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The Weekly Courier

Thursday, September 4, 2008

**The Atlanta Charter Middle School invites
parents/families to
Back to School Night and Dinner!
Wednesday, September 10th – 5:30 to 8:30 PM**

The annual Back to School Night provides an opportunity for parents and families to visit their students' classes and get to know the faculty and staff who work with students each and every day.

Schedule of Events

- ❖ 5:30 – Catered dinner for all families and students presented by The Roaming Chef, ACMS's food service provider
- ❖ 6:00-7:00 – Grade Level Meetings
 - 6th Grade: The Carrera Program
 - 7th/8th Grade: Class Trips, High School Transition, and more
- ❖ 7:00-8:30 – Visit your student's classes

Parking

Please park in the school parking lot, along the right-hand side of Essie Avenue, or on Delaware or Emerson Avenues. Please be respectful of our neighbors and take care not to block any driveways. There are lots of people at the school for this event, so please plan extra time for parking.

Child Care

Child care is available for students and children who are of walking age. To reserve a spot for your children, please contact Paula Jessup, PTCA President, at pjessup@mindspring.com.

***Please RSVP for the Back to School Night & Dinner on the Evite or at
info@atlantachartermiddle.com!***

Please note: There is not time on Back to School Night for meeting with your student's teachers about individual questions or concerns. If you would like to meet with a teacher or teachers, please email or call them to arrange a future meeting. Also, there are parent-student-teacher conferences in late November.

Calendar

Please Mark These Dates!!! (Subject to Change)

September

Thursday, September 4 – School Picture Day
Friday, September 5 – “First Friday” Coffee with Principal – 8:30 AM
Wednesday, September 10 – Back to School Night & Dinner – 5:30-8:30 PM
Friday, September 12 – Monthly Student Progress Reports sent home
Thursday, September 18 – ACMS Governing Board Meeting – 7 PM

October

Monday, October 6 – NO SCHOOL – Teacher Work Day
Wednesday, October 8 – PTCA Meeting: Assessment & Testing at ACMS – 6:30 PM
Sunday, October 12 – ACMS Building Celebration! (more details to come) – 2-4 PM
Monday, October 13 to Friday, October 17 – Book Fair
Thursday, October 16 – ACMS Governing Board Meeting – 7 PM

Reminders, Brief Notes, Etc.

[September breakfast and lunch menus and order forms](#) are now available on the ACMS website!

If you know your student will be absent from school for any reason, please call the office and leave a message letting us know. Similarly, if you are running late for regular afternoon pickup, please call the office and let the school know if possible.

The weekly Courier will be appearing in an electronic version via email and our website this year in order to conserve paper. If you do not have regular Internet access, a few paper copies will be available in the main office each Thursday or you can use the computers in the media center. If you have anything you'd like to submit to the Courier, please email it to info@atlantachartermiddle.com no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday.

Thank You!!!

Mrs. Gardner would like to thank the Garcia family for the donation of a clothing rack for costumes!

Can You Help?

Each week in this space there will be ways you can help the school, and, in many cases, earn required volunteer hours. For more information about the volunteer hour commitment, please read the ACMS Student & Family Handbook.

New Listing: The yearbook staff will hold their first fundraiser of the year on Thursday, 9/11 and Friday, 9/12. From 8:00 to 8:30 on each of these mornings we will have a bake sale in the front lobby of ACMS.

If you would like to help with this fundraiser by donating individually-wrapped baked goods, please contact Jacob Edmison at jedmison@atlantachartermiddle.com.

The ACMS after school band program is in need of a band instructor. The band practices once or twice a week after school, and the band instructor is compensated for his/her time. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Matt Underwood, Principal, at munderwood@atlantachartermiddle.com.

The school is often in need of various donated items. For more information, see the “Class News & Notes” section that follows.

Class News & Notes

Throughout the year in this space you'll find updates on what students in different classes are working on, upcoming field trips, and other important class information. Please also be sure to visit the ACMS website at www.atlantachartermiddle.com for more information about the school and class "blogs" where assignments and other information can be found.

