

DATES TO REMEMBER:

WED. DEC. 1
PTA Meeting

DEC. 2-10
MAP Testing

TUES. DEC. 14
Market Day Pick-Up

WED. DEC. 15
Go Green Day

DEC. 20-31
Winter Break
NO SCHOOL

MON. JAN. 3
School Reopens

WED. JAN. 5
PTA Meeting
7:00 p.m.

MON. JAN. 17
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
NO SCHOOL

TUES. JAN. 18
Teacher Institute Day—No Student Attendance

TUES. JAN. 25
Market Day Pick Up

FRI. JAN 28
Report cards issued for Kindergarten

Marion Jordan School
100 North Harrison St.
Palatine, IL 60067
Office: 847-991-5500
Absentee: 847-963-5501

Principal
Dana Petersen

Assistant Principal
David Kerkemeyer

PTA Co-President
Mary Kay Aronson

PTA Co-President
Alison Silver

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Jordanaire



DECEMBER 2010

Happy Holidays

It's hard to believe that the turkeys and fall decorations have been put away for another year and the holiday decorations are coming out. Half of the school year is almost over and it seems like yesterday we were at Meet the Teacher Day.

We continue to have a very busy and productive school year at Marion Jordan. Our children, teachers and staff are hard at work in their classrooms while members of the PTA work diligently to provide them with fun and educational activities.

As I look back over the past couple of months, I am in-

credibly moved by the kindness and generosity of our school community, but most especially the children and volunteers who work so hard to make all of our charitable projects a huge success.

Whether it be raising money to purchase books for children at Conyers Learning Academy or for our classroom libraries through the book fair, purchasing pies for the Palatine Food Pantry and PADS through our Market day sale or bringing in toys to support our local Toys for Tots campaign, you have continued to open your hearts to those in need. Thank you!

There are exciting PTA events on the agenda for the new year. We look forward to the Mini Courses during the recess period, Orbit Skate Night on February 2nd and of course the ever-popular Fun Fair! As always, if you are willing to help with any of these events, please call one of us.

On behalf of the entire Marion Jordan PTA, we would like to wish a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season to all our families, faculty and staff. Happy New Year! See you in 2011!

Mary Kay Aronson
Alison Silver
MJ PTA Co-Presidents

Principal's Note

Ah, the hustle, the bustle. It is certainly a busy time of year. With all of the preparations for the upcoming holidays it is easy to get caught up in all of the hoopla. I know that gifts will be purchased and wrapped, cards sent, meals prepared, cookies baked, the house cleaned.

These things always get done, primarily because they have to be done. In addition to the MUST do list, I've created a list of top ten things I WANT to do. I am happy to share my ideas with you in case you find yourself with spare time on your hands!

1) **Go Sledding**—Actually

go down the hill on a sled, not just sit in the warm car and supervise the kids as they sled.

2) **Host a cookie exchange**—Invite neighbors over for a fun-filled afternoon with the bonus of each guest leaving

Continued on Page Two



Principal's Note *(Continued from Page One)*

- 3) **Watch a family holiday movie, as a family**—Whether it's "The Polar Express", "It's a Wonderful Life" or whatever the majority chooses; pop the corn and snuggle under a blanket on a cold, wintry evening.
- 4) **See the lights and windows downtown**—A carriage ride as well would be the icing on the cake.
- 5) **Ice skate**—The fact that it has been years since I've done this will add to the fun.
- 6) **Go out to breakfast**—It is such a treat to have someone prepare food and serve you first thing in the morning.
- 7) **Go caroling house to house**—Gather the neighbors and/or family and ring a few doorbells. The music is sure to bring joy to those around you.
- 8) **Make homemade place cards for our holiday meal**—So simple, so endearing.
- 9) **Stay in my pajamas for a day**—One entire day, sun up to sun set.
- 10) **Host a game night**—Those commercials make it sound like so much fun, don't they?

I wish you all of the best for a safe and happy holiday season. May your home be filled with warmth and joy. I invite you to make the time to do what you want to do, not just what you have to do.

Fondly,
Jennifer Grosch
Interim Principal

Holiday Shopping with MANNA

It's time to start thinking about the holidays and the shopping can be overwhelming. Make it easy on yourself and order gift cards for the people on your list from the MANNA Program while earning money back for our school! There are only two order dates in December, so make sure you get your order in ASAP.

