



# HMS PTO TIMES

*Hilltop Montessori School*



## LOOKING BACK...

UPPER ELEMENTARY FIELD TRIP EARLIER THIS YEAR



## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Look throughout the newsletter  
for special announcements*

### LETTER FROM THE PTO PRESIDENT

**H**ello Everyone,  
I hope you'll join me in supporting Sally Dollar, mom to Luke (Ms. Shellie's class) and Anna (coming into the Toddler program next year) as our new PTO President! Sally has been at Hilltop for 2 years, serving as our Newsletter Editor this year. She is super organized and will do a great job. I am happy to turn everything over to her capable hands.

As the final days of the 2010-2011 school year and my presidency wind down, I have been thinking about what being involved with PTO has meant to me. While there's no denying that work was involved, there was also a great deal of satisfaction. Getting to know our teachers and staff members has been one of the most rewarding experiences for me. They are all truly dedicated and willing to do (almost) anything if it benefits Hilltop. I also enjoy knowing details of what is going on in the school, how the construction is progressing, and why things are done the way they are.

Really, it is how I find out anything that is going on in the classrooms, as neither of my children give up any information.

There really are opportunities to make a difference for your school and to be a part of the decision making process, and I would like to encourage all of you who are able to become involved with PTO. We organize and help out with so many activities most students and parents would consider vital to their Hilltop experience, yet each year we struggle to find enough volunteers for everything from board positions to working at the car wash. My thanks go out to the core group of PTO volunteers who have been so vital to making it work this year: Paola Garza, Jill Walton, Nancy Patterson, Martha Kay Griffith, Libby Holmes, Becky Cohn, Sally Dollar, Anneris Schutts, Lanie Reynolds, Jenny Brengelman and Elana Swiney, as well as all of our classroom liaisons and folks who have volunteered for each of our events. This is truly a group effort!

*(continued on next page)*

### Tuesday, May 17

#### PTO Meeting

8:45 a.m. in the multi-purpose room; Please join us for PTO meetings, where all of the planning takes place for PTO events & fundraisers.

### Friday, May 27

#### Last Day of School - Early Dismissal

Thanks  
for a  
wonderful year...  
Have a great  
summer!

# More PTO News...

## **Letter from the PTO President** *(continued)*

Elsewhere in this newsletter is a list of positions that are open for next school year. Please take a look and don't assume that "someone else" will take care of it. We need your help, whether you have 2 hours or would be willing to take on a board position. All PTO meetings are open to all parents, not just board members. We function so much better with a variety of opinions from people of varying experience. Also, PTO is not just for parents of elementary students. Preschool, toddler and elementary parents are needed, and our events encompass the entire student body.

As always, if you have feedback about PTO, feel free to contact me (chood-siegal@alumni.duke.edu) or make your suggestions to Sally (sallydollar1@gmail.com).

Cindy  
pto@hilltopmontessori.com

## **Board Positions for 2011-2012**

It's that time again – time to fill our board positions. Many of our current board members will be returning, which provides a beautiful continuity and consistency to PTO activities, as well as support for our new board members. Please take a look below and decide where you could help out. For more information on the duties of each position, please check out the [PTO blog](#) (no password required).

President	Sally Dollar
Vice President	(Open)
Secretary	Nancy Patterson
Treasurer	Paola Garza
Fundraising Chair	Martha Kay Griffith
Social Event Chair	Libby Holmes
Newsletter Editor	(Open)
Teacher Appreciation Week Coord	(Open)
Recycling Coordinator	(Open)
Box Tops Coordinator	Jenny Brengelman & Elana Swiney
Classroom Liaisons	All liaison positions are one per class

## **Art & Music Festival 2011**

The second annual Art & Music Festival was a great success, despite the bad weather which forced us to postpone our carefully laid plans. Our elementary art teacher Ms. Ona, our elementary music teacher Mr. Derek and our preschool music teacher Ms. Marcia, along with all of our classroom teachers worked for months with the children practicing and creating. We heard numerous positive comments regarding the quality of the performances and the quality and variety of the artwork displayed.

