

October 15, 2003



# The Aldrin Buzz

News from the Buzz Aldrin PTA

## ► School & Home Ensuring That All Children Learn

### Preparing for Parent/Teacher Interviews

**E**arly next month, Aldrin's parents and teachers will be sitting down together to discuss the number one thing we have in common — our children!

These conferences give you a chance to learn what — and how — your child is learning.

They are also an excellent opportunity for you to more firmly establish a good working relationship with your child's teacher.

*Parent/Teacher Conferences  
November 3-4*

### Getting Ready for the Conference

Since time during a conference is short, make a list so you'll be sure to cover what's important to you.

You may want to note things to share about your child's home life, personality, habits, hobbies, and reactions to homework.

All of this can help your child's teacher work more effectively with your child.

### During the Meeting

Time is short, so be on time, and make sure you cover what's most important to you first.

Some questions you may want to ask include:

- Is my child working to his/her potential? How does this compare to his/her peers?
- What are my child's best/worst

subjects? Is my child in different groups for different subjects?

- Is my child's behavior appropriate?
- What are your specific expectations for homework? Will these change over the course of the year?

Be sure to ask the teacher for specifics about how you can help your child do better.

And finally, summarize any action items for you or the teacher to take. These could include having you more closely monitor homework or having the teacher consider grouping changes to better meet your child's learning needs.

### Involving Your Child

Your child likely knows that you will be meeting with his/her teacher and will be naturally curious.

Before the meeting, ask your child if there's anything he or she would like you to discuss with the teacher.

After the meeting, share appropriate highlights with your child. Be positive about the meeting and supportive of the teacher. It's important that your child know that you respect the teacher.

And most importantly, recognize that these conferences should be simply one event in a chain of communications between you and your child's teacher throughout the year.

**SMILE!**  
School Pictures  
Friday, October 17

### Custodial Appreciation Week

October 20-24

Warm thanks to our custodians for an often thankless task.



Our school always looks great!

**Buzz Aldrin Elementary School**  
11375 Center Harbor Rd.  
Reston, VA 20194  
703.904.3800

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

## FCPS Keep in Touch Service

Wondering if school opening is delayed because of bad weather? (Is that possible? Here in Virginia?!) Interested in knowing about important FCPS initiatives?

You can be notified automatically by email via FCPS' *Keep in Touch* alert system.

Find out about school closings and delays, proposals that might affect the school calendar, emergency announcements and more.

Preferences allow you to specify the kinds of information you want to receive, and your email address is not shared with anyone outside of this service.

To sign up, click on the yellow box on the FCPS home page at: [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)



*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](mailto:elainekelly@comcast.net).

## ▶ PTA News



### Presidents' Note

Thank you to everyone who attended our October 7th PTA Meeting. We had a productive evening full of great questions and information. Some of the highlights are noted in the article below, although we really encourage you to attend in person if you can. Because we know that evenings don't work for everyone, **our next PTA meeting is in the afternoon, on November 11 at 1 p.m.**

It's a big job to get everything started at the beginning of the school year. We'd like to thank **Alicia Schmitt** for an outstanding job organizing our volunteer program and **Donna Patchett** for an awesome roster of after-school programs. **Maureen Newell, Ginny Lorenc** and **Jennifer Thomas** also deserve an Aldrin "thank you" for working so hard coordinating our Sally Foster Gift Wrap sale. It's a critically important fundraiser for us so look for a report on our success next issue.

There are still lots of ways you can volunteer and make a difference. In addition to those outlined on the next page, we'd love a volunteer to revive the **student literary newsletter**. If you are interested, contact Alicia Schmitt at 703.471.4880.

We hope you found the Aldrin **Town Hall meeting** yesterday an effective way to share information with Mr. Marinoff. Please let us know if you liked the format. We plan to hold another meeting in December.

Our first family event is the Bingo Bash on October 24 at 6:00p.m. **Roslyn Aroesty** and **Sharon Keyes** have put together a fun-filled evening, complete with prizes and teachers calling numbers! We would love to see you there.

Lastly, a big thank you to all our Aldrin parents. We love our volunteers, but there are so many ways that Aldrin families make our school successful. When you support our fundraisers, attend the family events, collect BoxTops, even send your children to school dressed for Spirit Day, you are strengthening the connection between school and home. And we believe that makes the difference between a good school and a great one.

*Stonnie and Beth*

### PTA Meeting Notes

The PTA met on Tuesday, October 7. Here are some highlights from the meeting.

