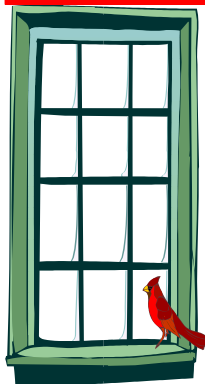


February
2012



MATOAKA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bird's Eye View

From Our PTA President, Erin Otis

Is it February already?! This year seems to be flying by! It has been a tremendous experience to be part of the PTA at Matoaka this year. We have so many willing and able PTA members. I am proud to belong to the PTA and to this school!

We had a fantastic turnout for our Family Fun Night at the William and Mary Men's Basketball game on January 7th. It was great to see so many families out enjoying themselves. Our Matoaka Cardinal and the William and Mary Griffin became fast friends.

There are two events coming this month where you can enjoy dinner together as a family. February 9th is Spirit

Night at Moe's and on February 16th we are having our Science Fair dinner. You can get more information on both of these events on the following pages of the newsletter.

Our next PTA meeting is February 15th, as our usual Tuesday night is Valentine's Day. We will be electing our nominating committee at this meeting. Our nominating committee will be putting together nominations for our officer positions for next year. If you have not been to a meeting yet, this would be a great time to get involved. This meeting is open to all parents and staff. Please join us.

Warmly,
Erin Otis,
PTA President

Can't Hide that Cardinal Pride!

Calendar of Events

February 9	Spirit Night at Moe's Southwest Grill	11 AM—9 PM
15	PTA Meeting, Media Center	6:30 PM
16	Science Fair and Dinner	5:30—6:00 PM
22	Deadline for Bird's Eye View Newsletter	



Matoaka Spirit Night is at Moe's Southwest Grill on
4950 Monticello Ave. (near Verizon)

**Thursday, February 9th from
11 a.m. to 9 p.m.**

Make sure to tell them you are from Matoaka
for us to get 20% of the proceeds!

2nd Annual Science Fair Dinner

The PTA will be sponsoring a dinner during the Science Fair on **Thursday, February 16th from 5:30 - 6 pm**. This year we will be offering either a free dinner (1 slice of pizza, salad or fruit cup and a drink) or for those with larger appetites we will be taking orders in advance for a whole pizza which will cost around \$6 - \$7 for your family. The PTA will still be providing a free salad or fruit cup and a drink if you choose to order a whole pizza. Be on the look out for the flyer with RSVP form attached to come home the week before the Science Fair.

**Square One Art is coming in
MARCH! Look for the order
forms and free stickers in your
child's backpack!!**

**For those parents new to
Matoaka, this is an annual
fundraiser using your child's
artwork to create magnets,
tshirts, mugs, mouse pads,
calendar to support
Matoaka's Art program.**

Calling All Volunteers!

The PTA is looking for volunteers to help with
the Science Fair Dinner on Thursday, Feb.
16th. Here are the time slots:

2:00-3:30 PM Food Prep & Set Up:

4 volunteers needed

4:45 - 5:30 PM Set Up: 3 volunteers needed

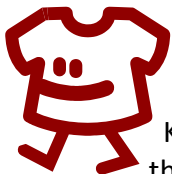
5:15 - 6:00 PM Serving Dinner :

6 volunteers needed

6:00 - 6:30 PM Clean Up:

6 volunteers needed

If you can help fill any of these time slots,
please contact Leanne Conrad at elcon-



Interested in donating your too-small spirit shirt?

Kids can turn in their gently used spirit shirts which are too small for them now and they will be given to others. Just bring them into the office and we'll do the rest!

**From Mrs. Chandler, RN, BSN, NCSN
Matoaka School Nurse**

**There is a lot to talk about
in February!**

February is National Children's Dental Health Month: One of the local dental practices (Dr. Stensland' group) will be presenting information about care of the teeth and good nutrition to all classes.



Olde Towne Medical Center is offering free dental care to children up to age 21 who are Medicaid eligible or low income and no dental insurance. Call 259-3255 to pre-register or get more information.

February is American Heart Month: Heart Disease is the Number One Cause of Death—About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. Many people make it harder than it is. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts. As you make daily food choices, read nutrition labels and base your eating pattern on these recommendations:

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1% fat, and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans-fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Select and purchase foods lower in salt/sodium.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man.
- Keep an eye on your portion sizes.

