



Shepherd Elementary School

The Mustang

Home of the Shepherd Mustangs

January 15, 2010

Mark Your Calendars!

Friday, Jan. 15: NO SCHOOL

Monday, Jan. 18: MLK's Birthday! NO SCHOOL

Wednesday, Jan. 20: PTA meeting

Thursday, Jan. 21: LSRT meets, 3:55 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. at the school

Friday, Jan. 22: 12:15 p.m. dismissal for students

Tuesday, Jan. 26: Middle School Night

Thursday, Jan. 28: Pastries with the Principal, 2 p.m. in the school library

From the PTA President

Dear Parents:

If you have a chance please notice the "Giving Tree" outside the Parent Resource Room that highlights all of the families contributing to the "180 Fund." Special thanks to Donna Johnson Harvey for putting this together.

This is a gentle reminder that we need your "180 Fund contribution." If you have agreed to pay semi-annually or monthly, it is critical that we receive your payment by Jan. 20. We want to continue to make technology improvements at the school. Please bring your payment to the PTA meeting or put it in the PTA mailbox. We will be making follow-up phone calls the week of Jan. 25.

I look forward to seeing everyone at next week's PTA meeting Wednesday, Jan. 20.

Have a great holiday weekend!

Charisse Brassard, PTA President

A Word from Mrs. Miles!

Greetings & Happy New Year!

Testing

This week, students in grades 1 through 5 took their benchmark assessments. We are excited because this interim assessment will let us know how we are progressing, show us what we are doing well and identify where improvement is needed.

Middle School

Though it is January and we have five more months of school, it is imperative that our fifth-grade parents and students begin making plans now for middle school. I know many of you have made your choice; however, I encourage you to explore all your choices before making a final decision. DCPS offers students a choice among 14 middle schools, which offer an array of academic and extracurricular activities. If interested, copies of the middle school guide are available in the main office. You may come by and pick up a guide or ask your students to pick one up for you.

Snacks with the Principal

The third parent-principal chat will take place at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 28, in the school library. Light refreshments will be provided. During our chat, we will review the stakeholders survey and discuss ways Shepherd can improve. If you are unable to attend but would like your voice heard, please visit the DCPS home page, www.dcps.dc.gov/portal/site/DCPS/. Then enter "stakeholder survey results" in the search box located at the top of the page. Click on the second link and it will take you to the results for all schools. Click on Shepherd to view the results for our school. You may send your feedback to Principal Miles at jamie.miles@dc.gov.

Curriculum Night

If you attended Curriculum Night in November, please note that a survey has been created and we are asking for your participation. Take a few moments to visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/TM7BYZT and complete the survey. If you did not attend but would like to see similar events in the near future, please visit the survey and answer questions 7-10.

Enjoy you nice long weekend!

Mrs. Jamie Miles, Shepherd Principal

LSRT Meeting Date Changes

All Are Invited To Attend:

The next LSRT meeting has been changed to Thursday, Jan. 21. This is an open meeting and all in the Shepherd Elementary community are invited to attend. The meeting starts promptly at 3:55 p.m. and will end at 5:25 p.m.

More Good News From the Northwest Current
We've been tracking the media's use of the Paul Robeson in D.C. music textbooks story since last fall. The Jan. 6 issue of the Northwest Current (which broke the story thanks to our student reporter, Emahni Grant) editorialized quite positively on the developments in an essay titled "Rolling along." It is reprinted below:

"After years of supplementing the information in school-issued music textbooks, Shepherd Elementary music teacher Ken Giles has convinced officials to add Paul Robeson's story to the tomes. The late actor, singer and civil rights activist influenced Mr. Giles from an early age. Giles loved the performer's rendition of "Old Man River" from "Show Boat" and admired his history as a barrier-breaking African-American who advocated for peace and equality.

When Mr. Giles first began teaching, he thought his students also would be inspired by the bass singer's story, but found nothing on the subject in the school's Silver Burdett music textbooks. Though he created a lesson plan to tell Mr. Robeson's story, he was troubled that the information wouldn't extend beyond his Shepherd Park school.

With the help of his students, Mr. Giles launched a two-year campaign to have the textbooks amended. The effort culminated in November, when the children serenaded a supervisor visiting their school with Mr. Robeson's version of "Old Man River." The official responded with great news: D.C. Public Schools will make Mr. Robeson's inclusion a condition in the selection of the next music textbook.

