



CHURCHILL SCHOOL NEWS



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Living to Learn—Learning to Live

November, 2008

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A Note From The Principal



Some things bear repeating—the following is a reprint from last year's November newsletter. . .

With parent/teacher conferences upon us, I look forward to seeing many of you as you visit your child's classroom and teacher. Watching so many parents make time to sit and talk about their child's progress is such a validation of this community's commitment to education. Your presence here this week, and every time you enter the building, sends a clear message to your children that their education is a priority in your life.

On the following pages, I have listed some reminders for you to consider as you approach your child's conference. For this message, I'll try to stick with the big ideas. Conferences can evoke a wide variety of feelings in students, parents and teachers. The teacher/parent relationship is still in the "getting to know you" phase. When either teacher or parent has a sensitive issue or situation to discuss, it can be very uncomfortable. We don't know how our message will be received. The fear of offending the other or of being misunderstood can sometimes keep us from discussing important issues related to our children's progress and development. Speaking up and getting issues on the table, however, is the only way to address them.

When faced with this discomfort, it is sometimes good to remember that everyone present is interested in one thing: the best educational opportunities for the child. We are all in this very important job together, so please take the opportunity to approach any issues as a member of a committed team.

So, the big important message I want to convey this year about conferences is this: Use this valuable opportunity to get all the information you need about your child. Establish a plan for communication with the teacher. If the conference time allotted does not provide enough time, make a follow-up appointment. Open communication between parent and teacher is a critical building block for a successful school year. We look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of all of our children.

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Transportation 101: Getting To and From Churchill School

Navigating a school building and the surrounding neighborhood is no easy task during the busy times of arrival and dismissal. The following are some helpful reminders that will keep our children safe and our drivers ticket-free!



When Dropping Off/Picking Up Students on Center Ave:

- ✓ Please do not turn around in driveways on Center Avenue. This creates traffic flow issues and safety concerns for our children.
- ✓ When approaching the drop-off zone, please pull as far forward as possible, and away from the crosswalk and crossing guard. While students may want to be dropped off in a specific spot along the zone, it makes traffic flow difficult when drivers stop near the crosswalk. The few extra steps needed to walk around will help us improve traffic flow for everyone. Stopping in the crosswalk is a 'ticketable' offense.
- ✓ Please remember the drop-off zone is just that—for drop off only. If you wish to stay longer, please proceed around the building and park in our lot. Remaining in the zone after your child has exited your vehicle causes back-ups along Center Avenue.
- ✓ Students may only exit cars on the west side of Center Avenue.

When Walking Your Child to School:

We are fortunate to have very dedicated and diligent crossing guards who take the safety of our children very seriously. Please review the following with your child if (s)he walks to school:

- ✓ Children and adults should always wait on the sidewalk as the crossing guard enters the intersection. They should only enter the intersection once the crossing guard has indicated that it is safe for them to do so. This ensures that traffic has indeed stopped and that the street can be crossed safely.
- ✓ Students and parents should always cross intersections at the direction of the crossing guard. Depending on the time of day and the general direction of foot traffic, the guard may be crossing in only two of the four corners of an intersection. Please follow the direction of our guards to ensure the safety of all.
- ✓ Students riding bicycles to school must walk their bikes on Center Avenue from the crosswalk to the bicycle racks. There is a great deal of foot traffic along that sidewalk. To ensure everyone's safety, all must walk their bicycles through that zone.
- ✓ Please remember that at no time should students be dropped off, picked up or walk in the parking lot.

Thanks so much for your attention to these important matters!



Make the Most of Your Parent/Teacher Conference

In the blink of an eye, the end of the first quarter is here. Parents and teachers will be meeting this week to discuss our students' progress during the first nine weeks of school. With a limited amount of time, it is important that both parents and teachers plan ahead to make the most of the time allowed for conferences.

- ✓ Report cards were sent home on Friday, October 31st, giving parents the opportunity to review them before conferences.
- ✓ Conference times are limited, so it is helpful to prepare ahead of time and think about what you most want to discuss. Take a moment and jot down specific questions or concerns you have.
- ✓ If there are specific family or home circumstances you feel are impacting your child here at school, please be sure to share that information with your child's teacher. Know that it will be kept in the strictest of confidence. The more we understand your child, the more able we are to help them succeed.
- ✓ Should your time run short, please be considerate of those scheduled after you. End the conference on time and if need be, schedule another time to continue your discussion.
- ✓ Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Coffey will be on hand during conferences to discuss any concerns or questions that you feel are more appropriately handled in the office.

Some other housekeeping items you can address while you are in the building for your conference are:

- ✓ Please stop by the front hallway for a complimentary cup of coffee!
- ✓ Our lost and found items will be on tables in the main entrance. Please look over these items and claim any that belong to you and yours.
- ✓ If any emergency information has changed, please stop by the office to update your child's records.

We look forward to seeing you at conferences!

Churchill Student Council Food Drive

It's not too late to donate to our Student Council Food Drive. Donations can be dropped off in the front hallway during parent conferences. Thanks for your help in making the holidays a little brighter for those in need.



A Message from Mrs. Obszanski

Dear Churchill School Community,

As the holiday season approaches, it seems this is a time when affection, appreciation, and reflection are at the forefront of our interactions with colleagues, family, friends, and even strangers. The upcoming holidays have a way of warming our hearts and heavily influencing us to take stock in our lives and set goals for the upcoming year. For me and my family, this opportunity presented itself in a much different way.