This week's updates come from the following classes...

Spanish – Mrs. Waldman and Mrs. Belloso-Pinto

¡Hola! Hello! Welcome to ACMS ... or welcome back! We are honored to be your child's Spanish teacher. Spanish lessons began and will continue every Tuesday and Thursday for an hour for 6th grade and every day for 7th grade. We will focus on speaking in complete sentences, and on writing paragraphs and improving conversation skills. For the next few weeks, we will study vocabulary about the faces and places of school and each unit we will study a different topic (i.e., food, animals, community, fairy tales, etc.)

This year each unit will last from four to six weeks. Halfway through the unit, each student will receive a study guide to assist in the review for the written quiz at the end of each unit. The study guide is bilingual for you to be able to help your child at home. Our class evaluation takes into consideration three areas: oral participation in class (30%), daily activities (40%), and written quizzes (30%). At the end of each quarter, your child will get a grade; we cannot emphasize enough the importance of participation in class and daily reinforcement at home with the use of the study guide. During instruction, we speak only in Spanish, without the use of English for explanations or translations, except when introducing new concepts. Although students do not understand everything, being surrounded by a Spanish language-rich environment provides them the opportunity to learn Spanish similarly to the way that they first learned English (or their first language, if other). Please reassure your child that he or she is not expected to understand all that is spoken within each lesson. Your child should relax, pay attention, participate, and enjoy the lessons. He or she will quickly begin to understand more and more. Through songs, games, drama, art, and movement exercises our students learn to understand and communicate in Spanish. Science, math, and social studies are also included in our Spanish lessons.

We hope we have the opportunity to meet you in person. We really want your child to love Spanish and have fun learning it, so we will do everything we can to make that happen, and we look forward to sharing our enthusiasm for the Spanish language and the Hispanic culture with you and your child. Feel free to contact us at ACMS or contact me by email at: mwaldman@atlantachartermiddle.com or mbelloso@atlantachartermiddle.com

We will have a great year! Thank you for all your support!

6th Grade Visual Arts – Mr. Edmison

Sixth Grade visual arts students recently completed a half-portrait drawing assignment. The students used half of a self-portrait photograph in order to determine the correct values and proportions to draw the other half of the portrait. At the end of last week, we had an in-process critique on these drawings. Each student had the opportunity to both give and receive feedback. After the critique, students had a chance to make revisions to their drawings.

This week, students will learn a couple of different methods for creating a self-portrait drawing. They will choose one of these methods to create the portrait for a self-portrait box. This assignment will combine their life drawing skills with an exploration of symbolism and collage. We will also look at the work of Joseph Cornell for inspiration.

Sixth graders will have their first sketchbook check next week. 6A will turn in their books on Monday. 6B will turn theirs in on Tuesday. All students should have at least eight complete drawings by next week.

6th Grade Performing Arts – Mrs. Gardner

This week we will be starting a unit on the theater of ancient Greece. We will discuss why theater was performed, who the important playwrights were and how it was performed. As we discuss these things we will use our improv skills to act out sketches showing how things might have happened. We will use sheets to create togas to give students an idea of what it was actually like to live in the time period. On Friday we will be reading a section of

Antigone and while studying blocking, we will stage part of it.

In three weeks we will begin rehearsals for our in class plays, which should be very exciting! I'm still in the process of choosing these shows, but each student will have a role.

7th/8th Grade Fit for Life – Mrs. Pam Jones

In Physical Education, the students have been engaging in a series of drills enhancing their concept of “training”. The students are learning the importance of warming up their bodies, the importance of training and practicing to be successful in athletics, and participating in drills that teach teamwork, coordination, speed, agility and balance.

In Character Education, the students are focusing on Respect for Self. Accountability: responsibility for one’s actions and their consequences, Respect for physical, mental and fiscal health: awareness of the importance of and conscious activity toward maintaining fitness in these areas.