Consider purchasing Dominicks or Jewel cards for the countless trips you make to the grocery store during the holiday season. Cards available for enter-

tainment include itunes, movie theaters, book stores, video stores, restaurants and even Disney! For those on your list who like clothes, did you know that the Options gift card can be used at Gap, Old Navy and Banana Republic stores as well as online at piperlime.com and athleta.com?

Order forms are available on the PTA website. Just click on <http://www.man-nagroup.net/Alpha.pdf> to download an order form and take a look.

Hurry up and get your orders in! Also, there are a limited number of gift cards available for purchase in the school office.

Order dates for December are:

Orders In Delivery
Fri. 12/3 Wed. 12/8
Fri. 12/10 Wed. 12/15

If you have any questions about the MANNA Program, please contact Deb Rudman at 847-991-7075 or debrudman@comcast.net.

MANNA
Cards are
always the
right size!
Order some
today for
holiday gift
giving!

It's a Bird . . . It's a Plane . . . It's a Book Fair!

Many thanks to all of the families who shopped at our Scholastic Book Fair. We are pleased to tell you that we had a very successful Fair. Sales were up from last year grossing approximately \$13,700 and earning almost \$8,000 Scholastic dollars for the Resource Center. Thank you, shoppers!!!

Thanks also to all the wonderful Marion Jordan "Heroes" who volunteered their time at the Fair and did such a wonderful job decorating in our Heroes theme: Julie Pope, Rose Jusi, Julia Park, Jeff Perkins, Kris Flemming, Anne Jefferson, Cindy Payne, Penny Zografos, Liz Pusch, Min Goodwin, Tara Schroeder, Laurie Bulson, Linda Seitz, Laurie Wood, Carla Rydberg, Denise Mirabulli, Sarah Borkowski, Bridget Corona, Deb Rudman, Patty Ide, Beth Anderson, Julie O'Hara, Eva Iaccino,Carolynn Burk, Susan Erickson, Janet Koufis, Kim Ault, Anu Pradhan, Maureen Ross, Jen Schelfhout, Karen Reaney, Terra Lawrie, Elizabeth Park, Christine Fiore, Joanne Pace, Marie Kuechel, Reta

Evenson, Rose Remian, Susan Sadowski, Josey Crescio, Linda Truver, Alexandra Noon, Marti Heagney, Susan Dee Dunne, Vishnu Achuthan, Kris Stone, Anu Pradhan, Sangeetha Achuthan, Deepa Kalle, Renee Graber, Michelle Kurtzweil, and former Book Fair Chair Nancy Kaye, who just can't get enough of us. This Book Fair would not have been possible without all of you.

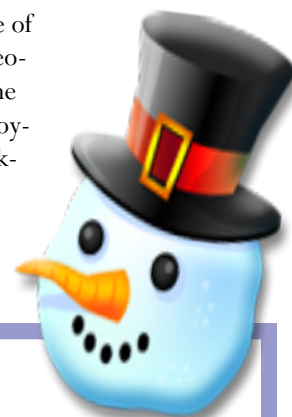
Thanks also to our phenomenal art teacher Mrs. Swiatowy for her creative abilities and fourth graders Emilia K., Amelia L., Emilia R., Heidi S. and Emma W. who painted those beautiful superhero banners. A special thank you to my creative, early rising, and hard-working co-chairs, Kelly Reynolds, Bernadette Konopka, and Gina Stavrou, who made this Fair as fun and easy as ever. As always, we are grateful for the support of Bob Normann, Karen Roiland, Donna Divello, David Kerkemeyer, Jennifer Grosch, our teachers and staff who are so appreciative of our efforts, and of course, Gail Tomal who gave

up her Resource Center for an entire week.

Last, but certainly not least, I commend our Marion Jordan families for donating so generously to our "One for Books" collection for the Conyers Learning Academy. "One for Books" raised \$474 for Conyers' Resource Center plus we had a very generous last minute donation from one of our families allowing Conyers to purchase closer to \$700 worth of books. Karen Steffler, the Resource Center Teacher at Conyers, left Marion Jordan on Tuesday, November 2 with three boxes full of brand new books including the latest titles for her shelves. The staff and students from Conyers extend their sincere appreciation for your kindness.

