



The Mustang

The newsletter of the Myers Park High School PTSA

October 2009

Principally Speaking

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful summer and a smooth start to the 2009-2010 school year. Despite the budget constraints encountered this summer, we experienced one of the best openings I can remember. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we worked through scheduling issues and worked to address the specific needs of each student. Our scheduling staff, administrators and counselors did an outstanding job and their efforts were most evident on the first day of school.

Myers Park experienced a 10-15% staffing cut in each department this year and as a result has experienced a similar increase in class size. We recently received four additional teaching positions from the Central Learning Community (due to state approval of 09-10 budget) which should help us reduce overcrowded classes. I am also proud to say that despite the staffing cuts this year, we did not reduce course offerings.

Many of the budget issues we meet this year will be factors again next year. We have already begun reviewing and revising this year's master schedule and will improve several programs currently in place which provide additional learning opportunities for our students. This year, we opened a Virtual Lab classroom which enables students to take on-line courses. The lab was developed to support students that may encounter course conflicts but it also gives students an opportunity to participate in classes not offered at Myers Park, i.e. Mandarin Chinese. The virtual class can be taken any period of the day and a certified teacher supervises a student's progress. We will share a list of spring offerings and opportunities with students/parents when we receive them this winter. We are also upgrading our Distance Learning Lab which allows Parents and us to share lessons/courses with other High Schools.

If you have not read the *Hoofprint* and the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook sent home the first day of school, I hope you will take a moment to do so. Our school goals this year will focus on four areas:

1. Student Achievement – EOCs, ABCs, AYP, AP & IB
2. Development/Success of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
3. School Safety and Climate
4. Preparation for School Quality Review and MYIB audit

In each newsletter, I will highlight and provide updates on one of the above goals.

Our current enrollment is 2960, slightly higher than last year. As I shared at the Back to School night, our school functions well at 2960. The college style campus negates many issues and the enrollment numbers allow us to provide additional courses requested

by students.

Attendance is critical to your child's academic success. With the increased possibility of students missing school due to the flu this year, it is imperative that other absences be held to a minimum. A two or three day absence can place a student significantly behind other students in the class – especially students in 4x4 classes. Any students missing more than 10 days in any class will have to complete "recovery" on a minute for minute basis. Students requesting an early dismissal for the day are to bring a note to the attendance office before 7:15 a.m. The note should contain a phone number so the request can be verified by 10 a.m.

Myers Park has taken a number of precautions regarding the H1N1 virus. We actually started this summer seeking bids for hand washing devices and cleaning products. IB students "Germ Team" quickly took the lead in helping educate our students and ensuring each classroom had hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer has also been available at after school activities. The students also produced an educational video being televised in all CMS elementary and middle schools. Custodians are also spending additional time each day sanitizing classrooms, restrooms and entry areas.

Home/School communication is always a challenge and focus. We will continue to use the Mustang Express, the Myers Park website and Connect Ed (phone messages) to relay information. All staff members have email and phone message centers and will make every effort to return inquiries within 24 hours. Parent Assist, the on-line grading program, is updated every 7-14 days and parents are encouraged to use it. If you are not registered, you can email parentassistance@cms.k12.nc.us. Parents will also be notified if their child is unable to transition to classes in the seven minutes allotted and must report to Lockout. Students late to first block, due to traffic problems, are provided two excused class admits before having to report to Lockout.

I hope you will be actively involved at Myers Park this year. We continue to need testing proctors, tutors and mentors. The PTSA and SIT can always use additional support. First quarter is usually the most difficult grading period for students. You can help your child by monitoring grades and setting clear academic expectations and study time. Progress reports/action alerts for first quarter were sent home September 29 and 30.

Thanks for your continued support. We are looking forward to an exciting and productive year.

— Tom Spivey
Principal

PTSA News

On behalf of the Myers Park PTSA we would like to welcome all new and returning students and families to the 2009-10. We realize that many of you are new to Myers Park this year and we especially want you to feel a part of the team here at Myers Park. We look forward to working with **all** Myers Park families to enhance our children's high school experience through hard work and our gifts of time, talent, and financial support.

