



# Burning Issues

## President's Message

It is with great pride and gratitude that I write this column. With a son who will soon be graduating from Burning Tree, I think back on his six years here and marvel at how much he's grown. He came in as a shy and cautious kindergartener. He's leaving as a self-assured, inquisitive and caring 5th grader who is well-prepared for and excited about attending middle school next year. How grateful we should be to Burning Tree for the varied experiences, the quality of instruction, the care and attention the staff provides to all of our students so that they grow as individuals and are prepared to transition to middle school when the time arrives.

I am very proud of our PTA and the many ways it supports the staff and community here at Burning Tree. In March we were able to send fourteen staff members to a two day conference at the University of Virginia. It was incredibly worthwhile, and many of these new strategies and practices that were learned will be implemented into the classroom. Part of the cultural arts program which we provide to the students included a visit by Tim Gregory, our Artist-in-Residence, who taught the children about other cultures through music and dance. His interactive program made quite an impression on our students, and it was an enriching experience for all of them.

The PTA also recently put on "Movies Under the Stars" to show our appreciation to the Burning Tree community for all of your hard work on PTA programs and for your involvement in the classrooms and other areas of the school. Huge thanks to Nic Ryba, Karen Van Loon and Cindy Campbell who coordinated this event. If you attended the movie night, I hope you felt as I did what a special, wonderfully relaxing evening this was. You could feel the warmth in the crowd and the real sense of community as Burning Tree families pulled up chairs, sat on blankets, laughed, and shared dinner and a movie together on a warm spring evening.

I am also proud of the fact that this amazing Burning Tree community looks beyond itself to the larger community in which we live. We assist our sister school, Broad Acres, in a number of ways and

contribute to many worthwhile causes such as the Montgomery Avenue Women's Shelter and Martha's Table. It was also heartwarming to see the large number of Burning Tree students, parents and staff who attended the Race for Hope as well as those who made donations for brain cancer research to honor Kayla Wegner and in memory of Sydney Schlobohm.

Thank you to each of you for the contributions you make of your time and your energy in supporting the school in one way or another. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to work with each of you. Having spent the last six years at Burning Tree, I can honestly say that our school and community are truly one-of-a-kind.

*Olivia Lai, PTA Co-President*

## Plant Sale Update

The recent Plant Sale was a huge success, raising twice the money as last year's event! The warmer weather, terrific looking plants, and great prices allowed us to sell our entire order, including many extras!

Thanks to everyone for making this event so successful! A special thanks to Maureen Ballock, Agnes Degonneville, Allison Ellis, and all the Pyle volunteers who got up early on a Saturday morning to help us sort, check, and load orders into people's cars. We couldn't have done it without you!!



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(Flyers attached at back of newsletter)

## Fundraising News

**Reach For The Stars Auction Fundraiser:** One final and heartfelt thank you to our fantastic chairpersons Lisa Sanfuentes, Kristen Farren, Santi Karamchetty and Tracey Fitzsimmons for a well-planned, fun and profitable evening! The Auction Fundraiser provides for nearly half of our PTA's budget, this year successfully raising over \$28,000! Special thanks to committee leaders Melinda Gray (volunteers) and Cindy Campbell and Ellie Abramowitz (food/entertainment), Elisa and John Bragale (catalog writing, copying and paper donation), David Abramowitz (emcee and "band leader extraordinaire"), John McManus (caterer and BCC Rescue Squad rep), Coleen Carone (teacher liaison), Laurie and Steve Mackey (event photography), Kristen Farren, Shoshanah Drake, Heidi Grunwald, Gina Okon and Stacey Mergner (fabulous class art), Amy Lenkin, Cynthia Rosenberg and Jon Garcia (beautiful wine baskets) and Michael Chelst (raffle and treasury). And we would not have been able to do this without our many amazing volunteers, fundraisers, donors and attendees and without the support of our wonderful teachers, staff and Dr. Chaset and Mr. Tark. We are already starting to gear up for Adult Fundraiser 2008, so if you are interested in helping to plan our PTA's biggest fundraiser, please let me know!

**Dine Out At Armand's:** Burning Tree families gathered at Armand's Pizzeria in Rockville for our third Dine Out event of the year on March 13th. As usual, Armand's and owner and former BTES parent John Deem were gracious hosts and donated 20% of their proceeds for the evening. Thanks to everyone who made the trip to Rockville we raised \$125 for our PTA!

**Dine Out At California Tortilla:** Did you use the secret password? It was "Go Frogs!" and if you mentioned it while ordering at California Tortilla on April 17th, BTES got 25% of your dinner check, raising over \$152! Our thanks go to California Tortilla for the beautiful balloons and friendly service. Amy Brown has done a terrific job as Chairperson of the Dine Outs this year, generating excellent turnouts at each event. Thank you, Amy!

