



THE OLD MILL CREEK

www.oldmillschool.org
2007-2008 Issue No. 4

Published by the Old Mill Elementary School PTA – Mill Valley, California

December 12, 2007

Dear Old Mill Families,

Do you remember that merry-go-round that almost stopped your heart? How about the feeling when you were able to cross from one end of the overhead bars to the other? What about that long, scary slide with the high ladder that you were finally able to climb? It's time to



pass those memories on to our own children. Our **K-2 Playground Renovation has begun!** Our school district has notified us that we must replace and refurbish the upper playground this school year. Here's how you can help.

In our school district, play structures are gifts from the PTA to the school. A committee has researched play structure vendors and has chosen a vendor who has an excellent reputation, outstanding product line, and has been the supplier of other successful play structures in the area. The committee was successful in finding a high quality play structure and a 50% matching grant that allows us to purchase and install our structure for \$65,000.

Thanks to the generosity of our school community, we are already well on the way to meeting our goal; however, we will need to raise an additional \$20,000 in order to install our play structure in February. We are asking each family to make a tax-free contribution of **\$200 by December 21, 2007** to enable us to complete our playground renovation in February. This means that in the Spring, our children will be enjoying a new playground!

Donations of all amounts are needed and welcome. Please place your donations in the envelope posted outside of the office, and when you do, please stop to look at the renderings of our new play structure. Remember, donations made this year are tax deductible for 2007. A donation form with our tax ID number is attached to this form for your records.

Our new playground will provide our children with opportunities for climbing, spinning, balance, imaginative play, and social development. Please help us to create happy playground memories for our own children. Come out and PLAY! Thank you for your generous donation.

Leanne Hansen
381-3245

Jan Hudson
888-4001

Samantha Stuart
383-1186

Calendar

Wednesday, December 12

School Board Meeting
7:00 p.m. District Office

Tuesday, December 18

Old Mill 3rd & 4th Grade
Chorus Performance
2:20 p.m. Old Mill

Monday, December 24- Friday, January 4

Winter Recess—No School

Monday, January 7

School Resumes

Friday, January 11

PTA Exec. & General Meeting
8:45 a.m./9:00 a.m. Old Mill

Wednesday, January 16

School Board Meeting
7:00 p.m. District Office

Friday, January 18

PTA Lunch Orders Due for
January to June 2008

Monday, January 21

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day
No School

Wednesday, January 23

Teacher Appreciation Lunch
12:00 noon Old Mill

Parent Education--Math
Night—7:00 p.m. Old Mill

Friday, January 25

Last Day of PTA Lunches
for First Semester

Monday, January 28

Staff Development Day
No School

DROP DON'T STOP SCHEDULE

WEEK OF DECEMBER 10—ROOM 15
WEEK OF JANUARY 7—ROOM 12
WEEK OF JANUARY 22—ROOM 10
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4—ROOM 8

WEEK OF DECEMBER 17—DDS COMMITTEE
WEEK OF JANUARY 14—ROOM 11
WEEK OF JANUARY 29—ROOM 9
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11—ROOM 7



PTA EXPRESS

By Jan Hudson
and Leanne Hansen



December - the season of giving and receiving. A time to remember those who have helped us throughout the year: the teachers, the principal, the assistants, the librarians, the aides, the custodians, and of course, you, the parents and volunteers who have made 2007 one of the best years yet.

In just three short months, we've accomplished so much and already enjoyed many fun events together such as movie night, the book fair, teacher appreciation lunches, and of course, the Lapathon. We are delighted that with your support we've already raised over \$40,000 for our school! This provides a great foundation for the many ambitious projects we have planned this year.

Our "Come out and play" playground campaign is off to a fantastic start – *Thank you! If you haven't yet received information about this or made a contribution, we encourage you to check out the playground renderings on the bulletin board in the front hallway.* We hope to meet our goal before the end of the month in order to install the new playground in February during winter recess! We invite you to "Come out and play" today – If you have any questions, contact Jan or Leanne.

