



The Aldrin Buzz

News from the Buzz Aldrin PTA

Getting to the Heart of Enrichment Programs at Aldrin

Last week, Principal, Marty Marinoff and Assistant Principal, Debbie Miller met with several dozen parents at a Town Hall meeting at Aldrin. The topic: what Aldrin is doing and plans to do to provide our children with an enriched education.

Differentiation is a Key Goal

“When I met with a group of area principals, they all agreed — providing students with differentiated services is our goal. It is hard to accomplish and we all need to do better. We know that there is a tremendous amount of enrichment going on in our classrooms. But as a whole, we have a tough time getting teachers to toot their own horns,” said Marinoff.

[Differentiated services involves tailoring how material is taught to meet the needs of students with different abilities. Children who quickly master standard material in a unit (Native American cultures, for instance) would be given opportunities to explore additional aspects of the topic.]

Mr. Marinoff stressed the importance of respecting differing teaching styles as the best way to foster creativity, risk-taking and innovation in the classroom. He views the role of the principal as providing teachers with guidance and direction in deploying differentiation in the classroom.

“Principals of all schools recognize they have teachers of various skill levels and stages of development,” he said. “My approach is to keep stretching our teachers so they reach their potential, but at a pace that ensures I’m not asking too much at one time.”



Mr. Marinoff at the school year’s last Town Hall meeting.

During the meeting, Mr. Marinoff, Mrs. Miller and teachers shared with parents a host of activities that are happening in various classrooms throughout the school. However, Mr. Marinoff notes that one approach used effectively by one teacher may not be used by another in the same grade.

When a Parent Isn’t Satisfied

One parent asked, “What do I do if enrichment programs are not happening in my child’s classroom?” Mr. Marinoff stressed the importance of working with the teacher. Ask the teacher, “how do you see my child doing? What are you doing to keep my child challenged?” Share with the teacher the kinds of activities you’d like your child to be doing. Check back with the teacher after four to six weeks. Then, if you aren’t satisfied that the teacher is responding to your concerns, involve Mr. Marinoff or Mrs. Miller in the next meeting with the teacher.

Commitment and Time

Key themes from the session were that creating a school where enrichment is widespread and integrated into every classroom takes time, training and creativity in staffing.

Mr. Marinoff noted, “We have so many excellent teachers and many excellent programs. We are providing staff with training and the opportunity to share successful practices with each other. But making change takes time, especially change that reaches every child.”

See Page 6 for 2004/05 enrichment focus items that Mr. Marinoff identified.

Aldrin Has a New Web Site

Huge thanks to Aldrin parent, Kathy Pursifull, who was instrumental in making it happen!



A Leafier Aldrin Thanks to the Rubin Family

For the fifth year, the Rubin family has marked Arbor Day at Aldrin by planting a tree on school grounds.

Jared and Mitchell’s dad visited the third graders to talk about trees and tree plantings. Courtesy of the Arbor Day Foundation, he also sent them home with seedlings to plant. Thank you, Rubins, for being so involved!

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www.fcps.k12.va.us/AldrinES/

Forgot to Order Your Yearbook?

The 2003/04 yearbooks are coming. If you missed out ordering earlier in the year, you're in luck! The books look so great that we have ordered an extra fifty.

If you would like to buy one, call Chris Lopez at 703.464.5957. Don't delay — this is a fabulous keepsake for your Aldrin All-Star.



A Different Kind of Hero

Your child can start thinking or working on the 2004/05 Reflections art program this summer. The new theme is *A Different Kind of Hero* and entries can be works of literature, music, photography or visual arts.



The Aldrin Buzz is published monthly during the school year to provide parents with school and PTA news.

If you have comments or suggestions, contact the editor, Elaine Kelly, at elainekelly@comcast.net.

▶ PTA News



Presidents' Note

It's difficult to believe that the year is almost over. We have been fortunate this year to have so many wonderful parent volunteers involved in PTA events and programs. We want to send out a huge and sincere "thank you!" to everyone who coordinated, assisted with and/or attended PTA activities during the school year. Volunteering is a rewarding and demanding experience and Aldrin benefits so much from all of your dedication.

