A Message from the President

One of my favorite sayings concerns parenting: “The days may go by slowly, but the years rush past so fast!” The same could be said about this school year. It is hard to believe we are already in the last grading period! Now that everyone has enjoyed a well-earned Spring Break, please mark your calendars & get prepared for the following April events:

Book Fair: (April 8th-16th) Coral Reef students love to read, and one of the reasons they are so hooked on books is our fabulous tradition of spectacular book fairs. This spring’s fair is no exception. Chairs Michelle Lopez, Debbie LaPlant and Media Specialist Diana Rivas are planning great fun and great reading. Mark your calendars for Lunch With Your Child Day on Wednesday, April 14th and Reading Night on the Reef Thursday, April 15th. Both events are great fun and give you a chance to visit the book fair with your kids. Pick up your summer reading a little early – the Fair has great adult books too!

Career Day: (April 29th) School Counselor Susan Sirota, Chair Cheryl Khomanduri (ckomanduri@gmail.com) and our Student Services committee are putting together a fabulous showing of potential careers for our kids. Please contact Mrs. Sirota or Cheryl now if you can volunteer your time and share your specialty. Forms are also available on the front picnic benches, main office and room 35. We need your help to make this day a success, and your kids love to see their parents as speakers.

PTA Officers for 2010-2011: Your PTA has elected a Nominating Committee that will determine the slate of officers for our school’s 50th year of operation. They will be welcoming confidential inquiries and nominations for the nine officer positions listed below. Our PTA can only be strong and effective if our amazing parents continue to step up into leadership. If you are interested, please contact anyone on the board to ask about their position. And if you are ready to put your name in for consideration, please contact any of the committee members listed inside.

We’ll have another general membership meeting May 19th to vote on the slate and will be searching for committee chairs in May as well. Thank you to everyone who has shown their support for our school so far this year. You truly make Coral Reef a great place to be!

Enjoy the last 9 weeks!
Leanne
**NOMINATING COMMITTEE SET TO SELECT OFFICER SLATE.**

The Reef’s PTA Bylaws require each year’s PTA officers to be selected (“slated”) by a Nominating Committee. This committee was elected at the general meeting held on March 16th and consists of the following members:

- Cindy Cook, VP Programs  
  [cindy324@bellsouth.net](mailto:cindy324@bellsouth.net) 
  305.903.5126

- Virginia Bernstein  
  [vbernstein@bellsouth.net](mailto:vbernstein@bellsouth.net) 
  305.213.6507

- Doris Villamizar  
  [doris_villamizar@yahoo.com](mailto:doris_villamizar@yahoo.com) 
  305.775.6571

- Claudia Perla  
  [claudiaperla@yahoo.com](mailto:claudiaperla@yahoo.com) 
  305.233.2913

- Lia Romano  
  [liaromano@aol.com](mailto:liaromano@aol.com) 
  305.962.0161

- Annie Lay (alternate)  
  [sosmedical@bellsouth.net](mailto:sosmedical@bellsouth.net) 
  786.306.5820

Thank you to these dedicated women for their willingness to ensure that our PTA has a group of qualified and excited board of officers next year. Throughout the month of April, these women will be looking for nominations for the following board positions: President, Vice President Volunteers, Vice President Programs, Vice President Ways & Means (Fundraising), Vice President Membership, Vice President Legislation/Advocacy, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Should you be interested in any of these positions, you can contact any member of the Nominating Committee to voice your interest. You can also contact the person who currently holds that position for more information (contact information is at the bottom of the newsletter’s front page).

The nomination period will close on April 24th to allow the committee to meet and determine the recommended slate of officers. After presentation of the slate to the PTA Board May 3rd, these names will be posted and voted on at our final PTA meeting of the year May 19th.

All inquiries, nominations and discussions involving the nominating committee are confidential, so please don’t hesitate to step up and submit your name for PTA leadership. The rewards are many, the friendships fulfilling and the work load is shared by so many dedicated parent volunteers here at the Reef. We have an amazing organization of individuals and they are just waiting for you to join the leadership team!

