

Cheetah Chatter

Published by Meridian Park School & Meridian Park PTSA

FOOD DRIVE

A big THANK YOU to our Meridian Park Families! Our school donated over 2,100 food items to the Shoreline District Food Drive. Another big "Thank You" specifically to the families who sorted and delivered the MP food to Kellogg Middle School!

MERIDIAN PARK VARIETY SHOW!

Mark your calendars for the 2016 Meridian Park Variety Show! Please join us for an evening of entertainment by our Meridian Park students at Shorewood High School Theater on **Saturday, January 9, at 6:30 pm**

LOST AND FOUND

Please check the lost and found. There are a lot of lost sweatshirts and coats! We will be donating lost and found clothing to The Works on **Friday, January 8**, so claim your items now!

KINDERFEST 2016 - January 23rd at Shoreline Center

Kinderfest is an opportunity for parents who will be enrolling their children in kindergarten to hear about the kindergarten program offered by the Shoreline School District. Kinderfest will be held on **Saturday, January 23, 2016 from 10:00am to noon** in the Shoreline Room at the Shoreline Center, 18560 - 1st Ave NE.

Kindergarten registration for Shoreline residents with students starting kindergarten in the fall of 2016 will begin Monday, February 1, at all elementary schools. At Meridian Park, families can register at the main office beginning on February 1 and throughout the spring and summer. While early registration is helpful, residents can register at any time. (Registration is **NOT** first come, first serve – all resident families will be provided a kindergarten seat at MP or at another district location.)

In order to attend kindergarten in the fall, a child must be five years old by August 31, 2016. All elementary schools in the district will have **kindergarten visitations on Wednesday, January 27, at 9:30 a.m.** Letting the school know that you are attending the visitation is not necessary, but highly appreciated for planning purposes. Shoreline School District is again closed to new non-residents in grades K-6. For more information about kindergarten registration and Kinderfest, please contact Kim Darcy at 206.393.4217 or kim.darcy@shorelineschools.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 7

4:00 pm – 6:30 pm
Shorewood High School
Variety Show Rehearsals

January 9

6:30 pm
Shorewood High School
Meridian Park Variety Show

January 12

Time and Location to be determined
MP Open House for new Hi-Cap
Kindergarten Families

January 14

9:30 am – 10:15 am
MP Cafeteria
Martin Luther King Jr. Assembly

January 18

No School
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 23

10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Shorewood Conference Center
Kinderfest Kindergarten Fair

January 27

9:30 am
MP Front Entrance Foyer
MP Tour for Prospective Kindergarten Families

February 2

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
MP Library
PTSA Board of Directors Meeting

February 5

No School
Staff Work Day

February 11

Suzanne Williams at MP (Guest
Author Visit)

Principal's Letter

Dear Families—

Welcome back for a wonderful new year in 2016! Congratulations and thank you for contributing an amazing 2100 items for the PTSA Food and Gift Drive in December. Thanks to Susan Duthweiler and her PTSA holiday helpers for leading this important community activity.

As a reminder, we are on a semester academic system. This system is the same as the middle and high schools, and we are planning to send semester reports home with students on Feb 12. Conferences will be held during March 8 – 11. Please look ahead to March and your teacher will contact you to sign up. We value ongoing family communication, and look forward to meeting with you for a conversation at conference time.

This month we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In our classrooms we regularly utilize activities to celebrate the many cultures, talents, and traditions of families and our community. We hope you will join us in teaching acceptance and appreciation of all people; as well as reinforcing our expectations of respect, kindness, and compassion.

Also this month, we are completing mid-year reading and math benchmark assessments. These assessments provide information to guide instruction and interventions. The reading assessments are called DIBELS (dynamic indicator of basic early literacy) and SRI (student reading inventory). The math assessment is called EasyCBM (curriculum based measurement). DIBELS is a national reading rate/fluency tool; CBM is a national concepts/procedures tool; and SRI is a national Lexile tool. Please see the links below if you are interested in learning more.



