



The Eagle Eye

Garden Oaks PTA Newsletter

February, 2009

PTA Day at the Capitol, Feb. 26

Let's take a road trip together!

Imagine joining in a rally at the capitol steps together with PTA members from around the state. Imagine sitting down in your state representative's office joined by fellow PTA members from Houston. Imagine sharing your Texas public school experience with your legislator, and knowing that you made a difference. Public officials and public policy will be shaped by our willingness to go to Austin and speak up on behalf of our children. *It's time to put this on your calendar.*

PTA Members from around the state will converge on the capitol of Texas on February 26th, 2009. Please join us! We will meet with our representatives, share our experience in the schools and weigh in on the legislative issues that affect our children. Contact our Houston ISD Council of PTAs' Legislative Chair, Theresa Comstock, for more information (theresa@thecomstocks.org) and to get in the loop on legislative email updates, meetings with legislators and more.

Valentine-O-Gram

Send a Valentine-O-Gram to the child you love, to a friend, or teacher you admire for delivery on Friday, February 13th.

The cost is \$1 for the card and a flower. Your child will receive flowers with all his or her messages on Valentine's Day, delivered right to their classroom.

Cards will be available from February 9th – 13th at a PTA table before or after school or in the front office. You write your message and put it into the Valentine box located in the office. Don't forget to include the child's name and classroom on the back!

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday., February 7, 8-10:30 a.m., GOES cafeteria

The Friends of Montessori 15th Annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction is almost here!

Wait till you see some of the creative ideas our teachers have come up with for the Silent Auction this year! A trip for two kids to the zoo with Mrs. Pousson, a hockey game with Ms. Straker, a Guitar Hero marathon with Mrs. Carson, just to name a few. As always, there will be free pancakes, entertainment, kid's crafts and more. Spread the word to friends, relatives and neighbors to come out and support this thriving fundraiser at our school. Donations are greatly appreciated and can be made online at www.fomhouston.org by clicking PayPal and notating Garden Oaks Chapter please (Tote bags may be purchased this way as well).

We still need volunteers, so if you would like to help, please contact Tonya Knauth, Breakfast Co-Chair, at tknauth@comcast.net or (713) 628-8243.

Movie Night/Sleepover - Feb. 13

6 - 9 pm for ages 3 - Kindergarten.

6 pm - 7:30 Saturday morning for 1st - 6th grade.

Activities include pizza, arts & crafts, board games, karaoke, computer games and movies. Children should bring sleeping bags, pillows and come in sweats or similar sleepwear (no changing on campus.) Donuts and juice will be served Saturday morning. Sign up by February 11th. Cost is \$10. *GOES students only!*

The PTA President's Corner

February is such a great month, the holidays are well over, the days will start to get longer and so much to do! February is not only Library Month, it's also Black History Month, National Children's Dental Health Month, 100 days of School (Feb. 18th), Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, President's Day, National PTA Founders Day Anniversary, and last but not least, it's the school's fundraiser, "Worlds Finest Chocolate! Be sure to watch for details in your child's folder. The Fundraiser runs from Feb. 23rd - March 9th.

Make it a great month!

Helle Johnson

New T-Shirts - Order now!

Thank you to those who submitted designs for the Garden Oaks PTA T-Shirt Design contest. The new design is a wonderful collage of artwork from students ranging from Pre-K to 5th grade within the branches of a graceful tree and surrounded by the words "Garden Oaks Elementary: A Place Where Children Flourish". The new shirt is an acceptable uniform shirt and may be worn to school. Youth sizes are \$8 and Adult sizes are \$10. Return order forms by Friday, February 6th.

PTA Directory

Please consider giving us your contact information ASAP for the PTA Directory. The directory will be completed in a couple of weeks & we hope to have enough entries to make it a good resource for parents and students. Thanks to those who have completed their forms.

Contact information can also be emailed to Theresa Comstock, theresa@thecomstocks.org. Include child(ren), teachers, parents names, phone numbers, email and address. Thank you!

Mark your Calendars!

Monday, February 3	PTA Board Mtg, 8:15 am*
Monday, February 3	Civic Club Meeting, 7 pm
Saturday, February 7	FOM Pancake Breakfast
February 9 - 13	Valentine-O-Grams
Wednesday, February 11	SDMC Meeting, 3:30 pm*
Friday, February 13	Class Celebrations, 2 pm
Friday, February 13	Movie Night/Sleep Over
Thursday, February 19	FOM Board Meeting, 6 pm*
Monday, February 23	School Fundraiser begins
Thursday, February 26	TX PTA Day at the Capitol

* PTA (Parent/Teacher Association), FOM (Friends of Montessori), and SDMC (Shared Decision Making Committee) meetings are open to all!