Last school year ended with news of budget cuts and teacher lay-offs. It saddened all of us to see some of our beloved faculty leave Myers Park. Many returning parents worried about a chaotic beginning of school as a result. The opposite happened. Our staff stepped up to the plate and really gave more than ever before to ensure a smooth start to the school year. Counselors and administrative staff worked hard during the summer, for little or no pay, to coordinate classes and schedules. While many schedules weren't perfect for the first few days of school they were quickly adjusted and classroom learning quickly began. We would like to thank our principal, Tom Spivey, capable administrative staff, wonderful counselors, and committed teachers for their hard work in preparation for the nearly 3000 students Myers Park now serves!

We all have had at least nine years of newsletters and beginning of school directives telling us how to become involved in our children's education. You are about to get some of the same information but with a Myers Park spin on it!

Join the PTSA. This is an important way for you to actually count in your student's school. Myers Park High School has many programs benefitting students and teachers that wouldn't happen without PTSA support. High participation in PTSA lets CMS and state government know that the parents of Myers Park are committed to their

children's education.

Give to the Priority Fund. This is the PTSA's **only** fundraiser and these funds are used to provide academic support, improve educational resources not funded by CMS, and fund other PTSA initiatives. Please see the Priority Fund article found later in the newsletter to find out what our goals are for the year. Generous support enables this initiative to succeed at Myers Park.

Volunteer and say YES when you are asked! We could not run the PTSA without the commitment of hundreds of volunteers like you. Please consider some volunteer opportunity, large or small, and be part of a fun and energetic group of parents. Print the volunteer form off the website if you don't have a copy and send it in to the office. To date we have had 376 of you send in the volunteer sheet so that all sorts of things at Myers Park can be accomplished. We will be contacting you as soon as possible to let you know how you can help.

Be informed. Watch for *Mustang Express* on **Tuesdays and Fridays** for up-to-the-minute information. It is not cost effective to send information through the mail. As a result, this is the best way the school and PTSA can communicate with parents. Please pay attention to all the announcements you receive. You can sign up for this e-newsletter on the PTSA's website - www.mphs-ptsa.org. This website will also help you find out just about everything you need to know about academics, clubs, athletics, and much more. Subscribe to the *Hoofprint*, Myers Park's student published newspaper to *really* find out what is going on at school. The PTSA newsletters will also be available online to help keep you informed.

Thanks for joining us to continue Myers Park's tradition of excellence!

Margaret Marshall and Beth Rayburn
2009-10 PTSA Co-Presidents

Mustang Priority Fund leaves the starting gate

Did you know that the Myers Park PTSA has only 1 (one!) fundraiser? It is the Mustang Priority Fund Drive. This year we have set a goal of raising **\$95,000**. It is an ambitious goal, but the money received will provide enrichment for all students. The Priority Fund provides resources for the PTSA operating budget and on-going activities such as: the Mustang newsletter, campus beautification, PTSA scholarships, staff appreciation, academic programs, special events, and more. After the operating budget is fully funded, funds will be directed to three special projects that have been identified by Principal Tom Spivey:

- Purchase updated security equipment to provide maximum security in light of cuts to MPHS security staff
- Open additional computer labs with refurbished CMS computers for independent IB and AP studies
- Fund a distance learning classroom that will allow MPHS students to network with other CMS high schools to offer a wider range of higher level course

We are off to a great start and have already received \$42,215 in direction donations, plus an additional \$4,200 from matching gift corporations, for a total of **\$46,415** toward our goal. (These donations have come from 211 families.) This year we hope to have 100% participation from our Myers Park families, no gift is too small and all will advance us toward our goal!

If you have not yet made a donation, please consider making a donation today to this important fund! Make your check payable to MPHS Priority Fund. You may send in your donation through homeroom teachers, or mail it to the school office. All gifts are 100% tax deductible and will be acknowledged.

Note: If you work for a company that has a matching funds program, please double your gift by returning the required form with your check. Please check with your employer to see if they offer this financial support to schools. Duke Energy, Bank of America, Wachovia, UPS, Microsoft and IBM are companies that have previously participating in the matching funds program.

Senior Announcements

The beginning of the year has been very busy. We met with the Senior Class on Sept. 10 and distributed Cap and Gown order information. Please make sure that your Senior has ordered his/her graduation products. This is especially important for any Senior who is planning to graduate in January. All Seniors who will be in either the January or June graduation program must have a **2009-2010 cap and**

gown. Order forms are available in the front office. If you have any questions, please contact the school.

