

The Mountain Times

Mountain Road School
Winter Newsletter

February 2010

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With Thanks and Celebration

Holiday Fair

Thank you to the most industrious Holiday Fair committee and to all the parents, friends and staff members who made the fair successful! After expenses we raised approximately \$3,700 for the school and had a wonderful day filled with laughter, good food, great shopping and fun! Thank you!

School Photos

Thank you to Cynthia Gray for donating her time to take exquisite school photos and raising money for the school! We are so fortunate to have such a talented photographer in our community!

French Night

Merci! We were so happy to see the attendance at French night! Thank you to all the parents who brought such delicious food and

Greetings From The Director!

In 2010, Mountain Road School celebrates its 35th birthday! We have already begun celebrating by launching our new web site and forming a 35th year anniversary committee! The committee has begun planning a MRS event in collaboration with the Abode (which is also celebrating its 35th year) during the July 4th weekend. We are looking forwards to reconnecting with Alumni and finding out how they are doing and where they are now! If you would like to be a part of the 35th anniversary committee, please let us know. It is a wonderful group made up of parents and alumni.

I am very excited about this year and the changes we have made in the school. This newsletter describes what lies ahead in the months to come and for next year so please read it through closely!

The teachers and I have been evaluating our strengths and weakness and have been working diligently on the curriculum, making it stronger. The upcoming report cards reflect our recent work as they demonstrate exactly what skills are being taught to your child and where each child is in meeting them. These skills have been taken from both the New York and Massachusetts frameworks. The teachers also have been evaluating the children throughout the year using in-formal and formal assessments and I am pleased to say overall, Mountain Road School students have done very well. Traditionally at Mountain Road School this has been true. Students leave the school with a confidence that is able to take them through their next learning experiences wherever they may be. There are, however, some children in our community who need extra practice along the way. Each child, like each adult, needs to put in different amounts of effort to achieve. For this reason, the board approved at our February meeting, the addition of tutoring services at the school. Parents may elect this option and pay an additional fee for these services. I am currently in communication with the Reading Institute of Williamstown to locate a certified reading specialist to work with us. This is a very exciting addition to our school! If any parent would like to start tutoring this school year, please let me know.

I am also pleased to announce the following class configurations and teachers for next year! We feel these class combinations will help us meet the children's developmental needs better and allow for more individualized attention.

Shivani Lash will not be returning as the preschool teacher as she will be pursuing a full time career in midwifery. We are very excited for her and feel so fortunate to have been able to have her and Faolan at the school for the last two years. She has taken the preschool classroom to a new level and has enriched so many of our lives.

Pre-K / K Black-Capped Chickadees

We will be searching for an early childhood teacher who has a strong background in environmental education to take over this classroom. We will also be searching for a full time assistant. This multi-age classroom will be together for the mornings and during the afternoon, while the preschoolers are napping with the assistant, the kindergarteners will be working on kindergarten assignments and activities in the afternoon. This allows the kindergarten to receive an specialized curriculum in a

to all the children for their performances. Thank you to Chantal for organizing it all!

Nature Curriculum

I am pleased to announce that we have received two financial awards towards our nature curriculum this year! A heartfelt thank you to both!

- **A generous \$1,000 contribution from the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Foundation!**
- **\$850 from the Twin Counties Arts in Education Partnership for the upcoming paper-making workshop!**

Bookkeeper Needed

Our beloved Gennifer Westover has taken a full time government position in Hudson. Congratulations Gennifer! Even though she is working full time, she has agreed to stay on with us until we find a replacement for her. If you know of a bookkeeper who would like to work for us approximately 4 to 5 hours a week and has experience with non-profits, please let the office know!

In the meantime, Gennifer is requesting parents to consult their statements for outstanding balances due. Thank you!

Parent Participation

Mountain Road is a small school, and we try to keep our tuition affordable. Because of this we rely on parent participation to accomplish many of the tasks that keep the school in good shape physically, spiritually, and financially. Twenty (20)

small group. Research shows that small group learning is the most ideal form of instruction. New next year to the Black-capped Chickadees will be a 1/2 day of Flying Deer.