- Principal Marty Marinoff presented results from our **No Child Left Behind** testing. Great news — Aldrin passed in all areas for all student groups!
- Assistant Principal Debbie Miller announced that, thanks to PTA funding, 12 teachers will attend a one-day conference to learn more about a **new word study curriculum**. The program is designed to enhance the teaching of spelling and vocabulary and can be used at all grade levels. Teachers who choose to adopt these techniques would integrate them into their existing language arts programs.
- A **new math enrichment program** that will be supported by parent volunteers is being developed by Aldrin's Gifted & Talented specialist, Eileen Dunne. Students will be selected to participate on a four- to six-week basis based on their performance on math pre-tests. Stay tuned for more details as the program is finalized.

## ► More PTA News

### New Programs Launched to Promote Strong Virginia Schools

Funding for public schools in the county and the state is the focus of two initiatives recently launched.

Just before the school year began, a new, bipartisan organization was formed to promote funding for education in Virginia.

#### **Alliance for Virginia's Students is Formed**

The Alliance for Virginia's Students intends to serve as a clearinghouse for education information and as an advocate for increased public education funding in the Virginia legislature.

Their first initiative is to ask every candidate for the Virginia legislature in November to sign a pledge committing them to supporting full funding for the actual costs of the Standards of Learning and legislative guidelines for higher education funding.

The Alliance plans to publicize which candidates have signed the pledge prior to the election.

To keep up with the Alliance's progress, you can

sign up at [www.vastudents.org](http://www.vastudents.org)

#### **Fairfax PTA Launches Public Education Initiative**

Closer to home, the Fairfax County Council of PTAs has launched a public education campaign designed to help voters understand public education issues before they vote.

The Council has created a special website that includes a briefing on important K-12 issues, and an Education Election Guide that provides insight into the education records of Fairfax County public officials and the positions of local candidates.

You are encouraged to visit [www.ProtectFairfaxSchools.org](http://www.ProtectFairfaxSchools.org)

The council is also sponsoring a Candidate Forum where you can meet, listen to and question candidates for the Fairfax County School Board and the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors.

The Forum will be held at Tuesday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m. at Luther Jackson Middle School Auditorium, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church, Virginia.

If you will be away on November 4th, find out how to vote absentee at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb/absentee.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb/absentee.htm)

\* \* \* \* \*

### Viva Volunteers!

Thank you, Aldrin volunteers! More than 160 Aldrin parents, relatives and friends have already signed-up for one or more volunteer activities — and that's on top of all our classroom volunteers.

However, there are still committees that need extra help. Please consider one of the following opportunities, no matter how much time you can give.

- The **Office** and **Library** need general help during the day, and we need volunteers for the Book Fair in November
- Can you bake? The **Hospitality Committee** needs help periodically for special events
- Several classrooms still need a volunteer to present **GRACE Art**. It's a lot of fun, you learn a lot, and you don't need an art background!

If you can help out with any of these opportunities, just send a note marked VOLUNTEER to your child's teacher. Include your name and contact info, and how you're interested in helping.

### Just How Well Do We Work Together?

Aldrin has elected to participate in a National PTA program designed to identify *Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence*.

With this year's school theme being *A Family Affair: School and Home Ensuring that All Children Learn*, the timing is perfect.

A team of parents, school staff and community members will assess Aldrin's performance with respect to the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement.

Our goal is to determine how well we're doing and apply for certification when we're ready.

If you'd like to join the assessment committee, contact Elaine Kelly at 703.481.5294 for details.

For more information on the certification program, visit [www.pta.org/parent-involvement/certification/](http://www.pta.org/parent-involvement/certification/)

### News for Aldrin Volunteers

As a reminder, all volunteers need to submit **TB test** results to the Clinic as soon as possible.

We're working on the **photo badges** for volunteers. Details to come soon.

Until then, please remember to sign in and out on the **volunteer** sign-in sheet located in the main office and wear a "volunteer" sticker.

## ► All Around Aldrin

### Come Join Us for

**M**ark your calendars for our first Aldrin Family event of the year!

The 2003 Bingo Bash will be Friday, October 24 from 6:00 -8:30 p.m. in the Aldrin Cafeteria.

Join us for bingo — and make an easy dinner night out of it with chili and hot dog dinners served up by 6th graders.

Hard Times Café will be catering dinner, and the 4th graders will be selling home-made treats for dessert.



Advance chili or hot dog dinner tickets are \$5 each or \$6 at the door. Dinner includes either chili, salad, cornbread and drink or hot dog, chips and a drink.

If you're just itching to play, bingo-only tickets are \$2.

We still need volunteers for this event. If you can give just 30 minutes of time or if you have any questions, please call Roslyn Aroesty (703-471-6526) or Sharon Keyes (703-481-6858).