Senior financial obligations should be taken care of immediately. All Seniors must pay a \$5 senior fee. They must also clear any old obligations in order for transcripts to be sent to colleges and universities and to participate in Senior activities, such as the prom. Please encourage your Senior to take care of these.

Career and Technical Education Department

The CTE department at Myers Park blends academic content with technical skills in a hands-on setting. The following curricula are offered as elective choices for students at Myers Park: housing and interiors, computer science, computer applications, engineering, horticulture, business courses, marketing courses, automotive technology, medical science, networking, computer programming, e-commerce, drafting and culinary arts. There are also several student organizations, such as DECA, FBLA, HOSA and FAA that integrate the knowledge and skills that students learn in the classroom with meetings and competitions as well as many other activities.

Upcoming events include the HOSA Autism Speaks Walk and the HOSA Fall Leadership Conference, FBLA Fall Regional Meeting, DECA State Leadership Meeting and DECA Scarowinds night. Last year the ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) Mentorship was started and was a huge success. Please encourage your child to explore these career areas and get involved!!

Meet the Art Department

Jessica Cecchini, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, BFA in Applied Media Arts
Seventh year of teaching; teaches AP Art History, AP Studio Art 2D Design, AP Studio Art 3D Design, Art 1, Art 3, Art 3 Honors, Art 4 Honors and Graphic Design I
Next semester will add Graphic Design II and III

Lisa Holder, U Colorado-Boulder- BFA; UNC-Chapel Hill- MFA
National Board Cert.
Seventh year at Myers Park; teaches Photo 1, 2, and IB Photo 1 and 2

David Nichols
U of Wisconsin River Falls, BS Secondary Education, U of Minnesota – MFA, 1988
Senior Fulbright to New Zealand
At Myers Park since 1993 and teaches Art 1, Crafts 1, and Crafts 2 / 3

Lynn Wu, Department Chair: Winthrop College, BFA; Pratt Institute, MFA
At Myers Park High School since 1993, currently teaches Art 1, Art 1MYPIB, Art 2, Art 2 MYPIB, Art 3, Art 3 Honors, Art 2 IB, Art 3 IB

Welcome Mustangs!

Progress reports were sent home at the end of September. If you have not received a progress report, please email your student's teacher. The Parent Assistant Module (PAM) is up and running; therefore, make sure to check your student's grades online! If you have not turned in your access form for PAM, please check the PTSA website for directions and details.



Please mark your calendar. The PSAT will be administered for 10th and 11th graders on October 14. In the next week we will begin planning for the 9th grade Student-Led Conferences that will take place on October 29th. Myers Park has many upcoming events and the fall and winter sports schedules are posted on www.myersparkhighsports.com. We hope to see you at many events in order to support our students and our athletes!

— *Dr. Kristen Lanier*
Assistant Principal
Myers Park High School

Counseling Corner

Handling High School

Welcome to a new journey and an exciting and challenging time for you, your child and your family! Remember this is just one of the many developmental milestones in your child's life...

Kindergarten, 4th grade, 7th grade, graduation, sophomore year in college and post-graduation are all reminders to us that adolescence truly last until age 24!

What can you do as a parent to support this transition?

- **Talk, listen and listen more**
- **Keep the sparkle in your eye when your child comes home each day because they can easily pick up on negative actions**
- **Let them be quiet, moody, whatever but they will come to you as needed**
- **Love them and understand their emotional and social needs during this exciting time**
- **Communicate with teachers and other professional at school regarding any concerns you may have**
- **Check your student's planner each day for assignments and help them to use this great organizing tool**
- **Allow down time**
- **Structure study time with the understanding that each child has a different learning style**
- **Limit television and video games early on**
- **What your 9th grader can do to stay involved and engaged in school**
- **Use the planner**
- **Ask questions to get answers**
- **Join a club or activity to meet friends**
- **Eat, play, study and take care of themselves everyday**
- **Realize that it is okay to feel overwhelmed at times**
- **What will the Myers Park faculty and staff do to help you and your student during this transition?**
- **Anything we can!**
- **Communicate through discussion, conferences and e-mail**
- **Refer students as needed to other services**
- **Set up a time to see them when issues arise**
- **Guide them through the years and get them ready for the College application process**
- **Work together as a team, parents, students, faculty, and all of us to produce the best young citizens for our future!**

— *Vicki Brunnick, MA, LPC*
Myers Park Counseling Department

Performing Arts News

The halls of the Performing Arts Building are buzzing as everyone prepares for their fall performances.