1/2 Red Squirrels - Bharati Shapero
3/4 Blue Jays - Aimee Johnson -New next year to the Blue Jays will be a full day of Flying Deer with Michelle Apland!
5/6 Jon Stevens
Art/ French Chantal Van Wierts
Sign Language - Sue Field
Music - TBA

This is Mark Kelso's last year with us as our music teacher and his plan is to end it with a BANG! He has been working with the children to complete a CD to benefit the Sacre Coeur hospital in Haiti. An overview of the CD project will be presented at our upcoming Open House on Saturday, March 20th from 1-3. Mark has been with the MRS community for many years sending two children here. We will definitely miss him as our music teacher and as a part of our Big Circle community. Mark's creativity and enthusiasm for song writing and rhythm has influenced each one of us and will remain in our hearts for a long time. We have been so fortunate to have him, Arti and Raven back here for the last few years.

As we begin the search for new teachers, I will be calling together the ad-hoc hiring committee who volunteered in the fall.

Thank you to every parent who has submitted their parent feedback forms and intention forms to the office! Thank you for the honest and reflective feedback! **Please remember that tuition deposits are due March 1st even if you are applying for financial aid. To receive financial aid, students must be enrolled in the school.**

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter,
Kathleen

TADS

In our effort to go green, Mountain Road School will now be using TADS (Tuition Aid Data Services) for tuition assistance and next year for tuition payments. Tuition Assistance Applications are due **April 1st**. Here are the details:

How to Apply for Tuition Assistance

We require all families seeking Tuition Assistance, regardless of the amount of assistance requested, to apply online at [Tuition Aid Data Services \(TADS\)](#). The MRS office has a paper worksheet to help you organize your information before you apply on-line. Please see Eileen in the office. We also have a few printed brochures about TADS for those who are interested in a paper version.

In order to be considered for Tuition Assistance, you must submit a 2009 tax return. TADS confidentially and impartially analyzes the information provided and

hours per year of Parent Participation are required as a minimum and may be completed in any of the following areas below.

Families are asked to keep track of the time they put in during the year on the yellow Parent Participation form provided in the Back-to-school mailing and submit the completed form into the school by June 1st. Families do have the option of paying \$15/hour in lieu of participating.

If you have not completed your 20 hours yet, we have tasks and committees that would love to have your participation!

Service Learning for 6th Grade

To help foster strong citizens, I have begun a Service Learning requirement at Mountain Road School for sixth grade.

I have asked the sixth graders to complete by the end of the year, 10 hours of community service to benefit the Mountain Road School community or the community at large. The children must complete their Service Learning in their own time outside of the classroom. Once the 10 hours are completed, the children will present their Service Learning in a visual presentation to the school during Big Circle. This culminating project will help foster a greater sense of Service Learning at the school and require our sixth graders to demonstrate their presentation skills. Our 6th graders will serve as a role model for others to follow in years to come.

Already Faolan and Raven have taken their roles seriously and have given their time to After Care as Service Learning helpers. You can see Raven and Faolan donning snowsuits, zipping coats and pulling sleds!

recommends a tuition adjustment to the school. TADS processes the financial statements of more than 250,000 families each year and more than 550 colleges and independent schools use their services. In the case of separation, divorce, or parents who were never married, both natural parents are required to complete the process in order for their child to be considered for tuition assistance. Information is kept in the strictest confidence.

Applicants for Tuition Assistance must apply by **April 1st** for first-round consideration. We begin to award Tuition Assistance at the end of April and continue the process until there are no longer funds available, at which time we begin a waitlist for assistance. Tuition Assistance is awarded on a first come, first served basis, with preference given to returning families although not everyone who applies will necessarily receive aid. Awards are for one year only and each family will need to complete this process annually.

Tuition Payments for 2010-2011

We are pleased to announce that TADS will process our Tuition Payments for the upcoming school year. With the TADS system, you will be able to access your account online at any time. You can make payments with your checking account or credit card or you can enroll in automatic payments. You'll also be able to choose your own due date! TADS has a friendly support team that you can reach via phone or e-mail if you have any questions about your online account.

