



A Note from the PTO President



A Monthly Update on PTO Information

Happy November!

In this season of giving thanks, the PTO has much to be grateful for. Top of our list is all of the wonderful volunteers who work with such focus and passion organizing events for the students, their families. The PTO could not operate without all the parents who volunteer their time helping out and we thank each and every one of you.

We have many PTO events in the coming weeks. Our annual VIP Day will be held, as always, on the day before Thanksgiving. This day provides students with a terrific opportunity to introduce a grandparent, aunt, uncle or family friend to the school. Formerly known as Grandfriends Day, VIP Day is a fun Excelsior tradition and we hope as many students as possible participate.

The annual Excelsior Holiday Secret Shop will be held the week following Thanksgiving. Secret Shop is, unquestionably, the most popular event of the school year according to Excelsior parents. It takes a tremendous amount of work to pull off this event and we strongly encourage any and all who can volunteer to be a personal shopper to do so. In order to sign up for a personal shopping shift, please follow this [link](#) and use the password [Secret Shop](#).

Excelsior's annual Pancake Breakfast will be held the morning of December 3rd. The Pancake Breakfast is one of the oldest and most storied PTO events of the year and one of two events that is run, exclusively, by the Dads of Excelsior. In addition to eating yummy pancakes, there will be several service projects suitable for the entire family to undertake including making greeting cards for service members, making blankets for Bundles of Love and making cat and dog toys for the American Humane Society.

We invite everyone to attend the next PTO meeting of the year on November 29th at 7pm. New Minnetonka School Board members, Charlie Kanan and Lisa Sumner, will attend to introduce themselves and answer any questions you might have that were not addressed during the election forums, we will receive a debrief from the Family Culture Fest chairs regarding the first year of this new event and we will provide an overview of events in January including Family Movie Night and the Imagination Fair. We encourage everyone to attend. As always, child care will be provided.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Kathleen Miller Liu
Excelsior PTO President

FIND US ON THE WEB AT

WWW.MINNETONKA.K12.MN.US

November

DATES TO REMEMBER

November 23
VIP DAY

November 24-25
Thanksgiving — NO SCHOOL

November 29
**PTO Meeting—7pm
Media Center**

November 29-December 1
Secret Shop
Open to parents to shop on
Thursday 12/1, 3-5:30p

Looking Ahead

December 3
Pancake Breakfast 8-11a

December 22
Last day of school before break

December 23-January 2
Winter Break

January 3
Back to school

January 13
Family Movie Night

January 26
Imagination Fair



Great Big Thank-You Awards



PTO Meeting
October 25, 2011
Submitted by
Michelle Houser,
PTO Secretary

Thanksgiving is upon us and the PTO board always wants to make sure that we say a Great Big Thank you to all the volunteers that give of their time to enrich the experience for students at Excelsior Elementary. **THANK YOU!** You make a huge difference in the daily lives of the students and teachers at Excelsior.

Thanks to all the ambassadors who provided an amazing learning experience for our kids at Family Culture Fest. Thank you for the amazing work done by the coordinators, Connie Clair, Holly Barbosa, Bhuvana Nandakumar, Shannon Richter, Ann McIntosh, and 5th grade teacher Jen Kitt, of this inaugural event.

This past month, we had Health screening overseen by Terese Ciaccio and the many volunteers that helped to screen the students. Thank you! Its a huge help to the Health Office Staff.

You hopefully received your fabulous School Directory a few weeks ago. Molly Davis put those together Thank you Molly. Thank you also to the volunteers who got the directories distributed to the teachers to send home.

We hope that you find many reasons to be thankful this Thanksgiving holiday and please know that we are very thankful for you!

Sincerely,

The PTO Board

An Art thank you to Gretchen Spottke for the new, beautiful art signs. Now when families see their children's art in the hallways they have a beautiful piece of art (created by artist and parent Gretchen Spottke) to explain what it is they're looking at.

And thank you to Patti Benson for organizing the over 40 volunteers that signed up to help out in the art room! Our art room has never been so organized!

~Sani O'Brien

Vice-president, Nicole Brush, welcomed the group of parents and gave an overview of the meeting.

School Board Update

Lisa Wagner, Vice-chair for the Minnetonka School District, gave an update from the School Board. First, she gave a summary of the results of the 2010-2011 parent survey results. The survey was emailed to all enrolled families in the district. 31% or 2,719 people responded. Of those, 77% are residents and 23% are open enrolled. 55% had children in Minnetonka schools 5 years or less. 98% rated the district education good or excellent.