We are excited to begin the Kindergarten registration process with the Kinderfest event on January 23 and Kindergarten Registration beginning February 1. Our regular fall kindergarten open house is January 27 in the morning. In addition, we are hosting the Kindergarten Hi-Cap Open House on January 12 (for current students who qualify) and we look forward to starting the Kinder Hi-Cap program on February 29.

Also this month our School District Board of Directors will continue to review capacity challenges district wide and on the Meridian Park campus. If you are interested in following this work, you're encouraged to attend a Board meeting or check information on the district website.

Principal's Letter

Principal's Letter continued

Safety is our #1 priority. While we believe our building and campus are very safe from unwelcome visitors, we are committed to making every effort to ensure our students, staff, and volunteers are safe each and every day. As a reminder, entry to the building is allowed through the main entrance only and we require all visitors to sign-in and wear a pass every time you visit the building. We appreciate our frequent visitors and volunteers, so please sign-in and wear a pass every visit, if only for a few minutes.

Thank you for the delicious staff appreciation treats in December, and thanks as always for our partnership. I hope to see you at our Variety Show or another activity this month. While specific questions are best directed to the staff member closest to the situation, feel free to contact me anytime on how things are going. I'm grateful to lead this wonderful school community. Best wishes to your family for a great year in 2016.

~David Tadlock, Principal
david.tadlock@shorelineschools.org

DIBELS <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

EasyCBM <http://easycbm.com/>.

SRI <https://lexile.com/about-lexile/lexile-overview/lexile-infographic/>

TADLOCK TIP #5 - TIME FOR EXERCISE

For students and parents alike, exercise routines are important to maintain in January and February. Get out and walk for 20 minutes daily, take bike rides when weather permits, or keep your commitment to visiting the gym – and take the kids. We know it's a lot easier to get outside after daylight savings time, but January & February are really important winter months to keep exercising – and to model for our students.

INCLEMENT WEATHER REMINDERS

Weather-related late start or closure – please check your plans. If late, school starts at 11:05 am; students line at up at 11:00 am. If closed, our make-up dates are May 16 and June 13. Please check the media or district website for late start or closure announcement. It's really helpful to limit calls to the school to keep our lines and staff free!

Meridian Park News



December 4, 2015

Dear educators and community leaders:

More than one million children walk into our public school classrooms every year. As educators and community leaders, we do everything we can to ensure these children feel safe and secure during the precious hours they are under our watch.

That task is especially important now. In the wake of the ISIS attacks in Beirut and Paris, as well as the recent shooting in San Bernardino, it is our responsibility to be on the lookout for children who are affected by hateful rhetoric and continue to protect each student from harassment in all forms.

These attacks are causing a renewed wave of anti-Muslim sentiment, and there are many who are turning their fear and anger against ISIS into fear and anger against Muslims. Members of our Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim communities will likely find themselves targets of anti-Muslim sentiment. Let us all be particularly vigilant and responsive to any indications of bullying or harassment of children in our schools or amongst members of our communities.

We want to thank all of our schools and educators who have been working tirelessly to address bullying in our classrooms. Your commitment and hard work does not go unnoticed, and we applaud you.

In addition to your work, the Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds stands ready to assist superintendents, principals, and educators to answer any questions and support your work in addressing bullying and harassment. They can be reached at 1-866-297-2579 or OEInfo@gov.wa.gov. All interactions can be confidential.

There is no place for intolerance or bigotry in any form in any of our schools. Whether the child sitting in your classroom is Muslim or Christian, wears a turban or a Mariners hat, dons a hijab or nose piercings, that child is a Washingtonian first and foremost. We want our children to thrive and grow up to be the global citizens who will espouse our Washingtonian values of respect, tolerance, and understanding. It is our duty to protect these children and ensure they and their families know we stand with them during these trying times.

Sincerely,

Jay Inslee
Governor

Gary Kipp
Executive Director
Association of Washington
School Principals

Dr. Bill Keim
Executive Director
Washington Association of
School Administrators

Meridian Park News



MP custodians Jim, Gary, and Lue decked out in MP spirit gear



The Duthweiler family at the December Shoreline Food and Gift distribution at **Kellogg Middle School**

Cheetah Notes

NOTES FROM ANNIE GAGE

Friendship Skills in an online game!