The first tuition payment for 2010-2011 will be due July 1st. Note this is a change from last year! You will receive a tuition agreement to complete for TADS about one month prior to this due date. The cost to enroll in a TADS payment plan of three or more installments is \$45. There is no cost for a full payment or for the bi-yearly plan. Full payments will be accepted by the school directly as well. You will also be charged a one-time \$10 should you prefer paper statements to e-mailed statements as part of the attempt to be environmentally friendly. Please be advised that late fees and returned payment fees may be applied to your account if applicable.

They have been a tremendous addition to After Care this year!

Iona worked hard over the Holiday Fair making truffles with her mother and putting together the beautiful boxes! Her effort helped raise money for the school!

Rasulan has spoken to me about her service learning and Isaac has had many ideas in motion.

I look forwards to the children's presentations!

Kathleen

Greetings From Afterschool Care!

Greetings from Aftercare!

The frozen stream has opened up new worlds of fun for us in Aftercare- let's hope that the return from Winter Break brings us some snow to sled with as well! We stay out for an hour every day, so remember to dress your child warmly!

Lily

Community Calendar

Parents! There are many ways now you can keep abreast of what is going on and to come at Mountain Road School. Every calendar listing can be found on our new web site under School Life/Calendar! This includes All Hands meetings, Board meetings, Flying Deer dates, Sign Language dates and all activities. There are postings from now to June! Also, on our home page you will find postings of Today's Events and Upcoming Events for those who want to do a quick check! If you can't make it to our web site, all upcoming events are listed in our Weekly Reminders and monthly events are posted on the printed calendar located in the second floor hallway. How about that

Going Green

To further our commitment to nature and environmental education, Mountain Road School has taken some recent steps I would like to share with you.

- **A unique Papermaking Workshop in the art room with guest artist Marie-Claude Giroux this spring!**
- **Full Day Flying Deer program for 3rd and 4th graders beginning 2010-2011!**
- **1/2 day Flying Deer program for preschoolers beginning 2010-2011!**
- **Paperless tuition assistance through TADS! (See info on side bar)**
- **Paperless tuition payment option through TADS for 2010-2011! (See info on side bar)**
- **A brand new web site via Solar Powered Web Hosting! Check it out at www.mountainroadschool.org**
- **Membership in the No Child Left Inside Coalition. We are very excited about linking up with so many environmental groups in New York and around the country in hopes to promote environmental education! Here are some key points from the coalition:**



Background: The No Child Left InsideSM Coalition is a national coalition of nearly 1500 business, health, youth, faith, recreational, and environmental and educational groups representing over 47.5 million Americans. The Coalition was formed to alert Congress and the public to the need for our schools to devote more resources and attention to environmental education.

Goal: The Coalition is working to support legislation sponsored by Rep. John Sarbanes of Maryland and Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island to ensure that every student achieves basic environmental literacy. The No Child Left Inside Act would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) to include environmental education for the first time. The legislation would provide new funding for environmental education, particularly to develop rigorous standards, train teachers and to develop state environmental literacy plans. It also proposes giving states that develop such environmental literacy plans access to additional funds.

Policies

There has been recent inquiries into our Birthday Etiquette and Sex Education policy at MRS. To help clarify, here they are:

If a child has a birthday party to which not all the children in the class are invited, then invitations should not to be distributed at school--it most definitely leads to hurt feelings for the children not invited. There is no

for communication!

SAVE THE DATE

Open House and Children's
Concert

Saturday, March 20th
1:30-3:00

Author's Tea
Thursday, March 25th
6:30

**Check Out Our New
MRS Web Site to
honor our 35th
year Anniversary!**

**[Mountain Road School](#)
[Flying Deer Nature](#)
[Center](#)**

Mountain Road School
5 Abode Road
New Lebanon, NY 12125
518-794-8520

compulsion to host a party inviting all of the class, but if you do the school policy is to mail the invitations or otherwise distribute them outside of school or school events.

It is Mountain Road's policy to work with parents to foster respectful and positive attitudes regarding sexuality. Mountain Road School expects parents to be proactive in this endeavor and to discuss with their children appropriateness in regard to privacy, boundaries, and communication about sexuality (particularly from older to younger children). It is the school's intention to work with parents to provide age-appropriate and accurate information that encourages positive and respectful attitudes regarding gender, sexuality and body image. The school seeks to be a resource for questions and issues for both parents and children regarding these issues. Mountain Road School, above all, wishes to acknowledge the sacredness that is present in our being.

