

May-June 2007

Dear McMurray Parents,

Thank you for your contributions to another successful school year at McMurray Elementary. Please have a safe and wonderful summer.

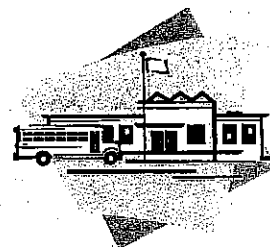
Sincerely,

Kathy Oberschelp
McMurray PTA President

Principal's PenDr. Robert Freado 941-5020

Learning Together in 2007-08

There are several new initiatives in store for students and staff at McMurray Elementary School for the upcoming school year. We are working to find more ways for teachers and students to work together, serve the school and one another, and increase learning opportunities for all students.



We will make several changes in the ways that we organize and deliver instruction. They include:

1. Our classrooms will be arranged in a mixed grade-level configuration similar to a "neighborhood" approach that some of you might recall from our primary schools. There are a few good reasons why we are making this change. The first reason is we believe that closer proximity will facilitate better communication and collaboration between grade level teachers and increase interaction between students at different grade levels. This increased interaction will occur in structured and supervised ways allowing for students to meet and work with a wider variety of students, provide our older students more leadership opportunities and generally promote the development of a positive school-wide culture.

The second reason for this change is that we need to address the fact that the number of classrooms per grade level is greater than the available number of classrooms in any segment of the school. This has been the case for the past few years. For example, we have had fourth and sixth grade classrooms share an area of the school and we have had a fifth and one sixth grade classroom located among fourth grade rooms or in isolation this school year. As we continue to increase the number of classrooms at McMurray, it is necessary that we take a proactive and intentional approach – one that is not constrained by the structure of the building.

2. We will modify how we provide support for students through greater use of the newly created Academic Center (AC). Teachers, paraprofessionals and volunteers will work out of the AC to provide assistance to students. Students can request help from the AC or teachers may refer students for assistance. This practice has shown promise this school year, and we intend to build upon the success given a full year of implementation next year.

(Continued on Page 2)

MCMURRAY ELEMENTARY PTA NEWSLETTER

The McMurray Star

Helping our students reach for the stars

McMurray Elementary

Articles and photos are due by the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Please submit to Kathy Collins at kcollins@mcmschool.org or call 942-6291.



SCRABBLE TOURNAMENT



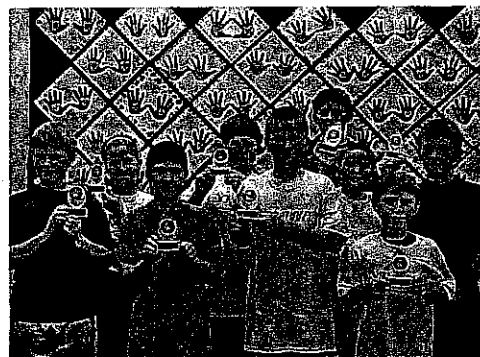
We had 127 students participate in the tournament this year. Special thanks to all the parents who helped with Scrabble every Thursday during lunch/recess and during tournament play.

Congratulations to the 2007 McMurray Scrabble Tournament Champions:

4th Adam Alavi, Matt Hilzendeger, Sebastian Hymson,
Luke Johnson

5th Jack Hussey, Derek Stewart

6th Josh Bowman, Justin Magnotti, Hayley Wilson



Principal's Pen (Continued from Page 1)

3. The practice of grouping for instruction is being modified. We will expand the practice of teaching math to heterogeneous classrooms to fifth grade. Fourth grade students were taught in heterogeneous groups for the first time this year in a number of years. Sixth grade math classes will remain the same and are grouped as either enriched or regular with the enriched curriculum exposing the students to more content. We will continue to promote the practice of students accelerating through the math curriculum when they show the desire and ability to do so. There are approximately ninety students who are working above their grade level in math this school year.

Another change will occur in the delivery of the sixth-grade reading curriculum. Sixth grade students will no longer be placed into regular or enriched groups. Teachers will teach Reading to their homeroom students.

