

# The Carson Courier

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*"Rediscovering... the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."  
from Rachel Carson's "A Sense of Wonder"*

## A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents,

I would like to thank all of the parents who joined us for the 7th and 8th grade Back-To-School Nights. The turnout was spectacular. As always, it was a delight to see so many of you in the hallways. Your support of our school and appreciation of our efforts are greatly appreciated. We truly have a partnership that is working well for the children!

Veteran's Day has always been a valued opportunity to honor the contributions and sacrifices of those who have given so much for our country. We would like to invite you to join us for our annual Open House on Monday, November 11. What better way to honor the contributions of our veterans than to celebrate the freedom they have preserved that enables us to educate a new generation. We hope you will join us for at least a portion of the day. You will be able to attend your child's classes and see firsthand all the exciting things that happen daily in our classrooms.

As children reach the age of adolescence, they are presented with more difficult choices as well as peer pressure to conform. As parents, it is important that we provide our children with a safety net. This is not an easy task with our jobs consuming much of our days and our children seeking more independence and less interference from mom or dad. There are some proactive measures that are essential in keeping in touch with the lives of our children.

- Know where your child is and with whom at all times;
- Avoid situations where there is not an adult to supervise (especially private parties and activities in homes);
- Network with the parents of your child's friends to ensure they adhere to your limits and expectations;
- Constantly monitor the use of phone and internet use (especially instant messaging, MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube). Students feel a sense of anonymity when they are using electronic communication devices;
- Keep in contact with your child's school through the school counselor and teachers;
- Encourage your children to take part in after-school activities. This is an important part of school life and extends and enriches our daily programs. Mondays are designated for academic help only. Clubs and activities meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Late buses are provided all three days;
- And most importantly, talk with your child on a daily basis.

By setting limits and keeping track of children's activities you can continue to monitor their growth and avoid those "poor choices" that can have lasting effects. As always, if you are concerned with your child's development please do not hesitate to contact his or her school counselor. They are equipped with many resources (inside and outside school) to assist parents in raising a healthy adolescent.

The first quarter ends October 30<sup>th</sup>. I hope our new initiative of sending regular progress reports is helping at home in keeping up with your child's education. In the main, we have been very pleased with the progress our students are making and the commitment they are showing to their schoolwork. That said, they are still children and can certainly experience bumps in the road. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or counselor. Ours is an important partnership!

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our Open House.

*"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, or touched...but are felt in the heart." - Helen Keller*

*Sincerely,*

*August Frattali  
Principal*





YOU ARE INVITED TO  
CARSON MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR OUR



## VETERAN'S DAY OPEN HOUSE

on November 11, 2009.

- Spend all or part of the day with us! Visit your child's classrooms throughout the day.
- This event is for parents or guardians only. Due to our increased enrollment, space for chairs will probably not be available, so some classrooms might be "standing room only". For this reason also, siblings, relatives and friends will not be able to attend this event.
- **All guests must present a photo ID at registration.** All cell phones, pagers and other communication devices must be turned off or on silent mode while you are in the classrooms. Remember that this is not a time for conversations with others, including your child.
- You will not be able to join your child for lunch in the cafeteria because the cafeteria is at capacity. If you would like to bring a bag lunch, you are welcome to eat in our Conference Center, Room B127, or you may attend the PTA meeting in the Media Center at 12:00 noon.
- In the interest of student safety in the parking lot, plan to arrive after 8:15 a.m. and leave by 2:30 p.m. Due to security and parking restrictions, we prefer that once you exit the building you do not return.
- Please remember this is an open house and not the appropriate time to discuss individual student concerns. If you would like to set up a conference, please stop by the student services office.
- Since we anticipate a large turnout, consider carpooling with other parents, if possible, to facilitate parking. Parking is not permitted across the street in the Lincoln Park II lots, nor in the Nysmith School lot for this event.

**ALL CARS MUST BE MOVED FROM THE BUS LANES BY 2:15 P.M. TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE BUSES THAT BEGIN ARRIVING AT 2:30 P.M.**

Flyers will be sent home with students a few days prior to Open House. This flyer will include a section where you and your child can fill in his or her daily schedule.

