

the Maury Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of the Parent / Teacher Association

Home of the Cougars



July 2015

Any Given School Day

by George Blackmon

You may have seen the popular movie "Any Given Sunday," which focuses on the success, trials and struggles of an American football team.

While the experiences of an elementary school student are totally different from those faced by a football player, there are some similarities. They will have some struggles; they will have some successes. Think of it as *any given school day*.



Over the past school year, students have been taught so many things from a variety of subjects. Some concepts were grasped quickly. But what about those that were a challenge? I'm certain there is a student or two who would agree some items caused anxiety or frustration. However, they had their "any given school day" moment when it suddenly clicked. That extra time with the teacher or a small group session with a para-professional. Maybe it took looking at the subject from another angle that finally brought the "aha" moment.

Maury has seen a lot of accomplishments this past year. As we depart for summer break, take the time to reflect and celebrate your child's academic growth.

Thank you Maury family for a successful year and remember that on "any given school day," great things can happen!

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Maury Field Day

by George Blackmon

Friday, June 12th was Maury field day, loaded with activities for students!



Second graders at Lincoln Park awaiting game instructions



Fun on the blacktop

Hello Summer Break

Written by George Blackmon, June 18, 2015

**Hello summer break, it's been a while
Two words that bring to me a big smile**

**A hearty welcome for chilling out
And fun activities that make me shout**

**Goodbye, for now, school uniforms
Some lighter clothes will be the norm**

**Later on for tougher classes
And waiting my turn for hall passes**

**A fond farewell to dragging books
Now I can work on that sky hook**

**Don't get me wrong, the year was fun
With much success and victories won**

**But everyone needs a little time out
Before we sit around and pout**

**So with all respect and all it takes
Goodbye school year, hello summer break**



Welcome, New Maury Staff!

by Carlyne Albert-Garvey, Principal

Thanks for another great year! While you enjoy the summer break, please welcome the incoming Maury staff—many of their bios are listed below and on the next page.

Kevin Parker has more than fifteen years' experience as a **School Psychologist**. A native Washingtonian, Kevin is the product of Montessori schools and is a graduate of St. John's College High School in upper northwest Washington. Kevin earned his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD and earned his Master's Degree in Educational Psychology from American International College in Springfield, MA. Kevin began his career as a School Psychologist in DC Public Schools in 2002 at Garfield Elementary. In 2009, Kevin founded Parker Diagnostic Solutions, an educational consulting firm that represented students with disabilities. In 2013, Kevin returned to the DC public school system. In his free time, Kevin enjoys coaching little league football and is an avid sports fan. He also enjoys watching historical documentaries and designing web sites. Kevin is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated.



Laura White, Maury's new **Mixed-aged Class Teacher**, is passionate about early childhood education. Prior to joining the Maury community, Laura was Ashoka's U.S. Changemaker Schools Manager, which allowed her to learn from schools across the country that excel in building empathy in children. Most recently, Laura was a preschool autism teacher for Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program. Laura graduated from Tulane University with a BA in political economy and will graduate from The George Washington University with her master's in early childhood special education in August 2015. In her free time, Laura enjoys reading, cooking, and volunteering at the National Museum of Natural History.



Desiree McClure, new Maury **Social Worker**, is a native New Orleanian who has lived in the DC area since 1989. Desi was a Business Administration major at Dillard University in New Orleans and received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Howard University. She has worked in DCPS as a school social worker for 13 years; loves to sing gospel music and seeing the potential in people, and is an avid Saints fan.



Lauren Dorsey is a passionate young woman from the state of Maryland. She is also a product of DCPS and attended our very own Maury Elementary. She is recently now an alumna from Moore College of Art and Design and The Art Institute of Philadelphia. She hopes to be a great and positive influence on Maury's children and looks forward to helping them in growing and preparing for a bright future. Her hobbies are, singing, dancing, fashion illustrating and writing.



Rebecca Sanghvi, new **Grade 3 Teacher**, is starting her sixth year of teaching in the 2015-16 school year. Becca has taught first and second grade at KIPP DC, DC Bilingual Public Charter School, and a San Francisco public school. She holds a BA in creative writing from University of Pittsburgh, a MA in elementary education from American University, and a MA in literacy from Teachers College Columbia University. She lives in Petworth with her husband. Becca is very excited to be joining the Maury community!