Physical activity in your daily life is an important step to preventing heart disease. You can take a few simple steps at home, at work, and at play to increase the amount of physical activity in your life. See CDC's physical activity Web site for tips and more information.

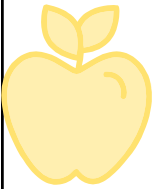


February's Character Trait of the Month: Honesty

Honesty means being
truthful and sincere.

I show honesty when
I do my own work.

I show honesty when I return things
that belong to others.



In honor of Healthy Lifestyles Week in November, the PTA kicked off a new award: **THE GOLDEN APPLE**. This award will be given throughout the year to teachers, staff and parents at Matoaka who are "caught" helping kids make healthy choices.

The first set of GOLDEN APPLES went to:

MS BUCKLIN: A teacher who spends every day working on ways to encourage Matoaka students to be healthy and active. She chairs the Wellness council, sponsors the Flag Football Club, and worked hard to make the school Fun Run a huge success.

THE FIRST GRADE TEACHERS: The first grade teaching team sent home letters to parents at the beginning of the year with a list of healthy foods that would make a great snack each day. These teachers understand the importance of healthy foods to

fuel healthy brains.

MS PENNY SMITH: Thank you Penny for sponsoring the Matoaka Girls Running Club. It is a fantastic and popular program.

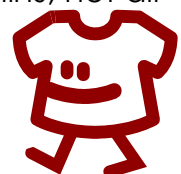
MS JEN SMITH: Jen is responsible for getting our teachers and the community excited about Zumba.

MS SLADE AND THE CAFETERIA STAFF: They work hard every week to make healthy, tasty food for us while also supporting our Locally Grown food initiative. We appreciate your dedication!

MS GADA: This Matoaka Mom made delicious blueberry muffins for her son's class birthday celebration (instead of cupcakes!) in honor of Healthy Lifestyles Week.

Thank you one and all for setting a great example and supporting Healthy Lifestyles.

The PTA has been contacted about 3 Matoaka t-shirts that have had the school logo peel off. They are our "flame" tie dye shirts, which are black, blending into a red and yellow tie dye with "Matoaka" and the cardinal on the front. We think that this problem was specific to one batch of the shirts, not all of them. If you have experienced such a problem with your t-shirt, please let us know and we will gladly provide an exchange or refund. Michaelle Gaul, michaelle@gaul.com





Announcing the 2011-2012 PTA Reflections Awards
"Diversity is..."

The Matoaka PTA is pleased to announce the 2011-2012 Reflections Program Participants and the awards they have received. We are so proud of our students' artistic endeavors!

The Outstanding Achievement award winners were also judged at the Council level, and were recognized at the PTA Council Reflections Ceremony on January 18 at Matoaka Elementary.

<u>Kindergarten through Second Grade</u>	<u>Third Grade through Fifth Grade</u>	<u>Awards of Merit for Literature</u>
Awards of Merit for Visual Arts	Awards of Merit for Visual Arts	<i>Ian Carone</i> <i>Rebecca Dawnkaski</i> <i>Jack Devore</i> <i>Ava Dovi</i> <i>Christopher James</i> <i>Kayleigh Laska</i> <i>Caitlyn Lucy</i> <i>Madeline Moniak</i> <i>Jacob Teer</i>
<i>Jayla Bennett</i> <i>Sarah Brandt</i> <i>Reagan Carino</i> <i>Rheis Granger</i> <i>Nick R. Kordek</i> <i>Jace Laska</i> <i>JulieAna Lotts</i> <i>Conner Martin</i> <i>Alaina McDougall</i> <i>Solana Neeley</i> <i>Christopher Parker</i> <i>Katherine Quinlan</i> <i>Eve Waldron</i> <i>John Walls</i>	<i>Timiya Caffey</i> <i>Danielle Eaton</i> <i>Brooke Harlow</i> <i>Autumn Kirby</i> <i>Ronnie Metzger</i> <i>Lizzie Molloy</i> <i>Taylor Sanders</i> <i>Arianna Shaw</i> <i>Lisa Small</i> <i>Soren Su</i> <i>Claire Waldron</i> <i>Amy Wall</i>	Awards of Excellence for Literature
Awards of Excellence for Visual Arts	Awards of Excellence for Visual Arts	<i>Andrew Block</i> <i>Sarah Harris</i> <i>Jacob Oman</i>
<i>Isabel Kantor</i> <i>Ethan Luchs</i>	<i>Kylie Johnson</i> <i>Sophia Liu</i>	Outstanding Achievement in Literature
Outstanding Achievement in Visual Arts	Outstanding Achievement in Visual Arts	<i>Alexis Holloway</i>
<i>Amelia Vasiliu</i>	<i>Jessica Shi</i>	Outstanding Achievement in Photography
		<i>Joshua Lisagore</i>
		Award of Merit for Video Production
		<i>Christopher King</i>