We applaud the efforts of Mr. Giles and his students. It's quite a feat to effect change in a large school system – and a valuable lesson for elementary school children. We think Paul Robeson would have approved."



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Literacy Corner

Happy New Year! Our focus for the month is Fluency. Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. Fluency bridges word decoding and comprehension.

Fluency Interventions:

Experts say that children should have seven readings or exposures to a text for optimal comprehension. Here are some of the ways we brainstormed providing seven exposures:

Child read aloud

Buddy read

Whisper read

Read in a phonics phone

Read silently

Make the text into a cloze passage (leave out the dolch/sight words) and have the children use context clues to add them back in.

Scramble it up and put in order

Read to a lower grade.

Record your own reading into PowerPoint, MP3, MovieMaker (narration line), etc.

Listen to your recording! Listen to a friend's recording!

Radio read (over intercom into your classroom only)

Re-enact the reading with friends

Volunteer (fireman, grandmas) classroom readers

Reader's Theatre Videotape

Great Leaps-Similar to Read Naturally. Students read letters, word parts, words, phrases, sentences, then paragraphs.

Graph how fast students read with a "one-minute read." Graphing is motivating because it makes progress evident. The basic procedure is to have your student read for one minute, count the number of words read, and graph the result with a child-friendly graph, e.g., moving a basketball player closer to a slam dunk.

Aim for speed, not accuracy. Time each reading with a stopwatch—if available, use the countdown timer, with its quiet beeping signal, rather than saying "stop," which can be startling. It is important in one-minute reads to emphasize speed rather than accuracy. Over repeated readings, speed in WPM will increase and errors will decrease. If you emphasize accuracy, speed falls off.

Allow your child to read the passage below and graph the number of words read in one minute!

From Fire! In Yellowstone by Robert Ekey (Third grade passage) Most of the fires that start go out by themselves. Those that burn usually burn only a few acres. But 1988 was a different year. The heat of the summer and lack of rain left the forest very dry. 41

The fires in and near Yellowstone grew bigger. A careless woodcutter started another fire. 54
By the end of July, fires were close to buildings, and tourists moved from their campsites. Rangers decided they should try to put out all fires. 70

Most states sent firefighters to Yellowstone to battle the blazes. More than 10,000 firefighters came from around the country to help out. These young men and women fought hard to control the fires. 106

But the fire had gone from bad to worse. Strong winds were blowing, causing the fire to jump from forest to forest, creating an uncontrollable blaze. 132

By the end of August, thousands of acres of forest had gone up in flames. This was the worst firestorm that the firefighters had ever seen in their entire lives. 162

Adapted from Fire! in Yellowstone by Robert Ekey. Copyright © 1990 by Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc. Reproduced by permission of Gareth Stevens, Inc.

Mustang Magnets

Last Week to Pay for Magnets, Laminates
Everyone received the fundraising magnets and laminates with children's pictures on them. Not everyone liked the pictures. Many people thought it was a good idea. This is the last week to either pay for the goods (\$20 for both, \$12 for one) or return them to Life Touch. Thanks to those who added to the school fund. Let's try to get everything taken care of by Thursday since Friday there is no school.

Happy New Year!

June E. Confer,

Shepherd business manager

Counseling Corner

Parenting Tips: Children and Grief

Happy New Year to all of our Shepherd students, parents and community. A number of our students have experienced the loss of a parent, grandparent, aunt, cousin and pet. It is very difficult for a parent to tell a child about a death in the family and, of course, the age of the child will make a difference.

A child's reaction to the news may vary from no emotion, to a lot of crying; a child may ask a lot of questions, or may say nothing (or say he does not want to talk about it). Some children may be fearful of discussing death - they may feel that if they talk about it the same thing may happen to them or a loved one. It is a good idea to allow children to express their feelings if possible.

Here are some tips to assist parents with addressing a death of a family member or loved one.

- Sit down with your child - or if there are more children in your family have a family meeting - to explain what has happened.

Explain that the person who died will no longer be in the child's life, but the memory of the deceased will always be in his heart.