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**CORAL REEF ELEMENTARY is getting its ACT together!**

In order to ensure that we have funding for our Aides for Classroom Teachers (ACT) to begin supporting our children and teachers as close to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year as possible, the ACT Committee has scheduled a fundraising Walk-A-Thon through Coral Reef Park on Friday, May 7th. Permission slips and pledge forms will be sent home via backpack in mid-April. All money raised will go directly to fund our ACT program. Participants will receive a popsicle treat and a pizza lunch will be given to the class with the highest level of participation and to the class raising the most money. Please contact Kristen Keating at 786.422.4636 or keatingkc@aol.com for additional information.

**The Book Fair Diner is coming to our school on Friday, April 9th through Friday, April 16th in the Media Center.**

We are excited about our reading filling reading menu, and we hope you are too! The Book Fair Diner brings a weeklong celebration of reading to our school.

The Book Fair will be open daily from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM, Wednesday until 2:30 PM. We will close on Friday, April 16th at 12:00 PM.

On **Wednesday, April 14th** we have the **Eat Lunch with Your Child Event**. Bring a blanket & enjoy lunch with your child, then come to the Book Fair for some Desert for your brain!

On **Thursday, April 15th** we have the **Reading Night at the Reef** Event. Come in your pajama’s and be read a bed time story by some very special storytellers & then enjoy a special treat! The Book Fair is open that evening from 6 - 8 PM. Storytelling begins at 6:30 PM. If you would like to volunteer at the book fair, please call or text **Michelle Lopez at 305-968-2512 or email to mcslopez@yahoo.com**. We can’t make the Book Fair happen without your help! Thank you!
ON THE ROAD TO THE RALLY IN TALLY

On March 24th, a little before 11:00 p.m., Kelly Fullerton, VP Legislation, and Leanne Tellam, President, rolled out of the parking lot of Coral Reef High School on our way to Tallahassee. We were on one of many buses heading towards the State Capital with the intent of speaking out against inadequate funding of public education. As you have seen in this newsletter many times, funding for our schools is insufficient and in increasing jeopardy. We had to let them know we are watching how they vote, and so we traveled through the night.

In the early hours of the morning, we met up with Sandra West, our PTA Treasurer and an officer on the Dade County PTA/PTSA Council. Together we dropped off many of those blue postcards you returned to the school. We met with several legislators and observed the meeting held that morning by the K-12 Educational Policy Committee. It was quite an education!

At 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 25th, a huge group of students, parents, educators and administrators gathered outside the Capital Building. Picket signs were held high, voices were even higher, and we witnessed how PTAs state-wide are getting organized, expressing their frustration, and promising to act against legislators that fail to support proper funding of our public education system. Superintendent Carvalho addressed the crowd accompanied by our School Board Representative, Dr. Larry Feldman. The son of former Governor Lawton Chiles spoke of his movement to bring Florida from “Worst to First” in terms of per student funding. Many spoke of their frustrations that the “state budget was being balanced on the backs of our students.”

Returning that night to Palmetto Bay, we realized that we had received an incredible education within the past 24 hours. We learned how to navigate the Capital Building and how to drop in on our elected officials and voice our opinions. But perhaps most importantly, we learned that we have to keep on pushing. There are a lot of “squeaky wheels” crying out for a decreased amount of grease this year. If we don’t speak up, our children will suffer and the quality of their education will go downhill.

So resolve to get informed and take action. Sign up for CapWiz today and sign up to receive Florida PTA alerts at www.floridapta.org/CapWhiz.html - click on Action E-list and provide your information. Then read the alert emails and respond to your representatives by telling them you are watching, you believe in public education, and you will vote in November according to what you see them do this session. It’s easier than you think, and our kids are depending upon you.

Once again I extend many thanks to a fantastic and dedicated team of volunteers! Thank you to Virginia Bernstein, Danielle Joseph, Kristen Keating, and Debbie DeLuca for helping to sell, organize, and lug boxes of books with me once a month. For the month of March, we earned $226.45, all of which is dedicated to purchase Accelerated Reader books and tests for the Media Center. That brings our yearly total up to $1309.00

Our next Used Book Sale is scheduled for Monday, April 19 and Tuesday, April 20 from 1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. inside the main entrance of our school. We hope to see you there!

