



### A Note from the PTO President



A Monthly Update on PTO Information

FIND US ON THE WEB AT  
[WWW.MINNETONKA.K12.MN.US](http://WWW.MINNETONKA.K12.MN.US)

**H**appy 2012 and Xian Nien Kuai Le!

February is I Love to Read month and the PTO has a full slate of activities for the students to enjoy. Susie Bazil, author of *The Sick Bug*, will be visiting the school and meeting with the students on February 6th. The Annual Scholastic Book Fair runs February 21-24. There will be books in both English and Chinese available for purchase. On Thursday, February 23, the entire family is invited to enjoy a delicious Spaghetti Dinner, prepared by Excelsior dads, before or after shopping the Book Fair. Finally, the Jr. Great Books program is looking for volunteers in order to ramp up for the new year. If you are interested, please contact one of our Volunteer Coordinators, [Rena Drageth](#), [Lisa Davis](#) or [Joe Engeman](#).

As no doubt you've heard, the Minnetonka Foundation's Annual Dream Makers Dinner will be held on February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Depot Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. The Foundation funds innovative teacher programs throughout the District. Last year, Excelsior Elementary teachers, with the support of Principal Drolet, submitted a number of applications; our school was at the top in terms of grants received. The Foundation grants have funded many of our most popular programs such as World Culture Day, the Write Brothers writing program for boys, Science symposiums for the different grades, and even the Weaving Loom in Mrs. O'Brien's Art Room. Money raised by the Foundation is definitely finding its way back into our school consequently enriching our students' educational experience. We encourage all parents to attend the dinner on the 11<sup>th</sup>. For more information, click [here](#).

The next PTO meeting will be held on the 31<sup>st</sup> at 7pm in the Media Center. Principal Drolet, along with 5th grade teacher Sue Mohn, will be discussing the math curriculum and trends being experienced in the teaching and learning of math in our school. We will also be providing updates on our financial situation and discussing the experience of Chinese visitors who recently visited our school.

If you are interested in increasing your involvement in the PTO, we would love to have you. Currently, we are recruiting Chairs for all the committees sponsored by the PTO. Please let us know if you would like to take on a leadership role in our school.

Thank you,  
Kathleen Miller Liu  
PTO President

January

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

January 31  
**PTO Meeting—7p**  
**Media Center**

February 2  
**Kindergarten Registration—6:30p**

February 6  
**Author Visit**

February 17  
**2 Hour Early Release —NO PM K**

February 20  
**NO SCHOOL—President's Day**

February 21-24  
**Book Fair**

Feb 21, 22, 24  
8:00-4p  
Feb 23  
8:00-8:30p

February 23  
**Spaghetti Dinner—5:30-7:30p**

*Looking Ahead*

February 28  
**PTO Meeting-7p**  
**Media Center**

March 1  
**Conferences 3:30-8p**

March 2  
**Conferences 8-4p**  
**NO SCHOOL**



## Great Big Thank-You Awards

**W**e want to extend a Great Big Thank You to Melissa Mandery and Deb Anderson-Hohag for another fun VIP day at the end of November. We appreciate the years of service you have given to this event and appreciate your time! Thank you!

Thank you to Stephanie Lutz and Denise Eng for their work on the handbook this past year. It's amazing!

We had our annual Secret Shop the week after Thanksgiving and we are so thankful to the board who oversaw it! It is a huge undertaking and requires a lot of shopping starting in September, as well as lots of hours setting up shop and organizing the many volunteers during the week of Secret Shop. THANK YOU to everyone who was involved. It is one of the students favorite things at Excelsior and we are grateful to those who make it possible! Barb Newhouse and Jan Hall were this year's chairs.

Rob Kahlmeyer organized our 17th annual pancake breakfast the first weekend of December! Thank you to Rob and his group of dads, with a few moms, for making a delicious breakfast. Thank you! While families were eating pancakes, they had the opportunity to reach out to our service men and women. Heather Durenburger organized greeting cards for our Military. Thank you for helping us to keep others in mind!

