

January 21, 2004



# The Aldrin Buzz

News from the Buzz Aldrin PTA

## PTA Direct Contributions Fundraiser Needs Your Support

**W**ith less than ten days to go, the PTA Direct Contributions Fundraiser is only 40% to our goal.

Donations were strong before the Winter Break, but tailed off immediately following. As of January 16, we had collected 68 donations totaling \$6,055. The average donation is approximately \$90.

### \$15,000 Target

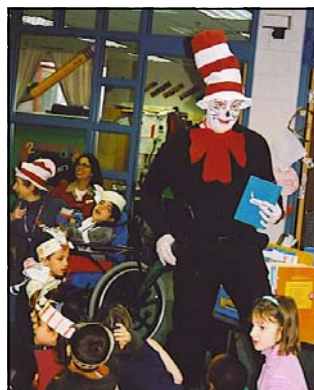
To fund all the programs planned for the year, we need to meet our goal of \$15,000. This is the PTA's single biggest fundraiser of the year.

We are confident that if every family takes our theme "It's a Family Affair" to heart and participates at the level with which they are comfortable, the campaign will be a success.

Why does the PTA need to raise money? The PTA funds items that Fairfax County does not fund, such as buses for field trips. The PTA also pays for:

- Resource books to assist with SOL preparation, and assignment books for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders

- New novels and literature for in-classroom libraries, and materials for Art, Music, PE, GT, ESOL, Preschool and Special Education



*Aldrin's Reading Program is supported by your PTA contributions.*

- Start-up funds so teachers can prepare their classrooms
- Programs such as Reading Enrichment, Authors Week, Math Olympiad, Odyssey of the Mind, GRACE Art and Reflections
- Funds for teachers to attend conferences and seminars
- Landscaping, the Sunshine Fund to help kids without a lunch, teacher and other staff appreciation weeks, and the school directory.

### It's Easy to Make a Donation

Misplaced your response card? Simply fill in the one we've printed on the back page of this issue of *The Buzz*. Then send it into school with your check in an envelope you've labeled "Direct Contributions Campaign". Thank you for your support of this fundraiser and of all the PTA activities.

## Student Directory Updates

Bring your student directory up to date with the changes attached to this newsletter.

## Next PTA Meeting February 3, 1 p.m.

Join us for the next PTA meeting, featuring two speakers.

At 1 p.m., Aldrin teacher, **Gary Cole** will provide an overview of how language arts is taught at Aldrin, and some useful reading strategies that parents can use at home.

Following the regular PTA meeting, our new Parent Special Education Ombudsman, **Donna Rich**, will discuss how she can help parents. See details on page three.

## Aldrin Boasts Two Reflections Council-Level Winners

**C**ongratulations to our Aldrin Reflections Council Award winners! **Molly Newell** received the Award of Excellence for her literature entry in the Primary level. **Maggie Gallagher** received the Outstanding Interpretation award for Visual Arts in the Primary level. Great work, Molly and Maggie!

Maggie's entry will continue to the District Level for further evaluation. We will keep you posted on the outcome.

All Reflections projects will be returned within the next few weeks. We are trying to post each entry on the Aldrin web site. Thank you for your patience.

**Buzz Aldrin  
Elementary School**  
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Reston, VA 20194  
703.904.3800

[www.fcps.k12.va.us/  
AldrinES/](http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/AldrinES/)



## Basic Safety Lessons Go Beyond “Don’t talk to strangers”

**A**lthough we live in a safe area and our children go to a very secure, protected school, as parents, we can never stop re-learning how to keep our kids safe. Many police and safety experts agree on the following tips and advice for parents:

- Don’t put your children’s name on the outside of their clothing. Strangers don’t seem as threatening when they know the child’s name.
- Children shouldn’t wear a house key around their neck as it signals to everyone that they are going home to an empty house.
- Tell children it’s okay to resist strange or threatening adults by shouting or yelling, for example “This man is not my father!”
- Keep current photographs of your children with height and weight on back of photo. Put one set in your purse or wallet.
- Be sure your children know their phone number and address as well as those of another trusted adult.