We are extremely happy that all the Performing Arts teachers are still with us this year. The band classes and marching band are preparing for half time shows and their fall concert under the direction of our extremely talented Band Director, Whit Blount. The fall Band Concert is Oct. 26 at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium. It is free and open to the public. You can catch the marching band perform at half time during football games.

What is that sound we hear coming from the Chorus Room? All 5 Performing Choirs, and the two a cappella groups, the "Sallies" (ladies) and the men, the "Clicks," are busy preparing for an exciting, fun filled evening of Pops Music. Their song selections span many eras. You won't want to miss this toe-tapping, good time event. Fall Pops Chorus Concert is Oct. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium. The concert is free and we will offer popcorn and soda prior to the performances. Joyce Palmieri, the Choir Director, is hard at work trying to pull every ounce of creativity out of her students. Come join them for a fun, toe-tapping, performance.



Tom LaJoie, Myers Park's Orchestra Director Extrordinaire, is at Myers Park every other day and at Butler High School on the opposite days. Tom is an extremely accomplished musician and never ceases to amaze the audience with the incredible sounds that he evokes from his three orchestras. The Orchestra Fall Concert is Oct. 22 in the Auditorium at 7 p.m.

We are thrilled to have our two Theater Arts teachers back at the Park. Both Caitlin Cornwell and Chip Caldwell joined the MPHS family last year. They are doing some great things. Mr. Caldwell is preparing two plays to take to the NC State Theater Contest at the end of October. We wish them good luck and hope they do well. Ms. Cornwell will be directing the MPHS Spring Musical. Be sure and watch for auditioning information on the musical. You won't want to be left out of this awesome experience. We invite everyone to come hear and see all of the very talented Myers Park students perform.

And Science!

The Science Department's leadership has changed this year. Chad Groncki and Jacob Standish now act as department co-chairs and have integrated their combined 25 years of teaching experience and leadership expertise. In the first month of the school year, Chad and Jake have organized the department into five Professional Learning Communities that are collaborating and improving their lessons into deep resources of best practices.

Chad and Jake are looking forward to an extremely productive year and are greatly appreciative of supportive staff, student, and parent communities. Their focus is on doing what is best for the students and they are relentless in their efforts to maintain and improve MPHS science's reputation.



MPHS Student Directories were sold at Open House and are now available for purchase in the front office. \$3 each or 2 for \$5.



Exceptional Children's Department

Greetings from the Exceptional Children's Department! This year we have 17 Exceptional Children's teachers in our department at Myers Park. We look forward to a great year, as we strive to meet the many diverse needs of our exceptional students. Our teachers take great pride in advocating for our students and meeting the educational needs of each student in order to equip them to be successful both while in school and in the future. If you have any questions or concerns about your exceptional student, you can contact me at 980-343-5800 ext. 589 or at april.morrow@cms.k12.nc.us.

Hope your students have a great year this year at Myers Park!

— April Morrow
EC Dept. Chair

JROTC News

JROTC is off to a great start for school year 2009-2010. New cadets are in the process of being issued their uniforms. Next week we will see the entire program of cadets wearing their uniforms for the first time and for the first time more than 70 cadets will begin their experience in JROTC. Their new experience will bring to light their leadership qualities, confidence and character development. Furthermore, the extracurricular activities such as the Drill Team, Rifle Team and

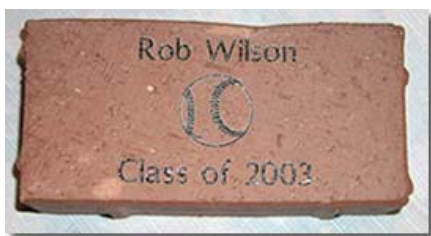
Color Guard will deepen their self respect and confidence and their will to succeed as a team.