I think I can speak for all my Co-Chairs when I say that in spite of the fact that it took a lot of people, time, and effort to run the Book Fair, it was truly an enjoyable experience. We are looking forward to the next one!

Alison Silver
Book Fair Co-Chair



SPARK News

Attorney L. Mark Russell was a guest speaker in September for SPARK. He provided valuable information regarding the importance of setting up a trust fund for your child with special needs. His article, entitled "Why a Supplemental Needs Trust is NOT Good Enough", is attached to this issue of the Jordanaire.

In January, two dads will share information about the life journeys of families who live with children with special needs. Richard Ney, Ph.D. and Gino Peronti will examine the impact of children with special needs on both the nuclear and the extended family. Participants will learn how the child with special needs has an effect on siblings and social relationships. Information will also be shared about the systems that attempt to meet the needs of children with disabilities, including schools, legal and medical/mental health organizations. If you have any questions, please contact Ani Erickson at 847-907-4732.

Smash! Boom! Pow!



Our fearless leaders
race to the finish

No, we didn't hear any of those sounds coming from the Marion Jordan playground just before lunchtime on Thursday, November 18th, but there was a great deal of noise being made by our 490 or so MJ students as they cheered on their fearless leaders. Mrs. Jennifer Grosch and Mr. David Kerkemeyer, our illustrious interim principal and assistant principal, duked it out to the finish line in the tricycle race to end all tricycle races. Our students earned this fabulous reward by reaching our Book Fair goal of selling 2,500 books, thereby making our fair a smashing success.

With students lining both

the inside and outside of our makeshift track, our unstoppable racers pedaled furiously around the course in their masks and capes, each



hoping to reach the finish line first. The crowd was deafening as each student cheered on his or her personal favorite. Mrs. Grosch led for a good part of the

race as Mr. Kerkemeyer's tricycle seemed intent on tipping over backward, but as the racers approached the final uphill stretch, Mr. Kerkemeyer conquered his tricycle challenges and narrowed the lead. At the final turn, the crowd was cheering so loudly you could hardly hear yourself think. With capes flying, Mrs. Grosch and Mr. Kerkemeyer reached the finish line neck and neck in a photo finish. It was a tie - and a fun and memorable way to wrap up a Thursday morning!

Thank you, Mrs. Grosch and Mr. Kerkemeyer, for being such great sports!!!



Pennies for Pies a Sweet Success

In November, as our thoughts turn to giving thanks — and delicious Thanksgiving Dinners — the Market Day Committee organizes Pennies for Pies. Pennies for Pies gives the students an opportunity to help brighten the holiday for the less fortunate in the area providing Market Day pies for their Thanksgiving celebrations.

This year's campaign had the theme "Small Change,

Big Difference." This theme turned out to be very appropriate as the students collected a total of \$1,357.51! Thank you to the students, parents and teachers who helped to make it a success with their generous contributions.

Ms. Hootman's Fourth Grade Class won a close battle over Ms. Harris's Fifth Grade Class and Ms. Smith's Sixth Graders to win a prize package for col-

lecting the most with \$185.04, enough for 16 pies. Ms. Harris's and Ms. Smith's classes each collected enough for 14 pies.

The money collected bought 124 pies for local service organizations. The Holy Family Food Pantry, Palatine Township Food Pantry, St. Joseph's Home, and WINGS (Women in Need Growing Stronger) all received pies.

Ways and Means

The winter season is almost here. The kids are awaiting the first snowfall in hopes of sledding and building the first “snow person.” It is a special time for all of our families and the holiday break is right around the corner.

There are lots of ways to get ready for the busy holiday season and help Marion Jordan at the same time. Get ready for holiday entertaining by ordering Market Day (Marketday.com Account #1257). Order by December 10th online with delivery on Tuesday, December 14. Also remember that there are Manna gift cards ready to be purchased in the front office. If you would like to order additional cards, the last date to order will be Friday, December 10 with delivery by Wednesday,

December 15. Print an updated order form by going to www.mannagroup.net.

