



# CATONSVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

(February) 2009

### From the Principal

Dear Catonsville Middle School Families,

It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through the school year. This year, the PTSA has helped Catonsville Middle School to become a "greener" school by publishing just one paper newsletter per quarter. Since the newsletters have been mailed less frequently this year, we have been taking advantage of a free service called eSchoolNewsletter to communicate with our CMS families. If you do not have a free eSchool-Newsletter account, then you have missed several informative email communications from the school. Please visit [www.eschoolnewsletter.com](http://www.eschoolnewsletter.com) today to set up your free account.

One of our most recent eSchool-Newsletter communications was an invitation to participate in our 2008-2009 Catonsville Middle School Satisfaction Survey. The survey is available until 3:00 PM on Friday, February 27 and can be accessed by visiting the school's web site, <http://catonsvillems.bcps.org>. Once you go to our web site, look for the survey

button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. When you click the button, you will automatically be redirected to SurveyMonkey.com. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete, and it is a great way to let us know your level of satisfaction with our school. The information collected from this survey will be used by our School Improvement Team as we plan for the 2009-2010 school year. Once you complete the survey, please follow the on-screen directions to print the last page (one copy for each child you have enrolled at CMS). Your child can redeem this printed page in homeroom to receive one "no homework" pass. If you are unable to access the online survey, please contact the main office at Catonsville Middle School, and we can mail you a paper copy of the survey.

At the end of the month, on Thursday, February 26, 2009, we will hold our annual Donuts for Dads event. Students and their male guardians are invited to participate in a coffee/juice/donut breakfast in our school gymnasium. The event, which begins at 7:00 AM, is an opportunity for students to have conversation with the male role models in their lives. Musi-

cal entertainment from our school's music department will also be provided, and a professional photographer will be on site to take portraits of the children with their role models.

As a service to the community, seven area elementary schools and Catonsville Middle School have invited Dr. P.M. Forni, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and author of *Choosing Civility*, to speak on the topic of civility. Unfortunately, our January presentation had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather. I am happy to report that we have rescheduled Dr. Forni's presentation for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 3, 2009. The presentation will be held in the gymnasium at Catonsville Middle School. Please arrive early as parking can be a challenge. (If parking is not available in the main lot by the time you arrive, please park along Edmondson Avenue. Do not park in the fire lanes.) The co-sponsoring schools include Catonsville Elementary, Halethorpe Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Relay Elementary, Westchester Elementary, Westowne Elementary, and Woodbridge Elementary. I would like to thank the Catonsville Middle School PTSA for making it possible for Catonsville

#### 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, (March 11) at 7PM**

**in the library.**

**All are welcome!**

Middle School to co-sponsor this community presentation.

For the past five months, our students have been learning vocabulary words in our Vocab. Smackdown program. Since December, they have been competing in physical challenges in physical education classes and defining the same words for tickets. As a prelude to the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), our students will participate in the Vocabolympics. In each grade level, the four homerooms that earned the most tickets during their weekly vocabulary challenges in physical education class will compete in our Vocabolympics playoffs on Friday, February 27, 2009. Those students not participating in the competition will be invited to watch the competition. Then, on March 6, 2009, the winning team from each grade level will compete in the Vocabolympics finals. Each team will receive medals, and the winning team will receive a trophy to display in homeroom for the rest of the year. This will be a fun way for all students to review their vocabulary words before the MSA.

Following the Vocabolympics, our students will take the MSA. These are state assessments that are administered in reading and math in grades 6, 7, and 8 and also in science in grade 8. The MSA testing window for reading and math is from March 16 thru March 27, 2009, and the window for grade 8 science testing is from April 28 thru April 29, 2009. The test for each content area (reading, math, and/or science) is administered over a two-day period, for a total of four testing sessions for grades 6 and 7 and six testing sessions for grade 8. The MSA is extremely important. The scores are used for making student placement decisions for the next school year, and in fact, our school's success is measured by our students' achievement on the MSA. Therefore, it is very important that our students do their best on the test. Please make every effort to ensure that your child is in school every day during

the testing window. Furthermore, research has shown that students who get a good night's sleep and eat breakfast before a test outperform students who do not. All public schools in Maryland are required to enforce test security protocol, and one of the rules is that cell phones are not permitted in any testing area. We will give students daily reminders to put cell phones in their lockers prior to going to testing sessions. Please help us to reinforce the importance of adhering to the state's test security regulations. Although students may still bring their phones to school to communicate with parents before and after school hours, cell phones will be prohibited in all testing rooms during the MSA testing window. I want to make sure everyone is aware that since the state of Maryland imposes very strict penalties upon schools where test security issues arise, the consequence for a student who brings a cell phone into a testing area will be a one-day suspension from school. We do not want to risk having our students' test scores invalidated by the state, to this rule will be strictly enforced.