Second Step is a social skills curriculum used in many classrooms in the Shoreline School District. It has developed an online game for children ages 7-9 in which they can design their own "critter" and learn the skills needed to navigate the virtual playground. Each mini-game within the journey maps to a social-emotional skill that encourages positive choices.

You can find the game at www.parkpalsgame.org



Features kids like:

- Easy to learn; fun to play
- Control over character design
- Whimsical world with spirited sounds and songs
- Points earned for each challenge met
- Safe way to explore tricky social situations

Features grown-ups like:

- Teacher-approved for ages 7-9
- Based on social-emotional research
- Trusted environment to practice social skills that prevent bullying
- Privacy protected; no personal data collected
- FREE! No external links, advertising, or in-app purchases

NOTES FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Happy New Year to you and your family!

The Winter Sing-Along was a wonderful event!

Congratulations to 6th grade students for their great performance at the Winter Sing-Along assembly on December 17! They sang Yuki (Japanese Snow Song) and Festival of Lights. Both songs were sung in two-part harmony, with percussion and/or melody instruments accompanying and a student pianist on Yuki! Great job, 6th grade and 5th grade students from the two 5/6 classes!

Several students from other classes and grade levels also played instruments with our sing-along songs, folk songs, winter songs, and different well-known or unfamiliar holiday songs from many countries.

Cheetah Notes

Notes from The Music Department continued:

2016 will bring exciting musical opportunities to your kids and your family! Please enter the following dates on your calendar so you don't miss these wonderful events!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Assembly

Thursday, January 14, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m.

Meridian Park Arts Festival

Thursday, May 26, 6:30 - 7:15 pm

All 2nd through 5th grade students perform a vocal music concert.

"Moving On" program for 6th grade

Thursday, June 23, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Honor Choir for 6th grade: Your student will receive a letter about honor choir. Rehearsal and concert dates are as follows:

Thursday, February 25

7:00- 8:30 pm

Shorewood Band room

Monday, March 7

7:00- 8:00 pm

Shorewood Choir Room

Monday, February 29

7:00- 8:00 pm

Shorewood Choir room

Wednesday, March 9

7:00-8:30 pm

Dress Rehearsal

Shorewood Choir Room/Theater

Wednesday, March 2

7:00- 8:00 pm

Shorewood Choir Room

Thursday, March 10

7:00-8:30 pm (Arrive at 6:40 pm)

Performance

Shorewood Theater



Happy New Year 2016!

Mrs. Anderson and the Meridian Park Singing Cheetahs

~Shari Anderson
Music Teacher

Cheetah Notes

NOTES FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

This is the time of year when we start to see more colds and other illnesses at school. Please remember to practice effective hand washing, get lots of rest, and drink water. I've also included some helpful guidelines to use when your child may need to stay home due to illness.

Too Sick for School?

Your student wakes up looking flushed, feeling congested or queasy. Do you send your student to school? To make this decision a little easier keep two C's in mind:

Contagious and Comfort.

Please keep your student home with following symptoms, which may mean that the illness is contagious:

- Fever above 100 degrees (must be fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
- Sore throat, especially if combined with fever or swollen neck glands
- Heavy nasal congestion or frequent, incessant cough
- Your student has been diagnosed with a contagious virus or infection
- Thick greenish-yellow drainage from the eyes
- Unusual fatigue, paleness, lack of appetite or irritability

Please call 206 393 4252 or email jill.gwazdauskas@shorelineschools.org if your child is going to be late or absent. We require a reason for absence provided by the parent for the absence to be considered "excused".

Without any of these symptoms, the question becomes whether your student feels well enough to function comfortably at school. Please feel to call Nurse Susan at the Health Office at (206) 393-4124 if you have questions.

Thank you!

~Susan Goldman, RN
School Nurse

NOTES FROM THE MERIDIAN PARK LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

LIBRARY HOURS

The library is open to students for quick book returns and checkouts at 9:00 before the first bell rings. Students can only be in the library before 9:00 in the morning with parent supervision. Students can also visit the library after school *to check out books* until 4:00. We want MP students to be safe at all times. To ensure their safety, they must be supervised. Thank you for your understanding and help with this.

