



Bird's Eye View

February 2014

From our PTA President, Michelle Alexander

Dear Matoaka Families,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday break and enjoyed our recent snow days. It seems like January just flew by! Thank you to all of our families who joined us for the Spirit Night at Z Pizza, as well as those who came out for our Family Fun Night at the W&M Basketball Game. Both events were well attended! I also want to thank those of you who attended our January General Meeting and Parent Program, "Bullying and Building Resistance", presented by Jen Smith, our school counselor. Ms. Smith provided a lot of great information on our school's approach to bullying prevention, as well as great parenting tips for raising resilient kids. If you missed this program, we will be making the materials available on the PTA website soon, so be on the lookout for these valuable resources!

As many of you know, the mission of the PTA is not only to offer support for programs and events at our school, but also to act as advocates for education, speaking "on behalf of all children and youth before governmental bodies and other organizations". The Virginia PTA Website has a wealth of information and resources on how you, as a parent and PTA member, can get involved in advocacy on the state level. Specifically, this year's PTA legislative priorities include two key issues that have already gained traction in the general assembly; the proposed reduction in the number of SOL assessments and the proposed delay of the recently passed A-F school report card program. I encourage you to visit the website: <http://www.vapta.org/legislation-education.html>, to learn more about how you can make your voice heard on these and other important issues.

In addition, it is also our goal to support advocacy efforts on the local level. That being said, the Matoaka PTA Executive Board recently sent a letter to the WJCC School Board, encouraging the board to consider the issue of rising class size averages at our school. As many of you already know, at our school this year, the class size average for our 5 third grade classes is 25.4; for our 5 fifth grade classes, it is 29. These averages are not in line with the school division's targets for class size, and cause unnecessary obstacles for both students and teachers. As a PTA Board, we felt it was imperative to raise this concern with our school board, in the hopes that they will consider the possibility of funding for additional teachers for Matoaka as they make their budget calculations for the upcoming school year.

If you are interested learning more about our advocacy efforts, please feel free to contact me, via email, chele.alexander@gmail.com.

As always, to keep up to date on all of our PTA happenings, you can read the full newsletter on our website: matoaka-pta.org.

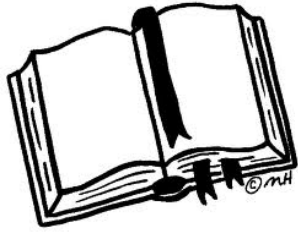
Thank you for your continued support of our school!

Sincerely,

Michelle Alexander
PTA President

You can read the entire newsletter on our website: matoaka-pta.org

**ORDER YOUR
YEARBOOK TODAY!**



Yearbooks can be purchased online at www.candidcolor.net Select "Yearbook" and enter the access code MATYBK14.

Parents have the option to select either a soft cover yearbook for \$20.00 or a hardcover yearbook for \$25.00. Order forms for parents that wish to mail in an order are available at the main office.

All yearbook orders must be placed by Friday, April 4, 2014. Don't delay Contact Candid Color with any ordering questions at customerservice@candidcolor.net or [1-800-321-4256](tel:1-800-321-4256).

SAVE THE DATE!

Matoaka's Cardinal Carnival is being held on Saturday, March 29th, 2 pm - 5 pm
Rain or Shine.

We will be offering unlimited play wristbands this year instead of tickets for the games and rides.

Several new games and rides have been added,

so don't miss out on the fun!

More information will be sent home in March.

Join the Cardinal Carnival team!

Contact Sue Bornschein at skysarkjb@aol.com or [565-4145](tel:565-4145).

February Calendar of Events

- 10 Box Tops Quarterly Deadline
- 17 President's Day—No School
- 19 PTA Board Meeting, 7 pm

Healthy Lifestyles: Heart Healthy Valentine's Day Alternatives



This year, many classrooms at Matoaka are supporting the “Healthy Celebrations and Snacks Initiative” by having Heart Healthy Valentine’s Day parties that include better alternatives to sugary sweets. Instead of lollipops, cupcakes and cookies some teachers are offering red, pink and white healthy options such as apples, yogurt, cheese sticks, popcorn, mini bagels with cream cheese, bananas, cranberries, strawberries and tomatoes with Ranch dressing dip, and much more! We have many fun ideas posted on the Matoaka PTA website <http://www.matoaka-pta.org/recipes>

You can take this idea a step further by encouraging your child to give healthier cards/gifts to their classmates. Remember, you do not need to attach anything to a Valentine’s card, but if your child wants to give a special gift, try one of these alternatives to lollipops and candy:

Valentine’s Day Sayings for Cards - and Gift Ideas

Bee Mine – toy bee or bumble bee stickers
Don’t ever change – a penny
Have a ball on Valentine’s Day – bouncy ball
Have a Dino-mite Valentines Day – plastic dinosaur
Let’s stick together – glue, glue sticks, bandaid
Love Bug - plastic bugs or bug stickers
Love is a battlefield – GI Joe
I am glad we are in the same SCHOOL - goldfish crackers
I have a sweet tooth for you - toothbrush
I like you berry much – strawberries, blueberries
I go bananas over you – banana
I dig you – plastic beach shovel
I like the way you roll – small ball
I wheelie like you – matchbox car
I pick YOU to be my Valentine – Flower
I’m stuck on you – stickers, tattoos, bandaids
I’m wild about you – plastic zoo animal
I’ve got my eye on you – Magnifying glass

My heart pops for you – Popcorn
Orange you glad you’re my valentine – oranges
Read My Lips, I’m Yours – Chap stick
Spread the love – peanut butter
Valentine, You Color My World! – crayons, markers, colored pencil
We make a perfect pair! – Socks or a pear
You can count on me when things get sticky – Wet wipes
You crack me up – Crackers or a printed joke/riddle
You make my heart bounce - ball
You blow me away, Valentine - bubbles
You make my heart glow – glow sticks
You rule, Valentine – ruler
You’re a great catch – Goldfish crackers
You’re the highlight of my day – Highlighter
You’re just "write" – pen, pencil
You’re sweet and I’m not "lion" – plastic lion
You’re plum perfect – plum
You’re the apple of my eye – apples

For more ideas including heart healthy recipes, connect with us online:

Website <http://www.matoaka-pta.org/healthy/>
Pinterest <http://www.pinterest.com/matoakapta/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MatoakaElementary>

For more information or to get involved with the Matoaka Healthy Lifestyles Committee contact Tryna Fitzpatrick tfitz@hotmail.com

Play Family Fun Bingo – Standard or Blackout?

Make a chair and pillow fort	Who can do the most push-ups?	Force bulbs inside	Have a cookie bake-off!	Who can do the most sit-ups?
Set up a photo booth with props (hats, mustache)	Read a book (out loud) in the dark with a flashlight	Take a movie out from the library & watch it	Play the art dice game. (directions below)	Use masking tape on carpet to play marbles
Go on a winter picnic (don't forget to bring hot cocoa)	Write a letter to a far-away relative.		Go on a winter scavenger hunt (list on Earth Corner)	Go for an evening glow stick walk (or flashlight)
Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count www.birdcount.org	Make edible sculptures with bread dough	Find out where fish and turtles go when the water freezes	Who can do the most jumping jacks?	Play hide and seek (but no scaring!)
Make smores!	Go outside for a color hunt	Make up your own tea ceremony	Who does the best impressions?	Make a pinecone bird feeder

The Art Dice Game

Begin with wooden or paper blocks to make dice: one should have colors, the other should have shapes or lines. You can pick a category ahead of time if you'd like (animals, house, seasons) or not, and roll your dice. Everyone gets a turn to roll, and everyone has to draw a color and shape that corresponds to the dice. After 10 or 15 rolls, see how your pictures are developing!

--Thanks to tinkerlab.com for the idea!



Crafty Kids



Using a white crayon, write secret messages to your friends and family on white paper cut into heart shapes. In order to decode your message, they must paint the hearts with watercolors!

Thank you Better Homes & Gardens!



Using a hole punch, yarn and a yarn needle (dull tip), take some card stock to make beautiful one-of-a-kind valentines! Thanks to realsimple.com for this idea.

Nature Silhouettes



How to:

- 1. Trace:** Grab your preferred nature study materials and let the kids pick out their favorite plants and animals. Trace the outlines lightly with a pencil. If you are doing this from a book, thin paper and dark images with a lot of contrast work best. If you're using photographs or images printed from the internet, tape them a window with your paper on top and use the sun to illuminate the images for easy tracing.
- 2. House plant option:** If you have plants in your house, try placing them in front of a light source and tracing their shadows.
- 3. Paint:** Once you have your outlines or silhouettes, have fun painting them in. You could put one silhouette per page, or you could make a composition from a few of them.



Discuss: While the kids are painting, share interesting facts about their plant or animal with them, or maybe even join in on the creative fun!

----tinkerlab.com

Winter scavenger hunt

How many of these winter treasures can you find? Whatever is growing on a tree (such as leaves, branches, flowers and seeds), the tree still needs it. Please collect only from the woodland floor.

- Spiky, shiny holly leaves
- Long tickly pine needles
- Tough, smooth leaves of an evergreen plant such as box
- Smooth bark of a cherry tree, with its horizontal stripes
- Bumpy, jigsaw pattern bark of a Scots pine
- Rough oak bark with its deep vertical cracks
- A green cone still to ripen on the tree (please leave it there)
- A ripe cone with open bracts
- A cone shorter than your thumb
- Seed catkins on birch trees
- A leaf skeleton
- A twig with two or three different species of lichen



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