We want to especially thank the PTA officers – **Ann Caron, Sally Cors, Claudia ElSawy, Kell Flood, Lee Fortna, Gail Russell, Alicia Schmitt and Carol Seitz** – for doing an awesome job and helping us through our first year as co-presidents.

Thank you, also, to all of the parents who chaired our important committees: **Donna Patchett, Peggy Skrocki, Elaine Kelly, Sally Cors, Terri Phillips, Roslyn Aroesty, Sharon Keyes, Mary Ricotta, Rhonda Rubin, Lori Kidder, Becky Lowdermilk, Charlene Celano, Ginny Lorenc, Maureen Newell, Jennifer Thomas, Jean McDougall, Bernadette Galloway, Cathy Patrick, Donna Long, Jennifer Osborne, Susie Metz, Lee Fortna, Jackie Curran, Lisa Harder, Brenda Williamson, Danny Burk, Terri Phillips, Ann Caron, Jennifer Wilson, Jill Gallagher, Anita Cosgrove, Jacqueline Wallace and Chris Lopez.**

We truly never realized how much effort went in to making the Aldrin PTA successful and we appreciate all your work!

The PTA accomplished quite a lot this year. We offered fun family events – Bingo Night, the Faculty Basketball game, the Family Dance – that helped further our sense of community. We sponsored wonderful programs, including GRACE Art, *It's Time To Read*, after-school activities, Parent Education presentations, Reflections and a fascinating school-wide science assembly. For the first time, Aldrin students participated in a Science Fair and in the Odyssey of the Mind competition, enriching their school experience. The PTA re-started the student literary newsletter, *Orbiting Around Buzz*, and continued publishing the student directory and *The Aldrin BUZZ* newsletter. We hope to bring many of the same programs and activities back next year.

Special thanks to **Kathy Pursifull** for helping to re-vamp Aldrin's website – we look forward to using it next year! Thank you to **Cathy Patrick, Bernadette Galloway and Maureen Newell** for coordinating the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and other Teacher Appreciation activities. We know our teachers enjoyed it all!

Thank you to everyone who coordinated and attended the Family Event at the school last month. The *No Ordinary Moments* presentation was informative and well-attended – thank you to **Terri Phillips**. The Outback Steakhouse dinners were enjoyed by all and *Finding Nemo* was a big hit with the children. Thank you to **Dayve Forman** for getting the movie projection and sound system up and running.

We'd like to congratulate **Mr. Marinoff** and **Mrs. Miller** on their excellent first year as our school's administrative team. We appreciate their interest in establishing a dialogue between parents and the administration via the Town Hall meeting format. We hope more parents will be able to attend a meeting next year. Finally, thank you to the wonderful teachers and administrators who assist the PTA's efforts every day. We are grateful to be part of such a supportive community.



Have a happy and safe summer. See you in September!

Ann and Beth

We Need Your Help for 2003/2004

Many of the programs and activities our families enjoy at Aldrin simply wouldn't happen without our incredible volunteers.

To help make it all happen next year, we'd like you to consider helping out. We need captains and co-captains (sounds less scary than "chairpersons"!) for lots of committees.

In most cases, there are "everything you ever needed to know" files from prior years. And there are always friendly Aldrin parents willing to share how they've done things before and others willing to take on parts of the load.

Some committee chairpersons are looking for co-chairs — a great way to learn the ropes and bring in some fresh ideas, without committing to running the whole program.

Here are some roles we need to fill for the next school year:

- **Family Events Coordinator**
Coordinates volunteers and programs for family events. Individual event captains also needed for Bingo Night, and the Faculty Basketball Game.
- **Foreign Language Program Co-Chair**
Works with Charlene Celano to coordinate before-school language classes.
- **GRACE Art Co-Chair**
Works with Jean McDougall brainstorming monthly projects, coordinat-

ing volunteers and purchasing supplies.