Once we complete the MSA and just in time for your early spring gardening, it will be time for another Catonsville Middle School tradition, the annual PTSA Mulch Sale. Order forms will soon be available on our web site and in the main office. Local orders can even be delivered. We hope you will purchase mulch from our PTSA. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and proceeds are used by the PTSA to support student programs at CMS. The delivery/pick-up date for the 2009 Mulch Sale is Saturday, March 28, 2009.

Following spring break, our sixth grade class will embark on their journey to NorthBay where they will learn about the Chesapeake Bay, the environment, and conservation in an interactive outdoor adventure camp for five days and four nights. The trip is scheduled for the week of April 20-24, 2009. The

cost of the trip, including 3 meals per day, cabin accommodations, and round-trip transportation is only \$50 for the entire week—just \$10 per day. Sixth graders will receive more information about the trip in the next few weeks.

Before you know it, June will be here. As always, we will have a grade 8 farewell assembly to celebrate the success of our eighth graders before they begin high school. The eighth grade teachers have already begun working with a PTSA subcommittee to plan this event. The farewell assembly is tentatively scheduled for June 12, 2009. This date is subject to change, however, since the school calendar may be shortened if we do not use all of our snow days. Please understand that this is an awards assembly, not a graduation. Due to renovations at the high school, the planning committee and the administration have decided that the assembly will be held at Catonsville Middle School this year. The advantage of having the assembly at school is that we can hold it during the school day, so every student will be able to attend. Another advantage is that our gymnasium is air-conditioned, which should make the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved. More information will be distributed to eighth grade students as the farewell assembly committee finalizes its plans for the event, some time after spring break.

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 calendar on next page.

I sincerely hope that your child is having a rewarding educational experience this year. Our goal is to provide the best possible educational program for our students in an environment that is rich in opportunities for them to learn inside and outside the classroom. As you can see, there are many exciting events happening here at Catonsville Middle School—where good leaders become great leaders.

*Sincerely,*

*Michael Thorne  
Principal*

**February**

- 18 Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 19 8th Grade Basketball—Catonsville @ Ridgely Middle
- 20 Straight-A Breakfast 7:30 am in the Gymnasium, Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon  
MESA Trip to Convention Center 8:10am—2:30 pm
- 24 Bowl-A-Thon—6th Grade
- 25 Bowl-A-Thon— 7th & 8th Grade
- 26 Market Day Pickup in the CMS Café from 7-8pm, Donuts for Dad at 7:00 am in CMS Gym  
Lifetouch Photos will be available for dad and student pictures, Last day for School Climate Survey
- 27 Interims issued this week

**March**

- 2 Orchestra Music Assessment at Dumbarton Middle
- 3 Dr. P. M. Forni's Choosing Civility Presentation at 7pm in the gymnasium
- 4 Parent Conferences 3:00-5:00 pm
- 10 School Improvement Team Meeting (SIT) 3:00 pm in Faculty Room
- 11 Band Music Assessment at Dumbarton Middle
- 12 Chorus Music Assessment at Dumbarton Middle
- 16 MSA Math—Grade 6
- 17 MSA Math—Grade 6
- 18 Market Day Paper Orders Due, MSA Math—Grade 7, MSA Reading—Grade 8
- 19 MSA Math—Grade 7, MSA Reading—Grade 8
- 20 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon, MSA Reading—Grade 6
- 23 MSA Reading—Grade 6
- 24 MSA Reading—Grade 7, MSA Math—Grade 8
- 25 MSA Reading—Grade 7, MSA Math—Grade 8
- 26 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7-8 pm
- 28 Mulch Sale Delivery

**April**

- 3 Third Marking Period Ends—School ends 3 hours early—spring break begins at the end of the day
- 14 School Resumes (Tuesday)
- 15 PTSA meeting 7:00 pm
- 20-24 6th Grade Trip to North Bay
- 24 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 27 Report Cards Distributed
- 28 Science MSA—Grade 8
- 29 Science MSA— Grade 8
- 30 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7-8 pm  
Side-by-Side Concert (5th Grade and 6th Grade) 7:00 pm at CMS in Gym

**May**

- 8 8th Grade Panoramic Picture 8:30-9:00am
- 12 School Improvement Team Meeting 3:00 pm in Faculty Room
- 13 5th Grade Visitation 7:00-9:00 pm in CMS Gym
- 14 Inclusion Play Day
- 15 4th Quarter Interims
- 18 HSA Testing/Mod-HSATesting —Algebra
- 19 Chorus Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th 7:00pm
- TBD PTSA General Assembly Meeting & Elections 7:00pm
- 20 Orchestra Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th 7:00pm, Market Day Paper Orders Due, Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-5:00pm
- 21 Band Concert, Grades 6th, 7th & 8th 7:00pm
- 22 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 25 Memorial Day Holiday—Schools Closed
- 26 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 27 National Junior Honor Society Induction 7:00 pm in Gym
- 28 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7-8pm
- 30 Festival Band, Orchestra and Chorus competition and Hersey Trip