With your help, we made over \$3300! If you missed out, you can still purchase your child's keepsake project, just contact your teacher. Many projects were even more elaborate this year than last, but that really was not the point. We wanted to raise money for Hilltop in a way that was more Montessori and did not require anyone to sell anything to friends and relatives (you're welcome). In combination with other money raised this year, PTO will be able to meet our pledge of giving \$12,000 towards two projects related to the new construction. Paved tricycle paths in both the new toddler and preschool playgrounds will be constructed, as well as landscaped steps down the hill behind the school which will lead to the field.

Feedback from our teachers and staff indicated a high level of support for this event to become part of the tradition of Hilltop, and we are already looking towards planning for next year. (Next year, we'll definitely set a rain date!)



## From the Executive Director...

**W**e've reached the last month of school and although May is always busy with kindergarten and middle school graduations, standardized testing for our older students and activities such as the science fair, May is always a time for reflection and celebration. This academic year has been very smooth and we have been pleased to celebrate a great deal of success along the way. The expansion of our school is certainly noteworthy, as is the continuing growth we witness in our students. Many of the children that have been here

since our toddler program are "graduating" and heading to their secondary schools and even the littlest ones have grown tremendously during the last school year.

As we wrap the academic year, please don't forget to honor our teachers over Teacher Appreciation Week, complete the online parent and student surveys and participate in our 2011 Annual Fund. With one hundred percent contributions from all the staff and board, we are now asking our parents to assist us with their help to reach our goal of

100% participation! With complete success and support internally, we are then better poised to seek funding from outside sources to enhance our programs.

In closing, we wish everyone a safe and happy summer. We look forward to 2011-2012 and thank you for your assistance in making this school year the best ever!

*Michele Scott,  
Executive Director*

## From the Classrooms

### **Toddler News: Ms. C & Ms. Shelley**

**I** just wanted to thank the parents, the children and the staff for a wonderful year!

It is amazing the year is coming to an end, it just seems like yesterday we were at the Parent Orientation meeting!

It truly has been a wonderful year. The children have made great friends and excelled in their learning. Ms Shelley and I wish you all a great summer break and safe travels. We also hope to see you all this summer during the camps....come and join us and watch as the new classrooms evolved!

### **Pre-School News: Ms. Marcia & Ms. Susan**

Dear families,

We are coming to the end of our school year. The children have accomplished many milestones, both academically and socially. Susan and I are very happy to have been a part of their growth, explorations, good times and challenges. We have also been a part of your lives as you have been of ours and we thank you. Thanks to the many of you who have come into the class to offer your time as volunteers for all the special events we have had or to read and write picture stories with the children. Thank you to Veronica Willey who also helped with the Scholastic Book leaflets. Lastly, thank you for the thousand little kindnesses you have shown us throughout our time together. Our cultural subjects are coming full circle at this time. We studied animal classification early in the fall and we now return to that topic with 'parts of the seven classes of animals books'. We will also be looking at dinosaurs. The children generally wait for this with considerable excitement. It's here.

### **Pre-School News: Ms. Shellie & Ms. Lorena**

**I**n May, we are going to finish up the academic year and study dinosaurs and the parts of animals.

This has been a wonderful first year for Lorena and myself. Thank you for all the love, understanding and support.

Enjoy your summer break!!!!

*Ms. Shellie and Ms. Lorena*

# From the Classrooms

## *Pre-School News: Ms. Cindi & Ms. Mary Jo*

**I**n April our topic of study was South America and its fascinating rain forests. The children always love learning about animals, and enjoyed finding out about the different animals in the rain forest. The rain forest has many layers. Placing the animals in the correct layer is a job the students like to do.

Our class is conducting a science experiment on plants. We have a special planter that allows the students to view the roots of the plants, not just the part that is above the soil. In this planter we have beets, carrots and onions. It has been interesting to see the entire plant growing. We also

talked about the parts of the plant and what plants need to grow. Our school gardens are beautiful. The students had a great time planting the seeds and plants that will be harvested in the summer.

