



Robious Express

September
2010

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Upcoming Events

Sept. 13	PTA Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Library
Sept. 21	Back to School Night, Grades 3-5, 7:00—8:30 p.m., Cafeteria
Sept. 23	Chick-fil-A Night, 5:30—8:00 p.m.
Sept. 28	Back to School Night, Grades K-2, 7:00—8:15 p.m., Cafeteria

PTA President's Report

It's always sad to see summer end, but all those eager little faces getting on the bus for the first day of school is such a sweet sight. I hope that everyone has settled back into the school routine by now and looking forward to a great year! The PTA has lots of fun programs planned and I would like to give a huge **THANK YOU** to all of the committee chairs for volunteering their time and energy to keep these programs running smoothly. I would especially like to thank Heather Crane and Sonya Carman for stepping up to the plate to host the Back to School luncheon for the faculty and staff before school even started. They did a fantastic job in a short amount of time and assembled a super-talented team of volunteers to help show how much we all appreciate the extraordinary staff here at Robious Elementary.

The first PTA-sponsored event will be the Monster

Mash costume and pizza party in late October. The winter months will bring the 2nd biennial "Kisses for Kids" Auction, Dad's Game Night with the kids, and Caboose Camp after-school enrichment program. The fun continues into the Spring with our 1st annual "Run for Robious" 5K & Fun Run, a joint elementary and middle school event to raise money for Expeditionary Learning.

You can keep abreast of PTA and school news and events by checking out our web site www.respta.org and joining us on Facebook. Simply search for Robious Elementary School and select "Like" to receive updates on timely announcements and weather advisories. We implemented a new management/organizational system this year that can be accessed via the "Parent Portal" link on www.respta.org. Please take a moment to go in and create an ac-

count. This information will be used for email communications, our school directory and for managing events and volunteers.

As in years past, the PTA will continue to provide valuable services for our teachers, students and parents. The PTA is always searching for volunteers who are interested in helping with existing programs and bringing new ideas to the table. There are numerous opportunities for parents to get involved—we are happy to work with all types of schedules. Each committee would eagerly welcome a new, enthusiastic member! Please consider attending a PTA meeting, joining a committee or volunteering for an event this year. It is our dedicated parents that keep our events fresh, fun, and worthwhile.

Erin Doyle

PTA President
eodoyle@gmail.com

Welcome Back to the 2010-2011 School Year!

A Note from Principal Anne O'Toole

On behalf of our faculty and staff, I am delighted to welcome your family to another great year at Robious Elementary School! As we enter our 41st year, our school community can be very proud of the academic preparation, the character development, and the leadership skills provided to every student enrolled in our school.

This year we have several new initiatives designed to make Robious Elementary even better. Beginning the first week of school, we will implement a Visitor Raptor System. All exterior doors, including the front door of the school, will remain locked during the school day, and visitors will need to identify themselves before the front door is unlocked by the front office staff.

Also, for the first time we will be identifying our school buses by bus route number, rather than by bus number. Since we have twelve buses, our buses will be numbered 1-12, each for a different bus route. This will make those days where we have substitute drivers and buses a lot easier for our students, staff, and you, our parents.

We are very proud of the fact that we are the first Expeditionary Learning School in Virginia. Expeditionary Learning is an inquiry-based approach to education, and the emphasis is on building higher thinking skills. As we enter our sixth year as an EL school, we look forward to expanding learning expeditions at each grade level. This year we will initiate "showcase portfolios" of high quality student work for all students in grades K-5, and your child will actually

conduct a scheduled conference to present his/her best work to you in his/her classroom April 1-8. It will be very exciting for both you and your child!

There are so many things that make Robious Elementary an outstanding school, but in my mind you, our parents, are among the true hallmarks of our success. I encourage you to be active as a volunteer and to join the PTA, taking a leadership role in that organization, if you can.

We're off and running, so here's to the best year yet!

Anne S. O'Toole



Become a Member of Our PTA!

Parents, welcome back to another great year at Robious Elementary! Our school is very blessed to have the support of loyal and enthusiastic parents and families like yourselves, actively committed to our children's success in learning.

Our PTA has exciting plans for the 2010-2011 school year, and it is through your support and membership that we are able to make these things happen. We proudly boast over 100% membership here at Robious year after year. We hope that you will help us achieve that goal once again as we kick off another exciting year.

Joining is simple. Just fill out the

blue PTA Membership and Class Party Fund form that was sent home with your child on the first day of school. The cost is \$5 per adult or \$10 per family. Please make checks payable to Robious Elementary PTA and include each child's name and teacher on the form. If you have more than one child at Robious, you only need to join once.

Please feel free to email me any questions you may have. Thank you in advance for your support and commitment to making this another excellent school year for our children.

Jen Boykin

jenluboy@yahoo.com

Kisses for Kids Silent Auction

My name is Elaine Bowling and I am the chair for this year's main fundraiser, the "Kisses for Kids" Silent Auction. It will be held at Salisbury Country Club in February and it is a really fun affair! In order to pull it all together it takes a big team effort and I am looking for help! I need volunteers to help with asking local businesses for auction donations and to help with planning the event. Would you please consider joining my team? You can email me at losbowlings@verizon.net or give me a call at 423-5794. I look forward to work with you in this exciting, rewarding event!

Elaine Bowling

Robious Elementary Auction Chair



Thank you to all who contributed to the Back to School Luncheon on September 2nd. A special thank you to the custodial staff and PTA Board Members. You all helped to make "Under the Tuscan Sun" a successful event, in order to show our teachers and staff how important they are to us. I would also like to thank Heather Crane for helping us to plan this event. We are so pleased to announce that Heather, Christine Overstreet, and Gretchen Broughton will now be Co-Chairing Staff Appreciation.

Sonya Carman

sonya@craigssondavid.com

Library News: Volunteers Needed!

Welcome back, Robious Families! I hope you had a great summer vacation, filled with fun and some good books!

Please consider the library when planning your volunteer schedule this school year. There are morning and afternoon shifts available, and you can work once a month or more if you would like. Working in the library consists of shelving books, making birthday bags, putting labels on books, and/or helping our kids make their reading selections. Shifts are approximately one hour long. Until the new PTA website is running, please email me and include



your name, the names of your children and their teachers, how often you would like to

work, and any specific concerns. Our library gets in full swing this month, so volunteers are needed right away. Also, be on the lookout for flyers in support of our Birthday Book Program. Thanks in advance!

Ivy Pressendo

ipressendo@verizon.net

Green Team News

It's so exciting to be entering the third year of "greening Robious Elementary School" efforts. The green team membership grew exponentially last year, and all the new members got together at the end of the year to brainstorm fun and easy ways to make our school even greener this year. Here are some of the programs you can look forward to (and talk to your kids about):

- **"Tap and Stack" in the lunchroom** – students who have bought a lunch will be encouraged to tap the leftovers off their trays and then stack the trays on a table (for bulk tossing later) as they exit the lunchroom. This program has been implemented in other schools, and has reduced the volume of waste leaving the lunchroom by up to 50%. Check out this cute YouTube video reenactment of how "tap and stack" works: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dif83bIO6M4>
- **"Boomerang" lunches** – students who have brought a lunch from home will be encouraged to bring their food packaging back home (hopefully this will raise the students' awareness of their part in waste generation

and prompt them to come up with solutions regarding waste reduction)

- **Juice Pouch Recycling** – there will be expanded opportunities for students to deposit their empty juice pouches for recycling. Last year, we kept thousands of juice pouches out of the landfill, and the PTA gave each classroom a backpack made out of recycled juice pouches!
- **Glue Stick/Glue Bottle Recycling** – each classroom will continue to collect empty glue sticks and empty glue bottles for recycling. Last year, we also kept over a thousand glue sticks and bottles out of the landfill!
- **Broken crayon recycling** – each classroom will continue to collect broken crayons for recycling by a local Girl Scout troop
- **Classroom paper and plastic recycling** – each classroom will continue to collect recyclable materials like paper and plastic as part of our highly successful classroom recycling program. Over the last two years, our students have kept tons of waste out of

the landfill.

- **Walking School Buses** – we will be planning more walking school buses this year. Check the PTA newsletter each month for dates!
- **Earth Week** – and, of course, we have all sorts of exciting plans in the works for Earth Week 2011.

I'd like to thank all of the Robious Elementary students, teachers, and parents for their support over the last two years for all the "green" programs that have grown at RES. I am looking forward to another great year, and invite any parent who would like to be a part of this year's Green Team to let me know. I always want to hear your great ideas and your thoughtful feedback.

Bryna Dunn
brynadunn@gmail.com



Expeditionary Learning News

Welcome to all those new to Robious Elementary, and welcome back to the rest of you! For those of you who are new, know that your children have started an educational journey like no other in Chesterfield County. Gaining a true understanding of "EL" can take some time. While you familiarize yourself with the specifics, know that at its core is an educational *philosophy* that empowers children through active inquiry-based, teacher facilitated learning. Our children are not subjected to their education, they are an integral component.

Student benefits, as stated on the EL web site, www.elschools.org are:

- Energizes student motivation and engagement through high-level tasks and active roles in the classroom
- Uses case studies and projects to connect students to real-world audiences and compel them to care and contribute
- Sets clear expectations and tight follow-through for respect and responsibility, teamwork and contribution, and commitment to high quality work
- Builds a school culture where students feel safe, respected, and pushed to be their best selves
- Trusts students with deep cognitive challenges and important responsibilities and prepares them to be leaders
- Develops the critical thinking and problem solving skills needed to succeed in college and beyond

Recently, Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education, spent much of the day at King Middle School in Portland, Maine, which has been an Expeditionary Learning school for 15 years. He was impressed. One of the things he said was, "This idea of Expeditionary Learning... this is how kids *want* to learn..."

We agree! And this is our second year of volunteering for our teachers in order to assist them with executing this fine education. Feel free to contact them with any EL questions.

Your EL parent coordinators for 2010/2011 are as follows:

K	Lora Franklin	matt_and_lora@yahoo.com
1 st	Jennifer Gurley	jsgurley5@verizon.net
2 nd	Candace Haske	candacehaske@gmail.com
3 rd	Summer Moore	jadas_mom@verizon.net
4 th	Leigh Deignan	ldeignan@verizon.net
5 th	Mary Beth McCabe	mccabeva@yahoo.com

We are excited to witness another great year of quality education at Robious Elementary!

PTA EL Co-Chairs:

Beth Hanna
B4Hanna@aol.com

Heidi Montemurro
hmontemurro@verizon.net



2801 Robious Crossing Dr.
Midlothian, VA 23113

Phone: 804-378-2500

E-mail: info@respta.org

*Visit us on the web
at www.respta.org*

*We are crew,
not passengers!*

MONSTER MASH

Get your costumes ready for our Fall fun event! "Monster Mash" is coming up on Wednesday, October 27, from 5:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m. There will be a DJ in the gym providing music and games. There will be costume and pumpkin decorating contests too! Pizza, drinks, and treats will be served in the



cafeteria to everyone. Be on the lookout for more information on pre-ordering pizza. As always, we need lots of help to decorate and assist with this event. If you can volunteer or have any questions, please contact Kristi Turner at fish-queen2007@gmail.com or 464-2708.

First Walking School Bus of the Year — September 24!

I can't think of a better way to reconnect with classmates and neighbors (or to meet new ones) than getting outside for a brisk walk to school. Do you think we can get over half of our students to walk to school for the first Walking School Bus of the year?

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to and/or from school with one or more adults; it's that simple. Just make sure you have adequate adult supervision, especially if you have to cross any streets... and make sure you don't walk on private property without advance permission. Please don't play on the school playgrounds (especially the one by the bus loop) before school, and please keep dogs away from the main entrance of the school. Oh, and you may have noticed the construction going on at the middle school – let's all stay away from that, too!

For September 24, plan on walking with other parents/kids in your neighborhood either to and/or from school (last year, most walked to school). If you are walking from school, remember that your kids will need a note, and you will need ID for school pick-up. If you want connections to others in your neighborhood who are participating, Frank Zwemer (Roxshire, at 379-9120 and frank_zwemer@verizon.net) can help.

See www.walkingschoolbus.org for more information and logistical tips.

In Case of Inclement Weather

At the beginning of each school year, families should make emergency closing child-care arrangements so that students know what to do and where to go if schools close early.

If it becomes necessary to close schools because of bad weather or for any other reason, such as power failure, announcements will be carried on the school system's web site (chesterfield.k12.va.us), made on Comcast Channel 96, submitted to local radio and TV stations or communicated via ParentLink.

Chesterfield schools use ParentLink to communicate with parents via phone or e-mail. So that this communication tool can work effectively, parents need to make sure their school has their correct phone numbers (home, work and cell) and e-mail addresses. In addition to emergency closing information, ParentLink is used to notify parents about children's absences and to share information about upcoming school events.

The Chesterfield County public school system does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, religion, disabilities or national origin in employment or in its educational programs and activities.

More info: http://www.chesterfield.k12.va.us/CCPS/About_CCPS/compliance_guidelines.htm