March of Dimes Read-a-thon

Garden Oaks students raised \$1200 during the March of Dimes Read-a-thon! Congratulations to our students!

After-School Program Enrichment Class Update *By Mrs. Pollock*

In response to parent inquiries for after-school enrichment classes, I contacted CHILDRENS Initiatives After School Programs, the company that coordinates the after-school program at Oak Forest Elementary. While the YMCA will continue to provide after school care, we had hoped to extend the enrichment offerings. At the time the enrollment deadline rolled around in December, only 4 children were enrolled. Wanting to be sure that we were able to serve our community, we postponed the program start date and extended the enrollment deadline to January 16, 2009. As of today, we have a total of 13 children enrolled with the majority in PK and Kinder, however not enough in any one class to start the courses. Therefore, we have decided to offer a scaled down version of the program to PK and Kinder students only. Classes will begin February 2 at 3:15pm.

If you would like to try the courses offered in the after school enrichment classes for PK and Kinder, please register right away! Complete your registration form and return to the front office along with your deposit check.

Learning from Nature

By Mr. Johanson (a Montessori teacher)

The Montessori program at Garden Oaks uses our exceptional campus in its studies. Thanks to the hard work of many, we have immediate and safe access to an unusual variety of natural areas and garden spaces. Montessori education has within its design and intent the ability to deeply utilize these resources and many of our teachers are guiding their students out of the classroom and into the truths to be found only in the natural world.

There is a revolution in parenting and in education regarding our connection to nature, exemplified in our current campus book study by Richard Louv, "The Last Child in the Woods: saving our children from nature deficit disorder." He proves that most children no longer get much free time out in nature, and shows the serious consequences of this. Teachers need to provide time for our students to connect with the natural world and we do. In Montessori we take care to carefully understand what Maria Montessori said after over 50 years of refining her method. When she says, "There is no description, no image in any book capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all the life to be found around them in a real forest," we respond within the context of Montessori education and integrate our classwork with the outdoors. We garden and learn about plant and animal systems. We go to the different habitats to explore and to sense nature. Then we can connect these experiences in an inter-disciplinary way to our learning. As it should be, these children will grow to adulthood having had a close relationship with the natural world and the inner peace that comes from this. Outdoor work is based on Dr. Montessori's vision for the extended classroom and the respect and responsibility inherent in meaningful encounters with the land and sea.

*Drop off contributions for the "EagleEye" in the PTA mailslot in the office or email them to Theresa@TheComstocks.org.
Garden Oaks Elementary School Administration has final editing privileges.
Many thanks for translation by Isela Villarreal.*

Get Involved!

Please consider how you can get involved as a PTA volunteer next year. Let us know areas of interest! – contact Helle Johnson (713-692-8229, hellej@earthlink.net) or Isela Villarreal (713-688-7722, iselajv@msn.com).

President	RoomRep/Volunteer
1 st VP, Yearbook	Coordinator
2 nd VP, Newsletter	Attendance Awards
Treasurer	Hospitality
Recording Secretary	Beautification/Gardening
Parliamentarian	T-Shirt Sales
Historian	Fundraising
Translation	Copy Crew
Website Chair	Legislative
Teacher Liaison	Liaison to Black M.S.
Membership Chair	Cultural Arts &
Directory	Enrichment

*Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember.
Involve me, and I'll understand.*

Science Fair Results

We had over 100 projects this year in the Garden Oaks Science Fair. Ms. Morris and the judges were amazed not only at the number of projects, but the quality of the investigations presented. Teachers and our Science Ambassadors from ExxonMobil judged the projects. The winners were announced at Family Science Night on January 29th.

Students Choice Award:	1st place: Ms. Woods' class 2nd place tie: Cydni Bailey & Benjamin Comstock
Class Projects:	1st place: Ms. Woods' class 2nd place: Ms. Nguyen's class 3rd place: Ms. Blanco's class
Group Projects:	1st place: Rea Golt & Tray Saltzmann 2nd place: Read Tatum & Riley Tatum 3rd place: Martha Duran & Guadalupe Romero
3rd Grade Individual	1st place: Lenore Craig 2nd place: Emma Lozano 3rd place: Audrey Dreiss
4th Grade Individual	1st place: Meshelle Gardner 2nd place: Emma Johnson 3rd place: Sean Walsh
5th grade Individual	1st place: Daniella Ramos 2nd place tie: Jacob Hoffart & Emily Roberts 3rd place tie: Stephanie Hernandez & Jack Runge