

# The Carson Courier

Volume 12, Issue 5

January 2010

*"Rediscovering... the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."  
from Rachel Carson's "A Sense of Wonder"*

## A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Dear Rachel Carson Families:

Each New Year brings an opportunity to reflect, hope, and dream. It is time to reflect on the past year's successes and disappointments and to make new resolutions or goals for the coming year. At Rachel Carson, we are continually reflecting on our practices to meet new challenges and to serve the needs of our community. We live in a complex world, and our number one job is to prepare our students to succeed and thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The skills and knowledge that are required for today's job market are much different than when I attended school. With the advent of National Standards and No Child Left Behind, the stakes for students have been raised considerably. I am fortunate to have a staff that is talented and dedicated to meeting these new challenges and keeping our students competitive and confident. In addition, we have a parent community that supports the learning process and who volunteer their time and resources to make Rachel Carson a warm and caring environment.

In setting goals for our professional learning communities, Rachel Carson's teams and departments, we ask our teachers to set S.M.A.R.T. goals for the upcoming school year. This same process is utilized with individual students and can be accomplished at home. A **S.M.A.R.T.** goal is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Below is a template to assist you in developing **S.M.A.R.T.** goals for the new year with your child. It is also a good tool to utilize for our resolutions that are so hard to manage and accomplish.

### **Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

Specific  
Measurable  
Attainable  
Realistic  
Timely

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**Specific** - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- \*Who: Who is involved?
- \*What: What do I want to accomplish?
- \*Where: Identify a location.
- \*When: Establish a time frame.
- \*Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- \*Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a specific goal would say, "Join a health club and work out 3 days a week."

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**Measurable** - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

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**Attainable** - When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed far away and out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

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**Realistic** - To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

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**Timely** - A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

**T** can also stand for **Tangible** - A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.

Sincerely,

Augie Frattali

*"Don't think of today's failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere; and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles."*

Helen Keller

**Rachel Carson Administrative Office**  
**Ph. 703.925.3600**  
**Office Hours:**  
**7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

August Frattali.....Principal  
 Cheryl Weaver.....Director of Student Services  
 Tamara Ballou.....Assistant Principal  
 Shawn Brown.....Assistant Principal  
 Pat Lee.....After-School Program Specialist  
 Michele Ford.....Office Assistant  
 Eileen Harrington..... Finance Technician  
 Nancy Hofrichter.....Administrative Assistant  
 Margie McCarthy.....Office Assistant

**Please refrain from calling the Carson MS office asking that a message be delivered to your student. We cannot interrupt instructional time to give messages from home to students.**

**RCMS Student Services**  
**Ph. 703.925.3614**  
**Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Cheryl Weaver.....Director of Student Services  
 Brenda Humphrey.....Lead Counselor  
 Joni Fraundorfer.....Counselor  
 Rebecca Little.....Counselor  
 Jamie Mahoney.....Counselor  
 Lesa Lloyd.....Guidance Assistant  
 Celeste Moore.....Clerical Assistant

Donna Winston.....Social Worker  
 Stephanie Harris.....Psychologist  
 Amy McLaughlin.....Test Coordinator  
 Maria de Barrios.....Parent Liaison  
 Susan Tindall.....School Health Aide

Ph. 703.925.3603  
 Ph. 703.925.3610

**Carson MS Attendance Line**  
**Ph. 703.925.3636**



*Accessible 24 hours a day,  
 7 days a week!*

**If you prefer, you may send an email to the office:**

[CarsonMS.Attendance@fcps.edu](mailto:CarsonMS.Attendance@fcps.edu)



**This email address should not be used for early checkout notes for appointments, etc.** A note should be sent with your child on the day of the appointment. Your child should bring the note to the office upon arrival to receive a check-out pass.

**Pre-arranged absences** must be done at least three (3) school days in advance and be approved by an administrator.

If you know your student will be absent, have him or her **bring a note** to the front office giving the dates and reason for the absence. We will start the pre-arranged absence process which will notify the attendance secretary as well as the teachers, and the student will be given his or her assignments for the time he or she will be out. At that point the pre-arranged absence form is submitted to the administrator for approval.

**Please visit our school website and bookmark it as a "Favorite." Check the website often for the latest news about RCMS, Couriers, curriculum, calendars, lunch menus, PTA news and links to FCPS 24/7, Keep in Touch, and emergency announcements.**



**Rachel Carson MS Website:**  
<http://www.fcps.edu/RachelCarsonMS>

**FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

*Parents are welcome to bring forgotten items to the front office.*

**Instructional time will not be interrupted to inform students when an item is dropped off.**

*It is the student's responsibility to check for forgotten items.*

**VISITING RCMS**

**All outside doors are locked.** Our staff and students have been instructed not to open any locked doors for visitors. All visitors are directed to the main entrance marked **Door #1**. Press the doorbell located on the wall to the right of the right-hand set of doors, and when asked, display your photo ID and state the nature of your visit. When the door latch is released, pull the door open and proceed to the **Main Office** on your right.



**Remember that we ask for photo identification when you pick up your child or visit the school.**

# Attention Rachel Carson Families



Rachel Carson Middle School will have an  
**Early Dismissal at 11:50 a.m.**  
**on Friday, February 5, 2010**  
for the purpose of staff development.

This early release is **only** for Rachel Carson students. Please be sure to arrange appropriate supervision for your child.

**Under no circumstances are students to visit other school sites that are in session.**  
Other schools are eligible to have similar opportunities on other dates.

