



# Burning Issues

## President's Message

What a busy first two weeks of school! I hope your children have settled into a routine and are

enjoying Burning Tree's beautiful new gym. Pretty soon our children will also be enjoying a brand new kindergarten playground and a new rock climbing wall in the back playground!

This was all made possible by our PTA membership dues, the success of our fundraisers last year, as well as some additional funding we received from the county which Dr. Chaset was able to secure. Many thanks go to our hard-working, dedicated kindergarten playground committee members: Vicki Herson, Bob and Renata Bianchi, and Darrin Hartzler.

Our PTA dollars from last year will also go towards a new digital TV studio for the students as well as enhancements for the new gym. It is truly amazing to see how far our PTA membership dues and fundraising dollars can go. In addition to funding our many PTA programs and events, items for the classrooms, books for the media center, and staff training, these dollars are also used to fund other items such as the ones I've mentioned which can benefit our children as well as future Burning Tree students.

I encourage you to join the PTA, attend PTA meetings, and get involved so that you can become an integral part of the decision-making process to determine how our PTA dollars can best be used to benefit our children and the Burning Tree community. I look forward to seeing you at some of our upcoming PTA events, and here's to a great year!

*Olivia Lai, PTA Co-President*

## Speakers for PTA Meetings

We are currently planning the programs for our PTA meetings for this year. If you know of any interesting speakers, or if you are qualified to speak on a topic that would be of interest to our parent community, please contact Lisa Sanfuentes at [lisa.rizzolo@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.rizzolo@verizon.net) or 301-320-6214.

## Burning Tree PTA Website

How would you like to be able to easily download PTA forms, get up-to-date information on upcoming PTA events, even pull up the latest issue of *Burning Issues*? Soon all of this and more will be at your fingertips thanks to Karen van Loon, who is in the process of designing and putting together Burning Tree PTA's very own website! We will let you know when the website is up and running which we hope will be within the next few weeks.

## Committee Chair Meeting

All committee chairs are asked to attend a meeting on Monday, September 10th, at either 10:15 am in the staff lounge or 8:15 pm in the Media Center. These meetings will immediately follow the Room Parent meetings. We hope to see all PTA committee chairs at this meeting. Even if you have chaired an event in the past, this information will be helpful to you. If you have any questions regarding this meeting, please contact Olivia Lai at [laigill@comcast.net](mailto:laigill@comcast.net) or Lisa Sanfuentes at [lisa.rizzolo@verizon.net](mailto:lisa.rizzolo@verizon.net).

## Back-to-School Family Picnic Tonight! (details p. 6)

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## Thank you Back-to-School Helpers

Thank you Back-to-School Helpers

Thank you very much to all the parents who came in to help prepare for the new school year.

In the week before school started, parent volunteers gardened, unpacked and sorted the school supply kits, decorated bulletin boards, prepared recess sporting equipment, ran the school Spirit Shop, promoted the Sally Foster fundraiser, recruited new PTA members and hosted a "Welcome Back" lunch for teachers and staff. Your time and efforts were greatly appreciated!

The PTA's work doesn't stop over the summer and we would like to acknowledge the Committees that kept working to ensure the school was ready for everyone's return. In particular we would like to thank:

- Kristen Farren for managing the school supply kits;
- Kathy Chelst and Beth Martino, co-chairs of the Staff Appreciation Committee, for organizing the Welcome Back lunch; and,
- Gardening and Landscape Committee Co-chairs Lisa Baker and Lisa Norwalk, who together with Allison Ellis, Kirsten Martin and David Martin worked extremely hard to tame the summer growth around the portables and tidy the school for Open House Day.

## Volunteer Corner – Count on Me for Three!

Thank you to all the parents who have signed up to help at school this year. Your commitment is greatly appreciated by the staff, the PTA and especially by the kids!