\* \* \* \* \*

### Parenting Workshops to Be Held at Aldrin

**J**ust when you think you have your child figured out, you find yourself faced with a new challenge.

To give you some new ideas and strategies, Aldrin's Counselors are offering two video-based parenting workshops during the school day. Both workshops run one hour per week for five weeks.



**Active Parenting Today** focuses on understanding your child, developing responsibility and winning cooperation.

**Helping Your Child Succeed in School** reviews strategies for success in learning.

You must reserve a place by calling Mrs. Mahoney at 904-3838 or Ms. Stewart 904-3837.

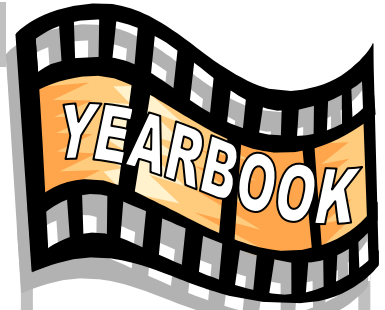
### Wanted: Fresh Ideas for After-School Programs

**D**id you know that more than one hundred Aldrin students are keeping their minds and bodies busy in one or more after-school programs sponsored by the PTA?

Our next session begins in January, and we'd love to hear your ideas for new classes to add to our traditional offerings. Is there something your kids would like to try? Perhaps jewelry making, crafts, yoga, a book club, cheerleading? We're open to all ideas!

And, we bet you didn't know that two of the seven programs offered today are taught by Aldrin parents. Join the fun. Perhaps you have a hobby, business or special interest you would like to share with students in a 6-8 week after-school program.

Whether you're interested in leading a program, or simply have an idea for one that the children might enjoy, please contact Donna Patchett at 703.925.0925 or [donnapatchett@comcast.net](mailto:donnapatchett@comcast.net).



### Get Out Those Cameras!

Everyone loves the candid shots in Aldrin's yearbook and we want yours for the 2003-2004 yearbook.

We are looking for shots of classroom activities, recess, field trips, music/art/PE classes, the lunchroom, bus stop, dances, assemblies, and after school activities.

Just place your pics in an envelope marked YEARBOOK along with a brief description of the photos enclosed. Then drop the envelope off with your child's teacher or the office.

If you have questions, contact Chris Lopez at 703.464.5957 or [chrislopez@aol.com](mailto:chrislopez@aol.com).



### Student Art Program

All students are encouraged to participate in the National PTA's Reflection Program.

Children are asked to create an original work of literature, photography, visual art or music based on the theme, **"I feel really happy when. . ."**

The deadline for entries is November 14.

Have questions? Call Jeanne Talbot at 703.435.0947.

## ► *All Around Aldrin*

### Physical Education — Getting Active for Learning and Life

**G**ymnastics, football, jogging, rope-climbing, “cone-bowling” — these are some of the activities that your children are up to each week in Aldrin’s gymnasium.

In fact, they are also part of a Fairfax County PE “program of studies” that’s becoming a model for U.S. elementary schools.

The program includes guidelines for fitness and conditioning, fitness planning, rhythmic activities and sports.

And for ninety minutes each week, Nicole Henry and Scott Worthington put each of our children through its paces.

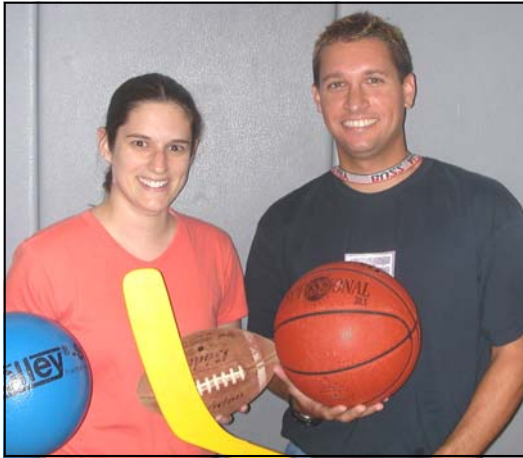
#### Maximum Participation

Aldrin’s two PE specialists team-teach two classes of students at a time. Most PE classes follow the same structure. The kids warm up by jogging to music, followed by “stretch & strength” exercises that work muscles and teach the students basic physiology.

“I bet that many of our students know more major muscle groups than their parents. We have them count out their stretch using the muscle name, like ‘Deltoid-one, deltoid-two’ and so on,” noted Mr. Worthington.

