



# HEADLINES

April 30, 2009

## HUNTER MCGUIRE LOWER SCHOOL STUART HALL SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

Well, all we can say is, "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!" This has to have been one of the most fun events that we have been to in a long time. None of it would have been possible without the incredible talent and participation of all of our Chefs. We had 20 of the finest Chefs anywhere. The food was nothing short of breath-taking. I encourage you, if you didn't make it to the event, to find one of our Chefs and taste some of their leftovers-if there are any).

As always, Lori Taibl did an incredible job taking photos of our children and having a fantastic display for all to enjoy. The Country Club of Staunton's big screen TV ran Lori's DVD slide show, bringing to the party a beautiful reminder of the purpose for the evening. Stop by the front office to see and purchase her amazing portraits and to arrange any additional reprints.

The Live Auction...WOW! That one word says it all. That has to have been one of the most fun things I have ever attended. Trish LaGrua did a stellar job putting the auction together. The creativity of the class projects was awe inspiring and the additional auction items were truly once in a life time opportunities. One thing is for sure - anyone who hears our Dynamic Duo, John Grantier and Curtis Craig, mentioned in the same sentence will not be able to resist a smile. These two guys put on a show like no other. Bravo! The best part is that many of our auction items will produce smiles on the faces of those who won them throughout the entire year.

Thanks to Scott Goldenberg for heading up the golf outing. Those who played couldn't have asked for a nicer day.

I must put a plug in for The Country Club of Staunton. The atmosphere couldn't be beat. With most of the chefs lined up along a wall of windows overlooking the golf course, it was like being outside with a spectacular view. They were fantastic hosts and do events of this nature for all sorts of organizations. So, if you have need a great place for a big event, check it out. They also have full golf and pool memberships, give them a call at 248-7271 for more information.

And finally, thank you to all the parents and friends who attended. Perhaps the absolute best thing about the entire evening was the smiles on everyone's faces. The energy throughout the party was electrifying. Laughter, jokes, and stories abounded. - *everyone* was having fun. You know, I think we just might have succeeded in our goal of bringing parents in the school even closer together. We have a special School community and it really felt good to have a great time together for a great cause.

We even managed to raise some money for the school at the same time. Yippee!

So...when is the next party?

*Brad and Sandra*



Dear Lower School Families,

This week we had the smoothest and most beautiful Field Day I have experienced at Hunter McGuire. The weather was perfect, warm and sunny but not humid, with a slight breeze blowing through the blooming trees. The Polar Bears edged out the Alligators for the first time in a few years; a great time was had by all.

This came just after a weekend of festivities and fundraising that almost took the roof off the Staunton Country Club. Our "Tastes from Around the World" was a smashing success – the food was fantastic – "Indian Surprise," Korean BBQ, Enchilada Soup, and many more, including our Top Chef Jim LaGrua's Grilled Filet with Chimichurri Sauce. Food was followed by a very lively auction with great competition and cooperation. We netted very close to \$16,000.00 on the event. In these economic times, it is a testament to our community and its dedication to our school to have made this tremendous contribution to the school's annual fund. Thank you once again for all that you give. This wonderful event was made possible by the hard work and dedication of Brad Bradford, Sandra Catchings, and Trish LaGrua, who put it together as if they do it every day. Thanks also go to parents Curtis Craig, our in-house professional auctioneer; John Grantier, an MC of great talent; Kristin Brandt, Dana Dewing, and Lisa Gordon, who helped at the door; and Jim Kivlighan, who assisted the auctioneer and looked really cute in his Korean hat.