Of course it's never too late if you haven't put your name down yet. By the end of the first week of school, the PTA had received more than 70 volunteer forms and collected other commitments at the Program Fair and first PTA meeting. But we have more than 300 families in the school so whether it's three times a week, a month, or a year, we hope those of you who haven't yet signed up will consider doing so and will join other parents in saying "Count on me for Three." You'll be setting an example of volunteerism for our children as well as getting the chance to see them at work and play.

There are a wide variety of opportunities to get involved in and something to match everyone's talents and time constraints.

If you would like to help, but don't know where to start, please don't hesitate to contact the PTA Vice President for Volunteers, Brenda Conroy, on 301-229-1703 or [brenda.conroy@gol.com](mailto:brenda.conroy@gol.com)

## Volunteer Badges:

The PTA provides name badges for everyone who volunteers in the school. If you don't have one, please email the PTA Vice President for Volunteers, Brenda Conroy, at [brenda.conroy@gol.com](mailto:brenda.conroy@gol.com). The badges are kept on the wall to the right of the Visitors' sign-in book in the school office. Even with a badge, please remember to sign in when you come to school. We calculate the number of volunteer hours served each year to report to MCPS and the MCCPTA. Thank you.

## Stand-by Support for the Office and in the Health Room:

The PTA maintains a list of parents willing to help in the school office or health room to cover on the rare occasions that Mrs Shaub, Mrs Dockery or Mrs Bouhafa are away. Parents' help is also needed for occasional health screening throughout the year. If you're able to offer the occasional hour to help in these circumstances, please contact the PTA Vice President for Volunteers, Brenda Conroy, on 301-229-1703 or [brenda.conroy@gol.com](mailto:brenda.conroy@gol.com). Thank you very much.

## What Do the Kids Really Do at Lunchtime?

Ever wondered how the kids spend their recess? Who they play with or sit with at lunch? What they really eat? What their friends really get for their lunches? You can find out as a lunchroom or playground volunteer.

Could you volunteer once a fortnight or once a month? Even once a year would be a great help and a treat for your child(ren). If you can, please let us know:

- **Playground:** Sharon Tompkins (301) 320-0061 [stompkins@lewisandtompkins.com](mailto:stompkins@lewisandtompkins.com)
- **Lunch room:** Brenda Conroy (301) 229-1703 [brenda.conroy@gol.com](mailto:brenda.conroy@gol.com)

## Room Parent Training Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>

Room Parents serve as the link between the classroom teacher and parents. Together, they organize the three class parties at **Halloween**, **Valentine's Day** and in the **last week of school**; recruit and organize classroom volunteers; and coordinate teacher appreciation activities.

Thank you to the many parents who have already volunteered on the PTA Volunteer Form or at the Program Fair. Vacancies still exist in most classrooms, so if you would like to volunteer, sign up sheets will be on display at the **Back-to-School Picnic** on Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, or you can contact the Room Parent Coordinators:

- **Grades K-2:** Nikki de Castro, 240-396-1532  
nikkidecastro@yahoo.com
- **Grades 3-5:** Shyami DeSilva, 301-320-7876  
sdesilva@usaid.gov

A short training session will be held for all Room Parents on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. There are two sessions to choose from: 9:30am or 7:30pm. These will be held in the Staff Lounge and will last just half an hour. Please note: Room Parents need only attend one of these two times.

## PTA "Job Vacancies"

The PTA is seeking parent volunteers to take on the following projects for 2007-08:

### School Supply Kits

This role begins in March and involves collecting the school supply lists from Grade Team Leader teachers; distributing and collecting order forms; and liaising with **Schoolkidz** to ensure delivery of the kits during the week before school resumes in August 2008. It is a role that can be done in, or outside, school hours.

### Recess Equipment

This year, the PTA and Ms. Loftus have organized all the recess balls and skipping ropes into separate bags for each class. Student *recess captains* are being appointed each week to collect the bags and return the equipment at the end of recess. These bags are being kept in the new gymnasium's external closet - next to the blacktop. The PTA is looking for a parent, or family, to check these bags during the first week of each month to ensure the balls are inflated and lost/burst balls are replaced.