After the holidays we will begin to focus on our Fun Fair which is scheduled for Friday, March 11, 2011. We will be working with the room parents to coordinate our themed gift baskets for our raffle. We will also be providing a variety of items for the silent auction at every price point. We are looking for volunteers to help make this possible. If anyone is interested, please contact us.

We would like to thank Marion Jordan’s families for their generosity these past months. The Blue Jay Shuffle and the Great American fundraisers were both very successful. Your support will enable our students to take

the field trips necessary for their educational growth (and, of course, have some fun at the same time!) We truly are blessed to have families that are eager to help out whenever possible.

We would also like to thank our volunteers. The parents who donated their time to sort food orders at Market Day pickup, helped us with our Blue Jay Shuffle in September, and those who have jumped in whenever we needed help to get the job done. We truly appreciate your time and effort.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday. We will see you in 2011.

Christine Fiore and Rose Justi
2nd VPs Ways and Means



Congrats to Reflections Participants

This year, several Marion Jordan students participated in The Reflections Program which gives students the opportunity to display their talents while reinforcing the importance of arts in education in the categories of film/video production, dance choreography, musical composition, photography, visual arts and literature.

Many wonderful pieces were submitted and advanced to the District 15 level from Marion Jordan. Below is a listing of all

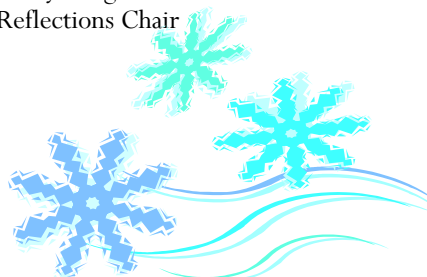
of the students who participated and are advancing in this year’s theme of “Together we can...”

Vasudha C.
Grant G.
Eli E. K.
Nicholas M.
Margaret P.
Matthew P.
Grace R.
Abby S.

Congratulations to all of the students who participated, and thanks to all of you for your hard

work! The talent and imagination displayed by all of our students was very impressive. Everyone should be very proud of their work, accomplishments and creativity.

Molly Plizga
Reflections Chair





Mini Course Registration Open

Registration is now open for Mini Courses! The PTA will once again be offering voluntary 40-minute classes during recess as an alternative to playing outside during the winter months. Many old favorites will be offered again this year, along with some exciting new

classes such as Police Dog and CSI!

The deadline to register for mini courses is Friday, December 10th.

There are two ways for students to sign up for classes: online through the PTA website or you can print the web page, complete it and

have your child bring it in to his/her teacher. Participants are selected by lottery. Classes will be held January 10 through February 25.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Menis at 847-991-3282 or Debbie Cox at 847-202-8066.

PTA Directories Still Available

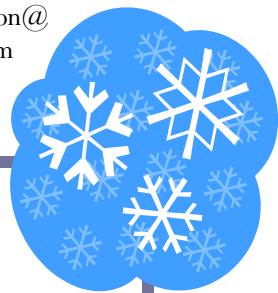
The PTA Directory was distributed to members last month. Part of dues paid by PTA members goes toward the printing of this directory. Non-members can purchase a directory for \$12. Members can purchase a second copy for \$3 (supplies limited).

Let us know if any of your information is listed incorrectly or has changed! We will be publishing an addendum in 2011 for updates, corrections and new PTA families.

And remember, you can join the PTA any time. Simply download the mem-

bership form at www.mjpta.org under "documents" and send it into school along with the membership dues.

If you have any questions or changes regarding the directory, please contact Sharon Snyder at Sharon@thsnyderco.com



Help Fill the Bus!

Marion Jordan is once again conducting a Toys for Tots toy drive in conjunction with the Palatine Police Department. We are accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys for girls or boys. Donation bins are located in the front lobby of the school. Our hope is to fill an entire school bus full of toys and drop it at the Palatine Police Department for distribution. Please help us make the holidays bright for those children who are less fortunate.

