

Happy Fall Sparks Families,

PTA Holiday Tea/meeting – 9:30 AM Wednesday December 7th all are welcome.

PLEASE NOTE-MAJOR CALENDAR CHANGES
(Due to the Presidential Primary Election Date Change from Feb. 14 to April 3, 2012, the BCPS Calendar Was Revised)

SCHOOLS ARE NOW OPEN ON VALENTINE'S DAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2012.
THE FINAL DAY OF SCHOOL IS NOW THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2012.
THE TENTATIVE DATE OF OUR FIFTH GRADE FAREWELL ASSEMBLY IS
TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2012.

Well, I don't know about you but I cannot believe how fast this year is going! It's almost December already! We had a very well attended American Education Week. Thank you Judy Rusins and Lisa O'Neil for the coordination of the PTA refreshment table and thank you to all our "bakers" for making the week extra special. Thank you Stephanie Chaney and the Reflections' committee for getting all the Reflections entries hung so that all the parents could enjoy the artwork while visiting. And, we ended the week with almost 600 guest for Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day! Thank you to all the people who worked so hard in making our guests feel welcome!

We will be looking to fill some vacancies on next year's PTA Executive Board – if you are interested, please contact Amy Lime at amylime@comcast.net. More detailed information will be available after the first of the year.

Did you know that your **PTA card can get you discounts**? Another great way to benefit while supporting Sparks! Check out the benefits page: http://www.pta.org/member_benefit_providers.asp and use the password and ID on the back of your Sparks PTA membership card. Here are some examples of current discounts:

- In addition to the 14% discount on your monthly recurring fees*, take advantage of waived activation fee (\$35) and substantial savings on devices when you activate a new line of service on **T-Mobile's** Classic Plans.
- Save 10% on your next purchase at **OfficeMax**—including supplies, furniture, ink & toner and Print Center services.
- PTA Members Save Up to 20% Off with **Hertz**!
- **Sharp Electronics Corporation** is offering PTA members special purchase opportunities
- **MetLife Auto & Home** has worked with PTA to bring PTA members a group insurance program that comes with special savings and benefits.

Direct Donation (DD) has reached 18.9K of our 25K goal... 13 more families have donated but that still leaves almost 200 families of our 480 families who have chosen not to participate. If there's a reason that you have chosen not to donate, we'd love to hear it. The PTA is *your* organization and should represent each of you!!! Your PTA uses DD money to directly benefit each and every student at Sparks. From funds that allow teachers to outfit their rooms to create a better learning environments, cultural assemblies, books during reading incentive to fun activities like movie night. We truly believe that direct donation makes your lives easier with nothing to sell but, we need your support. We don't want to spend the whole year collecting and reminding to get the funding that we need. We want to spend the year planning fun things for your children. **So, please, at whatever level you are able, support your children by giving to Direct Donation! And, please do it soon. It's tax deductible!**

Classroom Funds

Reflections

Box Tops

Yearbook

Movie night

Roster

Grandparents' Day

Ice Skating - 1/29/2012 from 5:15-7:15. *Admin is free, skate rental is \$2.

5th Grade Farewell Activities

PTA Volunteer Incentive Contest

Library Gift Fund

PTA reaching out

Calendar

Sparks 2011-2012 Sponsors

PTA meeting minutes

PTA meeting financial report – review online.

Classroom Funds

Thank you all so much for your donations to our classroom funds. The kids really enjoyed the Halloween parties this year. The room parents wouldn't be able to put together all the fun crafts and food without your donations. We realize that it is not always easy for every parent to contribute to the classroom fund, so this year, we decided to average the money out per grade level, so every class would be on an even playing field. The room parents for each grade will be working in conjunction to keep the parties similar in craft, food, and goody bags, so each and every child will be able to enjoy all that we have to offer.

Reflections

Hope that you had a chance to see the wonderful art work that was displayed for American Education Week!