- **Grant-Writing Coordinator**
Coordinates efforts to secure grants for Aldrin.
- **Hospitality Chair**
Coordinates volunteers to help at special functions for teachers and students.
- **Legislative Representative**
Meets several times a year with local legislative group regarding schools.
- **Redemption and Box Tops**
Coordinates "rewards" programs to earn money for Aldrin PTA.
- **Sixth Grade Liaison**
Coordinates fundraising activities and the end-of-year party.
- **Technology Liaison**
Meets with volunteers and Aldrin staff to coordinate technology plans for Aldrin.
- **Parent Education Coordinator**
Arranges speakers for parent workshops.
- **Room Parent Coordinator**
Works with room parent volunteers, especially on annual class projects.
- **Yearbook Coordinator**
Coordinates content to produce the school yearbook.

If you'd like more information on any of these roles, contact Alicia Schmitt, our VP, Volunteers at aliciaschmitt@comcast.net.

Executive Board Announced for Next School Year

At a special PTA meeting held before the Town Hall meeting on May 18, the PTA elected the officers for the 2004/05 year.

Re-elected are Co-Presidents **Jeanne Talbot** and **Beth Krauser**; Recording Secretary, **Kell Flood**; VP Volunteers, **Alicia Schmitt**; Treasurer, **Gail Russell**; Immediate Past President, **Lee Fortna**. This year's VP Ways and Means, **Carol Seitz**, will share duties next year with **Alison Corkery**.

New officers elected are Corresponding Secretary, **Elaine Kelly**, and VP Programs, **Danny Burk**.

Thank you to **Ellen Keyser**, **Sally Cors** and **Ann Caron** who formed this year's nominating committee.

From the 6th Grade Committee

We wish to thank everyone who has supported our fundraisers throughout the year! Because of your generosity, a wonderful 6th Grade Carnival will be held on Tuesday, June 15th for our 6th graders.

Also, we would like to congratulate the Aldrin Class of 2004 as they prepare to move on to middle school! **Good job, 6th graders!**

Please stop by to see our 6th Grade Bulletin Board to be displayed in June in the Cafeteria (above the water fountain.)

Thanks again for a great year!

Lee Fortna and Jackie Curran,
6th Grade Liaisons

Chess Instructors Needed

Parent volunteers, **Glenn Krauser** and **Scott Talbot**, are ready to retire after getting Aldrin's program off the ground and keeping it going for more than year.

To continue offering this incredibly popular program, we need new instructors for next year.

If you are interested or know someone who might be, please contact Donna Patchett at 703.925.9025 or donnapatchet@comcast.net.

Tokens of Appreciation, On Your Behalf

Aldrin's teaching staff is top-notch and we want them to know how the parent community feels.

So, during Teacher Appreciation Week earlier this month, we made sure they were reminded each day.

Here's what the PTA did on your behalf:

Monday. A token of appreciation put into every teacher's mail box.

Tuesday. The PTA hosted a breakfast for teaching staff.

Wednesday. During the lunch hosted by Mr. Marinoff and Mrs. Miller, the PTA and other parent volunteers staffed the classrooms so teachers had a little more than their usual 30 minutes to eat!

Thursday. Teachers received a token of appreciation from the SCA.

Friday. Each teacher went home for the weekend with a fresh loaf from the Harvest Bread Co. in Herndon, compliments of the PTA.

Marinoff Presents Updated School Technology Plan

Mr. Marinoff, Aldrin's principal, presented an update to the school's technology plan earlier this month.

The key themes are "wireless" and "PCs in the classrooms". Here are some highlights from this school year:

- Created a new 30-station wireless lab
- Installed wireless internet cards in all the laptops acquired the prior year
- Thirty PCs found a new home at Aldrin, transferred from other county schools, and replacing older Macs
- Classroom wiring was beefed up to allow seven computer connections per classroom. (Awaiting hardware before going live)
- Added four workstation in the library
- Moved and upgraded Aldrin's TV station
- Purchased additional licenses for student software

Funding from Many Sources

FCPS funded many of the infrastructure changes, including the installation of a new phone system for the school. The PTA con-

tributed \$10,000 for school technology initiatives, which was added to the \$18,000 that Mr. Marinoff committed as part of his annual plan.