Welcome, New Maury Staff! (continued)

MaryEllen Macek, Maury's new **Reading Teacher**, is thrilled to be joining our staff and community as the reading specialist for SY 2015-16. MaryEllen was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts and attended public school for grades PK through 12, enjoying diverse, challenging, and rich experiences. She attended Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania and participated in various activities including playing field hockey, tutoring students with and without disabilities, and volunteering with Habitat for Humanity. She graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and in Political Science. Her journey to Washington, DC began after graduation. She enrolled at The George Washington University to study Early Childhood Special Education; at the same time, she began her teaching career as a Special Education Teacher at Murch ES. Most recently, she has been a special education teacher at Hyde-Addison ES working with students and teachers in grades PK through 5. In 2014, MaryEllen completed her Education Specialist certificate in Educational Leadership and Administration with a focus on Special Education, also from the GWU. In her spare time, she enjoys Washington DC, is an avid baseball and football fan, and spends time outside hiking the Billy Goat Trail in Maryland and reading on the beach. She loves to visit exhibits at the Smithsonian Museums; the Air and Space Museum, the Museum of American History, and the Portrait Gallery are her favorites. She looks forward to meeting each and every one of you next school year!



Qinghua Wang, the new Maury **Chinese Teacher**, is in her tenth year teaching Chinese to DC elementary school students. As a member of the DC World Languages Committee, Qinghua (pronounced Ching Wah) helped develop the current DCPS Foreign Language Standards. Ms. Wang also wrote the curriculum for the DCPS Chinese language program. She has a Master's degree in early childhood education from Cambridge College in Massachusetts. She is from Kunming, capital of Yunnan (literally "South of the Clouds") Province in the far southwest of China. Ms. Wang graduated from Southwest University in Chongqing China and did advanced work at Beijing Normal Education University. Coming to the US as a visiting scholar at George Washington University, she remained to become a US citizen. She is married and has a daughter, Ma Li. Qinghua loves to read, to teach, and to travel.



Stefanie Gordon, a new Maury **Special Education Teacher**, will begin her fourth year of teaching in the 2015-16 school year. Stef comes from a family of educators (both grandmothers, mother, and two younger sisters,) so it was only natural she would become a teacher. Prior to Maury, Stef taught second grade at a charter school in DC as well as Special Education in DCPS. She studied Psychology and Theatre at Knox College and holds a dual Master's degree from Lesley University in General Education and Special Education.



Maria Zambrano, also a new Maury **Special Education Teacher**, is originally from Florida, where she received a certificate in Speech and Language Pathology at Florida International University. Maria moved to DC and earned a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education at The George Washington University. She began her career as a preschool teacher with Arlington Public Schools, and recently joined DCPS as a first grade Special Education Inclusion Teacher. Maria is passionate about teaching and feels fortunate to be part of a student's learning experience. She enjoys seeing the progress students make as the year passes by and has fun each and every day that she gets to teach. When not teaching, Maria enjoys running, traveling, being outdoors, and eating delicious food. She is excited to be part of such a great community and joining the Maury family!



Space Camp

There was a slide show with highlights from space camps and 5th grade representatives spoke about their favorite parts of space camp which included:

- 'getting to see rockets getting built and the team work it takes to launch a rocket into space,'
- 'Spending time with all our friends,'
- 'Memories we will never forget,'
- 'Team work on missions,'
- 'briefings before bed,'
- 'learning about NASA's plans and seeing things going into space,'
- '...and the food is pretty good too!'

There will be a meeting for 4th grade parents on Monday at 5pm about next year's meeting.

Voting

LSAT Election. LSAT Candidates: Each candidate gave a brief introduction and explained why they are running for LSAT. The candidates were Cody Rice, Sarah Hais, David Bibo, Amber Gove, Dinkar Mokadam and Erica Martin.

The following were elected to the LSAT Board: Erica Martin, Dinkar Mokadam, Sarah Hais and Cody Rice

Budget. The Budget was approved unanimously

Bylaws. The amendments to the bylaws were approved unanimously.

Committee Announcements

Fundraising:

Overall Budget & Goal

- Thanks again for all your help and support over the year. As you can see from the PTA budget that was sent out and we are voting on we are bringing more of the fundraising activities that have occurred in the past under the umbrella of the fundraising committee and trying to streamline the budget and goals.
- We won't be able to do this without you, the goal is \$157,250 and we are excited to get started raising the funds to support the amazing programs, teacher and of course students here at Maury
- Keep your eye out over the summer for announcements about different Maury fundraising updates and opportunities
- Also, please remember to keep clipping your Box Tops, we want to collect at least 5,000 and your gems from Argonaut



Committee Announcements (continued)

Maury Wine Sale

- This was a great success! In the 2 weeks of the sale, we sold 48 cases and our goal was 50. Schneider's extended our sale and even expanded it to their nation-wide list and we ended up with a total of 51 sold which is \$2,550 for the PTA. You can still buy a 6-Pack through Saturday so go on over and pick up a 6-Pack

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- I have to say I am getting a little desperate here. We REALLY REALLY REALLY need someone to step forward and lead the charge on Maury at the Market. Please consider doing this, we are happy to have you team up with your spouse or partner or friend. If there is a fabulous incoming family who you think would be great we will take it. We need someone to step forward and lead this event, it is the most important event and we depend on Maury at the Market for nearly half the overall PTA budget.