Box Tops – Fall Contest: Total Box Tops = 8,490 = \$849

Yearbook - still a few yearbooks for sale. \$18 each checks payable to Sparks Elementary. Please Contact Joanie S. at 443-797-2170.

Movie night – 11/11/11

Thank you to all who attended movie night on November 11 to watch Marmaduke! A good time was had by all. The PTA would especially like to thank the following people who volunteered their time to make it a great success: Sparks wonderful Building Services personnel (Adelaide, Elsie, Michelle, and Dillon), Dan Briscuso, Hope Grenzer, Dawn and Savas Karas, Aimee Klink, Stacey Krotee, Denise Kruzal, Tien Langlee, Anna and Matt Sienkiewicz, Rachel Westerlund and of course, Sharon Kearney and Missy Fanshaw. Thank you to the many families who brought dry good items for the student council. We collected 53 items!

Roster We want to thank all of the Fourth Graders who participated in the Roster Art Contest. Congratulations to the following students. They had their works of art published in our prestigious roster!

Summer C.- Front Cover
Ricky H.- Back Cover

Elle L.
Katie B.

Demi G.
Thomas M.

Katerina K.

Address and Information Changes for the Roster - If you have a change in address or other information after the roster is printed and you would like it shared with the Sparks families, you can do the following:

Please email Lisa O'Neil (lisa@netnavel.com) with your new information or fill out a Roster Change Form located in the office. With your permission, we will publish any updated information in Sharkbytes for families to correct in their current roster.

Grandparents' Day – what a great day, thanks to all the wonderful volunteers! We got nothing but positive comments from our guests. Thanks especially to our Grandparents' Day hospitality group they really worked hard and created a beautiful spread! Thanks to Bagel Works of Hunt Valley, Giant and Klein's ShopRite for donating to the spread. It was pretty crowded but that's a good problem when you consider that it means that we have very involved families. We had almost 600 people signed up to come with 80 requests for handicapped parking. We had approximately 350 Grandparents and Special Friends that couldn't be with us but were represented with stars on the posters of each homeroom and almost 200 that were remembered but have passed on. We also welcomed 21 Grandparents who were also past Sparks Alumni for the day!

5th Grade Farewell Activities

On December 2, 2011 at 9:30 am all 5th grade guardians are invited to attend a planning meeting for the end of year activities. Information was sent home that listed the subcommittees so please be sure to return the form and plan to meet us in the conference room. Please feel welcome to contact Lisa Turner at turner5mom@aol.com with any questions and thanks for your support!

PTA Volunteer Incentive Contest - And the winner is... Sea Park for September, Miranda Creager for October, and Cherelle Johnson for November - Congratulations to Sea, Miranda and Cherelle for winning the monthly Volunteer Incentive Contest! They will each win a SUPER COOL Sparks Sharks water bottle.... (and you could win, too...just log your Volunteer hours electronically via Sparkspta.org. Or, just use the paper system!)

Sparks' **Library Gift Fund** Committee would like to thank the families of the children listed below for their generosity in making a contribution to the fund. New books have been purchased for the benefit of Sparks Elementary Library honoring these students who recently celebrated their birthdays. Happy birthday to the following students!!!

Annabelle G. Kindergarten
Ben Y. 3rd grade
Evan C. 2nd grade
Hannah Z. 3rd grade

Kevin R. 3rd grade
MacKenzie C. 1st grade
Max K. 3rd grade

PTA Reaching Out – Hope you saw PTA bulletin board with the nice thank you notes that *you all* received from

Amy Cavanaugh – thanks for the "Tower of Treats" sent while she is on bed rest

Sharon Kearney – thank you for the welcome back luncheon

Chris Bennett – thank you for the welcome back luncheon

Linda Sympson – thanks for the welcome back to school present – Sparks water bottle

Ben Bemis – former student – thank you for the scholarship money

Rosemary Hall – former student – thank you for the scholarship

Each of these people is thanking each Sparks parent who contributed to Direct Donation! Whenever you are in school, check out the PTA bulletin board outside the library for the latest news and thank you notes.