As we plan for 2008, we offer a few resolutions to add to your list:

- 1) Attend *at least* one PTA meeting in 2008
- 2) Contribute \$200 to the new playground
- 3) Join us for coffee on Wednesday mornings at the coffee cart
- 4) Make a concoction for Science Night
- 4) Reveal your favorite hobby at Hobby Night
- 5) Dine with us at our Teacher Appreciation Lunches
- 6) Learn about volunteer opportunities for spring and fall
- 7) Check lost and found monthly
- 8) Help set up the Art Show
- 9) Serve lunch to the kids one day
- 10) Smile!

We wish you a wonderful, safe holiday and a Happy New Year!!

Think snow!!!

Holiday Food Reminder

Please remember school policy through the pre-holiday school days. We ask that you **not send cupcakes or sugary treats at all**, and that if food must be included in the school day celebration that it be carefully considered. Fruit or fresh vegetables are actually very popular with children despite media messages to the contrary. If you would like to see more on this school policy see http://web.mac.com/janemcdonough/Site/Updates/Entries/2007/8/31_Food_at_School.html

And keep those sugary treats for Santa!

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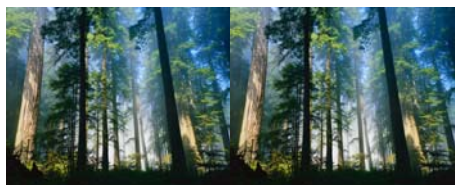
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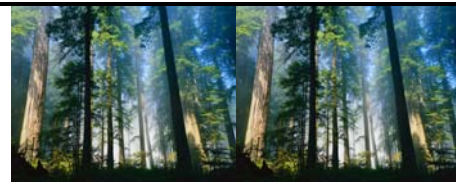
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GRIST

By Jane McDonough



Our holiday spirit is getting jump started by the exciting work the PTA has done to meet our need for a new play structure in the younger children's (upper) yard. Thanks to Leanne Hansen, Samantha Stuart and of course our president Jan Hudson, as well as the entire PTA, we are off and running on a campaign to complete the structure. All the specifics about the play elements, and fundraising details are in the letter you received from the PTA, and also posted in the hallways. If you have any additional questions you can contact Jan, Leanne or me for more information. With your help we will all be able to come out and play this spring!

Regarding the District Facility Master Plan, MVSD, through consultants Vanir Construction, is moving towards completion of the current phase of information gathering from school sites, and will be developing a document reflecting commonalities of specifications from the different school sites as well as the total district community. That is to say that input from each site has been considered, melded into both things that should be called for throughout all future classroom/school building efforts as well as those things that should be specified for each particular site. As part of the district's strategic plan, the master planning documents are due to be finalized some time in the spring. Thanks to Site Council and faculty for their support of this process, and clear vision of our most pressing site concerns.

Site Council divided up into action groups at its last meeting to tackle the various aspects of their work for this year. If you wish to learn more details about these specifics, you can track agendas, minutes and so on either on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the school building or on the school website; site council info is located on my website which you can find under administration. We are working on integrating our focus areas under the able leadership of Victoria Talkington, including health education, science and math curriculum and our walk to school efforts. Believe it or not, these all go together!

Yet more excitement arises from the mosaic mural project which the 3rd grade classes and teachers have undertaken this year. They presented their case to our school board, developed a working relationship with a partner school and will be starting the work of applying the mural components in the near future. The mural is due to be completed by February. Watch for more specifics, but at the moment January 12th is a Saturday mural day when our school is invited to help do the work of the final installation on our amphitheater. Our partner school, Bahia Vista, in San Rafael, will be completing their mural in a similar time frame. Thanks to everyone involved in this project, it is going to be stunning!