**Buses will depart RCMS  
at 12:00 p.m.  
on February 5, 2010.**

## **NOTES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES**

### **Career Exploration**

As part of our program in preparing students for their futures, school counselors on each team met with their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students for two days in December to present a career lesson. During this lesson, counselors introduced students to the many career opportunities available in today's world economy. Using a career website (<http://cxonline.bridges.com>), students completed an interest and skill inventory and were matched with careers which utilize these interests and skills. Students then researched several careers, discovering education needed, future job prospects, current earnings, job descriptions, etc. This website is great for parents and students to use together. You can use it at home by giving the user name (0088102) and password (carson).

### **Registration for 2009-2010 School Year Begins**

Beginning in February, counselors will begin the process of registering students for the 2009-2010 school year. During January, February, and March, rising 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be assisted in selecting courses for their next grade level. Please note parent orientation dates and times are listed here:

January 20	Oakton HS AP/Honors Night: 7:00 p.m.
February 3	Oakton HS Curriculum Night: 7:00 p.m. – Auditorium and Cafeteria (Snow date: Feb. 9)
February 3	Westfield HS Curriculum Night: 6:30 PM (Snow date: Feb. 8)
February 4	South Lakes HS Curriculum Night: 7:00 p.m. (Snow date: Feb 9)
February 8	Chantilly HS Curriculum Night; 7:00 p.m. for freshmen (no snow date)
February 10	South Lakes HS IB Information Night: 7:00 p.m.
February 11	Rising 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Parent Orientation at RCMS – 7:00 p.m.; Gifted and Talented Center and Special Education breakout sessions – 6:30 p.m. (Snow date: February 12)
March 11	Rising 7 <sup>th</sup> grade Parent Orientation for RCMS – 7:00 p.m.; Gifted and Talented Center and Special Education breakout sessions – 6:15 p.m. (Snow date: March 19)

### **TJ Retest**

If your child needs to participate in the TJ re-test, please note that it will be held at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 23, 2010, at Carson Middle School. Students should be dropped off and enter through the Cafeteria. Students who are only taking the re-test should be picked up at 10:45; students who will take both parts of the test should be picked up at 12:00 p.m. If you have any questions regarding the test, please contact Brenda Humphrey at 703-925-3618.

### **Did You Know?**

Fairfax County has a Parenting Education Center that offers courses to parents ranging from early childhood developmental classes to how to communicate with adolescents. For a brochure or more information call (703) 846-8695 or visit their internet site at <http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OECFS/parented.htm>.

### **Counselor Recommendations**

At this time of the year, our counselors receive many school and summer program referrals and recommendation requests. Due to their many obligations, we would ask that you please allow a two week window to have these requests processed and returned.

### **Looking ahead - Important Dates to Remember:**

January 18	Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday – staff and student holiday
January 28	Second grading period ends
January 29	Teacher work day (student holiday)
February 1	County-wide in-service for teachers (student holiday)
February 2	Second semester begins (third grading quarter)
February 5	Report cards mailed home
February 11	Rising 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Parent Orientation
February 15	Washington's Birthday holiday (Presidents' Day)

## **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' MESSAGE**

We would first like to welcome everyone back from what we hope was a restful and fun winter break. We are ready to plunge into the new year with renewed vigor and attention to our number one focus: learning. We have relatively few instructional days before the end of the quarter, so it will be important for everyone to maintain that focus.

To that end, now is a good time to replenish school supplies and, especially at the end of the quarter, work with your child to clean out binders and appropriately file papers that may be needed later. Organization is a key skill for successful students and adults; regular attention to keeping materials and assignments up to date and in place will go a long way to supporting academic success.

Please contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas as we work together to support your child in being successful. We look forward to working with your student in this brand new year!

Shawn Brown and Tam Ballou




Plan to attend the  
the Parent Coffee  
on January 13, 2010,  
from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.  
in room B127.

Our guest speaker is  
Officer Fred Chambers, RCMS  
School Resource Officer. Join us  
for coffee, donuts, and an  
opportunity to interact with  
Officer Chambers!



The RCMS PTA wishes everyone a  
**VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR** and  
**BEST WISHES** for 2010!

# January 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Winter Break	2
3	4 School Resumes	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 PTA Meeting Media Center 7:00 p.m.	13 Parent Coffee Rm. B127 10:00-11:00 a.m.	14 SCA-Sponsored Dance 3:00-4:30 p.m. <b><u>Tickets must be purchased in advance during lunches</u></b>	15	16
17	18 School Closed ML King Jr. Birthday Observed	19	20 Oakton HS AP/Honors Night OHS Auditorium 7:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grading Period Ends	29 Student Holiday Teacher Workday	30
31						

# February 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Student Holiday Teacher Workday	2 1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Second Semester	3 Oakton HS Curriculum Night 7:00 p.m. Westfield HS Curriculum Night 6:30 p.m.	4 South Lakes HS Curriculum Night 7:00 p.m.	5 Students Released Early-11:50 a.m.  Report Cards Mailed Home	6
7	8 Chantilly HS AP/Honors/ Curriculum Night For rising 9 <sup>th</sup> graders 7:00 p.m.	9 PTA Meeting Media Center 7:00 p.m.	10 South Lakes HS IB Information Night 7:00 p.m.	11 Rising 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Orientation Spec. Ed & GT Center: 6:30 p.m. General Meeting: 7:00 p.m.	12	13
14	15 School Closed Presidents' Day Observed	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 "It's Never Too Early to Think About College" Night Chantilly HS 7:00 p.m. for parents of 7 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> graders	23	24 Pre-Festival Orchestra Concert 7:00 p.m.	25	26	27
28						