

Churchill Cluster News

Fall 2008

The 2008-09 school year is off to a great start, and is a wonderful time to be part of PTA in the Winston Churchill Cluster. This year holds potential, opportunity, and challenges for our cluster schools, and with it vast opportunities for parent involvement. As your MCCPTA Churchill Cluster Coordinators, we hope 2008-09 is a year of active involvement by each of you, our parents, in the education of our children, including membership in, advocacy with, and support for your school(s) PTA or PTSA.

Why PTA? For your child, and for you. PTA/PTSA at our Churchill Cluster schools is a major source for enrichment activities and the forum at which this community comes together to learn, discuss, debate, and resolve. Each of our remarkable, membership-driven organizations supplement curriculum and provide a range of programs to develop the whole child in every child. We do it by offering programs such as science fairs, math nights, parent education programs, talent shows, after-proms, and National PTA's Reflections program, a contest that emphasizes art—and self—exploration. We do it with the amazing talent and time of you, our Churchill Cluster parents.

Our cluster PTA/PTSA activities go far beyond the bakesale. In the Churchill Cluster and in the broader Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA), the “A” in PTA also stands for advocacy. Our schools have a record of effective lobbying, as local schools and as a community. The PTA/PTSAs in this cluster respond to their membership and take up a wide range of issues with administrators and elected officials, addressing your concerns about public education. Safety of our schools, from pedestrian safety to lice to healthy classrooms; class size; and curriculum, from accelerated math to Chinese immersion programs, are just a few of the parent and staff issues on which PTA is the voice for this community. Make sure your voice is counted by attending the meetings of your PTA/PTSA and taking an active role in this dialogue as a PTA member.

But Churchill Cluster? Isn't PTA just an organization at my child's school? Strengthening the voice and activities of each of our cluster's eight schools is the collaboration of the leadership of each of our local PTAs, working together with us, your elected MCCPTA Cluster Coordinators, to define the key issues of the Churchill Cluster. Our cluster PTA/PTSA leaders meet regularly, and work together to determine what community priorities will be brought before the Board of Education and the Montgomery County Council in testimonies delivered by the cluster coordinators on capital and operating budget issues, and other school-based needs of our community. As a cluster, for example, we worked on the Bells Mill, Potomac, Seven Locks boundary study last year, and as a cluster we all await the release of the Superintendent's boundary recommendations on October 15th. On behalf of the community, we—your Cluster Coordinators—also meet regularly with our MCPS Community Superintendent, Dr. Sherry Liebes, looking to ensure that our school system is aware of the successes, concerns, and perspective of our Churchill Community.

How do I get involved? Just ask. There are an array of opportunities at your schools and a range of committees at the county PTA level. You do not need to be a PTA/PTSA officer, and you do not need much time to get involved. There is a place in PTA for every schedule, every interest, every background. Contact your PTA/PTSA leaders or us, and let us know where and how you would like to participate in your child's education. Your effort will make the Churchill Cluster that much more of a National Blue Ribbon community. We wish you and your family the best of school years.

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MCCPTA Churchill Cluster Coordinators, 2008-09