**Have a Conversation about School:
Get beyond one-word answers
and find out what your child really
thinks and feels about school.**

by Emily Graham, schoolfamily.com

Maybe your daughter says she hates social studies but won't tell you why. Or your son, when asked what he learned at school, just says "Nothing." Talking about school with your children shows them that you value education and keeps you aware of what's going on in their lives, but what should you do when they don't want to talk?

Getting the Conversation Started: First, think about the time of day and the kind of questions you ask. Whether your child is a chatty 1st grader or a tightlipped teenager, he may not want to talk about a tough math test as soon as he gets home from school. And questions like "How was school?" are bound to elicit uninformative answers like "Fine." Experts recommend taking a few minutes to reconnect as a family after the busy day before addressing school and household issues. Let your kids know you're glad to see them and wait a while to ask about grades. Keep in mind that kids may be tired or preoccupied when they first come home, or they may want some quiet time before launching into the evening's activities. When you start a conversation about school, ask specific questions about parts of your child's day or the school environment, advises Laurence Steinberg, author of *The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting* and a psychology professor at Temple University.

"I think the biggest mistake parents make is to ask broad questions like 'How was your day today?' and their kids give a one- or two-word answer," Steinberg says. "The more specific you are in your questions, the more of an answer you're likely to get."

At the beginning of the school year, Steinberg suggests asking general questions to learn about a child's classroom, teacher, and classmates, such as:

- What does your classroom look like? Where is

your desk?

- Which of your friends are in your class? Who else is in your class?
- What did you like best at school today?
- What did you have for lunch?

If your child is not talkative, you can still learn a lot about her school experience through other means. Read the school newsletter, email the teacher, and talk to other parents on the phone. As you become more familiar with your child's daily routine, you can ask more specific questions to get her talking about a project or a class pet.



Talking About

Problems: What should you do when your daughter announces that she hates school or when your son says he can't stand the kids in his class? Even for children prone to melodrama,

these kinds of statements may signal that a child is having academic or social problems at school. It's important to get to the root of the problem, Steinberg says, and that will take patience and understanding.

When your daughter says "I hate school," it could mean she is bored in class, doesn't understand new material, is being pushed too hard, or doesn't get along with a teacher. Your son's declaration that he doesn't like the other kids may mean that he feels ignored or friendless or that he's being bullied or victimized.

Parents can help by talking with their kids about steps they can take to make the situation better. Younger children may need their parents' help to think about how to solve a problem, while older children need a chance to solve problems on their own, Steinberg says.

While most kids will be nervous about new experiences, that nervousness should fade over time, Steinberg says. Parents should be cheerful, yet firm, in dealing with their kids. "The most important thing for the child to have is support from you."

Communicating With Kids: Tips by Age Group

Playground disputes and disappointing grades—and learning to deal with them—are important parts of growing up. Before you intervene on your child's behalf, think about what response is appropriate for his maturity level and developmental stage.

Talking With Young Children: Younger children, especially those in kindergarten through 3rd grade, will need help thinking about how to respond to problems at school. You can help your child learn problem-solving skills by talking about potential responses and what results they may bring. Help your child decide the best steps to take and encourage her to do what she can on her own.

Older children may be aware of potential solutions but still need encouragement to act. Children sometimes need coaching from their parents to take the first step, says Temple University psychology professor Laurence Steinberg. If the problem persists, Steinberg recommends calling your child's teacher to see what insights she can bring.

Talking with

Adolescents:

By 4th or 5th grade, children may become more resistant to parental involvement. Although it's a difficult balance, it's important to respect your adolescent's growing desire for autonomy while being

available to help when needed. For example, if a 7th grader is struggling in math class, talking with the child about the best way to ask the teacher for extra help is likely to be more effective than calling the teacher directly, Steinberg says.