Our student council (with leadership from council advisor Mrs. Tanguay) is getting underway with various projects to help others and to provide leadership on our campus. I am proud of all the students who so willingly take on leadership roles and give of their own personal time to do so. That, it seems to me, is the Old Mill way!

Are you interested in providing useful activities and variety to kids during their lunch recess? If you would like to help out regularly or even occasionally, with this very important job, please let me or Lisa Preger, Parents at Lunch coordinator, know of your interest. We will have a meeting to train folks in expectations and possibilities once we have contact information for everyone who is interested. You can email me at jmcdonough@mvschools.org, or call Lisa at 383 6680.

It is always worth remembering that for many of us, holidays can be a time of stress and anxiety. Along with the parties, good cheer and festive lights and trimmings, both children and adults sometimes are hit with feelings of sadness, loss or other emotions that may come with the season. Whether these come from memories of those no longer with us, too high expectations, or family issues when holidays weren't very joyful, it is very important to keep your priorities in mind when approaching the season and its sometimes frenetic pace. Try to make time to stop and reflect, to check in on your children's (and your own) state of mind, and to support quiet physical activity in at least equal measure to shopping trips or list making. Walks when the redwoods are kind of dark and sparkling with rainwater are always magical! The pressure to give or get the perfect present can overwhelm the season's greatest opportunity; reflection on the year behind, gratitude for what we do have, and a sense of the presence of our larger community to help boost our spirits when the nights are longest. Try to keep your expectations of yourself and your children balanced enough that the holidays provide rest and relaxation along with the jingly bells. I wish all of you and yours the very best of winter festivities, whatever your particular celebration might be, and look forward to the wonderful new ventures which will be part of 2008- just around the corner!

A Word from Kiddo! . . .

Kiddo! Annual Giving Campaign Needs Donations ASAP

Overall participation in Kiddo!'s Annual Giving Campaign stands at only 65% as of November 30, significantly lower than in years past. Old Mill's participation rate is 67%, which is higher than the district average, but still means that 73 families have not yet participated in this school year's fundraising campaign. We need everyone's participation and we welcome contributions at whatever level works for your family! While Kiddo! asks for a contribution of \$600 per student to cover the costs of arts programs and other services provided, we gratefully accept all gifts of any amount. Although our average gift is \$600, many families actually donate more which helps cover the costs for families who might not be able to give at this level! Thank you one and all for your participation! Please go to www.kiddo.org and make your 100% tax deductible donation online today or send your check to Kiddo! at 409 Sycamore Avenue. Kiddo! has committed to providing art, dance, music, poetry, and drama to our schools, but it can't happen without your help.



Kiddo! Thank You for an Enchanted Evening

A huge, heartfelt thank you to director (and Mill Valley School District parent) Kevin Lima and Walt Disney Pictures for donating a special screening of their hit movie "Enchanted" as a fundraiser for Kiddo! Thanks to their generosity and the hard work of our volunteers, Kiddo! raised approximately \$15,000 from the screening to fund arts and technology programs. Thank you also to everyone who attended this "Enchanted" event!

Help Us Reach Our Goal While You Reach Yours

Bring a copy of this newsletter in to 24Seven at 383 Miller Avenue and sign up to get fit. Check out the Loop, which is a full-body workout including cardio with strength and conditioning that takes only 30 minutes. That's less time than it takes to find a parking space at Whole Foods! Kiddo! supporters who bring in this newsletter will have their initiation fee waived (\$50), their processing fee reduced by \$30 to \$49, and will receive \$7.00 off of the monthly dues down to a mere \$40 per month. 24Seven will donate \$30 to Kiddo! for every new enrollment with a copy of this newsletter and the mention of Kiddo! What have you got to lose?



Get Ready Southern Marin Training Information—How do I get trained?