Thank you to all the parents who helped in classroom winter parties. There seemed to be a lot of fun things happening in the halls of Excelsior such as relay races, doughnut eating, and frosted faces. It's a lot of fun to see staff, parents and children all having fun together! Thank you parents for your time in the classroom.

In January we had our annual Family Movie night thanks to Allison Weick and Julie Mehr. The kids loved the option of Smurfs or Cars 2. Deciding on a movie was hard for a lot of kids! Thank you to all who volunteered their time on a Friday evening and to the families for coming out!

It takes a lot to have all this fun and time together and we want to say thank you for the giving of your time! It makes a HUGE difference.

The Excelsior PTO

**T**he Family Culture Fest Committee would like to thank the following volunteers for helping us make our first Family Culture Fest such a success:

Miriam Frugis and Joan Torrent, Michelle Benson, Ting Zou, Jill Ische, Jackie Carrera, Maria Anundsen, Tiffany Gibson, Petra Cripe, Mitra Whitlock, Shanta Misra, Gayathri Sambasivan, Alieshia Frink, Lindsey Frear-Jacobsen, Kelly Williams, Tara Hawks, Ann McIntosh, Jim Nunn, Vivi-Anne Kelly, June Tearle, Dawn Rynders, Betsy Barnard, Lisa Davis, Liling Miller, Christina Loescher, Kathleen Miller Liu, and Lena Otolski for your time and tremendous efforts as Volunteer Ambassadors. We also want to thank students Clarissa B, Sofia B, Mitchell R, Parthiv K, Macie A, Skyler S, and Kitty L for their wonderful help.

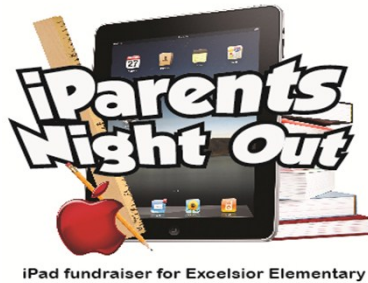
Thank you to Winona Eichelberger for your hard work as our helper the night of the event, Carol Thiss for designing the beautiful maps, Bob Mechtel, parent and owner of Promo-Link, for designing all the signs and helping us install them, Anne Kalscheuer for ordering our supplies and managing our foundation grant budget, Wolf Loescher for his rousing Scottish performance, Karen Gill from Groveland for lending us cultural props from around the district, helping us transport them, and staying to set-up and tear-down, Heather Tran and Terese Ciaccio for helping us to transport cultural props to and from Groveland and Excelsior in their big trucks, Therese Meyer for staying all night to help us with audio/lighting, Jennifer Kitt for working the various cultures into the curriculum, Val Nelson for her great work in the cafeteria the night of the event as well as implementing cultural side dishes into the lunch menu, Barb Landis and all the custodians for help with set-up, clean-up, installing signs, etc., Ali Alowonle for being our teacher liaison, and Lee Drolet for her support and taking the time to attend every meeting.

Thank you to Ingrid Roberts, Jen Barlow, Wadsa Schneider, Rajendra Kalindindi, Rena Dragseth, Barb Newhouse, Julie Hanson, Shannon Heupel, and Kristin Jackson for helping with set-up, greeting, and clean-up.

Lastly, we want to thank Shannon Richter and Holly Barbosa for being such awesome committee members. You were available all hours of the day and night to help us transport, decorate, attend meetings, set-up mixers, make phone calls...you two are the best!

Thanks to all who attended and we hope to see you again at FCF 2012!

Connie Clair and Bhuvana Nandakumar  
FCF co-chairs



## Excelsior Elementary's Annual Parents Night Out

**Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**  
**Bayview Event Center from 6:30 p.m. – Midnight**  
**Casual Attire (jeans are welcome!)**

Live & silent auction, raffle, appetizers & cash bar

Tickets: \$35/person

Buy tickets online at <http://excelsiorpto.revtrak.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&grp=1>

by March 21st

Please email Susan Quinn at [susan.quinn@emergingsoft.com](mailto:susan.quinn@emergingsoft.com) if you would like to donate cash, sporting/cultural tickets or any other items.