- If the child is old enough to understand, tell them the reason for death (if it was caused by an accident or illness)
- Answer all questions (that you deem appropriate) that a child may ask.

Children are curious so they may ask all kinds of questions.

Children will get over the death of a loved one if their relationship with their parents is solid and they are assured and they feel protected and safe. Reassure your child frequently during this time how much you love him, and there is nothing to worry about. Depending on the age of the child, discuss how the death of their loved one will be celebrated (funeral, memorial, cremation).

Explain the funeral process and let your child know what to expect. Then decide if your child should attend.

Children and their families should also consider bereavement counseling to help them cope with continued feelings of sadness, not being able to eat or sleep, not wanting to go to school and

not wanting to play with friends, play a favorite game or watch a favorite TV show.

Resource:

William Wendt Grief & Loss Center
4201 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20008
Call: 202-624-0010 or visit www.wendtcenter.org.



Student's Eye View

Everyone at Shepherd Elementary School enjoyed the winter break. Some people went out of town during the holidays. "I had a lot of fun on Winter Break," said fourth-grader Ebonie Hilton.

But now, it is new year and time to come back to school.

In the new year, everyone is starting with new friendships and new goals. There are even some new students in school.

As the school year continues, students in Mrs. Thurber's fourth-grade class will be taught new lessons in all subjects. She said the class will be learning new things in Spanish and art as well as in life skills. As the school year goes on, lessons in math and reading are getting harder and harder, but students are happy to get better in their studies.

To submit news tips, comment or contact the Mustang reporter, send an e-mail to: Emahni5@gmail.com.

Compiled by

Emahni Grant,

Grade 4

Thank You Corner

'Hat's Off to Box Tops'

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the "Hooray for Snow Days" Box Tops collection effort. Look for the results and information about the next collection drive in the next couple issues of the Mustang.

Katherine Trimble,
Box Tops coordinator

Art Smarts

Happy New Year, everyone!

I hope you all enjoyed a fabulous winter break like I did. However, it was great to return to Shepherd last week to see all the bright faces that greeted me in the art room. Last week pre-K classes began their torn-paper collages of "Play on a Snowy Day." First-graders became sculptors who created actual bowls out of modeling clay.

Second-graders are creating trailer trucks out of recyclable egg cartons that advertise their favorite food or thing. Third-graders began a sophisticated discussion about the nature of art and inspiration as they learned about the life and work of African-American artist Romare Bearden. Fourth-graders began to learn about the German art of paper cutting, scherenschnitte, which will lead to creating their own intricate snowflake cuttings. In the coming weeks, fifth-graders will be learning about innovations in the visual arts that came with the Industrial Age, from realism to abstraction.

So we are doing a lot and will have much more important work to do in future weeks.

Reminder: To reach the art room Website, Ms. Michaud's Art Room, just type in this url: <http://teacherweb.com/DC/Shepherd/Art/>.

Then, click any of the buttons shown to get where you need to go. Announcements change every week or two and are usually the same as the Mustang Art Smarts. Homework for grades 3 through 5 is listed weekly, and the current assignment has a bolded due date at its end. (Yes there was homework over the holiday! See the Homework page on my Web site.

I will take late assignments up until the end of the advisory.) Primary and intermediate vocabulary lists are listed under FAQ's (frequently asked questions) since that's what was most asked on Parent Conference Day. However, current homework now requires sentences, not word lists, as in the past.

Remember, you gotta have art!

Ms. Joele Michaud,

Shepherd art teacher

Martin Luther King

Remembering the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Most, if not all of us, have memories of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as a civil rights leader who helped tear down the shameful walls of prejudice, bigotry and discrimination. Dozens of books have been written about his life and time, his words and his actions, as well as his legacy.

Congressman John Conyers, a Democrat from Detroit who hired Rosa Parks - the seamstress whose refusal to accept segregated city buses led to the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., that first thrust King into the national spotlight - to do constituent service work, had sponsored a bill to make King's Jan. 15 birthday a national holiday.

For years it was scoffed at, ignored and stalled. Then Stevie Wonder wrote a song, "Happy Birthday," in 1980 that extolled King's life and the idea of a national holiday for the slain apostle of racial harmony. From there, the idea took hold in the minds of citizens everywhere, and 6 million people signed a petition to make King's birthday a holiday. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday bill into law in 1983. The third Monday of January has been a federal holiday honoring King since 1986, but it was not until 2000 until all 50 states observed the holiday as well. There is no school next Monday in observance of the King birthday holiday.