This year will be critical for the program, which will undergo its annual formal inspection on March 17, 2010. This inspection, conducted by a team from Fort Bragg, will assess the overall administration and operations of the program. The goal is to maintain the Honor Unit with Distinction rating that the program has held for the past 14 years. While striving to maintain this high rating, the cadets will also compete for the

annual Superintendents' Cup, to be awarded to the top five CMS schools that participate in the scheduled CMS activities.

Upcoming activities include CMS Drill Competition, Oct. 17; Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 7; Volleyball Tournament, Dec. 12; and a host of Color Guard performances and community service activities.

We look forward to a very busy, but also very productive, year.



A Brick makes a Great Gift!

It's always the perfect size and color ...

Place your order for a commemorative brick (or several) for your favorite Mustang. The Myers Park High School experience will always hold a special place in the heart of your graduate. Commemorative bricks are a great way to leave a little piece of that heart behind at a place that meant so much. Bricks are also a great way to honor a special teacher, administrator, or coach.

Order forms can be found on <http://www.mphs-ptsa.org/> or www.myersparkhighschoolsports.com – click on “Bricks”. Contact Gayle Baker for more information at gdavbaker@aol.com.

Senior Parents:

We've all worked hard to get here, so honor your senior and yourself with a Senior Yard Sign! These signs cost just \$10 and all proceeds go to our PTSA.

Email Karen Reid at karenreid@aol.com. Cash or check; make checks payable to MPHS-PTSA.

The Future Center Consider the big “ifs”

The Future Center Reopens-just in time for college applications and standardized tests! Please come visit us across from the Attendance Office **Monday –Thursday during all four lunch periods and every Tuesday from 2:15-3:30 p.m.** Our parent volunteers are available to help you navigate through college choices, post-high school options, college testing and even scholarships. We know that this can seem overwhelming, especially for our seniors, but we are here to help you in the process. Here are a few reasons why you should visit the Future Center:

If you are a **Senior**, now is the time to meet with college reps, finalize your application list and prepare for scholarship interviews.

If you are a **Senior**, and interested in a military career, now is the time to review serve academy, ROTC and enlistment opportunities.

If you are a **Junior**, now is the time to create a schedule for standardized testing. Look at our timelines and determine when it would be best for you to take these important tests.

If you are a **Sophomore**, now is the time for you to begin planning for an academic internship. Ms. Collins is available every Tuesday to match your interests with internship opportunities.

If you are a **Freshman**, now is the time to begin exploring your future possibilities through a program called Career Cruising. We have 5 computers available for student to help you create a path for success through high school and into the world of work.

Parents are welcome to stop by as well and check us out!

For more information, please email Emily Ahlum at eahlum@carolina.rr.com, Deb Borkey debborkey@hotmail.com, or Sally Beth Sutherland sbtsutherland@bellsouth.net.

PSATs October 14

Your child may be taking the PSAT on Wednesday, Oct. 14. The PSAT is given at no cost to all 10th and 11th grade students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

The test consists of verbal/critical reading, mathematics, and writing sections and is similar in format and content to the SAT, which many students take as a college entrance examination. The PSAT provides excellent preparation for taking the SAT, and schools use the results to aid instructional and program planning.

Please make every effort to have your child at school on time the day of testing, so that we may begin promptly in the morning. It is better to encourage your child to be relaxed, rather than to encourage additional drill or extra study at the last minute. For testing, your child needs to bring two No. 2 pencils and a calculator with which he/she is comfortable.

If you have any questions, please call Bobby Simmons at 980-343-5800 ext. 292. Thank you for your support.

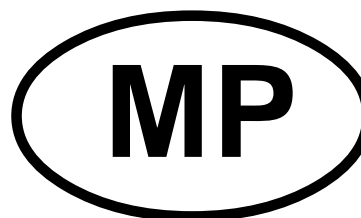
*The Myers Park Choral Department is
FLOCKING!*

*Great for **birthdays, congratulations,
anniversaries, etc...***

*For **\$30**, you get a 6ft pink flamingo
with a personalized poster
and a flock of little flamingos
set up secretly at your destination.*

*To order, Contact Kim Powell
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thepowells@carolina.rr.com



The best-dressed cars in Charlotte wear these top-quality Euro-style MP stickers, available through the PTSA for \$2 each. Email karenreid@aol.com.