On the evening of September 13th my father-in-law peacefully passed away in his home surrounded by his family. It was without a doubt an extremely sad event, but comfort came in knowing he was peaceful and pain-free. On the morning of September 14th my family woke up to rising floodwaters and recklessly prepared to evacuate our home. Prior to leaving, we did our best to secure what we could in hopes that upon our return we would most likely clear out some water damaged furniture, replace some carpet, repaint some walls and continue with life. Little did we know, to a certain degree the fall of 2008 would forever change our lives in countless ways for the worse and for the better.

Consequently these two events challenged and stretched our emotions to the limit. The following days were filled with sadness, sleepless nights, and grief as we said goodbye to a loved one and prepared to come to terms with the devastation of our home and community, which had been ravaged by floodwaters. The floodwaters completely destroyed the lower level of our home along with all of the contents leaving almost nothing salvageable. In addition, the water consumed three vehicles as well.

We found ourselves overcome with emotion of a different kind in the weeks following the flood. The acts of kindness bestowed upon us by family and friends were emotionally overwhelming. After spending three emotionally charged weeks discarding countless items collected over the past twenty-six years, returning to school and being embraced by the sincere compassion of the entire school community was the best remedy for my deep sadness.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the entire Churchill community for the countless acts of kindness bestowed upon my family; the lemonade stand, the coin drive, donation to the Munster Civic Foundation in my name, food and dessert items delivered to our home, those lending a hand to clean, lending a vehicle for transportation, an offer to live in their home, gift cards, holiday ornaments, anonymous cash gifts, hugs, smiles, cards, emails, and support from the administration and school board. The floodwaters tore us apart physically, but the remarkable acts of kindness rebuilt us emotionally and made a devastating experience a heartwarming turn of events.

There are benchmark events in everyone's life that force us to devote time for reflection and bring out the best in people that surround us which consequently pick up our spirits. I personally felt the death of my parents two years ago within six weeks of each other was a life-changing event in my life, but this has truly impacted my life in a way that will not be forgotten. This experience has taught me many things and the window through which I view my family, friends, and community is refreshed and renewed. Thank you on behalf of the entire Obszanski family.

Notes from the Nurse

Even though it's Cold and Flu Season-you can stay healthy this winter by taking certain steps to help reduce your chances of getting sick in the first place.

- ✓ EAT WISELY-a balanced meal with plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- ✓ WASH YOUR HANDS-good hand washing is the first line of defense against not only colds and the flu, but many other types of infections and diseases.
- ✓ DRINK PLENTY OF WATER---the winter months require extra hydration to flush your system and wash away poisons as it hydrates you.
- ✓ GET MOVING---exercise helps increase your body's immunity.

You can do plenty to keep the germs at bay and have a Healthy winter season

Be Well!

Important Dates to Remember

Thursday, November 6	Parent/Teacher Conferences 8 a.m.— 8 p.m.
Friday, November 7	Parent/Teacher Conferences 8 a.m.—12 p.m.
Monday, November 10	School Board Meeting James Hart Media Center, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, November 11	No School - Veteran's Day
Saturday, November 15	Market Day Pick-Up James Hart, 10:30 a.m. - Noon
Monday, November 24	School Board Meeting James Hart Media Center, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, November 26	Early Dismissal - 1:45 p.m.
Thursday, November 27	Thanksgiving Holiday
Friday, November 28	No School

Communicating By E-Mail

Some of you may have had difficulty recently in sending emails to school district staff. Those of you who use the internet or email know how many viruses and ads (SPAM) are transmitted through email. In an effort to maintain a safe, stable, virus free network and to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act, the district has implemented a device to block infected email messages, SPAM and inappropriate web-sites. While this device blocks the great majority of inappropriate internet content, some may be blocked incorrectly. From time to time, your emails may be blocked temporarily. Our SPAM blocker will alert the staff member about the blocked email and the staff member can then unblock your email address. This process, however, may take a day or two. If you have sent an email and have not received a response, please send a note to school with your email address. We will then unblock your address for future correspondence. We appreciate your patience and assistance.

Box Tops for Education

Happy Holiday season Churchill families!

This is a great time of year to look for the General Mills products that include the Box Tops for Education logos. Many holiday recipes call for these products so please choose with our students mind. Many of their products are convenience oriented so they are also wise choices for those busy evenings when you have a concert to attend or gift shopping to do! A list of products is available in the school office or at www.boxtops4education.com

My children frequently come home excited with new treasures from trading in their bones and paws. Clearly these small incentives are a successful way to reward good behaviors and academic performance. The classroom teachers use incentives as well. As a reminder, the funds we raise from this program go directly to the teachers for these incentives and other classroom purchases which mean our children benefit directly. Please make it a priority to support this great program.

Thanks to all who sent in their submissions this month. A new collection sheet is attached to this newsletter. Feel free to make copies or request an additional sheet if needed to go to www.boxtops4education.com to choose and print your favorite. Please see the list of prize winners for September below. Next month it could be you.

Angie Brandt
Box Tops for Education Coordinator

Culver's Custard - Elizabeth Neitzel, Katherine Henry, Kyle Vitolka, Shelley Berner, Violet Buchtel-Devine, Grace Bingham, Madeline Moxley, David Meehan, Lauren Jennings, Joseph Henry

Ice Arena Passes - Duncan Moss, Grace Ryan, Wille Lobdell