In Health, 7th graders are focusing on Nutrition and Fitness “The Food Guide Pyramid”. Students are asked to keep a record of all the foods that he/she eats for two or three days, count the number of foods that he/she ate from each food group each day, and determine whether he/she met the pyramid requirements for each group? Once they are able to see their eating habits, they can have an active role in improving their eating habits. Thursday, the students began working on a Pyramid collage project.

In Health, 8th graders are concluding their study of Mental and Emotional Health. The students are learning ways of Understanding Your Emotions, Mental and Emotional Problems, Getting Help, and Coping with Loss. The students were assigned an assignment in which was due on Sept. 2nd.

Next week, the 7th graders will begin studying topics in Personal Health and Mental Health: Hygiene, Stress Management, and Conflict Resolution. 8th graders will begin studying Safety topics: Accidental Prevention and First Aid. Both 7th and 8th grade will also begin participating in fitness assessments using results of FitnessGram testing to develop a goal statement and plans for improving and maintaining cardiovascular fitness and flexibility. *More detailed information will be coming in the next two weeks.

Teacher Wish Lists: Any donations of the following items would be greatly appreciated!

Ms. Capone’s 7th/8th grade language arts classes:

- Kleenex
- Looseleaf notebook paper
- Bean bag chairs (3)

PTCA News

Please check this section often for news about the ACMS Parent-Teacher-Community Association

If you have other questions about the PTCA, please email Paula Jessup, PTCA President, at pjessup@mindspring.com.

Supporting Your Student At Home: The following websites provide a number of helpful tips and insights into supporting your middle school student at home with getting ready for school, completing homework, and more!

<http://wingsforkids.org/eNews/pdf/Wings-BeyondtheBookbag.pdf>

Wings for Kids is a national non-profit that specializes in after school programs for elementary and the middle grades. This downloadable handout, "Beyond the Bookbag: Ten Practical Tips to Prepare Kids to Succeed in School by Building Their Social and Emotional Smarts," may be particularly useful to parents whose children are transitioning from elementary to middle or intermediate schools.

<http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/2858>

A collection of practical ideas parents can use to help children deal with the daily demands of homework. This easy-to-read booklet offers parents useful strategies for helping their children manage their homework — from elementary through high school. Make your child’s homework sessions a better experience for both of you!

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, September 10th is the annual ACMS “Back to School” Night! The evening will begin at 5:30 with a catered dinner, followed by grade level meetings from 6:00 to 7:00. 6th grade parents/guardians will have the opportunity to find out more about the Carrera program from its staff and from Dr. Michael Carrera who will be coming down to visit from the Children’s Aid Society in New York. 7th and 8th grade parents will have a chance to get important information about class trips, high school transition, and more. Then, from 7:00 to 8:30, parents/guardians will go through an abbreviated version of their students’ daily schedule to meet teachers and find out more about each class. Look for more information in upcoming issues of the Courier!

Ask the Experts from www.schwablearning.org: Is medication something that hyperactive students need?

Question: My daughter is in high speed all the time, doesn't watch where she is going, knocks things over or trips over stuff. Her teacher says that she doesn't pay attention to her work, she does it fast all the time and it ends up messy, but at home she will sit down and do the homework and do a fine job. Does she need medication? What do you suggest I do?

Answer from Dr. Joseph Gianesin: Some parents and teachers make a quick diagnosis and push toward the medication route without having gone through a thorough process of evaluation. However, experienced classroom teachers have seen hundreds of children over their careers, and if they have a concern about a child, I would be willing to have the child evaluated. This normally means that your pediatrician or a specialist in ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) evaluates your child. This will likely include a questionnaire for the teacher and parents to fill out, along with observation and feedback from those persons who interact with your child the most. After the initial evaluation, your doctor could offer several forms of intervention that might include medication but also some strategies for parents and school personnel. Teachers regularly encounter children with ADHD and can provide several accommodations for children who exhibit the symptoms you described. If your child turns out to have this disability, the CHADD Web site can be of great assistance. It also lists several accommodations and strategies to help your child get the most out of school that don't include pharmacology. Lastly, the fact that your child can sit and focus in the home setting is not really comparable to a classroom where there are numerous stimuli and distractions.