- Make sure your children know that you will never ask someone to pick them up without telling them first.
- Rehearse the safest route between places your kids walk to regularly. (This is especially important if they walk to and from school.)
- The three main safety words kids should know are “no”, “go” and “tell”. Teach them to be assertive and say no to strangers or when they are in uncomfortable situations. They should then go in the opposite direction and tell a trusted adult right away.

Many of these tips are common sense and parents have been reinforcing them for years. However, being prepared is always the best plan against a rare, tragic incident.

There is no need to frighten kids unnecessarily but there *is* a need in these changing times to provide balanced information so we can all lead healthy, safe lives.

*Kell Flood is an Aldrin parent.*

## Home Alone?

**Y**ou need to make a quick trip in the car to pick up your six-year old from a friend’s house. You’ll only be gone ten to fifteen minutes. Is it safe to leave your eight-year-old alone?

Should you leave your ten-year-old alone for a half-hour while you pick up a few things at the grocery store?

As your child grows up and matures, you need to find the right balance between safety and developing her independence. Ultimately, you must make the decision that feels best for you and your child. However, Fairfax County community and social work professionals offer these guidelines.

First, whenever your child is left unsupervised:

- There must be no emotional, medical or

behavior problems that would prevent good decision-making

- Your child must be comfortable alone
- Your child should know the family safety plan which includes what to do in an emergency, who to contact, and guidelines for acceptable behavior

Fairfax County family services also offer these age-related guidelines:

**Children 7 years and under** should not be left alone for any period of time. This may include leaving children in cars, playgrounds and backyards

**Children 8 to 10 years** should not be left alone for more than 1 1/2 hours and only during daylight and early evening hours.

**Children 11 to 12 years** may be left alone for up to 3 hours but not late at night.

## Special Education Ombudsman to Help Parents

Fairfax County Public Schools, with the support of the School Board, has established a new Special Education Parent Ombudsman program.

**Donna Rich** is the parent ombudsman for Aldrin’s cluster. Following the PTA meeting on February 3, Mrs. Rich will discuss her role in providing assistance to parents who are navigating the special education process and feel they could benefit from the advice and knowledge of a more experienced and specially trained parent.

Whether or not you can attend the meeting, parents who wish to learn more are encouraged to contact Mrs. Rich at 703.204.3992, ext. 7534 or by email at [Donna.Rich@fcps.edu](mailto:Donna.Rich@fcps.edu).

Other FCPS resources that are available for parents of students with disabilities include:

**Parent Resource Center**  
Marsha Goldberg  
703.204.3941

**Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)**  
Carmen Sanchez, Brenda Cross (Co-chairs)  
(Contact via the Parent Resource Center above.)

## Put on Your Dancing Shoes!



Mark your calendars now – February 27 is the next Family Event at Aldrin.

This year, we will combine two of Aldrin's most popular events – the Family Fun Dance and the raffle/auction of class projects and teacher outings. Everyone loves the Family Fun Dance with its great music and hula hoop and dance contests!

The raffle/auction is an important PTA fundraiser and was a big hit last year. Each class will donate a project that the children have created.

Last year, there were hand-painted bowls, plates, platters, placemats, a gardening bench, a play cloth, a terra cotta pot, and step stools. And your children were the artists! The PTA will sell raffle tickets that will give you a chance to win.

In addition, many teachers donate an outing, a fun chance for the kids to spend time outside of school with the teachers. This year, the outings will be won in a silent auction format.

Food, drinks and bake sale items will also be sold that night. Watch your upcoming Tuesday Recorders for more information!

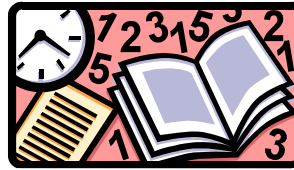
**The Aldrin Buzz—January 2004**

## ► All Around Aldrin

### Turning Our All-Stars into Bookworms

**A**ldrin's third annual reading program, *It's Time to Read*, begins today and runs through February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Students will log how much they read each week, earning rewards when they reach specific milestones. (A complete description of the program is in today's Recorder.)