How can we honor King's legacy today? Through the MLK Day of Service. On the day before his inauguration last year, Barack Obama took part in an MLK Day of Service project at Coolidge High School. You can locate MLK Day of Service projects through <http://serve.dc.gov>, which takes you to: <http://app.cnscs.dc.gov/mlkday/viewprojects.asp>.

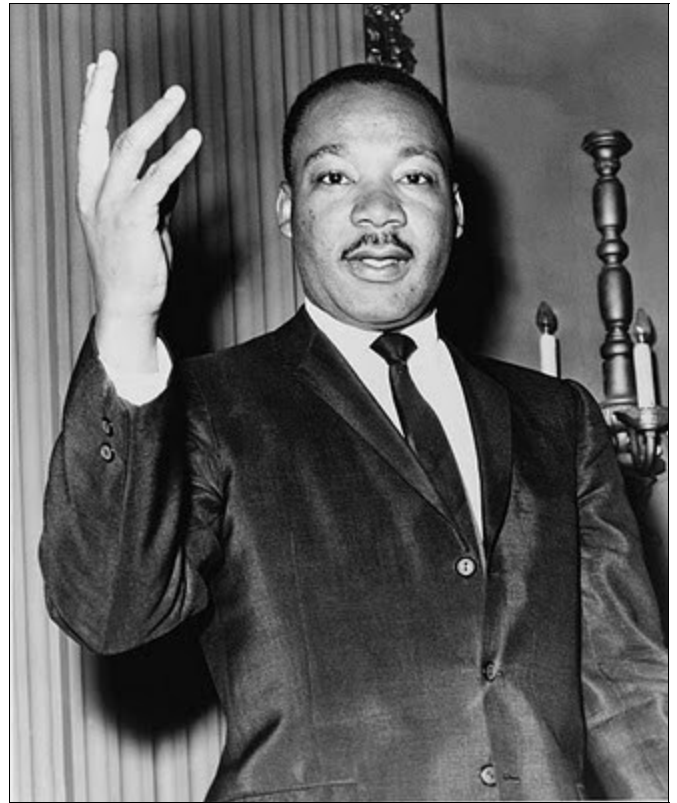
The two projects closest to Shepherd Elementary that are currently listed as the Mustang went to press are at the Rock Creek Nature Center and Roosevelt High School.

The D.C. government was still updating this Web site and adding projects, so please check back after you see this article. Also, if anyone knows of projects that are not listed on the Serve DC Web site, PLEASE help spread the word by registering the project on the Web site.

You can submit information for church/synagogue groups, schools, boy/girl scouts, senior centers, fraternities/sororities, offices, or individuals.

The Office of the Secretary of the District of Columbia partners with Serve DC and the Mayor's Office on Volunteering every year to serve as a clearinghouse of King Day service projects. We encourage all District residents to participate in projects, and let us know of any that are not already listed.

If you have difficulty accessing the Web site, please call 727-9417 or 727-6642.



Snider's Receipts

Deadline Extended

Snider's Super Foods has extended the date they will accept receipts from 2009 for a 1 percent cash-back to Shepherd Elementary. If you still have receipts from 2009 you can turn them in to the school office no later than Monday, Feb. 1. This will give Mrs. Confer, the school's business manager, enough time to compile them all, subtract the tax, etc. Of course, if you want to turn in any Snider's receipts from this year, go right ahead!

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The Mustang Round-Up

Join the PTA Listserv Today –

To subscribe, send an email (include your name, your child's name and his/her teacher/class) to:

Shepherd_Elementary_PTA-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Once signed up, you will be able to receive listserv updates directly to your email inbox. If you prefer to not receive emails for each listserv posting, simple select “no email” under the message delivery option in your listserv user setup.

Past Issues of The Mustang are Online –

Would you like to read *The Mustang* electronically? Need to refer back to a past issue? Each week, *The Mustang* is uploaded to the files area of the PTA listserv. Join the listserv and click to read.

The Mustang is also available on the Shepherd Elementary School website at www.shepherd-elementary.org.

Support Shepherd PTA's

*Title*

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