



Beyond the Ordinary

Established 1998

September 10, 2009

**First of Year Information**

Welcome MSW Families! The 2009/2010 year is going to be our best yet. As we continue to improve communication between school and home we will need your assistance by keeping us updated with current information and the best ways to contact you. We will be using the One Call Now system again this year, the automated phone system. We will also be sending more e-mail announcements and newsletters will be going out electronically as well, with the exception of the first newsletter of the month, distributed the first Thursday of every month. I am still missing first of year forms from some families. Please send this information to the office ASAP. It is urgent that we have the most current information in order to contact you in case of illness or an emergency. It is also important to notify the office in writing of any change in your child's regular transportation routine or if you're sending someone else to pick up your child/ren. If you are unable to send a note please call the office at 297-2662 as soon as you are aware of a change. Remember, if you have any questions, just call!

**Picture Day**

Picture day is Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Student portraits will again be taken by Pam Nelligan. Please see the attached order form for information on packages and fees.

**School Supply Help is Here**

We know that the economy has taken its toll on all of us. If your children are in need of a backpack and school supplies, PLEASE stop and see Mr. Houck ASAP. A private donor has provided some basic school supplies, and we want to be sure that any family in need is taken care of.

**Upcoming Events**

9/11	10 am Lice Check
9/14-9/17	Middle School - Hulbert Teambuilding Trip
9/17	6 pm Elementary Orientation
9/16	8:45 am "Town Hall" Meeting
9/16	Pizza Day
9/21	Golf Tournament
9/22	Picture Day
9/24	6 pm MS Orientation
9/26	Peru Fair

**"Town Hall" Meeting**

Parents, Board, and community members are invited to our "Town Hall" meeting next Wednesday, September 16 at 8:45 a.m. While this will NOT be about health insurance, Mr. Houck and Ms. Spence will review questions asked from NEASC parent surveys. Parents may also send in questions to the office by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday 9/15. Questions will be posted and notes distributed to families in the future. Parents are asked to bring juice or a small sharing dish for breakfast if they can. Thanks for sharing your thoughts and questions with us!

**Parent Orientation Nights**

The Mountain School at Winhall will be offering two orientation nights for parents only. The first night will be for all Elementary parents (grades Pre-K-4) and will be held on Thursday, September 17 from 6:00-7:30 p.m.. Pre-K/K parents will meet in their child's homeroom at 6:00, 1/2 parents at 6:30, and 3/4 parents at 7:00. The following Thursday, September 24, will be for middle school parents. Parents in 5/6 will meet in their child's homeroom at 6:00 p.m., and 7/8 parents at 6:45. If you are unable to attend, please contact your child's teacher.

Daren M. Houck, Headmaster  
Karli Spence, Assistant Head  
Carol A. Stachelek, Office Manager

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

## A Word from the Headmaster

*The Role of the Head of School*

By Daren M. Houck, M.Ed.

In a recent issue of *Independent School* magazine, the Head of School position was described as a cross between a CEO and a pastor of a choice. At first read I chuckled; then I realized how true this analogy was. On one hand, the Head is fully responsible for every aspect of business and operation of The Mountain School at Winhall, Inc.—from budget to staff to student to program management. As a private corporation, the Head is evaluated and monitored by an independent Board of Governors—or Trustees—and is expected to run an efficient, effective business. On the other hand, the Head is responsible for the education and growth of 70 students and their families. This involves personal and community relationship building, unique knowledge and understanding of the learner and learning process, and the development of trust. Being a business in the “business” of children is a demanding—and important—position.

As such, I am given the honorary charge of being the Head of The Mountain School at Winhall. This job has many rewarding aspects—positively influencing the education of every child that walks through our doors is, in my opinion, one of the highest callings. The excitement of witnessing the “aha” moment in math class, the exhilaration of the “thank you” note from a grateful parent, the joy of receiving compliments from a staff that feels respected and able to teach freely and creatively without administrative intrusion, and the satisfaction of receiving a good evaluation from the Board for fiscal responsibility and integrity all drive me to continue to do what I do, and inspire me to do it better.

However, the position of Head of School comes with challenges as well. The demands of the job are nearly double of that as a previous administrator at a 1,400-student school. The Head has no “district” to develop curriculum, programs, or procedures; to enroll or review

admissions applications; to manage the budget or serve as a human resource or risk management department; to hire, fire, manage, support or evaluate personnel; or many other things. This doesn’t even refer to the obvious daily responsibilities—bus and recess duty, classroom walkthroughs, parent contact and communication, student management, etc. And as my role continues to change with our governance changes and school growth, I understand more and more that my role of “Head” means I am the Head all day, every day (as the last year can attest to, with countless meetings, dinners, and gatherings on weeknights and weekends for Board members, potential Board members, donors, potential donors, community members and more...all in addition to the many other responsibilities expected of the Head!). But perhaps the most difficult role I have is that, while making decisions for our children, I know that not every decision is “best” for every child. Just like teaching and learning, every child is unique and needs different things at different times. However, when I make an institutional decision, I know that—while making the best decision I can for most—it is not always best for all. Because of that difficult reality, I never take (or make) any decision lightly...much thought and concern is placed on every choice I make.