Kim Woodbury
Used Book Sale Coordinator
It was a beautiful day on Saturday, March 20 when hundreds of kids and parents stormed the PE field for our Under the Big Top Fun Fair! There was good food, awesome rides, fun prizes and a great silent auction—what better way to raise money to support the Coral Reef Elementary PTA! I would like to thank all the parents and students who volunteered their time and creativity to make this day great. A special thanks goes out to my wonderful Fun Fair Committee:

Katie Butler
Christine Pack
Ruth Sensale
Natalie Kline
Liz Jordan

Margaret Correoso
Kelly Fullerton
Janine Stone
Monica Allman

If you see any of these tireless women please give them a hug and thank them for all their hard work! I also want to give a big thanks to the Coral Gables Fire Department for lending us their hospitality tents and their incredibly strong and dedicated Fire Fighters to help us out:

Chris Butler
Derrick Robles
Sean Nolan

We couldn’t have done it without them and their muscle!!

Finally one more thank you to our 2010 sponsors:

I hope that everyone enjoyed themselves—especially the children—which is why we’re all here!

Jenn Feinstein, Fun Fair Chair
A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO...

The Silent Auction was bigger and better than ever this year, and that could not have happened without the help and contributions of so many individuals. The baskets that came from almost all of our classes were amazing. Thank you to each individual contributor and to the room parents for coordinating these donations.

Thank you to all the teachers and staff that donated their time. Your contributions raised nearly $2,000 for the school. Thanks to Mr. Nicholeris for allowing us such great access to his room and students, and to the Chorus for a fabulous Fun Fair performance. Annie Lay and Doris Villamizar outdid themselves turning your extras into treasures. Our “green baskets” raised over $600! Overall, our projected gross income from the Silent Auction is $7,800. We couldn’t have done it without all of you!

The bidding process was so much fun we hated to close it down. It seemed like there wasn’t enough time to consider all the wonderful donations. What a great problem to have in such difficult economic times! But when we did close down, there was a great crew working behind the scenes to get your winnings to you in a timely fashion. Thanks to:

Tracy Anthony
Lisa Bluh
Laura Crovo-Lane
Meghan Davis
Jessica Dorsey
Anita Dyches
Cheryl Komanduri
Katie Landsea
Rebecca Landsea
Sharon Landgraf
Liza Letona
Hanna Nurme
Amie Potter
Elena Regalado
Derek Robles
Heidi Robles

and all the other wonderful parents that made the auction such a success. Start planning and saving up for next year!

Leanne Tellam & Amy Presby, Silent Auction Co-Chairs

SILENT AUCTION CONTRIBUTORS & VOLUNTEERS

SILENT AUCTION DONORS

What a fabulous day! We had bounce houses, water slides, bungee jumping, a photo booth, face painting, great food and music and incredible shopping... who could ask for more? We owe our success on this beautiful spring day to YOU. An event like this can only be successful with the help and cooperation of the entire school community, and we certainly came together to provide a great day of fun for the kids with the added benefit of raising over $7000 for the school. Volunteering at your class booth (or booths!), bringing in drinks for your “homework passes,” donating items for the silent auction baskets, and even buying wristbands and food tickets are all ways that you have helped your children enjoy the day and helped Coral Reef PTA raise money. For that, we thank you and congratulate you on a job well done!

We would like to thank the teachers and faculty who offered much beloved donations of their time for the silent auction. We would also like to express our gratitude to the following local businesses and families who provided generous donations as well.

- A Nose For Clothes
- Allman Family
- Avalon Gardens
- Bailey Chiropractic Life Center
- Boat Center
- Bob Lewis Foundation
- Bud Stop Florist
- Curves
- Deering Estate
- Design Concepts
- Fabregas-Lay Family
- Fairchild Tropical Gardens
- Dr. Randy Fink
- Frazee Family
- Hocutt Family
- Janine Stone Photography
- JoAnna’s Marketplace
- Laguna Suites of Cancun
- Landgraf Family
- LaPlant family
- MASS Martial Arts Sports
- Massage Envy
- Metro Zoo
- Omnipoint, Inc.
- Pack Family
- Palmetto Bay Soccer
- Palmetto High School Baseball
- Pasta Factory
- Pinch-A-Penny
- Roache Family
- Roasters and Toasters
- Sea and Sky Spa
- South Miami Jewelers
- Swarovski
- The Stretching Company
- Turfworx, Inc.
- United Way/ Jacquie O’Malley
- U of M Theater Camp Program
- Well Being Spa and Yoga
- YMCA
The Transition to Middle School: Tips for Parents