Parent Education: Video Game Safety

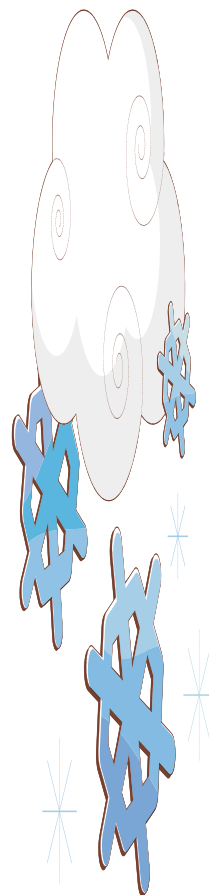
"Overall, 17% [of surveyed children] say their parents check the ratings on the video games they buy. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, two-thirds of all 7th- to 12th-graders say they have played the controversial Grand Theft Auto game," —*The Kaiser Family Foundation, Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8–18 Year-olds, 2005*

Some video games are for kids. Some aren't.

Do you know what's in that computer or video game your child wants to buy or rent? Just as with movies and TV shows, computer and video games on the market today are created for players of differing ages and maturity levels. Some games have content that may not be suitable for children. As parents, we have a responsibility to guide our children toward games that we decide are appropriate for them to play. That's why parents should read game reviews, talk to older children and other parents, and try out demos of the games online or in stores before they make a purchase. In addition to taking these steps, parents should check the ratings on every computer and video game box to help choose the right games for their family. Found on virtually every computer and video game package, the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings provide information about age suitability and describes the content of the game.

Helpful Tips for Parents:

- Check the ratings. Use both ESRB rating symbols and content descriptors to select appropriate games for your children. Before you go shopping, visit ESRB for specific ratings information.
- Consider your child's personality, maturity and abilities. Video game ratings provide guidance. Parents should decide which games are appropriate for their children.
- Don't stop at the ratings. Speak to older children and other parents, rent before purchasing, read game reviews, and try out demos of games online or in stores where games are sold.
- Look closely at the box the game comes in. Most video games have screen shots of the game on the back of the box showing typical scenes from the game. Determine if you are comfortable with the characters, scene depiction, and level of action portrayed before you buy or rent the game. Additional screen shots are available online at game preview websites, such as Game Revolution, GameSpot, or GameSpy.
- Know the store's return policy. Many stores will not accept video game returns if the cellophane wrapping has been opened. Check with the store before you make your purchase. Many major retailers will, however, allow parents to return or exchange games sold to their children in violation of store enforcement policies regarding the sale of Mature-rated video games.
- Play video games with your children. Playing or observing helps you understand your child's video game experience, while providing a fun parent/child activity. Talk to your child and ask him or her about the game, what makes it fun for them, what is the story-line, is the game real or make-believe?
- Use parental controls. Newer video game systems allow parents to restrict specific game content by rating. Check with the manufacturer of your video game system for more information, or ask a video game retail sales associate about the availability of parental controls.
- Be cautious with "online-enabled" games. Many popular games can be played with friends (and strangers) over the Internet. Often, these games contain live chat or other user-generated content that is not rated



Continued on Page 8

Parent Education *(continued from Page 8)*

may not be consistent with the rating assigned to the game.

- Be aware of “mods” that can change a game. Downloadable programs (“mods”) can alter game content and the game’s

age-appropriateness. Some mods can contain viruses or spy-ware, making them dangerous predators to your family computer.

- Set household media use rules. Establish rules for your children and encourage

open communication about their media use so they recognize what you feel is inappropriate content.

Source: National PTA.org

Kudos

Order

Thank you to all the Marion Jordan “heroes” who volunteered at the Book Fair! With your help, we were able to raise money for our Resource Center and foster the love of reading among our students!

Kudos to **Jeff Perkins** for coordinating the Pennies for Pies campaign and all the students

and families who so generously donated. Marion Jordan helped to brighten the Thanksgiving holiday for those less fortunate.

A big thank you to **Molly Plizga** for encouraging our young artists to participate in the Reflections Program. We appreciate all your hard work publicizing the program and pro-

cessing our students’ entries.

Kudos to **Christine Fiore** and **Rose Jusi** for all their work with the Great American fundraiser. Thanks for compiling all the orders and getting the merchandise to our families in time for the holidays!

The next Jordanaire will be published on February 1st. If you have anything you’d like to submit, please email it to Beth Anderson at

luddyandbeth@yahoo.com by January 17th.