Ms. Wagner then discussed enrollment and finances. Total enrollment for the district is 9,053. 7,128 are residents and 1,925 are students that open enroll. 65 students returned fro, private schools. Enrollment increased by 468 over last year. The current Kindergarten class is 745 students. 408 of them are residents and 337 are open enrolled. \$10,949,556 contributed to the budget this year due to total open enrolled students.

Lastly, she discussed goals for the board. They are as follows:

1. Modify high school to meet needs of incoming students due to more rigorous middle school.
2. Ensure full implementation of programs adopted.
3. Focus staff development on deeper understanding of 21st Century students
4. Develop clear process and organizational structure for collecting and implementing innovation ideas.
5. Explore ways to ensure all learners can achieve academic success by understanding any barriers to learning.
6. Identify new models to sustain district's financial viability.

School Board members are always available through email at schoolboard@minnetonka.k12.mn.us

Excelsior Parent Survey

Lee Drolet presented the results of the parent survey specific to Excelsior Elementary. 93% of those that responded would recommend Excelsior to a neighbor. The survey results can be found by clicking here.

Budget

Carol Thiss presented the PTO budget. A vote was taken and it was approved.

Service Projects

Heather Durenberger is the chair for service projects. We will be having yearlong service projects. This month is hunger and next month will be cards for nursing home residents. There will be an opportunity to make cards for Veterans at the Pancake Breakfast. Please contact Heather with any ideas for charities to work with.

Our next meeting will be November 29 at 7-8:30 p.m.



ORPHANED KEYS RECYCLING!

Don't forget to recycle your old keys – bring them to school!
Collection will continue through the end of the school year.

It's time! Bring in those broken holiday lights to be recycled! Collection starting right after Thanksgiving. We accept electric cords, holiday lights, telephone cords, appliance cords.

Drop off your lights in the school lobby.

Green Tip of the Month:

GOOD NEWS on RECYCLING!

Recycling your plastics at home is about to get much easier! It has recently been announced that Allied Waste, the primary hauler of recyclables for the South Lake Minnetonka area, will be collecting **ALL PLASTICS NUMBERED 1-7 starting JANUARY 2012.**

TONKA GREEN is recruiting new members and co-chair(s) for next year.

Do you cringe when you see a pop can in the garbage? Or when stacks & stacks of junk mail go right into the recycling bin? Or when there IS NO recycling bin? Do you unplug your cell phone charger when not in use? Do you dream about rain gardens and composting bins? Worms???

If so, then you need to be on the Tonka Green team! The team is looking for individuals who care about the environment and who want to help educate our students (and parents) and implement strategies to keep our school green.

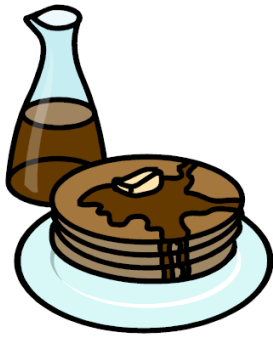
The Tonka Green team meets monthly throughout the year to come up with ideas for our school, prioritize goals and set plans in action. The Tonka Green team is not the same as the 4th and 5th grade Environmental Clubs, BUT they often team up together on bigger projects. Additionally, the Tonka Green team works with other schools on district-wide initiatives. You never have to touch a worm. EVER.

Become a part of the team now, and make a difference! If you have any interest in being on our team, please contact Lisa Davis lisa.davis@target.com or Lisa Meccia lmeccia@visi.com

Lost and Found

Claim your items ASAP!

Items not claimed will be donated on Monday, November 28th



17th Annual

Excelsior Elementary Pancake Breakfast

Saturday - December 3rd 8:00am to 11:00am

Adults:	\$5.00
Grades K-12:	\$3.00
Preschool:	Free

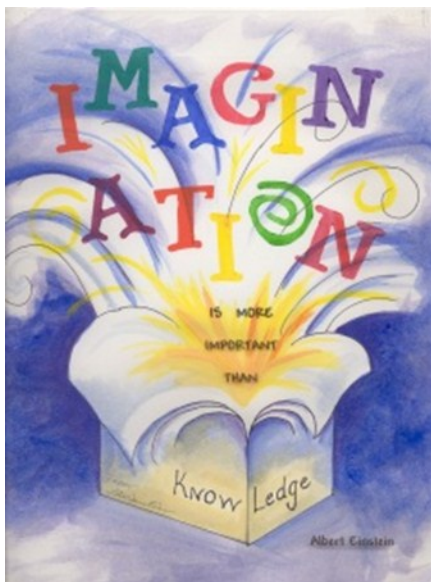


Volunteer Information:
Rob Kahlmeyer (952) 474-4131

During the first two months of school we've collected 8,300 box tops for education worth \$830 for our PTO. Kindergarteners collected 1,500; First graders 1,025; Second graders 1,450; Third graders 1,525; Fourth graders 1,000; Fifth graders 1,100 and Navigators 700.