**Bring the flyer with you** to Open House to use as your guide throughout the day.

*If you have any questions about the Open House, please call 703-925-3600.*

Please sure to review the  
calendars at the end of this  
newsletter for other  
Important Upcoming Events.

## NOTES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services staff has been very busy working with students, teachers, and parents to assist students to be more academically successful. Counselors work with students on their assigned teams in the classroom, individually, and in small groups. The counselors have spent time in the classroom this month working with students on each team to discuss the very important topic of bullying and sexual harassment. These lessons are presented as an extension of the Fairfax County Public Schools Student Rights and Responsibilities regulations. All counselors in all Fairfax County schools are required to teach awareness lessons on this topic to each grade level. We are hopeful that these lessons and information will foster a discussion of this topic at home as well.

### **Career Information**

If you have not already done so, and are interested in helping to share your career with our students, please call School Counselor, Rebecca Little at 703-925-3619. Instead of a single career day in which careers are addressed for our students, we are imbedding that information in our curriculum with speakers throughout the year. Later on in the year the counselors will begin working on interest inventories with their team students that will help students relate their interests to careers.

### **Please mark the following dates on your calendar.**

November 2 & 3	FCPS Teacher Workdays (NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS)
November 6	First Quarter Progress Reports sent home
November 11	Parent Open House (bring a book to read during Learning Seminar)
November 25	Early release (2 hour early closing)
November 26-27	Thanksgiving Holiday

If at any time you wish to have a conference with your child's counselor and/or team of teachers, please call the counselor assigned to the team. The counselor will make the appointment for you and assist with facilitating the conference. It is important that you contact the counselor first in order to make an appointment. The counselors have many responsibilities and are not often available on short notice or if you just stop by the school. The counselors are:

Jamie Mahoney	Teams: Trailblazers, X-treme team	703-925-3620
Rebecca Little	Teams: Champions, Yellow Jackets	703-925-3619
Brenda Humphrey (Lead)	Teams: Dream Team, Dolphins	703-925-3618
Joni Fraundorfer	Teams: All Stars, Wolves	703-925-3641
Lauren Robarge	Counselor Intern/ Resource Asst.	703-925-3617
Amy McLaughlin	Testing Co-coordinator	703-925-3617

### **REMINDER**

Parents, please remember that the Guidance Office closes at 4 p.m. The Main Office closes at 4:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. If a child misses the bus or is staying late to work with a teacher, he or she must be picked up before the Main Office closes at 4:30 pm (unless students are here late for special events such as drama, music, etc., and arrangements have been made to pick them up at a later time). When students are not picked up on time, school personnel must stay until the parent arrives. This presents an inconvenience, as many of the teachers and administrators have to attend classes, pick up their children or attend other evening activities. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

### **Federal Impact Aid Forms**

The first week in November your child will be bringing home a Federal Impact Aid Survey form for you to fill out and sign. **The Federal Impact Aid Program** attempts to compensate local school districts for their loss in tax revenue due to a federal presence in their district boundaries. This is especially important this year due to our budget shortfall. Last year Fairfax County Public Schools received approximately \$3,500,000 under this program. All information given on this form is strictly confidential. Due to a strict deadline, it will be necessary to call those who do not turn in this form by the required due date. Thank you for your assistance in helping FCPS to provide the best education and services for all of our children. **It is extremely important that you return this signed form!**

### **Guidance and Counseling Opt Outs**

The Guidance and Counseling opt-out form had been included in the set of County opt-out forms published early in the school year. By signing the form, your child will be excluded from participating in the Guidance programs which would include Academic Guidance, Career Guidance and/or Personal/Social counseling. Please keep in mind that opt-outs are considered permanent through 12th grade unless otherwise rescinded in writing by the parents. Counseling required for crisis intervention, or otherwise needed to maintain order, discipline or a productive learning environment is exempt from the opt-out.