As adolescents feel the need for more privacy, there will be times they simply don't want to talk. When that happens, Steinberg recommends the following approach: "If a 12- or 13-year-old looks upset, say 'You look upset. Do you want to talk about what's bothering you?' If the child says no, say 'That's OK, but if you do feel like talking, I'm here.' "



President's Day Reading

A Picture Book of George Washington
(Picture Book Biography) by David A. Adler, John Wallner, Alexandra Wallner

George Washington and the General's Dog by Frank Murphy

George Washington's Breakfast by Jean Fritz, Tomie dePaola (Illustrator)

George Washington's Teeth by Deborah Chandra, Madeleine Comora, Brock Cole (Illustrator)

A Picture Book of Abraham Lincoln by

David A. Adler, John Wallner, Alexandra Wallner

Abe Lincoln Remembers Abe Lincoln : The Boy Who Loved Books by Kay Winters

Abe Lincoln: The Young Years by Keith Brandt

Abe Lincoln's Hat by Martha Brenner

Abraham Lincoln: The Civil War President by Ginger Turner

If You Grew Up With Abraham Lincoln by Ann McGovern

—list compiled from apples4theteacher.com

Family Fun Ideas

The Living Room is Alive With the Sounds of Music!

Music is so important! Have you ever been having a bad day and one of your favorite songs came on the radio? The right music can change our attitudes remarkably fast.

So, do your children know what your favorite songs are? Do they know what you listened to back when you were in High School? Do you know what they like to listen to?

Here's your chance to find out! Have everyone gather their favorite songs: MP3 players, CDs, Tapes, Vinyls, 8-Tracks, or even sheet music and a piano. Then take turns listening to a full song of each person's choosing.

You never know, you might like your kids' music. And they might even like yours!

Make up some popcorn or other snack for this activity. Maybe tell why you like the song and point out your favorite parts.

—familyactivityideas.com

Go around your neighborhood and/or home to find naturally occurring hearts; take photos of them or draw them. Talk about love and its different forms and manifestations.

Can your family make a heart shape? What are the different actions and qualities that make your family loving?



Crafty Kids

Recycled Paper Heart Valentine

This heart is made from just newspaper, white glue, string and some pretty sparkle paint.



1. Tear about 8 sheets of newspaper (lengthwise will be the easiest direction) into 1" strips. Cut those strips into little 1/2" bits and place in a large bowl. Cover with hot water and let soak for 24 hours.
2. The paper will start to look like a pulp. Work it through your fingers, tearing up any large lumps so that it looks like gray oatmeal. When the lumps are gone, take a large handful of pulp and squeeze out all the extra water.
3. Working the pulp in your hands, add white glue to the mixture at about a ratio of about 1 unit of glue to 4 units of pulp. Form a ball, place it on wax paper and press to form a flat heart that is at least 1" thick. Let dry for several hours or until it starts to harden. When you can pick up the heart, wrap it with a length of string, pulling firmly to make indentations. Tuck the ends into the back.
4. When the heart is dry, paint the entire shape with a thick layer of white acrylic paint. Let dry and then paint with a thick layer of red paint. Let dry and have fun experimenting with smudges that emphasis the texture of your heart. I added some glitter paint for a final touch. A spray of a glossy sealer would be a good idea to finish off your project.

—www.artprojectsforkids.org



—artwork found at artprojectsforkids.org

Our house is surrounded by birds—cardinals seem to be in abundance lately! Why not make a simple drawing of a cardinal. You could even turn it into a valentine for your favorite Matoaka teacher! Why not make its tail into an elongated heart? Or its wing could be a heart. Happy Drawing!

Earth Corner: Unsung Heros

Life on Earth is a long journey though a series of transformations; all lives transform. The final transformation is bodily death. Nature has been naturally recycling for as long as there has been life on the planet.

To understand how Earth's ecology works, look at the original methods of recycling: Recycling is the process of breaking things down so they can again be part of the nutrient pools that all living things build their bodies from.

What happens after living plants and animals die? How do they get recycled? Where do their bodies go?

Decomposers are organisms which make a living by eating organisms which have died--what kept them alive is gone. Really, what decomposers are doing is transforming the bodies of both animals and plants back into the basic nutrients they were made of.

Decomposers are mostly bacteria and fungi. But they have helpers: Scavengers and Insects. Scavengers' role in the ecosystem is to prepare bodies for further decomposition. They open up animal bodies so others can share the food. Some of the more visible scavengers are vultures, crows, jackals, rats, opossums, ravens, catfish, beetles, maggots—all the creatures who use car-cion (dead animals) as an important part of their diet.