My advice in a nutshell: Have your child evaluated and then make a decision that you and your doctor are comfortable with regarding the interventions.

One last note, although there has been a huge media blitz about the dangers of ADHD medications, thousands of children each year benefit from them and are able to focus and concentrate on their schoolwork resulting in higher self-esteem and academic success. Your doctor should counsel and advise you on the benefits and drawbacks if you decide to utilize medication as an intervention.

Dr. Joseph Gianesin is a professor at Springfield College School of Social Work and a program and behavioral consultant for public schools in Massachusetts. He has more than 25 years of experience as a child and family therapist, a school social worker and a school administrator.

Advice from Schwab Learning experts is not a substitute for medical or other professional advice and services from a qualified health-care provider familiar with your unique situation. We recommend consulting a qualified professional if you have concerns about your child's medical or emotional condition.

ACMS Extracurricular Activities

ACMS Sports

ACMS belongs to a league with other charter schools around the Atlanta area, and the first sports of the season are set to begin!

FLAG FOOTBALL and CHEERLEADING PRACTICE HAS BEGUN! Practice for football and cheerleading goes from 4:00 to 6:00 every Tuesday and Thursday. Cheerleading practice is at ACMS and football practice is at the Berne Street Boys and Girls Club (unless otherwise posted). Please plan to pick your student up from school or the

Boys and Girls Club at 6:00 pm SHARP! **The first game will be Friday, September 12th! A complete schedule and directions to all games will be given to athletes and printed in the Courier.**

Flag Football and Cheerleading Athletes MUST bring in their ATHLETIC FEE & STUDENT CONTRACT in order to PARTICIPATE in practice. PHYSICALs must be in the school office by SEPTEMBER 4th. Students will not be able to play if a current physical is not on file.

ATHLETIC FEES:

Students Receiving FREE meal benefits: \$30.00

Students Receiving REDUCED meal benefits: \$35.00

Students who are FULL PAY: \$40.00

We are stilling looking for FULL TIME ASSISTANT COACHES.

If you have any questions about the ACMS sports program, please contact Ms. Maria Larson at 678-904-0051 or mlarson@atlantachartermiddle.com.

ACMS Band

The ACMS after school band program is in need of a band instructor. The band practices once or twice a week after school, and the band instructor is compensated for his/her time. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Matt Underwood, Principal, at munderwood@atlantachartermiddle.com.

A Huge
Thank You

for all who helped at the
Summer Shade Festival

It was lots of fun
and good community presence for the school
Not only did we have an ACMS booth but
several helped in the Festival Information Booths
Special thanks to Eric and Margaret Kaiser and Grant Central East

Thanks to the following Parents and Students:

Jakiva Wharton Patricia Garrett Sheri Davis Debbie Matani
Maureen Lobban Martha Stovall Kathy Bullard Richard Bell
Michelle Hebert Cidney Bullard Julie Lowring
Mari Stilson Glen Harris Devonte Atkins Alicia Brown
Dylan Attwool Russell Brown Andy & Paula Jessup Jessi Hudson
Stephanie Salazar Zak Fields Sam Jessup Frank Kocsisszucs
Dylan Greathouse Felix Jaffin Gabriella & Ramiro Garcia
Jacob Friesen Ramsey Nowlin Katie Edge
Brad Jessup Chris Murphy Susan Holloway Aeron Attwool
Regan Lowring Liz Nace Ari Paez Pearl Eifrid



November 15, 2008, 5:30-10pm

Make it a date! Remember that Fall Fling is a grown-up night out! Event ticket prices will remain at \$15 each again this year. Enjoy a great evening dining on fantastic food catered by parent and Chef *Drew Ihrig* of Endive while we raise money for our schools! Be on the lookout for childcare reservations in upcoming communications.

