



The Farmland Harvest

The Newsletter of the Farmland Elementary PTA

September 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

--*Caroline Cooksey*

A person once said that it takes a village to raise a child. I fear that person may have babysat for me. I will say that a parent's job is much easier with the support of neighbors and friends. I feel fortunate that as a community we share a common bond – we look out for each other and we put our children at the top of the priority list.

I'd like to welcome all our new families and our returning families on behalf of our PTA Board. Joining me on the board are our vice presidents, Lisa Miller and Andrea Nadelman; Matt Hamill, our treasurer; Lisa Garson, our recording secretary; Michele Wisniewski and Yvonne Levine, our MCCPTA reps; and Stacey Jungreis and Alan Hairston, our cluster reps. Representing the school and our teachers are Diane Smith, our principal; Mary Bliss, our asst. principal and Annie Moore and Audrey Fincher, our teacher reps.

You will be receiving The Farmland Harvest on a monthly basis from the PTA to provide you with news and information for parents. There are four primary ways that we communicate with parents: The Harvest (PTA), Principally Speaking (school newsletter), flyers in your child's backpack and the PTA listserv. We strongly encourage all of you to join our moderated listserv as it is the fastest and most economical way to disseminate information. In time-sensitive situations, it is the first and perhaps only communication for parents to communicate with other parents. To join, simply send an email to farmlandpta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



What does the PTA do? At Farmland, the PTA manages and financially supports many programs from in-school activities to after-school activities to major events. PTA activities and events

supplement the learning experience for our children in the areas of art, science, music, writing, culture and more. For example, the PTA pays for three to four cultural arts assemblies that the whole school enjoys (more likely to be two to three this year). We offset some out-of-pocket expenses for teacher materials through the staff instructional fund and we show our support for teachers and staff in our staff appreciation events. We hold major events like the Science Fair,

Follies (talent show) and International Night. We provide funds for Opera, Chorus, Artist in Residence, Safety Patrols, Geography Bowl, Career Day and much more. We produce publications like the yearbook and Scarecrow's Corner. Finally, we have fun and we socialize through our potluck and carnival events.



PTA Budget. In a tough economic year, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that the PTA will not attempt to reform healthcare – we'll leave that to the experts. The bad news is that we had to shave 13% from our budget from last year. At the same time, we are hoping to increase revenue by about 22% from 2008-2009. Not unlike many households, we need to spend less and earn more. Our budget is \$16,300 and we will manage another \$30,000 in pass-through activities. Our Treasurer, Matt Hamill, has done a phenomenal job of keeping our finances in good shape and has worked to reduce our operating expenses – not an easy task in a budget that has virtually “no fat.”

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Sept. 25	Deadline for Student Directory Ads
Sept. 30	Orders for Sally Foster/Otis Spunkmeyer/Magazines Due
Oct. 6, 7:00 p.m.	PTA Meeting
Oct. 9, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Kindergarten Potluck
Oct. 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m.	Carnival
Oct. 20-22	Book Fair
Nov. 17, 6:45 p.m.	First Grade Potluck



PTA Meetings. We had an unbelievable turnout at our first PTA meeting at Rollins Congressional Club. Sixty people came and we're so glad to greet new faces and have more parents involved. Thanks to Stacey Jungreis, Andrea Nadelman and Lisa Miller, we started with a fun icebreaker and refreshments. In all honesty, the first PTA meetings I ever attended seemed very procedural and I wondered if it was worth my time. Along the way, I realized that they are a great forum for dialog with our principal, assistant principal and teacher reps and for discussing our priorities, concerns, and how we allocate funds. It's where every family has a

voice. Being a PTA member doesn't require you to attend meetings and non-members are always welcome.

Our PTA meetings for this school year will be the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Rollins Congressional Club, 1621 Martha Terrace.

Join!

Membership. If you have been around me long enough, you've probably heard me say, "for the cost of a large pizza" (with toppings and without a coupon), you can fund some amazing programs for our kids and put smiles on more faces than you could ever imagine. And it so happens that they are our favorite faces. PTA memberships are yearly because our expenses recur yearly. Thank you to those parents who have already joined for 2009-2010. We're off to a great start but still have a way to go. Just think, if we had one membership from each family at Farmland ES, we would meet nearly one third of our expenses (instead of one fifth). Please see the attached membership form to join the PTA.



Fundraising. Spending money is easy; earning it is not so easy. Our two biggest fundraisers are the **Sally Foster Gift Wrap and Book Fair**. Together, they account for nearly half our revenue and they happen in September and October. See more about Sally later in this newsletter. Book Fair is October 20th through the 22nd. Please see the attached flyer for more information.



The **Farmland Carnival** is coming on October 11, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Rollins Park Recreation Center. It's a fun day for our kids to play on moon bounces and other inflatables, play games and enjoy a day outside with their friends.

We are looking for donations for the Cake Walk and volunteers to help. The Cake Walk is a game where the winner receives a cake or baked good as the prize! All proceeds go to the Farmland PTA. Bring a cake, cookies, brownies, or cupcakes on a disposable plate. For more info or to volunteer, please email Karen Opdahl at opdahljke@yahoo.com. We need a lot of donations, as the game is so popular we run out of cakes every year.

Also, it takes many volunteers to set up, clean up and help supervise the games and inflatables. If you can

donate some time, please contact Eric Tublin, tubline@hotmail.com or Carnival Chair, Michele Wisniewski (wisniewskimichele@yahoo.com).



Directory Ads. We are once again offering businesses and organizations a chance to advertise in our Student Directory. Don Cooksey is our directory ads chair and if you are wondering: 1) YES, we're married and 2) NO, he didn't have a choice in this assignment. Last year, directory sales contributed revenue equivalent to about 190 PTA memberships. If you know of an organization that would like to advertise, please visit www.farmland-pta.org for information. The deadline is September 25.

Open Positions. We are looking for a Corresponding Secretary, which is a PTA Board position. If you are interested and would like more information on the job, please contact Stacey Jungreis (jungreis@verizon.net). Other priority areas are FLES coordinators, NAACP Rep, and a coordinator for Girls on the Run for fall. If you want to help and don't know where to start, just contact Andrea Nadelman (aknadelman@yahoo.com) or Lisa Miller (lisamiller18@verizon.net).



Volunteering. Our programs would not exist without our volunteers. Parents who want to volunteer but hesitate usually think: 1) they don't have experience, 2) English is not their first language, or 3) they don't have time. The first time you do anything means you've never done it before – that's true of all our volunteers. Training is handed down from our veterans to our rookies or we find our own way. As for communication, it can be a challenge but I would say that a willing heart and able hands overcome most obstacles. Finally, time. Do you know any parent who has extra time on their hands? We all work – either in the home, for an employer, or for our kids. We do our best squeezing things in because they are important and we simply get it done.

PTA Activities. Class Piano, Chess Club and Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) registrations are underway. If you are interested in Class Piano or Chess Club, the PTA has made arrangements with KAH to use their bus for a nominal fee for morning activities. We are still working on making afternoon transportation available. This is dependent on the

number of kids participating to ensure it's a cost-effective option. Attached flyers give more details.



Chess Club

Open to 2nd through 5th graders and 1st graders with experience
Classes will be 8-9 a.m. on Thursdays
Deadline is Monday, September 14th



Class Piano

Open to 2nd through 5th grade students
Classes will be 8-9 a.m., days to be determined
Deadline is Wednesday, September 16th



FLES Chinese, Spanish, French

Open to all grades, based on level
See class schedule
Deadline is Friday, September 18th



Mad Science

We are working on a schedule with the Mad Science office



Girls on the Run (GOTR)

No GOTR for the fall season unless we have a coordinator

Grade-level Potlucks. Each grade hosts a potluck for the purpose of bringing families together. Coordinators decide on the details (date, time and food) and the PTA pays for the room rental and the paper products.

Kindergarten Potluck

Friday, October 9
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the APR at North Lake
Look for sign-up sheets soon. For more information, contact Julie Yang at juliechenghuayang@yahoo.com, or Lisa Cohn at cohnalisa@hotmail.com.

1st Grade Potluck

Tuesday, November 17
6:45 p.m. in the APR at North Lake
Look for more information soon. Look for sign-up sheets soon. For more information, contact Stephanie Vordick at svordick@yahoo.com or Lauren Greenberg at labbeyg@yahoo.com.



Listserv. As I mentioned earlier, the PTA listserv is for all parents (not just members). Todd Keller is our listserv moderator and he does an outstanding

job of reviewing the messages first to ensure that the content is appropriate and that we are not bombarded by unnecessary emails. You can choose to receive emails immediately as they are sent or in a daily digest which will group multiple emails for a day. One message to the listserv – versus a flyer sent home – saves us over 600 pieces of paper, the drive to North Lake, half an hour of copying and distribution time, and the strain on our overworked school copier. And delivery is immediate once the message is approved. We will always need to make copies to safely attempt to reach all our parents, but we can rely on it less. Again, simply send an email to farmlandpta-subscribe@yahogroups.com to begin receiving important information via email.



PTA Website. Also on the topic of communication, we are attempting to ensure that everything you need is on our PTA website (www.farmland-pta.org). The home page will be dedicated to timely news,

information, and the all-important deadlines. We will post information and copies of flyers for all PTA activities and events. Forms and archived newsletters will be available as are links to Farmland ES and Kids After Hours (KAH). Josh Wisniewski is our webmaster. He does a fantastic job of keeping it relevant and current (this is in his spare time). If you have a PTA question, check the website. If it's not there, let us know, and we'll get it there.



Student Directories. We know that our parents rely heavily on the PTA student directory to contact classmates for birthday parties, play dates, and questions on homework, etc. Kate Heald, our directories chair,

has already started the process. Once class lists are finalized, the deadline to withhold names has passed (Sept. 11) and directory ads are in, we can finish compiling the book and send it to the printer. This is a huge undertaking and a tough job and we thank Kate for suffering through it again. Each PTA member will receive one free copy (i.e.: two-parent memberships will receive two copies). Remaining copies will be available for a nominal fee to cover our publishing costs. We will gladly provide a free copy to any family needing some financial relief.