School Improvement: May 16th was spring cleaning. Thanks to everyone who helped out-- we also had 30 individuals from hands on DC help out and donate supplies and mulch.

Two projects we are working on -- getting a little community lending library and think tank shed.

Phase 2 expansion plans -- we were able to secure 5.8 million for Maury expansion in 2016. Right now we are planning a two story 6- classroom addition and also updating the multi-purpose room and adding a kitchen. We know that 5.8 million will not be enough so we hope that the council will be able to get us adequate funds. We were also offered additional trailers, but the cost of installing them and then removing them when the renovation started would have eaten too much of the budget which already isn't enough. The hope is that the renovation will be completed in 2 years.

July 18th. DCPS is sponsoring the **Nelson Mandela Day of Service**. Update will go to listserv -- but please put the day on your calendar.

Good opportunity to make your voices heard:

June 24. Grosso and Allen will be holding a Ward 6 town hall meeting.

July 8th: 11am DC Council will be holding a meeting with DGS about modernization of schools.

Q&A

Q: How much money do you think the project needs?

A: Our original estimate was 11 million, but it depends on the plans. Until the project is bid out, it's difficult to say. The council is aware that we are confident that 5.8 million will not be enough.

Q: What organization determines the scope?

A: DGS



Goodbye and Thank you to Graduating Families

We took a moment to say good bye and thank you to families who are leaving. Amy Weedon discussed her first year at Maury when the PTA had about \$100 in the bank account. Heather Schoell suggested a silent auction and the rest is history. Thank you Maury families for all you do, and good luck to all the students who are moving on next year.

Exec Board Update

Financial Fraud. The Executive Board report included details of the financial fraud case referred to in earlier PTA meetings and minutes. That section of the minutes has been redacted due to its sensitive nature and the wide publication of this newsletter. Any inquiries can be sent to mauryppta@yahoo.com

Principal's Update

New Staff. The latest newsletter has the bios and photos for most of our new staff. We just filled the position of para-professional for PS3. We have 2 other vacancies that haven't been announced yet -- they will be announced in the next few days. Chris will update the website by July 1st with new bios and photos of staff.

Home visits. Our goal will be to do 100% for early childhood and 50% for k-5, although it is optional. Expect calls in the beginning of July. We're hoping to get class lists out by the end of June. Prek 4 should have found out who their teachers will be -- **there will be a meet and greet tomorrow morning with prek teachers at 8:15 in the special ed room.**

CAG will be leaving July 2nd -July 9 for vacation. After that she'll be in school in NY, and then she'll take a final vacation at the end of July. She will not be in communication while on vacation.

APTT Meetings in 2nd and 4th grade were a huge success. 2nd, 4th and 5th have committed to do them again next year. The one thing we plan to change is that we'll do APTT early and late in the year and one-on-one conferences in between. But big shout out to teachers and parents because even though we lost the parent-teacher conference day (because of snow) -- we had 70% families make it up.

We had a discussion about 3 year contracts for principals. We are all excited and happy that CAG now has a 3-year contract, she pointed out some of the obstacles that DCPS has put into place (particularly for young recruits that we want to keep in DC) to obtain those contracts.

CAG's new personal campaign is to stop charters from beginning at 5th grade. It's awesome to have school choice, but it's not right that you have to make that choice in 4th grade and pull kids from their elementary schools.



Principal's Update (continued)

[Note from 5th grade parent: We've had such an incredible year, and we were still able to get into the middle school we wanted to get into. There is so much fear that if you don't start in 5th you won't get in the schools you want and that hasn't been our experience.]

PARCC results -- last heard was that the results will not be out until January or February.

The PARCC administration is very complex and it was stressful -- One good thing about the PARCC being later this year is that hopefully everything on that end will be fixed.

It's been a really great year. Thank you

In Attendance

Elsa Huxley, Emily Paterson, Jessica Gardner, Adam Hais, JR Ford, Principal Albert-Garvey, Amy Weedon, Vanessa Ford, Mr. Spradley, Anne McFadden, Vanessa Carswell, Leo, David Bibo, Kirstin Erfe, Franny Decker, Brooke Jamison, Max Kieba, John Prescott, Kim Longfield, Amber Gove, Dinkar Mokadam, Heather Schoell, Sara Hais, Sam Huxley, Erica Martin, Scott Douglas, Norm Gardner, Sarah Kyle. [There must be missing sign in sheets because I know there were more people there tonight]

Next Meeting

PTA meetings will resume in the next school year.

First Day of School: Monday, August 24, 2015

Tentative Back to School Night: Thursday, August 27, 2015

Tentative first PTA meeting: Thursday, September, 17, 2015