### Room Parents-at- Large

The PTA is seeking special volunteers to take on a new role in the school: Room Parents-at-Large. With more working parents and families living further away from the school, not every class is able to recruit Room Parents. If you are able to share your time to help one of these classes, please volunteer to become a Room Parent-at-Large.

For further information, please contact the PTA Vice President for Volunteers, Brenda Conroy, on 301-229-1703 or at [brenda.conroy@gol.com](mailto:brenda.conroy@gol.com). Thank you very much.

## Chess Club News

The Chess Club will meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month (barring a holiday or school closing) from 8-9:00 am, beginning on Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Players of all levels, including beginners, are welcome to join the club. The only requirement is an interest in the game.

For the more serious players there will also be opportunities for competition both within the club (there will be a rating ladder), and also against players from other schools. Parent volunteers will be sought to help with administrative tasks. We ask that for each family participating, a parent volunteer to work one meeting during the course of the year. For a sign up sheet, please keep an eye on the upcoming Friday Updates. For more information please contact Don Conners at [don.conners@mac.com](mailto:don.conners@mac.com).

## Join Your PTA Today

If you haven't joined the PTA already, please do it now! More than two thirds of the BT families have already sent their membership forms, along with their contributions. Our goal is 100% participation! None of our educational and fun programs like **Math Day**, **Science Fair**, **Cultural Arts**, **International Night**, **Arts Festival**, and **Spring Fair** could be done without your support. Further, PTA fundraising activities help fund many important programs at BT; including the purchase of books and equipment for the Media Center and extra supplies for our kids' classrooms. In previous years, the PTA funded the purchase of new computers, an extra copy machine for the school office and much more. This year, the PTA will partially underwrite the cost of the new kindergarten playground and gym equipment.

We hope that you will become a member. We encourage you to send your membership form and dues as soon as possible, and help the PTA anyway

you can. As part of your membership, you will receive in October the indispensable **Burning Tree Directory** with addresses, phone numbers and other valuable information. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at (301) 229-4286.

*Katerina Papaioannou, Membership Secretary*

### Putting the FUN in FUNdraising...

Did you know that nine of the 13 fundraising programs at Burning Tree Elementary School are FUN, friend and family-oriented events? Whether you help organize these events or participate in them, or both, they are a great way to get more involved in the Burning Tree community. AND, they are critical to raising funds for the many special programs we have here at Burning Tree. Thanks to the hard work of BTES's former VP of Fundraising, Laura Weiss, last year's fundraising program co-chairs, and of course your PTA dues this year, the PTA was able to purchase, for example, an amazing brand-new playground for our Kindergartner and 1st graders and also add some exciting new equipment to the playground out back.

Below is a list of our 2007-2008 fundraisers, the dates, co-chairs and a brief description of each event. Please mark your calendars now and plan to get involved! If you have questions, or would like to help with these events, please contact me and I can forward your email to the appropriate co-chair. Thanks in advance for your involvement!

*Cindy Campbell, VP of Fundraising,*

*CampbellHannegan@comcast.net or 301-469-0252.*

#### Sally Foster Gift-Wrap Sale

Wednesday, September 5th to Thursday, September 27th

Co-Chairs: Ellie Abramowitz and Jamie Pierce

Our biggest fall fundraiser is on! Burning Tree gets 40% of all cookie dough sales and 50% of all other Sally Foster sales, so please support BTES by buying and selling Sally Foster! Please read "Sally Foster Raises Funds for Burning Tree" in this newsletter to learn more about this current fundraiser.

#### Bingo Night

Friday, October 12th

Co-Chairs: Laura Weiss, Christine Brake and Tracey Fitzsimmons

This is a fun-filled community activity for Burning Tree families! Bring the family to Pyle Middle School where you and your kids can play several

rounds of **Bingo** with other BT families and your kids can win lots of cool prizes! Come hungry- Armand's Pizza will supply lots of their delicious food!