### **Student Services Advisory Council**

We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Price and her daughter, Cheyenne, and Mrs. Edner as part of our newly formed Student Services Advisory Council. This committee was formed in order to provide an avenue for continued communication to better meet the needs of our students and those of the community. Our next meeting will be on November 11, 2009 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. in room B127

### **Human Relations Committee**

The Human Relations Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, October 27, 2009 in the guidance conference room. The purpose of this committee is to continue to support and promote a good human relations climate throughout our school. If you are interested in learning more about the committee or attending our next meeting, please contact Mrs. Mahoney (Counselor) at 703-925-3620.

## **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' MESSAGE**

Here we are, well into the first quarter and this 12<sup>th</sup> year at Rachel Carson where we are striving to be "Greater by the Dozen." Students should be accustomed to the routine and feeling comfortable with class and school expectations. They should also have a good idea of their homework load and should be settling into routines at home for completing homework assignments and turning them in on time.

Our first ever electronic progress reports have gone home, so parents should have an idea of how well students are doing in their new classes this year. These progress reports will be coming home every two to three weeks throughout the year to provide detailed information about how things are going in each class and to give students and parents an opportunity to celebrate successes and address any challenges or concerns. Remember to make use of the Daily Assignment Book (DAB) to help keep up to date on assignments and expectations. Students will be working each week in learning seminar to refine their organizational skills, which are tremendously important to school (and lifelong) success. Late buses began on October 5<sup>th</sup>, so teachers are now available to meet with students after school if they need additional help.

With the advent of late busses, the after-school program is now in full swing. Each student should make an effort to take part in at least one after-school activity or club. That's a great way to meet friends, hone skills, have fun, and really feel a part of Rachel Carson Middle School. Students can check out the cafeteria bulletin board or the After-School Program Blackboard site for information about clubs.

Please remember to contact your child's counselor or administrator if you have concerns or questions. We are here to help ensure that your child has a successful school year.

Shawn Brown, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Assistant Principal  
Tam Ballou, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Assistant Principal

## **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

All club activities are posted on Blackboard under Clubs. Only students can see the club list. The list is also posted on the After-School Activities board in the cafeteria. Some club sign-ups are on the board; if the club your child is interested in is not posted, he or she should check with the sponsoring teacher in his or her room. The Late Bus schedule is also posted on Blackboard and on the board in the cafeteria. Please look for the bus stop closest to your home. Look at the list carefully as many bus stops were consolidated. Call me if you need any help.

Hay, Got Milk? This club resumed on Tuesday, Oct. 20, and will meet on Oct. 27, Nov. 10 and Nov. 17 The cost is \$28 for four weeks at Frying Pan Farm Park. Open registrations are available for karate and volleyball every week. All forms are available at the front office.

For After-School Clubs, parents may pick up students at doorway #8. Students will be waiting in the cafeteria. The front office closes at 4:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays and at 4:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. I may be reached on my cell 571-451-8207 or my office 703-925-3631 if you need to contact me. If I miss your call, please do not hang up; leave me a message so I know to return your call and locate your child for you.

Pat Lee, After-School Program Specialist

## PTA PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Parents,

As I write this I find it hard to believe that the first quarter is almost over! Students are settled into their routines and every time I am at Carson, I am always in awe at how smoothly things run on a daily basis.

Thanks to everyone who let Subway "make dinner" at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade BTS night in September. A big thank you to the NJHS volunteers who did a GREAT job feeding everyone and who were such phenomenal sales people that ALL of the subs were sold! The money that we raise on Subway sales and at our Spirit Dining Nights goes back to Carson to help defray costs of things such as student development, technology expenses and staff development. We are still in need of someone to coordinate the spirit dining nights. Spirit Dining Nights are a great way to meet other families in the RCMS community and let someone else do the cooking! If you are interested in getting involved please give me a call or send me an email. It does not involve a lot of time, but gives back to RCMS in a big way.