#### Making Time to Read

Please encourage your kids to read, read, then read some more! In the past, our Aldrin All-Stars have been innovative in making time to read. Some read while traveling to their after-school activities; others get up fifteen minutes early each day; some have even given up TV time in order to read more! Getting together with a friend to read is also a popular tactic. It doesn't matter where or when, just encourage your child to pick up a book!

#### Can You Donate a Book?

At this time, we are asking for your help with book donations. Last year, more than 200 students earned a book during the program. If you would like to donate a new or gently used paperback book for the program, please place it in the box in the school lobby.

Also, plan to visit Barnes and Noble in Reston tonight through Thursday for a special Book Event. Each of these days, Barnes and Noble will donate 20% of all sales made with an Aldrin voucher to our school.

We will have several guest readers during the three-day event and it promises to be a lot of fun. Tell your friends, neighbors and relatives to purchase their books during those two days!

If you have any questions, please call **Sally Cors** at 703.478.5591 or **Ann Caron** at 703.834.0513.

### News Round-Up

- **Yearbook orders** are being taken now for delivery the last week of school. Don't miss out on this wonderful keepsake. Order envelopes were in last week's Tuesday Recorder. If you have any questions, please call **Chris Lopez**.
- Know a school volunteer who has "provided distinguished community service in 2003"? Nominate him or her for **Volunteer Fairfax's 2004** service award. Nominations are due Friday, February 20 at 4 p.m., and forms are available in the Aldrin office.
- **After-school program registrations are due January 23!** Return your registration forms and checks by this Friday. Most classes begin the week of February 2 and end in late March. Be sure to get your registration forms and checks in on time! The final session of after school programs will begin after Spring Break with some new classes as well as some old favorites. The Spring schedule is not complete yet, so if you have any suggestions, please email [donnapatchett@comcast.net](mailto:donnapatchett@comcast.net).
- **Odyssey of the Mind Update.** Aldrin has registered seven teams for the Regional Competition that will take place on Saturday, March 6 at Mount Vernon High School. Thank you to everyone who stepped forward to volunteer and judge, allowing all the teams to represent the school. Each team will be working on a solution to a problem which they'll present at the competition. It'll be a great day filled with fun and amazing creativity! If you have any questions about the program or about the regional competition, contact **Danny Burk** at 703.668.0344 or [om@aliburk.com](mailto:om@aliburk.com).

## Teacher Interns Hard at Work at Aldrin

**T**welve “teachers-in-training” at Aldrin are breathing a little more deeply this week.

For the last two weeks, they’ve had full responsibility for their classrooms as their mentors (the regular classroom teachers) observed, took notes, and evaluated their style and success as teachers.

It’s a huge milestone for Aldrin’s interns as they move towards earning their Masters in Education and elementary school teaching certificates — all in just fifteen months.

“It’s a very stressful period for our interns. But it can also be very rewarding as they discover how much they’ve learned since meeting their first class in September,” says Carolyn Kazemi, On-Site Coordinator for Marymount University’s Professional Development Academy.

### Student & Teacher All At Once

The interns spend the school day in class with their students and mentor four days a week. And, Tuesday through Thursday, they attend required graduate classes on-site.

In addition, they substitute at Aldrin, and twice a month, at other Fairfax County schools.

“The program really is a win-win-win,” commented Mr. Marinoff, Aldrin principal. “The children benefit from extra teaching resources, the school system has a reliable pool of highly qualified professionals, and Aldrin staff benefit as interns share current “best practices” with teachers.

“And of course, the interns have the opportunity to learn from some of the finest teachers and to put theory into practice immediately.”

### From All Backgrounds and Professions

Many Marymount interns are career switchers. “We’ve had former attorneys, engineers, retired military, and instructional assistants,” notes Kazemi.

“It’s full-time for fifteen months. Traditionally, interns are awarded a stipend by the county to defray their tuition costs in exchange for their substitute teaching services.