4. World Language instruction previously started in 7th grade for many years. Formal instruction in three World Languages will now begin in sixth grade next year. Our students will receive instruction in Spanish, German and French for the first time.

We believe that these changes will provide for enhanced learning opportunities for our students. The 2007-08 school year holds much promise as we continue to find new and better ways of Learning Together.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Freado

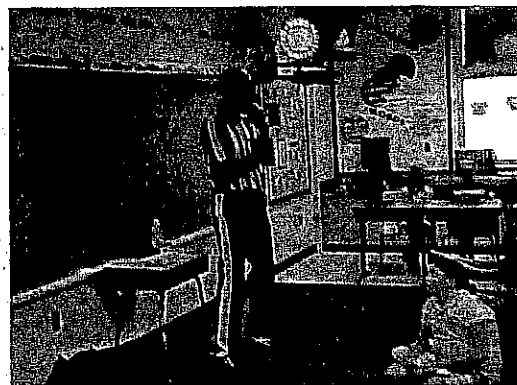
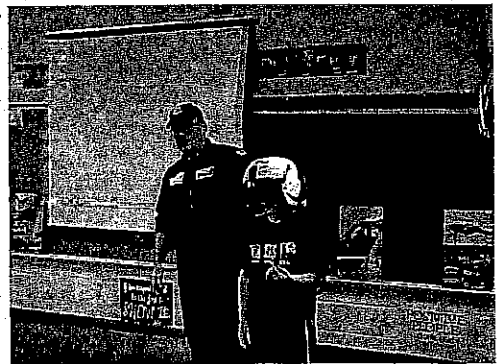
McMurray Messages

Just a reminder. Please keep clipping those BoxTops over the summer. You can send them in to school in September with your child to give us a good start next school year. Thanks.

Don't forget to save your Campbell's Soup labels. You can collect them all summer and send them in with your kids in September. Thanks.

Career Day

McMurray Elementary participated in its annual Career Day on April 20, 2007. Sixteen speakers joined us to teach students about various career choices. Students traveled to four different presentations with their individual classroom. In these presentations, a speaker shared about his/her career and the path taken to arrive at the career of their choice. Students were able to ask questions and some were even able to volunteer! Be sure to ask your child about his/her experience at this year's Career Day! This was a very informative and fun day at McMurray!



6th Grade Celebration -- Friday, June 1 6:00-8:00 PM

Attention 6th Grade Parents!

In prior years, there has been an event called the 6th Grade Spring Fling. This was commonly referred to by everyone as a "dance", when really it was an activity-filled event with food, games, and music. The students felt that they needed to be very dressed up and occasionally came with a "date", much to the unhappiness of both parents and administration. There was feedback that the perception of this being a dance led many other students not to attend for fear of not fitting in. This event has strayed from its original intent of being simply a big party for the departing 6th grade students.

So, in order to get this event back to its original design, it has been renamed the 6th Grade Celebration. We will have 13 different stations of games and activities including relays, free throw contests, and a scavenger hunt (much like the holiday parties).



There will be food, crafts, and a photo station with all photos being \$1 each.

There will still be an area with music. This is NOT a dance. The students should dress casually (no dresses or dress pants) while still adhering to the school dress code and wearing comfortable foot-wear (no flip-flops) or they will be sent home.



A letter to all 6th grade parents was sent home with a volunteer form on Friday, April 27th due back to the home-room teachers by May 1. If you did not receive it, ask your child. Please talk to other parents you may know in order to help us get the word out and make this a successful send-off! We need at least 60 volunteers- (Moms and/or Dads!). If you did not get the letter and are interested in volunteering, please call Michele Moore at 724-942-9013, Sheril Wilson at 724-942-0507, or Jodi Hannah at 724-942-9849.



2007-2008 PTA OFFICERS

At the PTA meeting on April 11, the following executive officers were voted into office for 2007-2008:

President	Karen Bovalina
1st Vice Pres.	Gina Wells
2nd Vice Pres.	Lois Maggs
3rd Vice Pres.	Lynn Soika
4th Vice Pres.	Beth Buzzelli
Treasurer	Danielle Ward
Asst. Treasurer	Sarah Lindsay
Secretary	Dianne Lioon

Thank you so much for volunteering your time to help make McMurray Elementary PTA so great!!