**Original Works Art Sale:** This year we again had the opportunity to turn our children's artwork into wonderful keepsakes (in plenty of time for Mother's Day!) thanks to our hardworking chairpersons Britta Battaile and Marianne Katinas. Sales were amazing,

raising over \$2700 for the PTA! Thank you, Britta and Marianne, for a fantastic sale!

**Plant Sale:** Our annual plant sale was held in April and once again, Lisa Baker and Mary Kunst led a record breaking event! Our plant sale generated more than double last year's sales meaning even more of us will have beautiful flowers and yummy vegetables in our gardens this year. Many thanks to all who helped with the sale and to everyone who participated by purchasing the plants at the sale. An amazing job for first year chairs Lisa and Mary who deserve many kudos for their hard work

I would also like to welcome Cindy Campbell to the Executive Board as your new VP of Fundraising! We are currently looking for parents interested in helping to chair several of our events next year; if you can help or want to know more about what is available, please contact either of us [campbellhannegan@comcast.net](mailto:campbellhannegan@comcast.net) or [lauradweiss@msn.com](mailto:lauradweiss@msn.com).

*Laura Weiss, VP Fundraising*

## FITNESS FROGS

Ms. Loftus would like a parent volunteer/s to coordinate the "Fitness Frog Club" next school year. The coordinator would schedule parents to come in at recess to encourage the students to run and to record their laps on their Fitness Frog Card. In addition the coordinator would find a parent volunteer/s to record the fitness frog cards on a graph. If you are available to help please contact me or Ms. Loftus. Thank you, Linda Adelson [adelson1@juno.com](mailto:adelson1@juno.com) H/O 301-229-6424

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### Friday, May 18

Field Day – K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades



### Wednesday, May 23

Principal's Coffee – 9:30am & 7pm

### Thursday, May 24

Volunteer Breakfast – 8:30am

### Friday, May 25

Field Day – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Grades

### Monday, May 28 – No School

Memorial Day

### Wednesday, May 30

Arts Festival – 6:30 -9:00pm

## Health Corner

### Did you know ...



#### *Helping Kids Eat Healthy Food*

*Good nutrition and a balanced diet will help your child grow up healthy. Whether your kid is a toddler or a teen, you can take steps to improve nutrition and*

*encourage smart eating habits. Five of the best strategies are:*

1. *Have regular family meals. Research shows kids who take part in regular family meals are more likely to eat healthy.*
2. *Serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks – especially fruits and vegetables to help your kids get at least 5 servings a day. Other good snacks include yogurt, peanut butter and celery, or whole grain crackers and low fat cheese.*
3. *Be a role model by eating healthy yourself. By eating fruits and vegetables and not overindulging in the less nutritious stuff, you'll be sending the right message.*
4. *Avoid battles over food. A better strategy is to let kids decide if they're hungry and when they're full – but parents can control what is offered, both at mealtime and between meals.*
5. *Involve kids in the process – make a game out of reading labels and choosing lower sugar cereal at the store, or looking for bread and crackers that are made with whole grain.*

*From Kids Health for Parents,  
[http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/nutrition/habits.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/habits.html).*

## Library Gift Program

Looking for a special way to honor a special occasion or person? Consider making a donation to the Burning Tree Media Center! After receiving your donation, our Media Center staff will purchase a book in your child's area of special interest to be added to the library collection. The book will display a bookplate acknowledging your gift. Through this program you can honor your child, expand our library collection, and benefit everyone at Burning Tree. If you are interested in participating in the Library Gift Program, complete the attached form and return it in an envelope marked "Media Center." All donations are tax-deductible and 100% of your donation will be

spent on the purchase of books for our Media Center. Questions? Call or email Jan Hauck (301-469-7790 [edhauck3@aol.com](mailto:edhauck3@aol.com))

## Under Construction – Gym Update

Our gymnasium construction is almost complete. The dedication ceremony will be in the Fall of next school year. The children have submitted designs for the center court floor mural and we will be voting on the entries soon.

The BTES Educational Foundation will be installing a unique brick walkway outside the new gym. Their **Walkway to Fitness** campaign has a goal of selling 200 engraved bricks to raise funds for electronic wallboards and an audiovisual system for the new gym. They are one third of the way to their goal! Will your brick put them over the 100 hurdle? See the attached flyer to find out how to order your brick today!

## Field Day - Save the dates!

Field day for students in grades K, 1, and 2 will be on **Friday, May 18, 2007**. Field day for students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be on **Friday, May 25, 2007**. Detailed information can be found on the "Frequently Asked Questions" flier in this issue of the Update. Parent volunteers help this day run smoothly. No special talents are needed. Our 4th and 5th grade students assist parents running the centers. If you can help for 1 hour (or more!) on this day, please email Susan Loftus ([Susan\\_J\\_Loftus@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Susan_J_Loftus@mcpsmd.org)).

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

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We welcome your contributions and suggestions. Please send your articles via e-mail to Joe Busch at [jbusch@urban.org](mailto:jbusch@urban.org) or call him at 202-261-5569. The deadline for the next newsletter is **Friday, June 1**.