Hilltop has some new residents! We have two hives of honeybees that now live at the school (but away from the children). This summer we are hoping to be able to harvest some honey. Ms. Cindi and Ms. Shiela are our beekeepers, and the children loved seeing Ms. Cindi in her beekeeping outfit. We learned all about honeybees, the queen and their life cycle. We also learned about the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. The teachers have enjoyed watching the children playing "bees" during

recess. They even have a queen, her workers and a hive. Our Art and Music Festival was a great success. All of the children sang beautifully and had a wonderful time doing so. Parents were able to see the gorgeous art works that their children have done. Thanks to all who came out to support the school for this event. Special thanks to Jill Walton, Paola Garza and Martha Kay Griffith who were such a help to our class.

It has been a wonderful school year. Thank you to all the parents and friends who came to listen to our children read this year. We want to wish everyone a safe and happy summer, and look forward to seeing everyone in the fall!

## *Lower Elementary News: Ms. Dama & Ms. Chelsea*

**W**e have finished another great year! Throughout this year we've seen some great plays, visited an awesome science museum, learned more about animals native to our home, and have one more great trip in store (Our mystery field trip!!!).

Throughout the academic year we've learned about our continents, were introduced to the Timeline of Life and the Timeline of Humans, we've worked on Roman numerals, fractions, Algebra ... we've had a GREAT time in the classroom!

We've bonded in and out of the classroom, and we've had many classroom meetings to make our classroom stronger and our bonds closer.

All-in-all it's been a fantastic year.

Chelsea and I wish everyone a wonderful, safe summer! We will miss our Third graders (and anyone making a transition to a new school) ... but wish you the BEST of LUCK!

Enjoy your summer!

We'll see you in the Fall!

## *Middle School News: Ms. Sherry*

**D**uring the first week of the month, the Middle School worked on SAT exams. We followed this by taking a field trip to Alabama Adventure.

We also created smoothies for the younger children as a Spanish project. We raised awareness for people in third world countries who are without shoes. The class also gathered items for people recently affected by the tornadoes. In addition, several of the middle school students received state and national honors for academics. The Middle School is looking forward to its graduation ceremony on May 25. We will miss our class, but we are excited to begin the next phase of our school careers.

*Written by Middle School Students*

# From the Classrooms

## *Lower Elementary News: Ms. Carol & Ms. Vicky*

We can't believe another year is almost over. It seems like only yesterday that our third graders were first graders. It has been quite a wonderful journey watching them grow and mature over these three years. They came in as unsure, reluctant first graders, turned into more precocious and active second graders, and are leaving as self-assured, strong leaders. We salute our graduates, Jack Hudson, Rachel Vigelis, Dylan Le, Finn Parkman and Colton Reynolds, on all of their accomplishments. We will surely miss each of them!!!

During the month of April we had so much fun as a class learning the dance to Thriller and singing the great songs of the 80's. The Art and Music Festival was the highlight of our month.

Now, after finishing our SAT's, we will settle back, explore more areas of science and enjoy being scientists doing experiment after experiment. Then the big day will arrive- Science Fair Day at Hilltop. Everyone enjoys showing off their scientific knowledge!! After that, we will have our annual Mystery Field Trip to end this fabulous year.

I wonder where we will go this year!!

## *Upper Elementary News: Mr. Brent & Ms. Janet*

Wow! It's difficult to believe that there are only a couple of weeks of school left! Mr. Brent and I are looking forward to teacher appreciation week, science fair and our (awesome) mystery field trip. This semester has just flown by. We've progressed past the Columbian Exchange and are now studying the history of the 13 colonies following a 5W (who, what, where, when, why) approach. Science lessons are currently focused on balance (it's unbelievable some of the things Mr. Brent can get to balance!) Students seem to be enjoying our current read-aloud book Warp Speed. As we reminded the students, SAT testing was not the end of school. We hope to foster a lifetime love of learning! Upper Elementary students will continue to have great lessons, cooperative learning opportunities, and regular classwork throughout the month.

Is a picture really worth a thousand words? We have a few photos from some of this semester's experiences that we'd like to share with you.