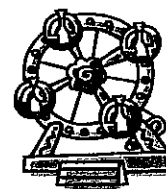


KENNYWOOD TICKETS



Kennywood tickets will be sold on May 23rd
from 11:15 - 1:45

Cost is \$18/ticket (cash or money
orders only - no personal checks)



GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT



Join 2,000 of your closest friends at the Peters Township High School Stadium on June 2, 2007 and become a **World Record Holder!**

What do you have to do?

Come to the Peters Township Relay For Life, listen to the live music and Dance "***The Twist***" for 5 minutes!

(To be able to dance the required five minutes, we suggest a minimum age of 10 years old.)

Is that all?

You must register between 3:00 pm and 4:45 pm and be ready to dance at 5:00 pm.

You must do the Twist for five minutes straight without stopping!

And you may want to make a small donation to the Relay to benefit the American Cancer Society!
After all, you're a World Record Holder!

May I bring a friend?

Bring lots of friends!

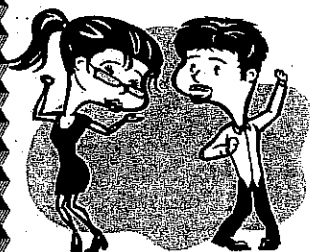
The record of 1,691 was set in England in 2004.

We want to smash that mark so bring your youth group, dance class, church choir, work buddies, softball team and grandma! With that size crowd, please carpool if at all possible. A shuttle will be available at the PT Middle School parking lot.

Who can I call for more information?

For more details about the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Peters Township, call 1-888-227-5445 or 724-222-6911.

www.acsevents.org/relat/peterstwp



ATTENTION

Please check out
our Lost & Found; all items unclaimed
after May 18th will be
donated to a local charity.
Also, if you are missing any
eyeglasses, please check
with the office; a number of
eyeglasses were turned in
over the year.

**McMURRAY DAY**

**Attention Parents. Volunteers
are needed for McMurray Day!**
This year the date is June 6, with
a raindate of June 7. If you are
interested, please
contact Dianne Lioon at
(724) 941-4908.

REFLECTIONS

The Reflections theme for 2007-2008 is "I
Can Make A Difference". You can get
started now and enter as many times as
you like.

The four categories are: Photography, Vis-
ual Arts, Music, and Literature. This is a
great way to express yourself in the arts
and every participant receives a ribbon! So
don't delay, work on it over the summer
and GOOD LUCK!

May **Mark
Your
Calendar!** **June**

May 21 (Mon)	6th Grade String Concert	7:00 to 8:30 PM	MC
May 21 (Mon)	4th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
May 22 (Tues)	4th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
May 23 (Wed)	Kennywood Tickets On Sale (Cash Only)	11:15 AM to 1:45 PM	MC
May 23 (Wed)	5th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
May 24 (Thurs)	5th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
May 25 (Fri)	School Spirit Day!		
May 28 (Mon)	Memorial Day NO SCHOOL!!		
May 30 (Wed)	4th & 5th Grade String Concert	7:00 to 8:30 PM	MC
May 30 (Wed)	6th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
May 31 (Thurs)	6th Grade Chorus Concert	2:15 to 3:15 PM	MC
June 1 (Fri)	4th Grade Economics Fair		MC
June 1 (Fri)	6th Grade Spring Fling	6:30 to 9:00 PM	MC
June 6 (Wed)	McMURRAY DAY!!		
June 7 (Thurs)	RAIN DATE McMURRAY DAY!!		
June 8 (Fri)	School Spirit Day!		
June 13 (Wed)	LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!!!		
June 14 (Thurs)	KENNYWOOD DAY!!		
June 20 (Wed)	Report Cards		
June 30 (Sat)	Community Day & Fireworks	11:00 AM 9:45 PM	Peterswood Park