Students entering middle school are experiencing a tremendous amount of change. Just a few months ago, they had only one or two teachers. Now they may have seven or eight. Their bodies are growing and developing every day. Added to the equation are the hormones and emotions that accompany the physical changes. This all can create the perfect storm for unrest at home and at school. Although they are beginning to look like adults, middle school students still need parental and adult guidance and assistance. Here are a few tips for parents and caregivers as they navigate the middle school years.

Require an Assignment Notebook

Many schools give students an assignment notebook or planner at the beginning of the school year. Parents can require their student to record all homework assignments in the planner and then check it. If the school does not provide one, create your own.

Read Course Syllabi

Parents should read each course syllabus. This will provide you with information about classroom policies and expectations and will provide a timeline for major projects and assignments.

Check Homework

Parents should check to see that homework assignments are being completed in a timely fashion. If students would spend a little time every day on each class, that will save a great deal of stress and time the night before an assignment is due.

Designate a Study Time and Place

Work with your student to pick a time and place where school work should be completed each day. If students do not have a homework assignment, they should read. Study areas should be as free from distractions as possible and should have available a study survival kit.

Create a Study Survival Kit

This kit should contain pens, pencils, paper scissors, and any other supplies necessary for completing assignments. Having all of these materials in one place will keep students from wasting time looking for them.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Communicate with your student’s teachers by phone or e-mail. Introduce yourself to them at back to school nights and PTA meetings. Let them know to contact you if ever they have a question or concern. Also communicate with your middle school student. Although they are growing up and peer relationships take a higher priority than family relationships, it is important the students know that you are available to talk to them and listen when they need it.

Helpful Resources:
http://www.greatschools.net/LD/managing/smoothing-your-childs-transition-to-middle-school.gs?content=980
http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2157
http://www.pamf.org/preteen/parents/middleschool.html

¡Hola! News from the Bilingual Department

Mrs. Vera-Llano’s fourth grade students from Ms. Hopkins’ class and Mrs. Valdes’ class have become “Spanish Mentors” to the kindergarten students from Mrs. Barbato, Mrs. Deleon, and Ms. Vaughn. Once a month, these classes meet for an additional hour of Spanish, and work together on an activity that promotes learning the language. The fourth grade students teach a lesson to their assigned kindergarten student. The lesson is designed to ensure that skills and concepts learned during the grading period are reinforced to both the student and the mentor. This activity enables the younger child to develop a positive relationship with an older student, and gives the older student a sense of responsibility while practicing the Spanish skills they have learned in the classroom. Both groups of students really enjoy working with each other and always ask, “When can we do this again?”

April is Autism Awareness Month

Autism is a growing problem that affects thousands of children every year. Children with autism face many challenges and obstacles. These children will have an easier time navigating the world if the people in their lives take the time to understand them better.

Children who do not have autism live in a world full of people who are different from each other in all sorts of ways. It isn’t always easy for children to understand and accept people that seem different or behave in ways they find unfamiliar. When children learn more about people with autism, they will be supporting their peers, making new friends, and strengthening their own character. Learn more about autism, visit www.autism-society.org or www.autismspeaks.org

Quote of the Month

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”

~Anne Bradstreet
Around the Reef

Mrs. Johnson's Black History Month Winners

Do the Right Thing Winners: Marlie Joseph and Miranda Benjamin

More Fun Fair Moments!

Calendar of Events

April
- April 9: Book Fair starts
- April 14: Eat Lunch With Your Child Day & EESAC meeting
- April 15: Reading Night on the Reef
- April 19 & 20: Used Book Sale
- April 22: Take Your Kid To Work Day & Earth Day
- April 29: Career Day

May
- May 3-7: Teacher Appreciation Week

April & May 2010
TREASURES from the reef

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