Get Ready Southern Marin is a program that has been prepared for direct dissemination to the general public for disaster and emergency preparedness. It is based on the most reliable hazard awareness and emergency education information available. The citizens training class can be completed in less than 2 hours. Please see the training dates below to find a class that will work for you. To schedule, send an email to getready@cityofmillvalley.org and include your name, telephone number, address, email address and the date and locations of the training you would like to attend. Training Sessions:

- November 24th 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at SMFD Station 9, 308 Reed Boulevard, Mill Valley 94941
- November 27th 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Westminster Church, 240 Tiburon Boulevard, Mill Valley 94941
- November 29th 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Tamalpais Valley Community Center, 203 Marin Ave Mill Valley 94941
- November 29th 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Strawberry Shores Apts., 111 Seminary Drive, Mill Valley 94941
- December 1st 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Tamalpais Valley Community Center, 203 Marin Ave Mill Valley 94941
- December 5th 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Bay Model Sausalito, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito 94965
- December 8th 10:00 a.m. 12:00 noon at SMFD Station 9, 308 Reed Boulevard, Mill Valley 94941
- December 11th 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Holiday Inn Express, 160 Shoreline Highway, Mill Valley 94941
- December 14th 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Tamalpais Valley Community Center, 203 Marin Ave Mill Valley 94941
- December 15th 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Peace Lutheran Church, 200 Tennessee Valley Road, Mill Valley 94941
- December 18th 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Bay Model Sausalito, 2100 Bridgeway, Sausalito 94965

To My Old Mill Family,

I have known the Old Mill School community is a family since my first weeks here in 1994 when I was immediately welcomed into it. Even this and my subsequent experiences here did not prepare me for the amazing out pouring of love and support I have been receiving this year as I go through my treatments for breast cancer.

I feel thoroughly surrounded by your good wishes, positive thoughts, warm comments and smiles and nods. This is as important to me as the meals you are providing. Having dinner prepared has been invaluable. The first week after my chemo treatment I have energy for my daily hour walk and that is about it. The second week is the week I am able to be back with my Kindergartners teaching. By the time I have taught and had my walk, I am done for the day. Knowing that we'll have a healthy meal makes all the difference and allows me to continue teaching.

You have been and continue to feed me, both in body and in spirit. There is nothing I can do to thank you in kind or at the level you are giving. Instead I have made a donation in the name of Old Mill School, PTA, families and students, to give flocks of ducks to families in parts of the world where this will allow them to feed their families and generate income for years to come.

I am now half way through my chemotherapy. The radiation and hormonal treatments that will follow are supposed to be less stressful. Please continue to send your positive thoughts and energy my way. Know always that my husband's and my gratitude will forever be with you, my school family.

With gratitude, Ann Nichols

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR MILL VALLEY GIRLS SOFTBALL!

The Spring 2008 softball season is just around the corner with the first game on March 15th. Softball registration forms are available at www.millvalleygirlssoftball.org or you can email Marla Kravatz at marla@supportwareconsulting.com. Get ready to play Fastpitch Softball!



It Takes a Village, Special Education PTA, Mill Valley

YOU ARE INVITED! Holiday Teacher Appreciation Party on Wednesday, December 19th 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Masonic Center, 19 Corte Madera Ave. (across from Mill Valley City Hall)

The District's special education staff will be the guests of honor at a holiday appreciation party. Parents and children are invited to attend to support our teachers. We will have lots of food and beverages. Come and enjoy!

SOCIAL THINKING—Speaker Event—Thursday, January 17, 2008, 6:30-8:00pm—District Office, 411 Sycamore Ave. If you are concerned about your child's social skills, this is the workshop for you! Stephanie Madrigal from the Center for Social Thinking in San Jose will present social skills strategies that parents can implement at home. This event is a companion the Social Thinking training that the District's special education staff received last year. Parent training will allow students to apply their social skills training at home for a more integrated program.