I would also like to thank all of the parent volunteers who have helped out with gym uniforms, picture day, magazine sales and making the BTS nights a great success. Thank you to the parents who have joined the PTA. We currently have approximately 681 members and we would like to try to exceed our membership from last year. If you did not join at BTS nights it is still NOT TOO LATE to join the PTA or donate to Friends of Carson. As of this writing, we have exceeded our anticipated donations from Friends of Carson which has raised over \$8000. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!! Joining the PTA is our way of saying we care about our children and their school community. Throughout the years, PTA has focused on a variety of issues which affect our children including nutrition, physical fitness, substance abuse, school lunches and family life education as well as many more. The majority of your contributions stay at Rachel Carson, but the money that goes to state and national PTAs help support these and many other programs. If you would like to learn more about PTA, please visit [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).

Thanks again to Jeannine Dollard for all of her hard work putting the directory together. The directory will be available for \$5.00 (make checks payable to RCMS PTA). Directories will be available for sale during student lunches and in the front office. Keep an eye out for the sale dates.

The Magazine Drive is coming to a close, and I would like to extend a HUGE thank you to Debbie Perreault for all of her hard work coordinating volunteers and to ALL of the volunteers who have made this program such a success. The RCMS staff certainly appreciates all of you who have purchased magazines or donated your time during the prize and tally days.

If you have not already done so, please sign up for Giant Bonus Bucks or with your VIC card at Harris Teeter. Even if you registered last year, you must reregister each year. You may sign up at your local store or online. For Giant the web address is [www.giantfood.com/aplus](http://www.giantfood.com/aplus); the RCMS ID number is 03624 (password YJQK). For Harris Teeter, go to [www.harristeeter.com](http://www.harristeeter.com); login is TIE6719 (password CARSON1). We also have Box tops for Education at RCMS so remember to save those box tops! We are still in need of a coordinator for this program so if you are interested in getting involved or have any questions please DO NOT HESITATE to get in touch with me.

Lastly, we are still in need of someone(s) who have a special talent for party planning...think celebrity wedding coordinator...JUST KIDDING! We are still without a coordinator for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade celebration, so if you want to let your party planning skills shine please give me a call or send me an email. If we do not have a coordinator for this event it cannot happen. This is the event that marks the "graduation" celebration of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders onto high school. These memories last a lifetime. My 24 year-old still talks about his RCMS celebration today as he remains friends with those he has been friends with since middle school.

Let me just close by saying I feel so fortunate to be a part of this community. I know how busy life can be and I am always so impressed by how giving and enthusiastic the staff, parents and kids of RCMS are. We ask a lot and you give a lot but never without a tremendous level of caring. I look forward to seeing you at the PTA meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the library. Please note: the November meeting will be held at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, November 11 during the Open House. PLEASE be mindful of flu season; WASH YOUR HANDS, GET YOUR FLU SHOT and if you or your children have any flu-like symptoms, PLEASE do not send them to school. As a nurse I want to see as many people as possible stay healthy during flu season!

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE to call or email me with any comments, questions or concerns.


Take care,

Chris Clark  
[csclark721@verizon.net](mailto:csclark721@verizon.net); Ph. 703-742-6103

# November 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Student Holiday Teacher Workday	3 Student Holiday Teacher Workday	4	5 Fall Picture Retakes 8:00-11:00 a.m.	6 Report Cards Go Home	7
8	9	10 Vision/Hearing Screening	11 Veteran's Day Open House 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. PTA Meeting 12:00 Media Center	12	13	14
15	16	17 Cluster 8 Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting RCMS Media Center 7:00 p.m.	18	19	20 Fall Play "Nothing But the Truth" 7:00 p.m.	21 Fall Play "Nothing But the Truth" 7:00 p.m.
22	23	24	25 All FCPS Schools close early; Carson students dismissed @ 12:50 p.m.	26 School Closed Thanksgiving Holiday Break	27 School Closed Thanksgiving Holiday Break	28
29	30					

# December 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Choral Concert 7:00 p.m.	8 Band Concert 7:00 p.m.	9 Orchestra Concert 7:00 p.m.	10 Band Concert 7:00 p.m.	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 All FCPS schools close early; Carson students dismissed @ 12:50 p.m.	24 Winter Break	25 Winter Break	26
27	28 Winter Break	29 Winter Break	30 Winter Break	31 Winter Break		