#### Fix N' Feast

Thursday, November 15th

Co-Chair: Liza Fues

**Dream Dinners** in Rockville will make it possible for you to make anywhere from 6 to 12 family dinners in just 2 hours! Dream Dinners provides all the ingredients for the meals you choose. Then you assemble the meals, take them home, freeze them and have healthy family meals ready for those busy weeknight meals. Best yet, a portion of the money you spend goes to BT!

#### Book Fair

Kick-off Thursday, November, 29th (and the following week)

Co-Chairs: Jeanne Pettanati, Debra Rubin, and Heidi Grunwald

For one week, following the kick-off night on November 29th, Barnes and Noble in Rockville will donate a percentage of their sales to the BTES PTA. This is the perfect place to start your holiday shopping, with Barnes and Noble's wide selection of children & adult books and gift items. Don't miss the kick-off night when BTES teachers read favorite children's books to our children. And make sure to start your evening at our first "**Dine Out**" at **Armand's Pizzeria** in Rockville, where they will donate a percentage of the proceeds to BTES!

#### Dine Out With Burning Tree

November 29<sup>th</sup> **Armand's Pizza** in Rockville;

January 15<sup>th</sup> **Parker's** in Bethesda;

April 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> **Ledo's Pizza on River Road**

Co-Chair: Nancy Sandler

Leave the cooking to someone else for a night! Dine out with other Burning Tree families at area restaurants who will donate a percentage of that night's proceeds to Burning Tree.

#### Adult Fundraiser

Saturday, March 1st at **Maggiano's Restaurant** in Chevy Chase, MD

Co-Chairs: Michael Chelst, Surya Shah and Cindy Campbell

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year! Share an adults-only (!) night with other Burning Tree parents and get a chance to spend time with BTES staff

outside of school. Come prepared to have a fabulous time- eating, drinking, talking and best of all...shopping! Our Silent and Live Auctions provide funds for BTES and if you're lucky you might even go home with Redskin tickets!

### Plant Sale

Saturday, April 26th

Co-Chairs: Lisa Baker and Mary Kunst

Make your yard beautiful and at the same time help out the Burning Tree PTA! Buy your spring and summer annuals at this fundraiser—they are the highest quality plants and flowers and they are less expensive than at area Nurseries, and it benefits our school!

### Original Artwork

In the spring

Co-Chairs: Britta Battaile and Marianne Katinas

We'll turn your child's original artwork into a picture on a pillow, a mug, or a luggage tag- to name a few- and then we'll all see the proceeds grow for BTES!

### Spring Fair

Saturday, May 17th

Co-Chairs: Ellie Abramowitz and Kristen Farren

Looking for a fun way to spend the day with the kids? Then head on over to BTES's annual **Spring Fair**. There's so much to do for children of all ages—an inflatable obstacle course, a moonbounce, lots of prizes and carnival games, crafts, and lots of yummy food and desserts. A fun-filled day when BTES is turned into a carnival!

## On-Going School Fundraisers:

### School Spirit Shop

Co-Chair: Laura Weiss

Shop at the August Open House and other specified days at our **School Spirit Shop**. Proceeds go to BTES and you can buy school spirit items like tee-shirts and sweat shirts; important supplies like pencils and school planners; and of course the ever-important PTA calendar which lists important school events and holiday's.

### Shop For Our School

(Giant/Safeway/Target/SchoolPop)

Co-Chair: Amy Lenkin

PLEASE read the related article in this Newsletter to learn more about this program.

## Shop for Our School....

Want to make a financial contribution to BTES without spending a dime? Many of the places where you already shop will donate a percentage of your purchase to BTES and our sister school, Broad Acres. These programs don't cost you a thing and if every BTES family participated BTES could earn thousands of dollars! Please don't miss out on this easy way to financially support our school! Read below and see how easy it is to sign up and participate!...