SPEAKER NOTES—Many parents have asked for notes from our speaker events. We now have minutes of the following events available: (1) September 27th—Dan Phillips (technology that can help your child read and write); (2) October 18th—Pauline Nacamuli, Erin Conklin, and Sarah Stoelting (reading strategies); and (3) November 1st—Dr. Virginia Bassi, Janet Miller (support for families/siblings of children with learning differences).

Please contact your school representative, Deborah Goldman (383-2091, dmgreed@aol.com), or any member of our board to get speaker notes or with any questions or comments you may have. Thank you!

PSYCHOLOGICALLY SPEAKING

By Claudia Trinklein-Engman

Winning and losing are HUGE concepts for elementary school age children. Admittedly, competition is a way of life. But as adults, we must help our children be graceful winners as well as gracious losers. On the school site, we are constantly reminding children that being first is not always best. In my social groups, I have many a discussion about the traits of good winners, good sports, and good losers. If your child is participating in any kind of team sport, he/she is undoubtedly being taught some of these good sportsmanship qualities as well. But it is of great importance that the home environment embraces these social graces as well.

I encourage families to play a variety of games with their children, and to include board games or card games in the mixture. This is a great place to practice good winner/good loser responses. I usually begin with games of chance. (And I always talk briefly with the children about the difference between games of chance and games of skill.) Good examples are Chutes and Ladders, Go Fish and Candyland. Before each game, I ask the children to show me or tell me what a good winner would act like or sound like during and after the game. I also have the children tell me what a poor winner would act or sound like as well as good and poor losers. Prior to play, I always say that I'm going to be looking for these good examples during and after the game. So, for example, if in Chutes and Ladders, your child falls on a chute

and graciously descends down the chute, I would briefly comment on how well he/she is playing the game. You don't have to make a big deal of it, but a brief reinforcement will often go a long way.

Organized games are a great place to practice NOT having to go first, especially when in games of chance, often it is the second or third player who ultimately wins, not always the player to go first. Board games are a great place to obviously practice taking turns, but more importantly, winning and losing with grace. Most times, just saying good game is sufficient.

I also recommend playing these same games with partners. Encourage the team to make team decisions. A brief discussion about how partners need to work together, and do not blame each other if they do not win are extremely important concepts. The skills that a child learns while playing games successfully will transfer back into the classroom when a child is asked to cooperate with other group members on a team-based assignment.

The skills learned in chance games now also need to be practiced in games of skill. For the active child, this would be a game of soccer or a swim race and for the less physically active child, it would be a game of chess or checkers. I never want to discourage the desire to win and do well, but the social skill of competing graciously needs to be practiced at school, at home and in the community.

NOTES FROM THE MILL VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

It's not too late to sign up for after-school Holiday Crafts fun. Make **Time Capsule Picture Frames** on Wednesday, December 12 (Grade 3+) and **Funky Folk Art Rag Gifts** (Grade 4+) on Wednesday, December 19. Programs run from 3:30 - 5:00 pm. Call 415-389-4292 x106 to register.

Free Movies, Popcorn, and a Pillow. Join us for our annual **Children's Winter Film Series** Wednesday-Friday, December 26, 27, 28, and January 2, 3, and 4 at 3:30 pm. We'll be showing a brilliant selection of child-friendly cinema, including **Ratatouille**, **Charlotte's Web**, and **Wallace & Gromit Meet the Were-Rabbit**. For more information, call 415-389-4292 x106.

Got homework over the Winter Break? Got a library card? Try **Live Homework Help**, our free online tutoring service, available from 1:00 – 10:00 pm every day. Go to <http://millvalleylibrary.org/homeowork/html>

Old Mill Creek Deadlines

Please submit any Creek articles by email to dale.rice@hellerehrman.com by the deadlines below (no pdf files please):

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Published</u>
January 6, 2008	January 16, 2008
February 3, 2008	February 13, 2008
March 2, 2008	March 12, 2008
March 23, 2008	April 2, 2008
May 4, 2008	May 14, 2008
May 25, 2008	June 4, 2008

Dale Rice, Editor