All of this terrific support for our school program is what sustains us while we develop our strong staffing structure, an exemplary program, and a balanced budget for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year. At this time, I am pleased to announce that lower school faculty members have been offered their contracts for next year and will be returning them within two weeks' time. Certain job descriptions are slightly different from this year, but almost all of our current lower school staff members have retained their current status. For this I am very grateful. The staffing, as planned, is as follows:

Kindergarten	Patterson/Hartley
First Grade	George/Flora-Brownell
Second Grade	Sanders/Fultz
Third Grade	Gardner/Simon
Fourth Grade	Cornelius/Fultz
Fifth Grade	Peel/Fultz
Art	Wilson
Music	Bomberger
PE	Tate
Technology	Williams

There are three areas of our current program affected by this new structure. PE will be reduced to three times per week with Coach Tate, but my plan is to organize a structured 4<sup>th</sup> class per week that can be staffed by parent volunteers who can implement a fitness program designed by Coach Tate. Similarly, since we have not funded a Librarian position for next year, I will build a cadre of committed parents who will keep our library vibrant and deliver our library skills curriculum. I will work closely with both of these volunteer groups to integrate their efforts into our daily program. We have had great success with similar efforts in the past. In addition, Spanish will either be offered by a volunteer during the school day or it will move to the afterschool program as an optional extension opportunity. Lastly, in order to staff the Dragon's Den, each full-time contracted teacher will give 2 ½ hours every one or two weeks to work with children in the afterschool program. We will supplement their help with parent and high school volunteers.

The only piece of the picture that remains to be filled in is the Pre-K, where plans continue to develop. I will keep you posted as things move along. We are seeking cost estimates to bring the generously donated modular unit onto the back of the property and get it hooked up and classroom ready. We have already received six student applications, and I am in the process of meeting with experienced lead teacher candidates who are interested in joining our faculty. A Pre-K Advisory Committee, including teachers and parents, has been formed to assist in developing the curriculum and classroom environment as well as ensuring the coordination and integration of this new program. I am extremely optimistic about the progress of this developing part of our program.

I am so thrilled with the outpouring of support for our School and the quality of our program that I do not see anything stopping us from continuing to fulfill our mission driven goal of offering the best program in the Shenandoah Valley. It may sound like jargon, but it is not. Given the times we find ourselves faced with, these necessary changes are relatively minor. As we continue to work together and support one another, we will be able to creatively answer the call of excellence, something we all expect and our children deserve.

As always, please feel free to call me or drop by if you have questions or want to discuss any of this information. My door is always open.

Truly yours,

*Anne*

Dear Members of the Stuart Hall Community,

We're writing you on behalf of a school-wide working group that has been formed by the Stuart Hall School administration and Board of Governors to explore and enhance communication among the various constituent groups of Stuart Hall. One of our tasks is to recommend to the administration and the board of Stuart Hall a mechanism for effective communication practices, and we need your input and suggestions.

If you have ideas about how to improve communication at the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools of Stuart Hall, please send your thoughts to Dave Jones at [jonesdh@jmu.edu](mailto:jonesdh@jmu.edu) (lower school parent), Renee Staton at [statonar@jmu.edu](mailto:statonar@jmu.edu) (lower school parent), or Nadine Woodrum (Parents' Association Liaison; Middle and Upper School Parent) at [gwoodrum@ntelos.net](mailto:gwoodrum@ntelos.net).

We will keep all correspondence anonymous unless otherwise requested. If you prefer, you may put your written suggestions in the basket in the foyer of the Hunter McGuire Lower School campus, or, on the Staunton campus, in the suggestion box in Sue Appleby's office, the suggestion box outside Margaret Wood's office, or the suggestion box in the faculty workroom. We need your suggestions by Thursday, May 7.

Thank you in advance for taking time to share your ideas. We welcome your involvement in this process.

Sincerely,

Dave Jones, Renee Staton, and Forum Working Group Two (Communications)

# PORTRAITS BY LORI TAIBL



**STOP BY THE OFFICE TO LOOK AT THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS THAT LORI TAIBL TOOK FOR OUR RECENT EVENT. THE 8 X 10 PHOTOS ARE \$25.00 EACH. YOU MAY HAVE THEM FRAMED FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$45.00.**