A NEW contest is beginning this month to see who can collect the most box tops. Will it be Odd (numbered classrooms) or Even? Our school goal is 30,000 box tops which can be reached with each classroom turning in about 1,000 box tops. Thank you for supporting this program and others by turning in box tops, milk caps, and UPC's from Campbells/Swansons/Pepperidge Farm products. More information can be found at www.btfe.com!

If you would like an extra directory or need to replace a lost one, additional directories are available for \$5. Directories can be purchased in the office by cash or check made out to Excelsior PTO.



Imagination Fair

Thursday, January 26, 2012
Save the date. Start brainstorming ideas!

The annual Imagination Fair is an opportunity for Excelsior students to showcase their experiments, inventions, or creations. All Excelsior students, from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade are invited to participate. Students may work alone, with another student, or in a group. Students in grades 3-5 will be also given the opportunity to participate in an after school *Invention Workshop* in early December as part of the Imagination Fair. Watch for registration sheets coming home in backpacks this month.

Don't know where to start? Projects don't have to be complicated! Let your child's imagination, creativity, and inventiveness guide you as you help your child explore whatever may interest him/her at the moment....nature, mechanics, art, technology, fashion, chemistry, photography, animals, weather, crafts, or any other hobbies. On the evening of January 26th, all projects will be displayed in the auditorium.

Let your child's imagination go wild!

Minnetonka Visual Arts Davanni's Fundraiser



Mark your calendars and join us at **Davanni's in Minnetonka from 4:00PM to 8:00PM, Tuesday, December 6th.**

20% of your order will be donated to the Minnetonka Visual Arts upon presentation of the form below. We are raising money to renovate and improve the art gallery in the Arts Center on 7.

Drop by for dinner, or place an order for takeout, and don't forget to hand in the fundraiser form (below).

DAVANNI'S®

PIZZA & HOT HOAGIES

Shop location: Minnetonka

"Fundraiser Night" for Minnetonka Public School Visual Arts
Group or Organization Name

Bring this ticket in with you and present it when ordering on

Tuesday December 6th 2011 between 4:00pm - 8:00pm
Day/Date Start time End time

And **20%** of your total order will be donated to our group!

\$ Amount of order: _____ Order number _____

* Not good on delivered orders. Customers may call ahead order in advance and present ticket on arrival.

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Minnetonka, MN 55345

(952) 938-4243

Important information for ALL Excelsior volunteers

One of the widely-used communications tools for volunteer information is [PTO Manager](#).

If you are not registered then you are missing a lot of valuable information! Please follow these steps to get registered and to indicate your interests in volunteering for certain events at school.

If you ARE registered already, please take a moment to update your interests (many events have changed or been added since last year) and student information.

The updated student information helps the PTO tremendously when we need to communicate with a specific grade level or classroom.

Please follow these steps to register -

Welcome New and Returning Volunteers! Click [here](#) to sign up.

New users - click the "Click Here" link under "New PTO Manager User?" to register. You will need to provide your e-mail and choose a password. Then click "Save".

Under the heading "Step 1 (Volunteer Information)" Enter as much or as little personal information as you like, with first and last name required. Then click "Save".

Under the heading "Step 2 (Volunteer Interests)" Check as many volunteer events/interests as you like. Then click "Save". The chairperson of the events/activities will contact you when that event approaches. This is not a commitment to volunteer - just an indication of your possible interest.

Under the heading "Step 3 (Students)"*

***important - allows the school to communicate to specific grades/classes**

Click "New Student". Add your student's first and last name, and select the teacher/grade. Then click "Save". Repeat for each student you have at Excelsior Elementary.

Returning users - enter your e-mail and password and click "Sign In".

Click on "My Information" to review your personal information and volunteer interests.

Please update any personal information, volunteer interests, and *student information** as necessary. *(see note above).