Regardless of these challenges, I chose to become a Head of School because of my love for education, passion for the next generation, and desire to influence not only “my” classroom, but EVERY STUDENT in the school. I have never regretted my choice; I love what I do, day in and day out, and am continuously and tirelessly excited about what I do. As we begin this year, like every year, I want all of you to know how honored I am that you chose The Mountain School at Winhall to serve your family. I pledge to do my best to make this the best school I can for all of your children. As Head, my door (and email and voicemail box!) is always open. Thank you for trusting us, and I am looking forward to another great year at The Mountain School.

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

## Lice Check

With all that talk of the Swine Flu, we don't want to forget about lice! On Friday, Christine Jenks (parent and owner of Christine Jenks Hairstyling) has kindly volunteered to check all staff and students at the school, starting at 10:30 a.m. Thanks, Chris!

## Extended Care Program

This year MSW will be able to offer morning and afternoon care for a small fee. Students may arrive at the school at 8:00 a.m. (costs for mornings are only \$3/day) and/or stay after school until 4:30 p.m. (costs for afternoons are \$5/day). If you are interested and did not sign an interest form Tuesday (or do not receive information today), please contact the office Friday morning. Extended Care will begin next Monday, September 14 at 8:00 a.m.

## Annual MSW Golf Tournament

It's that time of year! The Mountain School's annual fall golf tournament is Monday, September 21 at 12:00 noon. See the attached flier and pick up a brochure in the office. Join us for a great time of golf!

## Endowment Gains

MSW's endowment—\$25,000 established on February 28, 2009—experienced great returns (over 15%) last quarter and gained over \$4,500. As our endowment grows, so will our ability to serve you better. Thanks for your support!

## Soccer

Soccer is here! Coach Jeff (Dill—parent) will be heading up soccer this year. He is hosting an all-school practice today after school. Any parent wishing to help *please* let the office and/or Jeff know. All students need a permission form and proper soccer equipment. Parents will be notified of practices and games once coaches and teams are established. *A big thanks to the Burt family for donating new soccer uniforms for the school!*

## Fall Long Trail Work Day

MSW has adopted a portion of The Long Trail and is responsible for fall and spring cleanings. Parents are asked to join the middle school for our next trail workday on Tuesday October 13. Workers will leave MSW at 8:45 sharp. All trail workers need to bring work shoes, appropriate clothes (CHECK THE WEATHER!), a sack lunch and water, and shovels and hoes if possible. The school has several tools as well. Please let Mr. Houck know if you can go and/or drive by 10/8. Thank you!

## Paper and E-Newsletters

In an effort to save paper and money AND provide more convenient e-communication, The Mountain School will move to once-a-month newsletters on the first Thursday of each month, followed by e-letters every other Thursday. PLEASE provide the office with updated email information as soon as possible. The next e-newsletter will be sent on Thursday September 17.

## Morning Meeting Change

Please note that Morning Meetings will be held on Thursdays this year instead of Wednesday. All students and staff join together each Thursday for shared group activities.

## PreK/K News

Our first week in the PreK/K classroom has been fun and exciting. I'd like to thank parents and teachers for welcoming me into the Mountain School. I am also grateful to Linda Smith and Linda Burnett for creating such a solid program that this year's kindergarteners already know a great deal about respect, turn taking, handwashing, and being a good listener. We will continue to use the Responsive Classroom to help build our classroom community. Academically, we have started choral reading of the morning message, listening comprehension of read aloud books (Sumi's First Day of School Ever; Tiptoe into Kindergarten); and a math counting book entitled My Little Sister Ate One Hare.

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

Our PreK/K schedule is evolving. We have gone to music with Ms. Laura, Spanish with Maestra , and physical education with Miss Chris this week. We also spent time with Officer Gould. We have been offered computer time once a month and working out the details. The children are going through guided discoveries of our classroom materials right now. They are doing a great job taking care of their materials.

Miss Linda and I welcome your input to make this experience as wonderful as possible.

## 1/2 News

Welcome back! It has been a very busy and exciting week in our classroom. We welcomed three new students to our school; Bria, Luke and Billy. We have been working hard on getting to know each other and building a strong sense of community. We're off to a good start!