**Schoolpop.com**—Just about every store you can think of is located here- stores like Sports Authority, Banana Republic, Children's Place, Barnes and Noble- to name a few! Just register at [www.schoolpop.com](http://www.schoolpop.com) (it takes about 3 minutes!) and every time you make a purchase at a participating retailer on line, BTES gets a percentage of the sale. There is NO extra cost to you- and it can add up to BIG bucks for BT! Attach the Schoolpop reminder to your computer to remember to shop there.

**Giant A+ Bonus Bucks**-- Register at Giant or on [www.giantfood.com/aplus](http://www.giantfood.com/aplus) and every time you buy groceries BTES will get a percentage! You can register up to three schools and Giant will divide the contributions. BTES's code is #666; you can also help Broad Acres by entering #867 as a second school. Remember, even if you designated your school(s) last year, YOU MUST REDESIGNATE AGAIN THIS YEAR. (You can also fill out the blue *SHOP FOR OUR SCHOOL Giant A+ BonusBucks* Program flyer sent with your child's teacher assignment and Amy Lenkin will register for you!)

**Safeway eScrip**--Earn money for BTES by signing up for eScrip and registering your Safeway card. Register at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and specify BTES (#6480304). Broad Acres school number is 151722171.

**Shop on-line at eScrip.com**-- Earn up to 10%, or more, when you shop at the eScrip Online Mall. Make your online shopping count! Go to the eScrip Online Mall at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) to see all the great stores that participate!

**Target Take Charge of Education Visa Card**--Do you use a credit card that doesn't give you anything back? Get a Target Visa card and a portion of your charges will be donated to BTES! Application forms for the card are available at Target stores and at [www.target.com](http://www.target.com).

For more information contact Amy Lenkin 301-365-4123 or by e-mail at [amylenkin@millerandlong.com](mailto:amylenkin@millerandlong.com) or Cindy Campbell [CampbellHannegan@comcast.net](mailto:CampbellHannegan@comcast.net), 301-469-0252

## Creative Writing Club Moves to Tuesday Afternoons

The Burning Tree Creative Writing Club welcomes poets, novelists, mystery writers, and humorists in 2nd through 5th grade. We meet every other Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. starting on October 9. Club members are given the opportunity to write poems, short stories, songs, puzzles, and more. The kids choose their favorite pieces to include in a magazine published in the spring. The club is led by a Burning Tree mom and is limited to 22 students. Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration forms will be sent home in the *Friday Update* in mid-September. Questions? Call Rosanna Morrison, 301-469-5949.

## Family-To-Family and Kindergarten Family-To-Family

A big thank you to Julie Zebrak, Katerina Papaioannou, Sharon Tompkins, Kristin Shaver and Renata Bianchi for heading our Kindergarten Family to Family program. We really want all families to feel very welcome at Burning Tree and to help the new Kindergarten families with any questions they might have regarding Burning Tree we made sure to give all of them a call!

Also a big thank you to Sujata Pasic for running the Family to Family program. All new families got a welcoming phone call from an existing Burning Tree family.

We have a large group of new American and International families entering the school each year and we realize how overwhelming a new school can be. Please stay in touch with your buddy family and/or do not hesitate to call or e-mail them if you need some extra support.

## International Night

Our annual trip around the world to visit the countries represented at BT will be on Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. **International Night** is a celebration of our diverse school community, our world, and our desire to understand and appreciate our differences and similarities. International Night gives our children and families a chance to explore the world through

the eyes of Burning Tree families who, last year, represented over 50 different countries.

During International Night we will have

- A colorful PARADE OF NATIONS. Parade participants will carry a banner identifying their country. Students are encouraged to showcase their national colors and/or traditional costumes.
- A showcase of CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS in the multipurpose room where students (and their families) present music, songs or dances from around the world!
- A TOUR OF THE WORLD during which families are invited to travel the seven continents by visiting our country booths. All families are encouraged to share their national heritage by setting up a country booth.