Now you're all caught up. From one villager to another, I hope that you will get involved with your PTA and help us continue the tradition of giving our

kids the best school experience possible. If we haven't met yet, please feel free to introduce yourself or to contact me. I promise to refrain from any discussion on the economics of purchasing pizzas – that is until we know each other better.

See you at the next PTA meeting on **Tuesday, October 6 at 7:00 p.m. at Rollins Congressional Club.**

Sincerely,
Caroline Cooksey
carolinecooksey@yahoo.com

P.S. Below you'll find details on some more great PTA programs from the chair people who run them.



Unleash Artistic Talents with PTA ReflectionsSM

Encourage your child to participate in Reflections, a national arts recognition program for students in preschool through high school. Encourage your child to create works in any of the six arts areas (dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography or the visual arts). The arts help students develop skills in math, reading and writing. They help build social skills, creativity, and self-esteem.

As PTA Reflections celebrates 40 years of achievement in the arts, join communities across the nation in inspiring student works around this year's theme: "Beauty is..." For more information about the program, go to PTAreflections.org. More details to come.

Dori Morper and Amy Chang,
Farmland Reflections Chairs



Sally's Back and She's Brought Otis with Her!

The PTA's largest fundraiser of the year has kicked off. Check your (youngest) child's backpack for the SALLY FOSTER packet.

This year, we are selling Sally's gift wrap and gift items, as well as Otis Spunkmeyer cookie dough and magazine subscriptions to raise funds for the PTA to support our school and enrich our children's education. The Sally Foster catalog has many bright and cheerful wrap patterns, and many really neat gift items. (You may have noticed many of them in our display case across from the school office when you came for Back-

to-School Night.) As for the Sally Foster candies and the cookie dough --- Mmmm, mmmm, good!

While we don't encourage door-to-door sales, we hope you will check with your friends, family, neighbors and work colleagues. Your distant friends and relatives can also order Sally Foster items online (please see the instructions on the cover letter stapled to your packet).

The sale runs through the end of the month. Remember, up to 50 percent of sales COME BACK TO US to support the PTA. This year, in an effort to be "green," we sent packets home with only the youngest child in the family that attends Farmland. If you want an additional packet for an older child, please check in the school office or contact one of the chairs.

If you have any questions, please contact either **Ilene Reid (301-230-1864)** or **Lisa Garson (301-468-8043)**. As always, thanks for your support!

Ilene Reid and Lisa Garson,
Sally Foster, Cookie and Magazine Fundraising Chairs

Sister School Donations

Due to our relocation, Farmland is assisting the Sister School through four monetary donations throughout the school year. Our first drive for support is NOW. Please send a check for anything between \$5 - \$100 to my home and I will get it to Harmony Hills. We want you to choose an amount that you will be comfortable contributing four times, once per quarter. Checks should be made out to **Mental Health Association...** as soon as possible and sent to: **Connie Jacobson**, 12108 Old Bridge Road, Rockville MD 20852. Many thanks.

The Farmland Harvest is the monthly newsletter of Farmland Elementary School PTA.

Farmland Elementary School at North Lake
 15101 Bauer Drive
 Rockville, MD 20853
 301-230-5919

PTA President: Caroline Cooksey
 Principal: Mrs. Diane Smith
 Harvest Editor: Peggy Ellett

You can find more information about the PTA on our website (www.farmland-pta.org) or by joining our listserv (farmlandpta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.)

For Harvest submissions please send them via email to ellets5@verizon.net and indicate HARVEST in the subject line. Deadline is the Friday after each month's PTA meeting.

Volunteers Needed!

It's almost time for Farmland's Annual Book Fair



The Scholastic Book Fair, sponsored by the PTA, will be held at the North Lake Center **Tuesday, October 20 through Thursday, October 22**. We need volunteers to help plan and work at the Book Fair. Volunteers are needed to organize events such as Teacher Read Night and One for Books. **You don't have to be available during school hours to help.**

If you are interested in helping, please indicate your volunteer interests below and send it in to the PTA Box in Farmland's office. This is a great event for the kids and a wonderful way to bring the gift of reading to your children.

Name _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

Please circle how you'd like to help with the book fair:

Decorations One for Books Teacher Read Night

Work at the book fair:

Set up: Monday Oct. 19: 12-3pm

Tuesday, 10/20: 9-11am 11-2pm 2-3:30pm

Wednesday, 10/21: 9-11am 11-2pm 2-3:30pm

Thursday, 10/22: 9-11am 11-2pm 2- 3:30pm

Teacher Read Night, Thursday 10/22 from 6:00-8:30

Breakdown: Friday, 10/23: 9-12 pm

Questions? Please contact Stephanie Vordick (301-984-6104; svordick@yahoo.com), or Lisa Tillman (301-984-3818; Lisa.Tillman@comcast.net).