Fall Fling Meeting Tuesday 9-9 at 6:30pm in the NCS Media Center--- volunteer opportunities are available- If you've got interest in any aspect of Fall Fling please join us to chat about how you can help!

Connections— We need yours! Whether vacation homes, hotel connections, specialty stores or your personal talent for cooking a gourmet meal...Let's work together! Please see the Donation Request Letter and Donation Form also in this week's Courier.

Auction Item of the week

Italian Cooking Class for 4

"Enjoy an afternoon of wine, cooking, pizza and pasta with Chef Lis of Stella Neighborhood Trattoria. You'll receive personal cooking instructions on preparing authentic Italian pasta dishes and thin crust Neapolitan pizza. Learn top-secret recipes and the skill of pizza tossing. If you're passionate about cooking, this is perfect for you!"

Tip of the week: Start saving now and plan to do your Holiday Shopping at this year's Fall Fling!

*Michael Berzsenyi, Sheri Davis, Margaret Kaiser, Susan Rouse
and Amy Smith*

Questions? Contact us! auction@neighborhoodcharter.com

September 3, 2008

Dear Potential Donor,

Neighborhood Charter School and Atlanta Charter Middle School would like to invite you to take part in their most important fundraising event of the year: the Fall Fling.

This annual auction benefits two thriving schools that share a commitment to providing a high-quality, innovative public education to children in our community. The Fall Fling also is a wonderful chance for all community members, even those who aren't parents at the school, to come together for great food, silent and live auctions, raffles, and more. Hundreds of people are expected to attend this year's Fall Fling, to be held November 15, 2008. **What better way to get your name out to a large group of potential customers -- while supporting the community -- than by contributing to this event?**

We hope you will consider making a donation of merchandise, services, or gift certificates for this year's silent auction. In recognition of your support, your company name will be featured in the event catalog, as well as on the NCS website - giving you broad exposure to parents and supporters of the schools. **This is the kind of positive publicity you just can't buy, and what's more, your gift is tax-deductible.**

The Neighborhood Charter School is a public elementary school occupying the historic Slaton School building in Grant Park. Its sister school, Atlanta Charter Middle School, is a public middle school located in the historic Anne E. West building in Ormewood Park. With a constructivist curriculum and an emphasis on parental involvement, these two schools offer a unique educational experience for students in several in-town neighborhoods. While charter schools receive an allotment from Atlanta Public Schools for basic operating costs, many other items are not covered. Among them: building costs, professional development, technology, playground equipment, library materials, and special programs.

A fundraising committee member will be contacting you in the next couple of weeks to answer any questions you may have and to enlist your support. You may contact Susan Rouse at 404-622-8734 or auction@neighborhoodcharter.com to arrange a donation. Items may also be sent directly to: NCS, attn: Fall Fling, 688 Grant Street SE, Atlanta, GA 30315.

We would like to **thank you in advance for considering a contribution.**

Sincerely yours,
Fall Fling 2008 Auction Committee



Auction Donation Information Form

Thank you for your generous support. Neighborhood Charter School (T.I.N. 58-2435592) and Atlanta Charter Middle are non-profit, tax-exempt organizations. Your gift is tax deductible according to IRS guidelines. Donations may be mailed directly to:

Neighborhood Charter School attn: Fall Fling 2008
688 Grant Street SE
Atlanta, GA 30315

Please provide your name and/or company name, and all pertinent information.

Contact Name: _____

Business: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ email: _____

Item Name for Program Listing: _____

Description:

Estimated Retail Value: _____ Suggested Minimum Bid: _____

For Gift Certificates, please check one of the two options below:

_____ Gift Certificate for Fall Fling 2008 is attached.

_____ NCS must create a Gift Certificate.

Expiration to be: _____ (auction date is 11/15/08)

Stipulations and/or Exclusions to include: