



Burning Issues

President's Message

When I was little I had a favorite Bing Crosby Holiday show that I loved to watch each December.

In it he sang a song with the verse, "when I'm tired and I can't sleep I count my blessings instead of sheep and I fall asleep counting my blessings." I try to remind myself of that throughout the year but especially as the year comes to an end.

We have so many things to be grateful for at Burning Tree. PTA Board members, committee chairs, and volunteers who donate their time and energy organizing school fundraisers, school activities and events, who photocopy and edit PTA publications, and who volunteer time in our classrooms, playground and media center. Thank you to the many parents and families who support our school by attending school fundraisers and events and who have generously supported our Fill Our Pond campaign, even in these difficult financial times. And of course we are especially fortunate to have such amazing, energetic and committed teachers and staff at BTES. We thank them for their dedication and endless hours of hard work on behalf of our children! We appreciate the working partnership between the teachers, staff and parents and know that is one of the many things that makes our school such a special place!

We would also like to thank Shahab and Gurrinder Ravary and their family for generously donating food from their downtown Bethesda Restaurant, The Nest, for our Staff Appreciation lunch last month. The luncheon was amazing. There were different pastas and sauces, salads, sandwiches, cookies, brownies and enough delicious food left over to feed our more than 75 teachers and staff the following day!

We wish you all a happy, healthy and peaceful holiday season and look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Cindy Campbell, PTA President and Ellie Abramowitz, PTA President-elect

Happy Holidays!

International Night - A World of Thanks!

Allison Ellis, Santi Karamchetty, Agnes de Gonneville and Tracy Knighton, thanks to you all for your hard work organizing such a fabulous celebration bringing us together for International Night this year.

Also a big thank you to all the families who hosted one of our booths representing 28 countries, all the children who participated in the Parade of Nations, and those performing; you were outstanding! There were so many interesting items and activities and such delicious food, it was hard to get to all of it.



Special thanks to the Burning Tree Staff who are so supportive of this event, particularly Mrs. Erdrich and Mr. Tark. Thanks also go to Ms Siegel for the musical and technical assistance. The Burning Tree Building Services team ensured the evening ran smoothly.

Most of all, thanks to the Burning Tree Community, children, parents and staff, for taking part and helping us celebrate the fantastic diversity at our wonderful school.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

Patti Klepp, VP School-Based Programs

Burning Issues is published monthly by the Burning Tree PTA, the week following each PTA meeting.

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Contributions and suggestions welcome. Please send your articles via e-mail to Joe Busch at jbusch@urban.org or call him at 202-261-5569. The deadline for the next newsletter is **Feb. 5th**.

Fundraising Update

Barnes & Noble Book Fair & Bethesda Dine-Outs

Please join me in thanking our tireless Book Fair co-chairs Sharon Curry, Rachel Bottone, and Elizabeth Padgett as well as Nancy Sandler for her continued stellar service in arranging four Dine Outs on December 8th,

The Book Fair ran incredibly smoothly over a two-day period, allowing for daytime shopping as well as all of the great after school and evening activities. Parents, kids and staff all looked to be having a wonderful time, and we added over 100 books to our school's collection. The apparent seamlessness of the event is a testament to the hours of work that our co-chairs dedicated over the days and weeks prior to the event, and you have our heartfelt appreciation for your efforts.

Nancy Sandler has our heart- and stomach-felt appreciation for the Dine Outs that she arranged this year. I was only able to make it to one of the restaurants, but I know that our fearless PTA President made it to at LEAST two of the dining hotspots (that she's admitting to) and had a great time at both.

Thank you, thank you, for making our BTES community such an enjoyable and welcoming place, even when we're fundraising!

Original Artwork

All students should have received their Original Artwork orders. Once again we owe our thanks to Britta Battaile and Marianne Katinas for smoothly running this popular fundraiser for our school.

Fill Our Pond

Thanks to those who have already responded to our check-writing campaign. Our pond is slowly filling! Every dollar helps, and every family in our community is an important addition to our pond. Please consider your child's elementary school when thinking about your holiday giving! This is a tax deductible donation, and it goes directly back to improving the educational environment for your child and all the members of our school community.

Shop for Our School – Make Your Holiday Shopping Count!

This holiday season make every dollar count - when you shop on-line you can raise money for BTES! Just

register at www.onecause.com (formerly school pop-it takes about 3 minutes!) and every time you make a purchase on-line at one of the hundreds of participating retailers, BTES gets a percentage of the sale. There is NO extra cost to you - and it can add up to BIG bucks for BT! And if you shop at Target (and who doesn't!) be sure to designate BTES to receive a percentage of your purchases if you shop with a Target Visa card. Visit target.com/tcoe or call 1-800-316-6142 to designate our school as part of their TARGET TAKE CHARGE OF EDUCATION program.

Also, remember to register your Giant and/or Safeway cards. If you are entertaining guests this holiday season - and buying extra food- make sure BTES benefits. Register your Giant card at <http://www.giantfood.com/aplus> and use our BTES school code of 0666. If you would like to support our sister school, Broad Acres, include their code of 0867 as a second school. Safeway cards can be registered on www.escrip.com by specifying BTES #6480304 (Broad Acres #151722171) or contact Amy Lenkin amylenkin@millandlong.com and she will help you with this process.