### Classroom Baskets

Parents Night Out will include 1 silent auction basket from each grade level. The teachers and students will have an opportunity to make recommendations for a theme for each grade level. Our goal is to have each basket include one technology item per basket, i.e. iPod nano/shuffle, Kindle, Nook. A \$1 donation is requested by **February 15<sup>th</sup>** from each student to help build the baskets. Please send your child's donation in an envelope addressed Parents Night Out/Classroom Baskets and give to their teacher.

**Donations in all amounts will be graciously accepted!** For every \$1 donated up to \$5, your child's name will be entered in a drawing to win 2 Parents Night Out tickets (value of \$70).



THE ART SHOW IS BACK!

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Crawl

Friday March 16<sup>th</sup>

5:30 – 8:00 pm

All- School Student Art Show

Make & Take Art

Preview Student Canvas Paintings  
to be auctioned at Parent's Night Out

Bring the family for a fun art-filled evening!

# Maynards

## Win a \$50 gift card to Maynards!!

We need ALL families to register on PTO Manager if you have not already done so. This is the PTO's primary communication tool for school events & volunteer opportunities.

If you are already registered, please log in and update your information to ensure that your student information is correct, email and phone are up to date, and volunteer interests are current.

If you are NOT already registered, please do so today! You have until **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3** to register or view/update your information to be entered in the drawing for a Maynards \$50 gift card!

It's very simple and will just take a few minutes. Sign up today!

<http://excelsior.ptomanager.com/index.html>

*Thank you for collecting Box Tops for Education. As we approach the halfway point of the school year, we've collected 15,225 box tops from our students and staff. Our school goal is to collect 30,000 box tops (\$3,000) for the year. We can reach or even exceed our goal if each of our 35 classrooms collect about 1,000 box tops! Classroom prizes of games or books are awarded for turning in 1,000 box tops. Mr. Broten's class won some books in the Unfortunate Event series. Other classrooms are nearly there.*

*Alanen 275; Gao-Tao 200; Gerling 475; Johnson 600; Olsen 675; West 300; Fisher 300; Hanson 325; Mei 450; Saboe 475; Yan 300; Du 225; Dumalag 475; Gabriel 450; Liu 225; Mohr 850; Weber 825; Alowonle 100; Gluck 250; Gong 600; Broten 950; Harding 475; Li 200; Leingang 225; Reisenauer 550; Frye 625; Igl 400; Ketel 500; Orr 675; Zou 150; Chiang 275; Kitt 700; Lemke 350; Mohn 325; and Potter 450.*

*We have started an Odd vs. Even (room #) Contest to see who can bring in the most box tops. Oddly, the odd numbered classrooms are way ahead! We may need to change the contest K-2 vs. 3-5 to make the contest more even. When we collect 30,000 box tops, perhaps we could have a Wacky Tacky Day for the entire school. Thanks*

### Dream Makers Dinner Just Around the Corner!

The 9th annual Dream Makers Dinner will be held at The Depot hotel in downtown Minneapolis on Feb. 11th and all Excelsior parents, teachers and staff are warmly invited to attend!

Dream Makers, sponsored by The Minnetonka Public Schools Foundation, supports innovative educational programs, materials and tools in every Minnetonka school, including ours! From cutting edge technology that supports Math, Science or Reading to materials that enrich our Language Arts curriculum, all Minnetonka students benefit from The Foundation's work.

Dream Makers is a fun and casual event (you can wear jeans!) and tickets are just \$65 each.

Visit [www.minnetonkafoundation.com](http://www.minnetonkafoundation.com) to learn more and to purchase your tickets.



### **Green Tip of the Month:**

You can NOW Recycle all PLASTICS #1-7 in co-mingled recycling!  
Allied Waste, the primary hauler of recyclables for the South Lake Minnetonka area, has begun collecting **ALL PLASTICS NUMBERED 1-7 in JANUARY 2012.**

#### **Tonka Green Weekly Tip: Don't forget your REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS**

If you had a 15-year-old tree and made it into paper grocery bags, you'd get about 700 of them. A supermarket could use all of them in under an hour! This means in one year, one supermarket goes through 60,500,000 paper bags! Imagine how many supermarkets there are in the U.S.!! - *source: Recycling Update*

### **South Tonka Baseball Registration**



It's time to register your players for 2012 Spring Baseball - remember it is first come first serve for Evaluation times for the 10-12 year olds.

