home soon. December is also holiday shopping time and I hope you'll think of "**The Catonsville Blanket**" as a holiday gift. It's a very popular item with students and parents who live in our community. Order forms are available on the school's website.

After winter break we return in January to a quiet month for the PTSA. Our meeting date in January is 1/14/09 and in February we meet on 2/11/09.

I thank JoAnne Birkmeyer and her volunteers for organizing and producing this quarterly newsletter for the PTSA. It's an outstanding resource for school and PTSA information. Between newsletters, the PTSA also offers the eSchoolnewsletter system. If you haven't already signed up to receive our emails, it's not too late. Just go to www.eschoolnewsletter.com and register anytime. Liz Atwood who manages our email entries keeps us up-to-date with periodic messages. There are many ways you too can help the PTSA. Contact our volunteer coordinator, Cathy Jeremenko at jstation@yahoo.com if you'd like to get involved.

The PTSA is also helping the school's Literary Committee (aka Vocabulary Smackdown), headed by English teacher Cecily Anderson. We support this successful vocabulary initiative with monetary support as well as offering help during the school day. PTSA vol-

unteer Andrea Hohn is looking for parents who want to get involved with this program. Please call her at 410-788-1085 if you can help.

Don't forget to keep clipping those Boxtops and helping your student's homeroom win a snack attack party. Michaela Demarest is doing a great job increasing awareness of our boxtops participation—thanks Michaela. Finally, I encourage all you to visit the school's website, managed by our dedicated volunteer Megan Lembach, at www.catonsvillems.bcps.org to find all the latest information about what's happening at CMS.

Have a wonderful holiday season and thanks for supporting the PTSA.

Dianne Eff
PTSA President

Library News

Do you love to read?
Do you want to join in an online "discussion" about the books you read and would like to recommend?
Join in the online book club!
<http://cougarslibrary.pbwiki.com/>
Or find the link from Mrs. Smith's teacher page.
You can link to it from the CMS page...
Start at www.bcps.org and click on schools.
Find CMS and then click on the link for the teacher pages.
You will need an invitation to join, so email Mrs. Smith at: asmith3@bcps.org

**Great Leadership is Serious
Business for
CMS Eighth Grade Students**

Catonsville Middle School's vision statement is "CMS—where good leaders become great leaders." Although that sounds commendable, a vision statement is nothing without action. Mrs. Anderson decided that it was time for us to show her students how to take the action they needed to help move them closer to realizing their own personal vision of leadership. In September, Mrs. Anderson's eighth grade English students wrote personal leadership vision statements for the 2008-2009 school year. These are currently on display in the main lobby. Throughout the school year, the students will monitor their own progress as they strive to make their goals a reality. Mrs. Anderson also assigned her students a writing prompt that connects their leadership goals, and the school's vision. The students wrote essays about their personal leadership goals, and the administration selected two essays to include in the November PTSA newsletter. The following essay by Asad Khan is an outstanding example of how great leaders set goals, overcome obstacles that impede their progress towards those goals, and persevere until they are successful. The other essay is written by Meg Cavanagh who has also done an outstanding job of displaying her feelings in her moving and inspiring words to become a stronger individual ready to take charge of her life one day at a time. Thank you Asad and Meg for sharing your beautifully written essays with the Catonsville Middle School community.

Reward Programs

Help our school earn money for programs & technology equipment. Listed below are the ways you can help:

1. Go to www.escrip.com to register your **Safeway** bonus cards, and your credit and debit cards.
2. Go to www.giantfood.com/aplus to register your **Giant** bonus cards.
3. Clip **Box Tops** and drop them off at school, or shop at the **Box Tops'** site to earn money for our school. To learn more about Box Tops for Education, go to btfe.com

If you have any questions, please contact Michaela Sidu Demarest at mitchdemarest@comcast.net or call 410-788-9776