Calendar

December	7 th	Wednesday	9:30	PTA meeting/Holiday Tea – all are welcome
December	16 th	Friday		PTA provided staff holiday breakfast
January	29 th	Sunday	5:15-7:15	PM PTA Ice Skating Event

Sparks PTA 2011-2012 sponsors:

Bagel Works of Hunt Valley, Klein's ShopRite, Graul's, Walmart, Target, Giant, Food Lion, Wegmans, Carvel, Kingsdene, and Radebaughs

Sparks Elementary School PTA Minutes November 2, 2011 The meeting was called to order by PTA President, Stacey Krotee, at 7:05 pm.

In Attendance Stacey Krotee, Sharon Kearney, Missy Fanshaw, Meghan Parker, Amy Lime, Renee Genco, Anna Sienkiewicz, Laren Altberger, Leigh Anne Mayo, Aimee Klink, Jennifer Swanson

Budget Report

- Budget – reimbursement has begun
- Direct Donation – donations are still being collected
- Room parents – Halloween parties have concluded so reimbursement forms should be sent in; an idea for remaining classroom funds at end of year is for teachers, grade-wide, to purchase an educational item for each child

Officer and School Report - Principal Sharon Kearney reported:

- Thank you to everyone who made the Book Fair and the Ice Cream Social amazing events this year
- Overcrowding in area schools continues to be an issue and to be discussed; options being considered are redistricting, capping enrollment, and building additions
- Jenny Roberts has accepted a teaching position and has left Sparks – Luanne Elicker will replace her
- First marking period ends 11/3; reports card distribution on 11/17 (1ST Grade will have conferences)
- Professional Development Day 11/4 – staff will discuss school population and sub-groups in conjunction with meeting the needs of all students as well as the transition to the Common Core Standards
- BCPS visitation on 11/7 including members representing Special Education
- Hunt Valley Tree Lighting – 11/25 at 5:30 pm – Sparks' 5th Grade will perform hand bells, caroling and the countdown and everyone is welcome to ring in the holiday season
- Kennedy Krieger Tree – Sparks will again be adopting a tree and Sparks' 4th Grade will be making ornaments to adorn the tree
- SIT report – funds for parent loop signs and a mirror are being discussed
- Teacher Report – Mrs. Mayo expressed thanks for teacher gifts – Sparks water bottles

Committee Reports

- Volunteer training – people are continuing to be trained
- Book Fair – total sales were slightly over \$17,000 and proceeds to Sparks are slightly over \$5,000, our most successful year ever
- Ice Cream Social – over 700 people enjoyed this event – a wonderful day
- Movie Night – Marmaduke will be shown on 11/11; volunteers are needed to assist; thank you to Amy L. And Dan B. for making this such a success; discussion involving the future title of this event will continue

Current Business

- Spring Fair – mid April dates are being discussed in conjunction with Hereford baseball
- Reflections – thank you to Stephanie Chaney for chairing; entries are due by/on 11/8; all entries will receive a prize for participating and all entries will be displayed during American Education Week with judging Thanksgiving week; everyone will receive a magnet photo at the spring celebration

New Business

- American Education Week – the committee is making plans; volunteers are needed for that week; Bagel works has generously donated 12 dozed bagels
- Grandparents Day – the theme is “Celebrating the Generations with Sparks”; volunteers are being recruited; Sharon will follow-up on police coverage for traffic that day
- By-laws review of changes – 2 changes to the Sparks PTA bylaws were discussed, motion by Stacey K. and seconded by Aimee K. then passed unanimously – there will be 2 general membership meetings per school year and only 1 delegate from Sparks is needed to attend the BC PTA meetings
- Change of Principal Office – an executive PTA board vote was taken electronically and passed unanimously to change to Sparks current address of 601 Belfast Rd, 21152

Meeting Adjourned The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.