



December 2009 Newsletter

Need to do something over break?

Upcoming events:

- * 12.23 ~ 01.03~Winter Break
- * 01.12 ~ PTO Meeting
- * 01.29 ~ Popcorn Sale~3rd gr.

Thank You!

Thank you to Amy Lopez, Melanie Lynn and Ronda Dennis for helping with the hot chocolate and movie night! We had an awesome turn out!

Holiday Shopping

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with our holiday shopping. We couldn't have done it without you! Thanks to: Sandy Castagna, Susan Heethouse, Kari Freye, Ronda Dennis, Shannon Hodges, Laura Hiachue, Amy Whipple, Amy Holwerda, Lisa Recknagel, Mindy Rosel, Barb Miller, Sue Kling and Erin Sturtevant. It's a large event that takes a lot of help from parents. Our children and the PTO appreciate your time and effort!



Send in your box tops for education today! It's an easy fundraiser for our school!

Winter break means a well-deserved reprieve from homework and daily obligations. "Just as we adults cherish our vacation days, students need a break from their routines to recharge," says elementary school expert Lawrence L. Smith, Ph.D., acting associate dean for the teachers college at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Still, before you know it, the holidays will be over and it will be back to the bus stop. To prepare for a smooth re-entry and a successful second semester, don't let school skills like reading, writing, and math slide completely during winter vacation. "We want kids to read, do some writing and some math," says Smith. But not to worry: "All of these can be done in fun ways from shopping to cooking to playing games." Try these family-friendly activities:

- **Read for pleasure.** Whether your child is in the mood for holiday stories like *The Night Before Christmas* or the newest installment from his/her favorite series, winter break provides the perfect opportunity to stash schoolbooks and read for fun.
- **Cook up an easy lesson.** Invite your child into the kitchen to help you whip up a special dish – from Christmas cookies to potato pancakes. "Having a child help you with a recipe involves reading and measuring," says Smith. All of those half tablespoon and quarter-cup measurements are great practice with fractions.
- **Write thank-you notes.** Penning notes of appreciation to gift-givers teaches gratitude and helps polish writing and spelling skills. One tip: A mug of hot cocoa can make this task feel more festive!
- **Make the most of car rides.** Turn the drive to or from a holiday get-together into an opportunity to practice letters and numbers. You can look for license plates from different states, try to find the alphabet on the license plates, or even count the number of red (or white or green) cars you see. Try making this game even more meaningful by having your child graph the results and draw a conclusion about his observations.
- **Maintain reasonable bedtimes.** With no school to get up for in the morning, it can be tempting to let kids become night owls. A few days before school starts up again, ease back into the regular bedtime schedule so your child can start the year bright-eyed.
- **Ask for grocery list assistance.** Have your child help choose what to buy, decide how much you need, check your supplies to see what you've already got, write or draw pictures on the list, and sort coupons. Try posing math-related problems: For example, say you need two eggs for one recipe and three for another. Ask her to determine if you currently have enough in the fridge, or need to add eggs to your list.
- **Let kids help with online shopping.** Need a last-minute gift for Grandma or Uncle Joe? Log onto your favorite shopping sites and let your child help you select presents. "This helps children work on their computer and research skills, which are very important in school," says Smith.
- **Have a family game night.** Chances are many of your family's favorite board and card games reinforce skills such as counting, reading, and drawing. Gather the group to play games you usually don't have time for on school nights.

Taken from: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=1330>

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Meet our Teachers

We're excited to announce a new section to our monthly newsletter—Meet Our Teachers. Each month you will be introduced to teachers/staff from our great school!

Name: Mrs. Melissa Dolphin

Grade: 1st grade

Family: I have been married to my husband David for 22 years! He is also an elementary teacher for Grand Rapids Public Schools. We have a menagerie of “children”: 2 dogs, Ciaran & Nanya; 3 horses, Leohdrin, Rocky, and our new filly Lilly; CAT-our cat, and a few chickens.

Teaching experience: I have finally graduated to first grade, though I have been at this grade for 8 years! I began my 22 years of teaching in a room for the Severely Multiply Impaired Children, then moved to a Pre-Primary Impaired Room, a DK-Kindergarten class room, and finally to first! I have really enjoyed the variety of children and realize that they are all given special talents.

Hobbies/Spare Time activities: You can probably guess that our animals take up a lot of our spare time! My husband and I really enjoy camping with the dogs and our horses, we hit the trails as much as possible in the summer months. I also enjoy curling up with a good book, biking and cross-country skiing in the orchards near our home, and playing volleyball.

Favorite Food: My mom's beef stroganoff. It only has 3 sticks of butter!

Favorite thing about Ross Park: I don't think there is just one thing. The children make each day a new adventure, the staff members are very dedicated and always looking to provide an excellent education and our district provides the means for us to do so!

Name: Mrs. Megan Warren

Grade: K-5 Cognitively Impaired Classroom

Family: My family consists of my husband, Brent, son, Benjamin (2 yrs), and daughter, Madelyn (1 yr.)

Teaching experience: I taught at Mona Shores Middle School (Resource Room teacher) for 1 year and have been at Ross Park (CI Classroom) for 7 years.

Hobbies/Spare Time activities: I enjoy spending time with my family, church, camping, Greater Muskegon Service League and shopping.

Favorite Food: Bagels and cream cheese from Brooklyn Bagel with a big Diet Coke.

Favorite thing about Ross Park: The AMAZING group of people I get to be with everyday—staff and students. What a caring atmosphere for everyone! ROSS PARK ROCKS!

Name: Maryann Lane

Grade: 3rd Grade

Family: I have one son, Brendan.

Teaching experience: I have taught many grades including: 1st, DK, Kindergarten, third and fourth.

Hobbies/Spare Time activities: I enjoy spending time reading, walking and doing bead work.

Favorite Food: Cake and Ice Cream!

Favorite thing about Ross Park: My favorite thing about Ross Park is the staff and the children.



Name: Mrs. Traci Hackney

Grade: K-5 Technology

Family: My family consists of my husband, Charlie. He's a teacher at Reeths-Puffer. We have been married 6 ½ years. We have a son, Drew who is 3 ½ years old.

Teaching experience: I taught at Mona Shores High School 7 years. This is my 2nd year at Ross Park. I also taught at Muskegon Community College for a year.

Hobbies/Spare Time activities: In my spare time I enjoy teaching spinning at Norton Pines, running, playing tennis, scrapbooking and spending time at the beach.

Favorite Food: Raspberries, blueberries, and CHOCOLATE .

Favorite thing about Ross Park: The staff and students are so wonderful

Name: Mrs. Kristin Fricke

Grade: Physical Education Teacher, (K-5) at Ross Park, Churchill, & Lincoln Park.

Family: My family is my husband, Zach (high school teacher) and two children: Lucy (4) and Oliver (2).

Teaching experience: I was a kindergarten teacher in Colorado Springs, CO for 1 year. I taught 2nd grade at Ross Park Elementary for 4 years. The past three years I have been a part-time Phys. Ed. teacher.

Hobbies/Spare Time activities: My favorite activities are being outdoors, crafting, reading and family vacations.

Favorite Food: Italian Food

Favorite thing about Ross Park: Our wonderful students and the positive, supportive staff!