The Development Committee News

The DC has been very, very busy planning some great, fundraising fun for the spring semester. The following is a summary of our work.

Spring is coming soon...Bulbs and Bulbs and Seeds....this year we will be selling seeds (botanicalinterests.com) and Dutch bulbs (flowerpowerfundraising.com) and hopefully energy efficient light bulbs. We will be using direct sales and the Internet, as well as setting up tables at local grocery stores. We are providing an incentive for the students to sell lots and lots of bulbs! As the students sell they will be rewarded with new sleds for recess and if they reach our sales goal they will be rewarded with a magic show! We are trying to emphasize that we need to work together as a community to get the fundraising job done. So, please let all your loved ones know that they will be able to purchase high quality seeds, bulbs, and light bulbs to benefit Mountain Road School.

There are plans for a wine tasting in the works. We are investigating venues and hope to have a solid plan within the next few weeks. We are hoping that this event will occur in March or April. If you are interested in helping us with the

planning of this event please let one of us know or send an email to the office.

June 6th is the date of the 1st annual Family Fun Day sponsored by Mountain Road School. This event will take place at Shatford Park in New Lebanon. Shatford Park day has been a longstanding Mountain Road School. With the successful addition of School on Legs week it seemed best to move Shatford Park day to a time outside of the school week. So, the DC has come up with a plan that creates a bigger and better Shatford Park day! We are still in the planning stages but here is what we know so far:

- Tag Sale
- Food
- Bouncy Bounce (or the like)
- Balloon animals
- Vendors
- Music
- Fun booths/activities
- Bring your own bike, skates, and outdoor toys
- Possibly a road race or bike clinic

This event will be open to the public and we are hoping that folks from local communities will bring their families and learn how fun it is to hang out with Mountain Road people!

We are open to ideas and help. Please let either the office or one of the Development Committee members know if you think you can help with this event.

Development Committee: Liz Young, Jill Rembetski, Aimee Johnson, Marianna Anthonisen, Cynthia Gray, and Betsy Feathers

Giving Thanks

The preschool is alive with creativity. We recently opened the Chickadee Cafe, with an eclectic menu with everything from fried egg salads to love sandwiches! Waitstaff and chefs eagerly bustle from kitchen to dining room, writing down orders, serving delicious entrees and tea, and answering the phone for take-out clientele. What a wonderful way to be inspired, as we learn more about community and the world of language. We also celebrated the fifth birthday of our beloved Rowan. We're so glad you were born, Rowan!

Shivani



Exploring Dirt

The Red Squirrels have seen, explored, and discussed much since we returned from our holiday break. A favorite among the group has been our exploration on dirt. They loved getting their hands grimy, gritty, and dirty, feeling the richness of the soil and the trickling of water through pebbles. We will continue our explorations with dirt in the coming month through planting seedlings and observing the plants as we change different factors in their growth. Our growing theme has also transferred into the Language Arts curriculum. Our Charlie the Chia Pet is a popular little guy who has helped us learn the ch diagraph. As the earth thaws, we will take our discussions and explorations on dirt outside as well.

Bharati



Birthdays

Greetings All!

The Blue Jays visited the Berkshire Museum for a presentation on the Mohicans to supplement our study of local native peoples. We've celebrated two birthdays-Ariel, "Queen of Stars and Snowflakes" and Rawan, "Bailiff of Estuaries." We made "goop"



in science class, and we opened our class store for math work using money. We've enjoyed playing in the snow and making valentines.

Aimée

Looking More Closely

The Red Fox Clan has continued to deeply investigate beginnings of our country. Students considered the perspective that racism in America was created and fueled by the quest for limitless profit and blatant manipulation by the wealthy. Out of our discussions came the connection that this quest for limitless profit persists



today and has a negative impact on many things, including our ecosystem. We are now looking more closely at who the colonists were.

Students took their Columbus Critiques entirely through the writing process. These critiques are now hanging in our classroom. Our focus in writing will now shift to reading responses, reflections, prompts and book reviews. Math groups are investigating concepts including linear equations and functions, exponents and multiplication facts. Book groups, spelling lessons, nature journals and lessons on the environmental impact of town and industry zoning are among the other things that round out what we've been up to this fall.

Jon