*Jaime Wolfe, an intern in Mrs. Ward’s multi-age classroom, takes her students through the Weekly Reader.*

“And it’s hard work — there’s no way anyone can hold down another job and complete this program. But there’s no doubt that our graduates are ready to manage a classroom!”

### Learning by Doing

Each intern starts the year with a focus on developing classroom routines, rules and schedules. Armed with a checklist of things to observe, they learn ways to get twenty-five children’s attention at once, how to line them up, instill good hallway behavior, and more.

As the weeks progress, the interns begin teaching small groups, or the whole class for a period of time. They plan and teach in conjunction with their mentor. Then, late in December, they find themselves spending hours doing lesson planning for their ten-day teaching “solo”.

For those two weeks, they are “on” from school bell to school bell, responsible for every aspect of the classroom.

Then, just to keep things interesting, the interns all move to **new** classrooms in February. Those from the primary grades move to fourth to sixth grade classrooms, and vice versa.

With new mentors, new curriculums, new classroom routines, and all-new kids, the interns find themselves in serious “student mode” once again!

## From Intern to Teacher at Aldrin

Aldrin’s teaching staff boasts a number of Marymount graduates including Gary Cole, Larissa Peluso, Cari Fayed and Nikki Wood.

Ms. Wood, a 6th grade teacher at Aldrin, started Marymount immediately after earning her undergraduate degree.

“Interning was really tough, but an amazing learning experience. I can’t imagine what my first year of teaching would have been like if I hadn’t spent a full year interning,” she commented.

Ms. Fayed was an intern just last year. Now, she’s teaching 1st grade, and notes, “If anything, this year is harder. I’m on my own in the classroom, full throttle, every day, every week.

“But there isn’t ever a day when I haven’t known that this is right for me. I get goose bumps when I see how far the kids have come since the beginning of the year.

“And I know that I can go to any teacher or staff person in this school for whatever help I need. It’s an incredible team.”



# Mark Your Calendars

January 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 PTA	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 B&N Reading Event	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 	31

February 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 PTA	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 	26	27 	28
29						

## January

- 01-02 Winter Vacation**
- 05 School resumes**
- 06 PTA Meeting**, including a presentation on school progress reports, at Aldrin, 7 p.m.
- 16 Family Skate Night** at SkateQuest, 7:30–9 p.m.
- 19 Martin Luther King Day — No School**
- 21-23 Aldrin/Barnes & Noble Reading Event** (*Save 20% on all purchases*)
- 21 What Honors and AP Classes are All About Parent Workshop**, at Herndon HS, 7 p.m.
- 21– Feb 24 It's Time to Read program**
- 22 Middle school information meeting**, for parents of rising 6th graders, at Herndon Middle School, 7 p.m.
- 26-27 Student Holidays—No School**
- 30 Spirit Day.** Get dressed up in your favorite "retro" wear!

## February

- 02 After-School programs** resume
- 03 PTA Meeting** at Aldrin, 1 p.m., featuring Gary Cole on language arts and Donna Rich, Aldrin's special education parent ombudsman
- 10 Progress Reports** go home
- 12 School-wide assembly, Motion and Machines**, sponsored by the PTA
- 16 Washington's Birthday—No School**
- 18 Cluster I Community Meeting**, at Long-fellow Middle School Library, 7 p.m.
- 25 Town Hall meeting**, at Aldrin, 7 p.m.
- 27 Spirit Day**  
**Family Fun Dance & Raffle** at Aldrin, 6:30 p.m.

**Aldrin-Armstrong Basketball Game**  
April 16, South Lakes HS



### *It's a Family Affair*

#### Direct Contribution PTA Fundraising Campaign

Enclosed is our contribution to fund the many valuable Buzz Aldrin PTA programs and activities that benefit our students.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form and your check made out to "Buzz Aldrin PTA" to the school by January 30. Thank you for your support!

*The Buzz Aldrin PTA is a 501 C3 charitable organization. All contributors will receive an acknowledgement in writing to serve as a receipt for income tax purposes.*