

Thoreau Matters

Thoreau Matters is published every two weeks by the PTA and the Thoreau administrative staff to inform parents of important information about school life at Thoreau Middle School.

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Thoreau Web Page: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS

PTA Web Page: www.ThoreauPTA.org

December 1st, 2011

If your student walks home, please remind him/her to USE THE CROSSWALK when leaving school. We have corrected several students who are leaving school premises at the end of the day and crossing Cedar in front of the school instead of using the designated crosswalks.

- 1. As the winter months approach, it may be necessary to close schools for the entire day, open schools late, or close schools early due to inclement weather or other emergency situations.**
 - Parents are urged to make arrangements now for the care of their children when schedule changes are made and to provide for the rare situation when it is necessary to close an individual school because of a power failure or other circumstances.
 - Decisions on schedule changes are made after careful study of the best information available from many sources including weather services, the highway department, the police, and FCPS transportation staff members who are out checking the roads. FCPS will make every effort to decide, before 5 a.m., whether to close or delay schools and will begin communicating the decision once it is made.
 - While no sources dealing with weather predictions can be infallible, decisions are made with one overriding consideration—the safety of all students—those who ride buses and those who walk to school each day.
 - FCPS has several schedules set up to deal with inclement weather; these are put into effect when conditions threaten the safety of children who are walking or riding school buses to schools. These schedules are: (1) Keep schools closed. (2) Open two hours late. (3) Close two hours early. In every case of a schedule change tune in to local radio and television stations (including FCPS' Channel 21), which are notified as soon as a decision is made. You may also check www.fcps.edu.
 - Do not phone the school or one of the stations for this information. To receive this information via e-mail, sign up for the FCPS Keep in Touch (KIT) e-mail notification system. (See article above on how to subscribe and how to update your Keep in Touch information.) For more information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/news/weather.htm>.
- 2. The following procedures are to be followed to help the front office handle attendance issues:**
 - Students arriving late to school must check in and receive a tardy pass (excused or unexcused) from the attendance secretary. The parent/guardian can excuse their student's tardiness by writing a note or by phone call.
 - If a student wishes to be dismissed during the school day for an appointment or other reason, he/she must bring a note from the parent/guardian stating that reason for and time of dismissal. This note must be presented to the attendance secretary in the morning before school begins for the day. The attendance secretary will issue a pass to the student to be presented to the teacher at the time of dismissal. A parent/guardian or other authorized adult must appear to sign the student out of the building.
 - To prearrange an absence, please provide the attendance secretary with a note explaining the absence. The student will be given a form to take to his/her teachers to record work that will be missed during the absence. Parents and students should also check Blackboard for additional assignments.
- 3. Outer Wear Drive (clean coats, jackets, scarves, hats and gloves) from November 28th-December 19th.**
 - Donate to teens in our area in need of outer wear. Collection boxes are in the foyer of the main office!
- 4. Food for Others is scheduled for Thursday, December 8th.**
 - This monthly trip is an excellent opportunity for students to volunteer and get involved in community service.
 - We still have a few spots open; see Mrs. Carter-Wharton in room 212 for information: jfcarter@fcps.edu.
 - All forms are due back by Friday, December 2nd.
 - Parents of volunteers will need to support the trip by transporting students to and from the warehouse (from 2:45-4:30). Without volunteers, we will greatly limit the number of students who can participate.

Principal's Part (Interim Principal Cox)

I wish to express a heartfelt thank you to staff, students, and parents who have welcomed me with warmth. My experience as interim principal has been fruitful and positive. Based on my observations, teachers, administrators, support staff and other employees in the school work diligently to provide excellent instructional opportunities for students. These include providing creative and exciting lesson activities, an energetic atmosphere to participate, and an environment complete with entertaining and fun events, i.e., Spirit Week.

Congratulations to those students who received recognition as students of the quarter. Parents and students appeared very uplifted and excited by the positive statements made by the teachers during the ceremony. Additionally, 310 students made the "All A Honor Roll" and 425 achieved the "A/B Honor Roll" for first quarter. These data represent a remarkable attitude and focus among students to strive for academic greatness. The positive outcomes also indicate the degree of excellent teaching and dedication to student learning by teachers. I encourage students to continue to achieve impressive results.

PTA NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✚ **Calling all bakers!** Our Hospitality committee is planning a holiday cookie exchange for the terrific Thoreau faculty. Please contact them at Hospitality@ThoreauPTA.org to donate some treats.
- ✚ **When making your holiday gift list, consider ordering a magazine!** Renew your favorites, subscribe to a new magazine or give gift subscriptions to friends, relatives and/or business associates. Save 40-89% off the regular cover prices and 40% of the sale is donated to our school. Shop at [QSP](#) and enter Thoreau's code 1187235.
- ✚ **The next Thoreau PTA meeting is scheduled Monday, December 5 at 9 am.** Check out www.thoreaupta.org to learn about our diverse programs and generous volunteers.
- ✚ **Gear Up to Give Back Shopping Information** Don't forget, we participate in a program from Pottery Barn Kids and Pottery Barn Teen! Our school will qualify for up to 4% back on annual net sales of our Gear merchandise including backpacks, lunch bags, and duffle bags. The holidays are a great time to shop for traveling gear or a new backpack for school! Below is our member ID and password, which **will be required every time an order is placed online or in a retail store to track our school's annual sales.**
Thoreau Member ID: 411080139232
Password: WS9140960
- ✚ **Marshall High School Class of 2013** is hosting a **Holiday Shopping and Community Expo** Saturday, December 10, 2011 from 10 am - 3 pm
\$2 tickets include over 30 upscale vendors, pictures with Santa, Games and Prizes
Support the GCM Boosters! Buy a tree, Get in Free!
More information at <http://holidayshoppingexpo.weebly.com/>

Inclusive Schools Week is December 5-9, 2011.

Inclusive Schools Week is an annual event to recognize and celebrate the progress that schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to an increasingly diverse student population, including students who are marginalized due to disability, gender, socio-economic status, cultural heritage, language preference and other factors. The Week also provides an important opportunity for educators, students and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children.

These free events, open to all FCPS families, are offered during the week:

- Tuesday, December 6, 2011, 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Let's Teen Talk - Avoiding Power Struggles

Join FCPS Behavior Intervention Teachers for this interactive, informal evening to learn how to avoid power struggles with your teen!

Location: The Parent Resource Center, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1, Room 105, Dunn Loring, VA

Details at <http://www.fcps.edu/cco/prc/resources/events/documents/TEENtalkflyer2.pdf>

- Thursday, December 8, 2011, 10:00am - 12:00pm

Screening of "Including Samuel"

Join us for a special presentation and discussion of this documentary film to celebrate Inclusive Schools Week.

Location: The Parent Resource Center, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1, Room 105, Dunn Loring, VA

Details at <http://www.fcps.edu/cco/prc/resources/events/documents/IncludingSamuelFlyer.pdf>

More great inclusion resources can be found at www.inclusiveschools.org and at

<http://www.fcps.edu/cco/prc/resources/packets/documents/InclusionResourcePacket2011.pdf>

Upcoming Events

December...

6: Band at Madison, 7pm

8: Orchestra at Madison, 7pm

12: Theater Trip

13: Chorus at NFCU

16: Chorus at Madison, 7pm; Mid-Quarter Progress Reports

23-Jan. 2: Winter Break