Sign up sheets and detailed information will be available the week of September 17. For more information please contact Nikki De Castro (240) 396 1532 [nikkidecastro@yahoo.com](mailto:nikkidecastro@yahoo.com), Allison Ellis ((240) 396 6480 [allison\\_ellisuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:allison_ellisuk@yahoo.co.uk) or Karen van Loon (301) 320 4223 [karenvanloon@verizon.net](mailto:karenvanloon@verizon.net)

## Can You Walk the Walk?

Please make a note that **International Walk-to-School Day** is Wednesday, October 3. Bus riders, kiss-and-riders and walkers are all welcome to participate (children must be accompanied by an adult).

For those of you new to Burning Tree, each year we gather up to 200 parents and children for a united walk to school. It's a great chance to meet other families, get exercise, teach pedestrian safety and help protect the environment -- all goals of the Day. Detailed information will follow in the coming weeks on BTNET and in the *Friday Update*. We'll see you on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

-Robin Rosenblum, [robin@buypromos.com](mailto:robin@buypromos.com)

## Tonight (Friday, September 7): Back-To-School Family Picnic!!!

Meet old friends and new tonight (Friday, September 7th) from 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Pack a picnic dinner or – better yet – buy the pizza, subs, hot dogs & drinks provided by **Potomac Pizza** (yum). Bring a blanket. Bring a dessert to share (optional, of course, but very appreciated). We're encouraging grade seating, so that parents and students can socialize with their classmates and teachers in an informal atmosphere.

This is always a relaxed and happy event; you don't want to miss it. Bring the entire family. Any questions or if you'd like to help, email or call Robin Gonzales at samandrew20817@comcast.net or (301) 320-7448. Rain date is Friday, September 28th.

### Sally Foster Raises Funds for BT!

Looking for a quick and easy way to support Burning Tree? Then look in your Sally Foster catalog!

**Burning Tree earns 50% of ALL Sally Foster sales and 40% of all cookie sales...**so buy and sell Sally Foster to support Burning Tree. Ask your friends, neighbors and relatives to order. Bring the catalog to the office. Buy some things yourself! Remember to take advantage of the Internet—send your out-of-town relatives and friends an e-mail to let them know about our fundraiser.

Remember to consider all of your gift-wrapping needs for this coming year and stock up! There are dozens of all-occasion and Holiday gift-wrap patterns in this year's catalog. But don't stop there. Sally Foster has LOTS of beautiful gift items for adults and children, including bath and beauty products, a new line of cookies, easy-bake mixes and bake ware, and delicious "Harry London" gourmet chocolates. So think about all the friends, family and teachers (!) you may want to give gifts to this year and buy them now!

We hope every family will participate in our schools biggest fall fundraiser by buying and selling Sally Foster (the deadline for catalog sales is Friday, September 28th)! **QUESTIONS?** Contact Jamie Pierce 301-320-6801 [Jamiemaray@yahoo.com](mailto:Jamiemaray@yahoo.com) or Ellie Abramowitz 301-365-0543 [ellie.abramowitz@verizon.net](mailto:ellie.abramowitz@verizon.net).

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events



### September

#### Monday, September 10

Committee Chair Mtg -- 10:15am or 8:15pm  
Room Parent's Mtg -- 9:30am or 7:30pm

#### Tuesday, September 11

Pyle Back to School Night

#### Thursday, September 13 – No School

Rosh Hashanah

#### Monday, September 17

Back-to School Night, K-2<sup>nd</sup> – 7pm

#### Tuesday, September 18

Back to School Night, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> – 7pm

#### Friday, September 28

Early Release day 12:55pm

PTA Executive Board Mtg – 9:30am

### October

#### Tuesday, October 2

PTA Meeting – 7pm

#### Wednesday, October 3

Walk to School Day

#### Thursday, October 4

Martha's Table Sandwiches

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***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, October 5.**