Ideas for the Coming Year

Of course, no one is ever "done" when it comes to technology. Mr. Marinoff also shared the Technology Committee's focus for the next twelve months. These initiatives are dependent on funds from Aldrin Elementary, the PTA, and any instructional grants the school can obtain.

The Committee hopes to be able to:

- Replace classroom and lab Macs with PCs, and acquire appropriate PC software
- Complete building-wide wireless access by December 2004 (an FCPS-funded initiative)
- Increase use of the school file server to fulfill the promise of wireless access, and purchase a file server backup system
- Acquire a variety of new devices including new video and digital cameras, a flat-bed scanner, as well as a laser printer and PC-compatible projection system for each pod area.

So, They're Not Just Messing Around on the Computer!

Did you know that Virginia's Standards of Learning sets down requirements for computers and technology?

In fact, there are five minimum skills that students should acquire by the end of fifth grade. They are:

1. A basic understanding of computer theory
2. Basic technology skills including keyboarding; understanding the main parts of a computer; operation of peripheral devices; selection and use of appropriate technology to complete a task; and applying technology for problem solving and critical thinking
3. The ability to effectively use search



strategies to get information from electronic databases, encyclopedias, the internet and local and wide-area networks

4. The ability to create a 1-2 page document using word processing and publishing programs and which incorporates simple computer graphics; the ability to create simple databases and spreadsheets to manage information and create reports.

A different set of standards has been created for students in grades six through eight. To view the actual SOL, visit <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml>

► *Helping Our Children Learn*

Keep 'Em Busy all Summer Long

Summertime is for kicking back and taking it easier — for your kids at least! Between camp weeks and trips to the pool, you're going to have to find ways to keep them entertained. And you're probably hoping you can keep their brains from turning to mush between June and September.

Workbooks can help, but teachers strongly advocate “everyday learning” — reinforcing math and language skills that we use in getting through life each day.

Some of these activities might help you through the summer when you hear, “Mom, Dad, I'm bored!”

Get From Point A to Point B

Learning to use a map is an important life skill. It also puts spatial abilities, estimating and calculating skills to work. Next time you head to the mall or a theme park, pick up a map. Have your child plan a route, estimate distances, or find the best way to get from one location to another. And if you're headed out on a car trip, help your child mark the route on a road map. She can also learn to use the odometer to anticipate exits and find landmarks.

Be Surprised at the Library

Of course, there's plenty to read at the library. But most libraries also have plenty of children's events, as well. The Reston regional branch has a slew of entertainment on the schedule including puppeteers, magicians, a reptile show, odd-ball musicians and more. For details, visit www.co.fairfax.va.us/library/libevents/evntform.asp

Chronicle Your Summer

Get your child a special book in which he can write all summer-long. He should aim to spend fifteen minutes or so most days writing about whatever — what he plans to do for the day, a joke or funny story he heard, his reactions to a book or newspaper article. Make it a big book, throw in a glue stick and some coloring pencils or crayons

and encourage him to add mementos and drawings to keep it interesting.

Come One, Come All

Give your budding performers or entrepreneurs a focus for their energies. Encourage your child to hook up with some neighborhood buddies to stage a show or carnival or host a bake or yard sale. They'll be using math skills in setting prices, following a recipe, selling tickets, and making change. Leadership and group skills will be tested. Imaginations will be in high gear writing a show, and creative and engineering skills will be put to the test making costumes and devising games. An added benefit — planning these events can keep kids busy for days!