Julie Garcia, VP Fundraising

Bingo Night Volunteer Thank You

Many thanks to all our volunteers for contributing to Bingo Night's great success! It could not have happened without you. Big thanks to Joan Wolf Chiaverini for entertaining us all as the masterful emcee of the night!

Our volunteers contributed their time and talents to facilitate a fun and well-run Bingo Night. We all heard how much the kids enjoyed the night! Many thanks to Ellie Abramowitz, Britta Battaile, Marcia Berman, Christine Brake, Yi-Wen Chen, Cindy Campbell, Ilissa Flamm, Sue Garton, Elissa Ginsky, Robin Gonzales, Joan Ishimoto, Darrin Hartzler, Ellen Singer, Ruby Lee, Amy Lenkin, Katherine Lewis, Eva Lifshitz, Louise Meyer, Tammy Morgan, Karen Rosen, Lisa Sanfuentes, Jen Tober, and Sharon Tompkins. Our appreciation also goes out to the Pyle and Whitman students who volunteered.

Tracey Fitzsimmons & Melinda Gray, BINGO Volunteer Coordinators

We Went Bananas for Books!

The Book Fair was a great success as Burning Tree families celebrated their love of reading at Barnes & Noble in downtown Bethesda. Book Fair participants raised over \$1,300 for the PTA and bought over 100 Wish List Books for our school! (Be sure you sent them all to our teachers via backpack!!)

Book Fair participants were visited by the mascots Curious George (Tobias Schecter) and his giant banana friend (Matei Fawzy)---now that's school spirit! Yummy prizes of home baked banana bread, banana scented pencils and scratch & sniff stickers were available to all. Kids who did the in store scavenger hunt also won a prize---a banana, of course.

And the books! Prize drawings included several books from the store, but the real winners were the folks who benefited from the 500 plus books donated via the Book Drive. Our school provided many books to Broad Acres, after school programs in PG County, the National Center for Children & Families and kids in our own school. Thank you everyone for your generosity.

Thank you to the teachers who read: Ms. Merritt, Ms. Granof, Ms. Barry, Ms. Richter, and Ms. Erdrich.

Big thanks to Ms. Richter & Ms. Erdich who lead the book talk during the Principal's Coffee, and then came back to read!

Thank you to the many volunteers who made the day (and the day before!) run so smoothly:

Yumiko Miura, Santi Karamchetty, Nancy Khaghani, Ellen Singer, Anne Mandigo, Rebecca Smith, Louise Meyer, Illisa Flamm, Risa Bender, Barb Butrica, Christine Brake, Ilana Meller, Laura Wills, Joe Okon, Sarah Borcherson-Kato, Debby Rubin, Lisa Sanfuentes, Katherine Lewis, Delia Tang, and Ritu Kuraran.

We know Burning Tree loves books!

Book Fair Co-Chairs: Rachel Bottone, Sharon Curry, and Elizabeth Padgett

Volunteer Corner

On behalf of all Burning Tree families who received our wonderful new directory last month, a huge thank you to its editors Karen Van Loon, Marijn Verhoeven and Marci Ruderman. We are enormously grateful for your efforts this year!

Another thank you goes out to all the parents who submitted their volunteer hours to me. I appreciate all your endeavors and willingness to capture time you are spending on projects and events on behalf of Burning Tree. I am happy to report a combined total of time worked at school and from home, resulted in 1,126 volunteer hours for the month of October! That's quite a number and a great indication of how much our community cares about the well being of our school. Kuddos to you all and keep those hours coming!!

As we arrive at the end of the first half of the school year, may I extend my sincere thanks to all of you who have volunteered at Burning Tree and wish everyone a very Happy Holiday Season!

Lisa Segert, VP of Volunteers

Community Building

As the VP for Communities, I want to extend a very warm and heartfelt thank you to Joe Okun, Robin Rosenblum, Vicki Herson, Wynne Sitrin, Minki Chatterer and Sheryl Isaacs for chairing some of our very successful October and November events.

Joe Okun for our Trick or Treat for UNICEF, which was a huge success, we saw many a BT frog with their UNICEF boxes on Halloween night!

Vicki Herson for again organizing a successful Food Drive for the Capital Area Food Bank - thank your Vicki from everyone! Wynne, Minki and Sheryl for organizing BT's clothing drive, always a success for the Burning Tree and our sister school! And last but certainly not least, Kelly Rose for organizing Adopt-an-Angel. Thanks to Kelly and the generosity of so many BTES families many children will have a much merrier Christmas! Thank you again to all our committee chairs for all your hard work and dedication, we all appreciate it!

Kerry Sporkin, VP for Community Building

Start the New Year Off Right!

Join us at our first PTA meeting of 2010 on Tuesday, January 5th starting at 6:45 (please note the earlier start time). Following the business portion of the meeting there will be a presentation on the MSA (Maryland School Assessment). *What does it look like? What does it sound like? What does it test?* Don't miss this important Presentations!

Cindy Campbell, PTA President