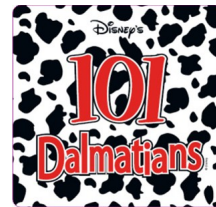
Get registered before **February 18th, 2012** to avoid a \$50 late fee. Registration will be closed by February 24th, 2012.

Go to the [South Tonka Little League Site \(www.SouthTonkaLL.org\)](http://www.SouthTonkaLL.org) and click on Register Online.

We look forward to another great season in 2012.

### **Discover All that Minnetonka Preschool Has to Offer!**

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the Minnetonka Preschool Open House on Saturday, January 28th from 9 – 11 a.m. at the Minnetonka Community Education Center in Deephaven! Parents and children are invited to explore, play, and participate in activities in the Preschool classrooms and gym. In addition, childcare will be available while parents are given the opportunity to attend the presentation "What to Look for in a Preschool". Please contact 952-401-6812 for details.



*Our school musical will be presented on February 11<sup>th</sup>!*

*Everyone is invited to attend our school musical 101 Dalmatians! We have two shows on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1pm and 5pm in the big theatre at Excelsior Elementary! All Excelsior families are invited to attend. Tickets are available at the door or on-line at the school's web-store! Come cheer on our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade cast members! Break a leg everyone!*

*Excelsior 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> graders interested in being on the backstage crew please email director Trent Boyum at: [trent.boyum@minnetonka.k12.mn.us](mailto:trent.boyum@minnetonka.k12.mn.us)*

*See you at the show!*

# BOOK FAIR



Mark your calendars for the Scholastic Book Fair, which will take place at Excelsior Elementary on February 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. Book Fair hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with additional hours until 8:30 PM on Thursday during the Spaghetti Dinner. This popular annual event is great for families, and earns money and books for Excelsior Elementary.

This year there will be a "Reading Luau" for the kids if they meet their reading goal for "I Love to Read" month. We will be once again raising money for "One-For-Books". For every \$1+ donation, the child will get a lei to wear during the week and for the Luau; for every \$20 collected a teacher/staff name will be drawn to hula at the Luau. This money goes directly to books for our school and Scholastic matches the amount in free books for a school in need. We will also have the lollipop tree during the Spaghetti Dinner again. The money collected will also go towards "One-For-Books". Come pick a lollipop for \$1 for a chance to win book fair dollars. Again, all the money raised will go straight back to our school. Help us to make as many teachers/staff hula at the dance party and get books for our school. Sign up to have lunch with your student and shop for books with them during their recess.



## TONKA PRIDE RECOGNITION

We would like to recognize the following 5th Graders for exhibiting Tonka Pride: Ella J., Erin R., Izzy H., David D., and Thomas H. They were chosen by their teachers and class mates for being helpful, kind, respectful and promoting Tonka Pride. Congratulations !

## Lost and Found

Claim your items ASAP!

Items not claimed will be donated on Thursday February 2nd.

## WHAT'S RATTLING AROUND IN THAT AMAZING IMAGINATION OF YOURS?

A Spooky Short Story? A Hilarious Haiku? A Fascinating Fable?

3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders:

The annual **Excelsior Expressions Literary Magazine** is looking for **YOUR original work**. Many of you are already working on some fantastic fiction in class – we'd love to see it! Let your creativity shine and share your published work with the entire school community.

All submissions **must be typed**. Each student may submit two poems or one story no longer than two pages double spaced.

Submissions will be accepted from **January 25<sup>th</sup> to February 28<sup>th</sup>**. Please email submissions to [excelsiorlitmag@gmail.com](mailto:excelsiorlitmag@gmail.com), or place submissions in the Literary Magazine submission box located in the main office.

Have fun – and happy writing!

And remember: Each student who submits their work will be entered in a drawing for a **\$25 gift certificate** to Excelsior Bay Books!