**June**

- 3 Coffee House at 7:00pm
- 5 8th Grade Dance
- 9 8th Grade Field Day
- 10 7th Grade Field Day
- 11 6th Grade Field Day
- 12 8th Grade Awards Assembly
- 16 School Closes 3 hours early! @ 11:45am
- 17 School Closes 3 hours early! @ 11:45am  
Market Day Paper Orders Due
- 18 Last Day of School—School Closes 3 hours early! @ 11:45 am  
Report Cards Distributed
- 19 Market Day Internet Orders Due by Noon
- 25 Market Day Pick Up in the CMS Café from 7-8pm

## PTSA President

Hello everyone. Since our last newsletter winter has descended on Catonsville and temperatures have been frigid. We celebrated several holidays and welcomed 2009. We also witnessed the inauguration of our first African-American president and enjoyed one of the best Super Bowls in recent memory.

Now, get ready for a busy spring at CMS. The CMS Mulch Sale will be held on Saturday, March 28th. Your purchases of mulch help fund a large part of our annual budget. You can't get a better deal on mulch anywhere in the area, so stock up! Also, please consider helping on mulch day at what has become an annual Catonsville Event! Help is needed in many ways—you can work at the school to coordinate distribution, or you can help make deliveries in the 21228 area. Any amount of time you can give is greatly needed and appreciated.

Our monthly Market Day sales continue to be very successful. Did you know CMS was THE top selling organization in our Market Day region last year? We're on our way to topping that again this year. Thanks for supporting this program and if you haven't tried any of the food they offer, it's never too late. Give it a try TODAY!

On April 3rd spring break starts and we return to school on April 14th. Just in time for our 6th graders to go to North Bay the week of April 20th.

Like I said, it's going to be a busy spring at CMS.

Did you know regular reminders about school events are sent home via email? If you haven't already signed-up for eSchoolnewsletter, you still have time. Go to [www.eschoolnewsletter.com](http://www.eschoolnewsletter.com) to register or update your current profile to include Catonsville Middle as one of your schools.

Finally, believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about the 2009-2010 school year. Help is going to be needed on many PTSA committees. Please consider helping any way you can. A list of volunteer opportunities will be posted on our website. Please check it out. And visit our website often (<http://catonsvillems.bcps.org>) to stay up-to-date with things happening at CMS. Have a great day!

*Dianne Eff*  
PTSA President

### YEARBOOK ORDERS

- Yearbook orders will be taken from February 23 through March 13
- Fliers/Oder Forms will be distributed in homeroom
- Don't miss out on 88 full-color pages. That's 16 more pages than last year!
- The cost of the yearbook is \$30 if the book is pre-ordered. Please make checks payable to "Catonsville Middle School"
- A very limited supply may be available in June for \$35.
- If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Smith in the library.

### MULCH SALE HELP NEEDED

Our annual mulch sale is March 28 and we need many volunteers to make it happen.

How can you help?? - spread the word and give your family, friends and neighbors and order form. We need parents with trucks to make deliveries and volunteers that can lift 45lb. Bags of mulch. We need help with loading the trucks and with deliveries. If you can help contact Julie Perry at [julieperry1372@hotmail.com](mailto:julieperry1372@hotmail.com) Any questions?? Contact Beth Reymann at [reymann1904@verizon.net](mailto:reymann1904@verizon.net)

### DONUTS for DAD

Donuts for Dad will be on February 26 at 7:00 am in the gym

## BOX TOPS

Just a quick update on the recent Box Tops competition, which ran from October 15th through December 15th. The contest was a huge success, and in just two short months \$650—was raised just by the collection of those ten cent Box Tops. Overall, when I submit the Box Tops in February, we will be getting back over \$700, compared to \$191 last year.

- Mr. Roy's homeroom won 1st place with 1434 Box Tops
- Ms. Zacharski's homeroom won 2nd place w/716 Box Tops
- Ms. Krupka's homeroom won 3rd place w/578 Box Tops

As the 1st place winners, Mr. Roy's homeroom was treated to a "snack attack" party. Each 1st place student won a deluxe goody bag, holiday snacks and sodas, and a "no homework:" pass. The goody bags were a huge hit with the kids, because I went a bit overboard...so the expense for these bags will be my donation to the PTA.

I would like to do another contest in the spring, with a reward of an ice cream social for the winning homeroom. Mrs. Smith (librarian) is helping me with this.

Michaela Sidhu Demarest

### Volunteer Opportunity

THE AAWCC, sponsors of the Women's Expo at the Community College of Baltimore County Catonsville, is offering volunteer opportunities for this year's event. The Expo held March 7&8 is looking for middle schoolers and their parents to assist with Friday night vendor set up as well as other duties during the Expo Saturday and Sunday. All minors must be accompanied by an adult. Service Learning Hours can be earned. If your interested please send an e-mail to Ellen Robinson at [erobinson2@ccbcmd.edu](mailto:erobinson2@ccbcmd.edu)