Lend a Hand or Heart

Encourage your child's giving instincts. Urge her to play with a younger child a couple of hours per week to help a busy parent. Have her water a vacationing neighbor's plants and pick up the mail. Decide to “adopt a spot” in Reston as a family to help keep your neighborhood or a favorite play area free of trash (http://www.reston.org/reston/r_volunteer_Adopt-a-Spot.html)

Think about sharing one of your childhood activities, too. Show 'em how double-dutch is really done; camp in the backyard and roast some s'mores over the grill; or just stretch out in the hammock or lawn chair and listen to the summer sounds.

For lots of game, travel and craft activities, visit <http://familyfun.go.com>

For an idea a day, visit www.fcps.edu/DIS/OECFS/FLI/pdfs/daybydayesesummer04.pdf

For even more ideas, visit this site sponsored by the Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign: www.theantidrug.com/news/news_101ways.asp



A Book A Day ...

Studies show that children who read during the summer are better prepared to begin the new school year. Plus it's a great activity indoors, outdoors, when it's raining, too hot, too humid, too whatever!

Reading Incentives

Fairfax County's public libraries sponsor a summer reading program in conjunction with FCPS which runs from June 18 to September 4.

Preschoolers and elementary students who read 15 books and record them on the official log sheet will receive a coupon book for freebies and discounts. (Pre-readers can have books read to them.)

Pick up the log sheet at any library branch and return it by September 4 to collect the coupon book.

What to Read?

Looking for some fresh ideas on age-appropriate books for your children?

Teachers in the National Education Association rated 100 books as their top picks. See the list, with age recommendations, at www.veaweteach.org/resources_parents.asp and click on *100 Books for Your Child to Read* in the right sidebar.



Mark Your Calendars

June 2004						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	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	Summer Vacation!				

May

- 28 Spirit Day** — Go Hawaiian!
31 Memorial Day Observed — No School

June

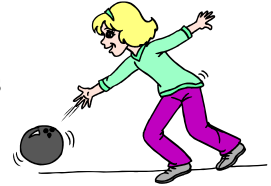
- 7-8 Author's Assembly** — Hilary Hyland (and trusty Newfoundland dog!) will take 3rd-6th graders through the process of writing fiction based on history
15 6th Grade Carnival
17 Kindergarten—5th Grade Award Assembly
18 Last Day of School! Progress reports go home. 6th grade reports are mailed.
6th Grade Breakfast & Award Assembly

Reward Those Good Grades

Two area businesses are offering freebies to students who bring home "A"s on their final report cards.

Rolling Rewards

Now in its eighth year, **Bowl America's Rolling Rewards Program** salutes those students whose hard work and dedication have earned them the highest marks in the classroom. For each "A," "O" or equivalent grade a student earns on their final 2003-2004 school year report card, Bowl America will reward them with a FREE game of bowling that they can use throughout the following school year.



For more information on the program, visit www.bowl-america.com and click on Programs.



OLLY Honor Roll

OLLY Shoes in Fair Oaks Mall has a similar program. For every "A" your child receives, they'll give him or her a free pair of fluorescent shoelaces and a "surprise gift for summer". Parents will get a 20% off coupon for new shoes for each child receiving an "A" grade.

Aldrin's Enrichment Focus for 2004/2005

During his Town Hall presentation on May 18, Mr. Marinoff outlined focus items and initiatives related to providing Aldrin students with enrichment opportunities. These included:

- Creation of a teacher bookroom so that teachers can borrow extra books for classroom use
- Increasing the number of days that Aldrin students have access to a Gifted & Talented specialist from the current two per week
- Implementation of optional guided staff reading groups which will study and discuss educational theory and approaches
- Recruiting new teachers who are committed to Aldrin's philosophy of being child-centered, flexible and committed to differentiated instruction in class
- A staff development workshop in July on how to pro-

vide differentiated instruction to all children

- Tighter alignment of field trips with curriculum
- Continued use of Professional Learning Communities to identify best practices and extend their use in the school
- Continued involvement of grade-level team leaders in decision-making
- Continued support of curriculum compacting and multiple approaches to word study. (Curriculum compacting involves testing children prior to a new unit of study, then providing enriched and broadened learning activities to those who demonstrate early mastery of the information.)