Why A Supplemental Needs Trust Is NOT Good Enough

By attorney L. Mark Russell ; Copyright 2010, all rights reserved

Parents often contact me because they want me to draft a supplemental needs trust for their child with a disability so that

- their child will remain eligible for government benefits, if needed,
- the State can't seize their child's inheritance for cost-of-care claims,
- they can name someone they trust to manage their child's future inheritance.

But the supplemental needs trust is only one part of solving the puzzle of how to protect your entire family if you become incapacitated or die. A number of other documents are often needed to ensure everything runs smoothly if a health crisis or death hits your family.

Here's a list of some of the other documents that help protect you and your family:

- A living trust to manage your assets during your incapacity and to avoid probate after your death. Let's say you have just a Will and then you become incapacitated. You're unable to pay your bills or manage your investments. Who legally can manage your financial affairs? Well often a relative will have to be appointed guardian over your estate. That means your guardian will have to get approval from the judge for buying you things. I've had guardians of the estate literally cry in my office because the process can be inconvenient, costly, and frustrating. With a living trust you can avoid the cost, inconvenience, and potential frustration of court oversight. You simply choose your own successor trustee to act if you are no longer able to manage your financial affairs. For example, when my dad got dementia, I took over as successor trustee of his living trust which allowed me to manage his assets and pay his bills. Moreover, you can say if you become incapacitated, the successor trustee (usually your spouse first), can distribute assets for your benefit, your spouse's benefit, and for your children -- without any court intervention. This means, your family is financially taken care of during your incapacity. Plus, with a living trust you can often solve other problems by avoiding probate and estate taxes.
- Power of attorney for property. The power of attorney for property lets your agent (typically your spouse first and your next most trusted relative or friend second) sign your name to transact business for you. It's an incredibly useful document especially if you become incapacitated. For example, if you were to become incapacitated, your agent can sign your name to file your income taxes, or to do various banking for you, sell your car if it's only in your name, transfer assets just in your name into your trust so the assets will avoid probate, or to make decisions regarding your IRA or retirement plan that are only in your name. Or, let's say you have a major stroke and you're incapacitated. And now your spouse needs to sell your home to downsize into a less expensive condo. To sell your home, if your home is held jointly, your spouse needs to be able to legally sign your name by having a power of attorney for property.
- Power of attorney for health care. You will need a power of attorney for health care naming who you want to make your health care decisions if you become incapacitated and can't make your own health care decisions. The person you name will also be responsible (pursuant to your directions) for the "pull-the-plug" issue if you become terminally and imminently ill.
- HIPPA authorization. This permits the people you trust to be able to get your confidential medical information. For example, if you become incapacitated and your successor trustee needs to take over to manage the assets in your

trust, the financial institutions that hold your accounts will often want your successor trustee to provide them with a letter from your doctor stating that you are no longer able to manage your financial affairs. Without this HIPPA authorization, the doctor cannot legally release your confidential medical information to the successor trustee to give to the financial institutions.

- **Pourover Will.** Even with a living trust, you'll still have what's called a "pour-over" Will that acts as a "backstop" to your living trust. For example, let's say you die with a \$20 bill in your pocket. The legal issue is "Who owns the \$20?" Your Will essentially says "pour" any money that you own individually (without a beneficiary designation or as a joint owner) into your trust, so these assets will flow into your living trust and be distributed or held for your family as you wish, making sure that assets don't go outright to your child with a disability. It's also in your Will that you name who you want to be the guardian for your children.

- **And more:** I don't want this article to get too long, but often you may need other documents such as
 - * Trusts for your other children,
 - * Estate tax reduction subtrusts or an irrevocable life insurance trust,
 - * Short-term Guardian Designation to legally transfer guardianship power if you go on a vacation without your child with a disability, need to stay overnight at a hospital, etc.
 - * Living Will,
 - * Personal and tangible property memo,
 - * Tangible property assignment to your trust,
 - * If you do not become guardian over your adult child with a disability, your adult child with a disability, if mentally capable, should have powers of attorney for health care, property, education and a separate HIPPA release.
 - * Standby Guardian Declaration naming successor guardians,
 - * Declaration for Mental Health Treatment.

To get more information about how to plan properly, you can go to attorney Russell's website and download his Preparation for Attorney Meeting PDF at www.LMARKRUSSELL.com.