I know many of you, as well as myself, have tried to find Monarch caterpillars with no success. It seems that they are not very prolific this year. I will try again this weekend. Thanks to the internet, we will still be able to "watch" the progression of their life cycle. Thank you to all for you efforts.

I'm looking forward to a fantastic school year!

## 3/4 News

First day jitters are behind us and we are looking forward to an awesome year!

We spent the first day going over classroom expectations, schedules and procedures and getting

to know each other. I've placed a copy of their daily schedule on the back of their take-home folder for your reference.

Students have Scholastic book order forms in their backpack. These are due back by September 23, 2009. Look for our first classroom newsletter with lots more information to go home on Monday.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.  
Linda Burnett

## 5/6 News

Welcome Back, MSW Families! It is so great to see all the students refreshed from the summer! It sounds like students have had adventurous, fun and relaxing summers. We have an exciting year ahead planned, beginning with our trip to the Hulbert Outdoor Center next week. This trip promises to be an opportunity to build community and experience the outdoors.

For the very beginning of the school year, we will be focusing on community building and becoming familiar with our environment, routines and expectations. We will also be launching into our unit formed around the essential question, "Why do people seek nature?" which focuses on the Long Trail. Please let me know if you are interested in becoming involved or know of any great resources connected to the Long Trail, land use, urban planning, forest ecology or geology.

For those of you that don't know me yet, my name is Christina Tutsch and I am the 5-6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. I am thrilled to be a part of this community for my fourth year. I am looking forward to another great year of teaching and learning with students, families and MSW staff.

## Hulbert Centre Reminder for Middle School Families!

We are looking forward to our trip on Monday!  
We have some last minute reminders:

### **Please send in your:**

- payment
- MSW release form
- Hulbert release form
- Hulbert medical form

### **Please remember to pack:**

- any medication your child needs in original packaging with detailed directions
- clothing for heat, cold and rain. Remember, layers are good!
- sleeping bag/bedding and pillow for sleeping

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

## 7/8 News

It is a new year for seventh and eighth graders with new teachers. Jon Wilson and Kate Muir are excited for their first years at the Mountain School. The New Englanders are excited to build on the curricula with challenge-based learning experiences that will strengthen 21<sup>st</sup> century skills while providing services to the community. Transparency in communication with parents is a priority for Mr. Wilson and Ms. Muir. On Mr. Wilson's website (which can be found on the staff pages of MSW's website) there is a link to a website that shows what Mr. Wilson and Ms. Muir have assigned for homework. They encourage parents to check it regularly to see what is being asked of their children outside of school.

## Math Lab News

Greetings MSW Families! Hopefully you all had a chance to enjoy summer, brief as it may have been. I am looking forward to another great year of working with you and your students! This year the Math Lab has been relocated to the area formerly known as the Atrium. This is a bright space with lots of positive energy for learning! I will be directly working with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders as well as offering an Algebra study. Of course I will be working with all MSW students, but I will be seeing these groups on a daily basis. I want to encourage your support at home, if it's practicing math skills with students or making sure that homework assignments are complete-it's all great!

In addition to serving MSW as the Math Specialist, I am also doing administrative work as the Assistant Head of School. This year I am focusing on our accreditation process through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. During the afternoons I can be found in the front office and I encourage you to stop in with any feedback or questions you may have regarding the accreditation process. Again, I am looking forward to another great year here at the Mountain School! Go Wildcats!!!

## Library News

Hello from the library,  
Welcome back to all families. It's good to see everyone again. This year we are trying to build our parent - professional library. There are some wonderful parenting books as well as some educational books which are on the of the Best Seller Lists. Many parents signed up for their own library cards. Thank you. Please feel free to come in and look at our collection and hopefully you will find something that will interest and help you. We have purchased a lot of new books, including the Red Clover Books, which are always a hit. I will be here on Mondays and Thursdays this year. I am here from 8:15 - 4:30. Please feel free to call me at any time. I look forward to working with your children this year. I will let you know about new things that we are doing as the year progresses.

## Spanish News

*Hola Familias* and students ~~ *familias y estudiantes!*

I really enjoyed meeting you all *martes* at the all school picnic. Era un placer *conocerles* Tuesday al *almuerzo*. *Y que almuerzo delicioso!* *Gracias a todos los cocineros*. What good food! I am grateful to all the cooks.

I can tell that lots of you are eager to get your Spanish rolling again. And many of you are curious about what Spanish will be like this year. In our first lessons together you'll share with me what you know... I'll help you dust off all your Spanish morsels hiding in the corners of your brain... and we'll explore different projects, activities and ideas that we can learn from and enjoy.