#### Goals for Achievement

During PE, younger grades focus on exploration activities such as developing ball-handling skills. Older grades work on specific skills such as football. And each grade level has benchmarks for achievement based on the FCPS program of studies.



*Nicole Henry and Scott Worthington are Aldrin’s very active PE specialists.*

“Our goal is to keep the kids busy and moving throughout the whole class. No one sits on the sidelines. We make sure that everyone is involved at all times,” said Ms. Henry.

#### Activity Every Day

Both Ms. Henry and Mr. Worthington stay active outside the school playing basketball, lifting weights and running.

Mr. Worthington commented on the challenges for our children to hit the same level of activity.

“It’s a lot tougher than it used to be for kids to be active every day. Lives are more scheduled and kids have less freedom to play unsupervised.”

Ms. Henry added, “But PE class is not nearly enough to ensure that our children will be healthy, active adults. We can teach them the basics, but families have to make physical activity a part of everyday living.”

### Enriching the PE Program

One of the primary goals of Aldrin’s PTA is to find ways to improve our children’s experiences while at school.

Over the last couple of years, our PE specialists have taken that message to heart.

Two years ago, they asked for and received funding that allowed them to purchase 60 floor hockey sticks and pucks.

And in the next few weeks, they’ll receive a similar quantity of lacrosse equipment.

The equipment will help Aldrin meet some of the new PE program of studies requirements, and the quantity means that every child can play at the same time.

A greater variety of activities also helps keep our children more engaged and interested in physical education.

Your support of the PTA and the school’s fundraisers makes these initiatives possible. So, thank you!



### Two Ways to Get Busy as a Family

**1** Organize a neighborhood game of Red Rover, King of the Hill, Capture the Flag or a sidewalk Hopscotch tournament. If you’ve forgotten the rules, you’ll find them (along with 40 jump rope and hand clapping rhymes) and a lot more at [www.gameskidsplay.net](http://www.gameskidsplay.net).

**2** Take the President’s Fitness Challenge. With programs for kids and adults, for those just getting active and those looking for a new challenge, this program provides ideas for fitness, a log to track your activity and progress and special awards to mark your accomplishments. Visit [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org) for all the details.



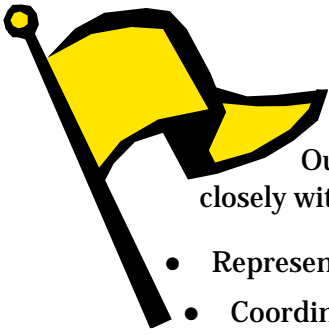
## Mark Your Calendars

### October 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 Homecoming Parade
5	6	7 PTA Meeting, 7 p.m. Aldrin	8	9	10	11
12	School Holiday	14	15 Hearing & Vision Screening	16	17 School Pictures	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Family Bingo Night, 6:00 pm	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 School Spirit Day Dress as your favorite book character	

### November 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	Parent-Teacher Meetings No School		5 GRACE Art volunteers mtg., 7 p.m., Aldrin	6	7	8
9	10	11 PTA Meeting, 1 p.m., Aldrin 6th Grade Trip	12 5th Grade Trip	13	14 Fifth Grade Trip Book Fair Begins Reflections entries due	
16	17	18 Report Cards Go Home	19 Thanksgiving Luncheon Book Fair— Parent Night	20 4th Grade Trip to Williamsburg	21 Book Fair Ends	
23	24	25	26 School dismisses 2 hours early	Thanksgiving Holidays		29
30						



# Support Your PTA by Joining Today!

Our mission is to keep the focus on your children's educational needs. We work closely with Aldrin teachers and administration on your behalf to:

- Represent the parent community's interests
- Coordinate volunteer activities to enhance the learning environment
- Fund worthwhile initiatives to help enrich student experiences

Your membership fee also helps support the work that our national and state PTAs do to keep our children's interests high on law-making agendas.

## 2003-2004 Membership Fees

\$15 per family (2 adults) **or** \$10 per adult

### Membership Bonus!

#### **FREE Aldrin Phone Directory**

(\$5 for non-members)

Absolutely essential for making play dates, catching up on forgotten homework assignments, etc.

#### **FREE Absences/Permissions Notepad**

(\$1 for non-members)

A big help getting everyone out the door in time for the bus!

## PTA Membership Form

**Member Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Member Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

✓ Membership dues: \$15 per family (2 adults) **or** \$10 per adult.

✓ Make checks payable to *Buzz Aldrin PTA*.

✓ Please return check and this form to your child's classroom teacher.

***Thank you for your support!***

**Have questions about PTA membership?  
Contact Brenda Williamson at 703.707.0038**