Cheetah Notes

Notes from The Meridian Park Library Media Center continued:

Greetings Meridian Park Families,

I hope that everyone had a peaceful and happy holiday season. If students and other family members have made resolutions to read more in 2016, then you will find the following resources helpful when looking for books:

- **Kidsreads** - This site provides monthly reviews of new novels, series additions, and everybody-picture books for children. It contains archives of past months' reviews.
- **Mid-Continent Public Library** - This site offers lists of books in series at a variety of reading levels.
- **Goodreads** - This site offers a variety of book lists. Registration is free.
- **Guysread** - This site was developed specifically to help boys find books that they'd like to read.
- **Children's Book Council** - This site has lists of books for students, from beginning readers to advanced readers.
- **Bookspot** - Lists of books - best sellers, award winners, beginning chapter books and more.
- **KCLS (King County Library System)** - Genre booklists in downloadable PDF format.

You can also access these websites on my library website, under the heading, "Book Lists and Recommendations".

GUEST AUTHORS

Author Suzanne Williams, co-writer of the popular children's series, **Goddess Girls** and **Heroes in Training**, will visit Meridian Park on Thursday, February 11th. She will give three presentations to students, kindergarten through second grade, third and fourth grades, and fifth and sixth grades. Assembly times will be posted on our calendar by the beginning of February. Parents are welcome to attend the presentations. Students will have opportunities to purchase her books and have them autographed. Order forms will go home in late January/early February.

Dana Sullivan, local author of the Digger and Daisy beginning reader series, and creator of graphic novels, will be here in May. More information regarding his presentations will be available in spring. Happy Reading!



Sincerely,

Jenny Hillger
Teacher/Librarian

Cheetah Notes

NOTES FROM P.E.

THE DISEASE OF SITTING

One of the reasons that I love my job is that I get to be on my feet all day. Moving is a joy to me and I can't imagine a life or occupation that didn't keep me mobile. My profession, however, puts me in the minority of Americans. A 2008 study published by Vanderbilt University in the American Journal of Epidemiology estimated that the average American spends 7.7 hours or 55% of their waking time sitting down. Recent medical studies indicate that sitting for extended periods of time has a profound negative impact on our health. A 2010 American Cancer Society study found that women who were inactive and sat for over six hours a day had a 94% increased risk for mortality over those who were physically active and sat for less than 3 hours each day. Similarly, men who sat for more than six hours a day had a 48% increased risk of mortality compared to their standing counterparts! Increasingly the medical community is making the connection between prolonged sitting and cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, cancer and dementia. Some have gone so far as to declare that sitting is the new smoking. This data also suggests that prolonged sitting compromises the health of people that are meeting daily exercise recommendations. In other words, your daily recommended sixty minutes of exercise doesn't negate the impact of sitting all day!

What can we do to help alleviate the negative impact of sitting? The answer is quite simple; stand more! If you have a job that requires long periods of time in a seated position, set the alarm on your watch or computer to go off at least every 30 minutes and get out of your chair and take a short walk, do ten push-ups or 20 jumping jacks, figure out a way to stand up and work. While you may fear a loss of productivity, I think you will soon realize that the short dose of moderate exercise actually boosts mental awareness and work output. Explore the option of a standing work-station. While a little fringe in the workplace today, standing desks are becoming more commonplace in the office buildings of America with encouraging results.

There are even schools that are adopting the idea that standing desks and a more active learning environment are beneficial for both learning and health. A recent study conducted in a Rochester, Minnesota high school implemented the use of a redesigned classroom to promote a greater amount of basal physical activity among students. The classroom made use of mobile stations that allowed students to work standing up and move freely about the classroom. After just two months, teachers reported less student disruptions such as bathroom breaks and frivolous movements, and that students related better to each other. Parents also use of mobile stations that allowed students

Cheetah Notes

Notes from P.E. continued

to work standing up and move freely about the classroom. After just two months, teachers reported less student disruptions such as bathroom breaks and frivolous movements, and that students related better to each other. Parents also reported that students came home less stressed and more eager to complete homework. Furthermore, basal activity levels doubled in the student engaged in the study compared to regular classroom and they demonstrated 20% growth and state standardized tests.