*Adelante* ~~ *Onward,* *su maestra* ~~  
Greenough Nowakoski

## P.E. News

Greetings to all families, I am looking forward to a year full of fun, energetic, and creative learning experiences. We will take important time in our first classes together to learn the rules and expectations of our PE class creating an atmosphere where all students feel comfortable as valued and active participants in a caring and

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

safe community. The focus for the rest of September and October will be on fitness skills to promote healthy lifestyles and conditioning drills for sports (soccer).

Our head soccer coach this season is Jeff Dill, father of three of our new students, Summer, Kira, and Bria. Jeff played high-level soccer and our players will find him very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the sport. After school soccer information will be coming home soon.

New on the playground this fall are the beautiful Four Square and Basketball courts. Thank you Nancy Oakes, Dave Campbell, and Paul.

## **PE classes are on Thursdays and Fridays.**

### PE requirements:

- Athletic sneakers, such as running shoes: that are well fitting, tie or Velcro snugly (so they don't fly off or trip your student!), and they don't need to be the expensive model.
- Athletic or comfortable clothing with a light jacket for cool fall days out on the field.
- Water bottle for convenient hydration, otherwise students must leave the field or gym, which often disrupts class flow (we have little time and much to accomplish).

Students without the appropriate attire requirements maybe asked to sit-out.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to call or e-mail me. If you would like to see what we're doing in class, feel free to drop-in and participate...and remember your sneakers and water bottle.

Chris Uchida

## **Flu Reminders!**

This year's Flu season is expected to be the worst in decades. Families are asked to remember and abide by the following:

1. Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds, and do it OFTEN. This is the most powerful tool against the flu—PREVENTION!
2. If soap and water is not available, hand gels (i.e. Purell) can be used. Please note: THESE ARE LESS EFFECTIVE THAN REGULAR HANDWASHING!
3. Any flu-like symptoms need to be addressed. Keep your child/self at home. Minimize contact with others. Wait 24 hours AFTER FEELING BETTER to return to school/work.
4. Contact your school/office if any member of your family has the Swine Flu. The school will make notify families of closures due to an outbreak.

## **Cups, Forks, and Other Dinnerware**

In both a cost- and environmental-saving move, The Mountain School hopes to continue to be more responsible, and looks to you for help. MSW requests the following:

1. Please send in your own silverware with your child's lunches that can be taken to and from school daily. Plastic forks are used one time for about 5 minutes before being thrown in a landfill forever...not a good use of resources!
2. Please search tag sales, clearance racks, etc. for utensils to donate to the school. We hope to have a LARGE collection of forks (and some knives and spoons!) to use at gatherings. While washing forks and knives after an event is a chore, it is better than throwing away 100 forks every time we gather! Thanks for your help with helping us be more sustainable.

## **Box Tops For Education**

Thank you to those families who have already sent in Box Tops. Please keep sending in your neatly clipped box tops and let's have a record year! Thank you for your support!

# The Mountain School at Winhall

*Beyond The Ordinary*

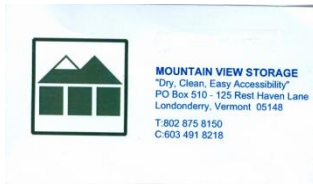
## Community News

### “No Limits” Bike Ride

Staff members at MSW are riding in the “No Limits” bike ride on September 19 to raise money for the Bart Center at Bromley Mountain. The benefit, which begins and ends at the rec. center in Manchester, is for riders of all different experience levels. There is a 10, 30, 63, or 100 mile ride.

This adaptive sports center teaches many different types of people with different disabilities to stay physically active. MSW’s 8<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher, Jon Wilson, was taught to ski by the Bart Center last year after the amputation of his leg three years ago.

If anyone is interested in joining in the ride or making a donation then check out the Bart Center’s website or call Joe Hurley at (802) 824-5522 ext. 430. If you would like to sponsor the MSW team then please contact Jon Wilson at [jwilson@themountainschool.org](mailto:jwilson@themountainschool.org) or at (802) 297-2662 ext. 214.



Thank you to the Cyr family for their donation of a 10X10 storage space for our School!

### **Procedures for public participation at Board meetings:**

Individuals wishing to address the Board must contact the Board Chair at least 3 days in advance of the Board meeting. The contact should include the subject of the presentation and the approximate time needed to speak. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

### **The Mountain School Board of Trustees:**

Debbie Peretz, Chair \* Chuck Scranton, Vice Chair \* Thom McMahon, Treasurer \* C.J. King \* Virginia Morgan \* Ric Swenson \* Betsy Wadsworth