Bird's Eye View

Most living matter on land is plant-based. Termites, beetles and carpenter ants eat their way into trees. Some beetles have little pits on their wing cases that contain fungi spores, so as soon as the beetle tunnels into the tree, the fungi can begin decomposition. This relationship is called symbiosis.

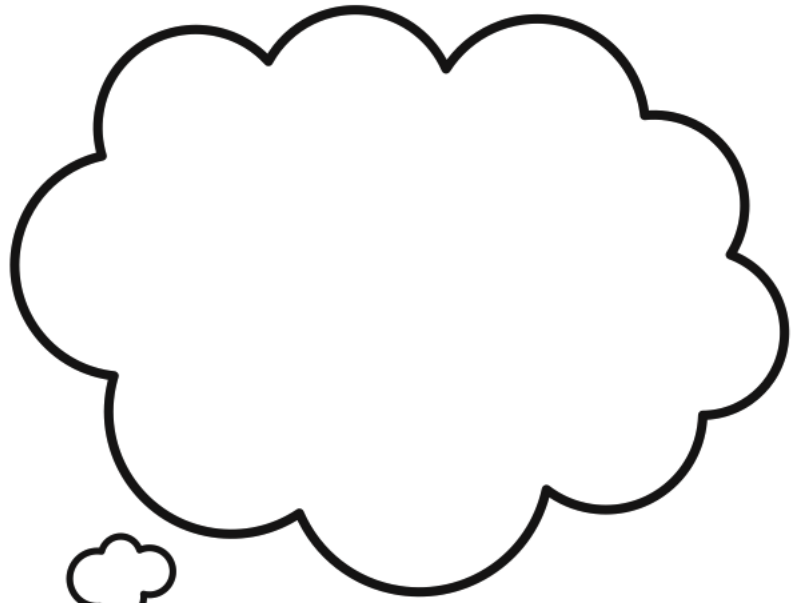
Most life on Earth lives in the ocean. In the seafloor mud, vast numbers of deep sea worms and smaller organisms prepare dead matter for final disassembly by bacteria.

Like the Decomposers, Scavengers suffer from social stigma; humans tend to regard them with contempt and fear. Many people even look down on garbage-collectors, but they are the first to yell when their trash is not collected. How long do you suppose human beings have given the decomposers their bad reputation? Has it always been that way? After all, decomposition is a natural, and fundamental, life-giving process.

Explore the idea of Natural Recycling

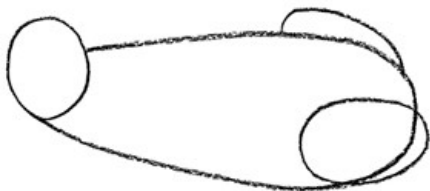
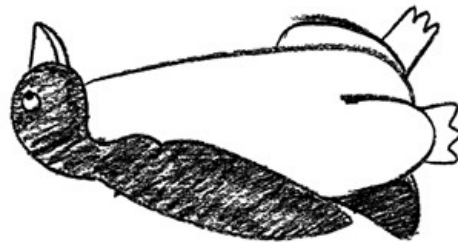
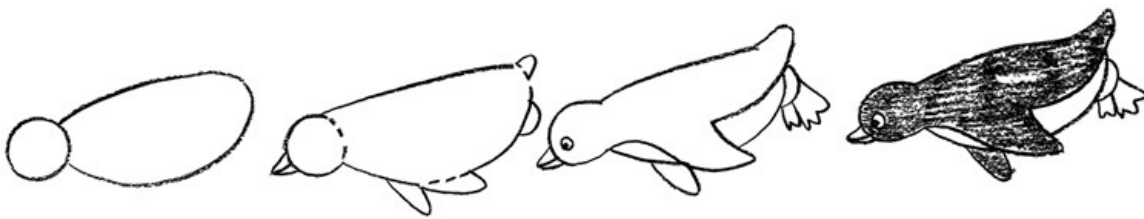
- * Add some verses to the old children's song: "The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out, the worms play pinochle on your snout."
- * Make up a poem about the Decomposers and/or Scavengers.
- * Imagine a storyline for a graphic book, or a music video, in which the Heroes are scavengers or decomposers; then draw it or write it.
- * Write or draw a description of your town or city without decomposers.

—Ideas and text from morning-earth.org/decomposer.html



i love...

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erinvaledesign.com



Penguin