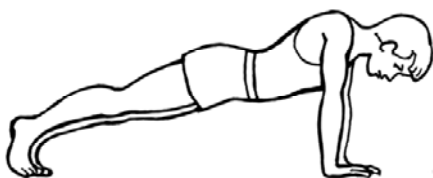
As we increasingly become a less healthy and a more obese society, it seems it may be time to rethink some of our most basic beliefs about how we spend our time in school and work. Is it possible that our age-old adage of *"sit down and pay attention"* may not be the most productive way to work or learn?

As we think about changes that we can make in our health and fitness in the New Year, I encourage your family to join in on our campaign to get a little stronger here at Meridian Park. Our physical fitness testing data has confirmed that Meridian Park students need the most improvement in the health related fitness component of muscular strength. We are targeting this component of fitness every day with a variety of exercises that aim to improve our muscular strength test of push-ups.

Beyond what we are doing in the classroom, I am strongly encouraging student to dedicate just three minutes each day to improving their muscular strength. Planks, push-ups, burpies, wheelbarrows and handstands are just a few of the exercise we have done in class that could easily be brought home and practiced.

I strongly encourage you to talk to your kids about the importance of dedicating time for physical fitness every day and to get involved by modeling healthy fitness habits. Might I suggest a few minutes every evening that your family dedicate to improving upper body muscular strength. Ask your child to show you what they are doing in class and give it a try. *Family push-up challenge anyone?*

I appreciate your support in promoting the health and fitness of the students here at Meridian Park.



Matt Alford
Physical Education Specialist
matt.alford@shorelineschools.org

PTSA President's Letter

Happy New Year from the Meridian Park PTSA!

We hope that everyone will attend the Meridian Park Variety Show on Saturday, January 9th at 6:30pm at the Shorewood High School Theater for an evening of amazing talent! This is a free event and all are welcome!

Speaking of talented kids, the 4th – 6th grade Drama Club is beginning auditions for "Out of the Woods." Auditions begin Monday, January 4th and performances are scheduled for March 4th and 5th at 7:00pm at the Shorewood Theater. Tickets will go on sale in February.

Everyone is invited to attend the next PTSA General Membership Meeting coming up on Tuesday, January 5th at 7pm. The agenda includes electing a Nominating Committee to recruit candidates to run for office in 2016-2017. If you are interested or have questions, please contact us at mpptsapresident@gmail.com and we will get you in touch with the Nominating Committee. After our brief business part of the meeting, our special guest will be Chuck Goodwin, School Safety/Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for Shoreline Schools. Chuck will be available to answer your questions regarding safety procedures at Meridian Park and all Shoreline schools.

At the beginning of the school year, the PTSA presented an ambitious set of strategic goals to the general membership. We are pleased to announce that we have already accomplished one and a half of the five goals!

Goal #1 was to increase membership by 10% (17 members) by year-end and increase staff membership to 100%. In November, we exceeded our 10% increased membership goal and currently have 205 members (our goal was 192 members). Thank you to everyone who joined our amazing PTSA!

Goal #2 was to develop a new fundraising program to meet PTSA needs and the interest of PTSA members. We held our first annual *Empower the Cheetah* giving campaign and have received just over \$5,000. We are grateful to everyone who contributed! It's not too late to participate so feel free to donate any time during the school year. *Empower the Cheetah* forms can be found on our website mpptsa.org or you can use the Paypal "DONATE" button on the website.

February's PTSA Board of Directors meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 2nd at 7pm**. Our regular monthly Board of Directors meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month from 7:00 – 8:30pm in the Library. YMCA provides free childcare and all of our meetings are open to the public.

Don't forget to check out "Meridian Park PTSA" on Facebook for reminders and event information.

~ Jill Steinberg
MP PTSA President, 2015-2016
www.mpptsa.org
mpptsapresident@gmail.com
206-356-5977

Cheetah Cheers



Thank you to all of the families who donated cookies and fruit for the surprise cookie exchange in December. The teachers were presented with many choices of sweets and not-so-sweets, and they loved it! Special thanks to our bakers, our fruit-buyers, and our behind-the-scenes coordinators: Diane Baskin-Thompson, Holly DeGrazia, Lori Ramsay, Karen Lagasca, Kristina LaBore, Christina Lu, Melina Thung, Jennifer Kleyn, Amy Poffenbarger, Naomi Hillyard, Megan Menis, Ammon Larson, Penny Daly, Correne Saunders, Jessica Blackham, Alemnesh Teshome, Susan Duthweiler, and Julianne Rogers.

The next staff Appreciation Event will be a Sandwich Smorgasbord hosted by the second and third grade families on January 22.



PTSA News



Drama Club 4th – 6th Graders
Coming soon...

"OUT OF THE WOODS"

*A new musical by
Rob Jones & Donna Rae Davidson
Directed by Melani Lyons of Dandylyon Drama*

Important Dates to know....

- *January 4 - 7, 2016 - Drama Auditions
- *January 11, 2016 – Drama Rehearsals begin Monday - Thursday
- *March 4, 2016 – Drama Performance @ Shorewood H.S. Theater
- *March 5, 2016 – Drama Performance @ Shorewood H.S. Theater

MATH CLUB

In last month's Math Club update, there was a significant omission in our thank-yous, which we would like to correct now. Many thanks to Jill Steinberg, Matt Clark, and the rest of the PTSA team! Your behind-the-scenes cooperation and support make it possible to bring the wonderful world of math to so many students.

In 2016 we have MOEMS, MATHCOUNTS, Math Is Cool, Shoreline Math Olympiad, Blaine, WSMC.... At least 10 contest dates are scheduled. Lots of practice, challenges, and all-around fun ahead!

For more information about Math Club, please visit www.mpmathclub.com, or contact coordinator Raif at mpmathclub@gmail.com.



Community News

Information on these resources is offered as a service to families—these are not always MP or MP PTSA events or workshops.

MERIDIAN PARK ELEMENTARY

[schools.shorelineschools.org/
meridianpark/](http://schools.shorelineschools.org/meridianpark/)

David Tadlock *Principal*
David.Tadlock@shorelineschools.org

Hillery Clark *Early Childhood
Program Manager*

Diane Randall *Office Manager*

Jill Gwazdauskas *Registrar*

Susan Goldman *School Nurses*

Annie Gage *Family Advocate*

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Follow the MP PTSA on Facebook

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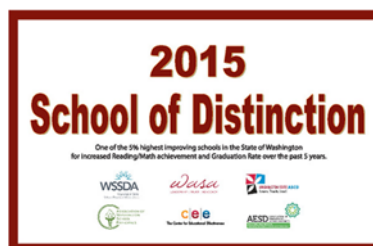
2015 SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION

Three Shoreline schools were recently recognized for supporting continuous improvement in reading and math achievement at their schools. Briarcrest Elementary, Lake Forest Park Elementary and Cascade K-8 Community School were selected as 2015 Schools of Distinction. They are among 90 schools in Washington honored with the prestigious designation by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, the Association of Educational Service Districts, the Association of Washington School Principals, the Washington Association of School Administrators and the Washington Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Only schools in the top five percent of improvement for their level are selected to be a School of Distinction. To earn the recognition, a school must show high levels of improvement in state math and reading assessments over the previous five-year period.

"The awards are something our students, staff and families can take great pride in," said Rebecca Miner, Superintendent of Shoreline Public Schools. "It is a reflection of our district-wide focus on continual improvement and supporting the achievement and success of every student in our schools."

Briarcrest, Lake Forest Park and Cascade K-8 will join other Schools of Distinction from our region at a special awards ceremony on January 21, 2016 at the Puget Sound Educational Service District in Renton.



The Cheetah Chatter is Published Monthly by
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