

OCELOT OBSERVER

Volume XVIII, Issue IV, December 2009, a Monthly Publication of the Aldridge Elementary PTA

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December Birthdays

Connie Denbow
 Julie Stanley
 Beth Hubbard
 Donna Brooks
 Cynthia Royal
 Lysa McLaren
 Stacy Starnes
 Donna Cachero
 Gricelda Bravo
 Karol Prather

Aldridge PTA

Parents and Teachers
Working Together for the
Children of Aldridge



A Word from our Principal ...

As I write this in late November, it seems hard to believe that we have just about finished our first semester! December is upon us, and so is a very busy and festive time of year. There is (always) lots going on at Aldridge, and families are busy with all the activities and traditions associated with the December holidays. As busy as this month will be, I hope all of our families will create some special, and perhaps quiet, family time. The best gift we can give our kids is the gift of time! Consider a family game night, a family movie night or a family reading night. I hope the break from the school routine will allow families to make some special memories!

Thank you for your overwhelming support of the PTA Fall Fundraiser! I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the hours and hours of volunteer effort that made the Check Writing Campaign/Fall Festival/Auction possible. I was delighted to see students, parents, former students, former parents and staff members here at school on that beautiful fall afternoon! Aldridge students will benefit from your generosity!

We have a PTA meeting, our 5th grade choir concert, the Dad's Den performance, field trips and class parties scheduled this month, (*see the calendar in this newsletter for details*). I look forward to seeing many of you here at school. I wish each of you a wonderful holiday and thank you again for your support of Aldridge.

Mrs. Carruthers

From our PTA President

It's Thanksgiving weekend, and I'd like to share my Top 10 Things that I'm Thankful for at Aldridge. Drum roll, please:

10. Our beautifully remodeled and newly landscaped school. Aldridge is the sparkling gem of our neighborhood.
9. The BEST and most involved Dads' Den around. If you haven't heard the lively Dad's Den band, you'll have a chance to do so this month!
8. All of our tremendously dedicated volunteers – from room moms and lunchroom volunteers to library helpers. The countless hours you spend at school and behind the scenes really make a difference!
7. Our outstanding PTA board members. We have a great team in place – I couldn't do my job without you.
6. The hardest working cafeteria and custodial staff in town. Thanks for all you do to ensure our kids have healthy meals each day and a clean, safe environment.
5. The super teachers who make "Specials" a hit with our kids. Kudos to you for enriching each day with the arts and instilling the importance of daily physical activity.
4. Our Aldridge faculty who concentrate the special needs of our kids. Your extra-special care provided to each child is really appreciated.

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2009 – 10 PTA Board

President	Tammie DeVoe
1 st VP – Programs	Karrie Ronk
2 nd VP – Ways & Means	Sheila Gabel
3 rd VP – Hospitality	Alicia Rinaldi
4 th VP – Volunteers	Karen Fleming
Secretary	Amy Gokey
Treasurer	Dawn Hunck
Parliamentarian	Pam Hainlin
Historian	Carla Getz

Committees

Arts in Education	Diane Valdez
Communications/ Newsletter	Kelli Peters
Council Delegate	Marjorie Campbell
Council Delegate	DeLisa Menton
Cultural Diversity/ ELMS	Beth Smith
Dad's Den	Tim Manders
Directory	Rebecca Ballard
Environmental	Kelly Barton
Legislative	Eve LaMendola
Membership	Kristina Rodriguez
Newcomers	Carol Doyle
Parent Education	Judith Reiter
SAGE	Angela Gibbons
School Supplies	Missy Peelman
Spiritwear	Catherine Jones
Yearbook	Brandy Diamond
Youth Safety	Shawnee Pittman

PTA Representatives / Co-Chairs

Principal	Marilyn Carruthers
Staff Representative	Sue Melton
Marquee	Susan Lindholm
Hospitality Asst.	Ashlynn Bourque
Ways & Means Asst.	Becky Hodnett
Webmaster	Mark Smith

Visit us online at:
www.aldridgepta.org

Aldridge Ocelot Observer PTA Newsletter

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Submission Deadline: Dec. 18, 2009
To submit content, contact:
Kelli Peters 972.814.9255
kelli.peters@hotmail.com

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3. The fantastic individuals in the front office. You greet us with a smile on your face and are always willing to share your expertise and guidance.
2. The most wonderful classroom teachers and aides in the world. I can't put into words the thanks that I would like to express to each of you. We are truly blessed that our children have you in their lives.
1. Our fabulous Aldridge students and their families. You all are the heart and soul of our school and are the reason for our tight-knit Aldridge community. On behalf of our PTA, I want to extend a special thanks to those of you who helped make our fall fundraiser such a huge success – we asked, and you all came through. Thank you!

From my family to yours, have a wonderful and safe holiday season!

Tammie DeVoe

Volunteer of the Month

Congratulations **Colleen Manders**, our December Volunteer of the Month! Over the past few months, Colleen has spent countless hours coordinating the fund-raising event for our Fall Festival. She worked diligently to organize the class baskets, communicate with auction volunteers, create and track all silent auction items, and store items in her home. Colleen also developed a logistics strategy to ensure the auction went smoothly with the first ever 'buy-it-now' option that allowed people to bid and leave before the auction was over. We all benefited from Colleen's tremendous dedication; it was a primary reason for the huge success of our recent fund-raising initiative.

Colleen is blessed with a wonderful family: her husband, Tim Manders (who leads the Dad's Den), a step-daughter, Drew (an Aldridge 4th grader) and a son, 21-month-old Rhett. She was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, received a marketing degree from TCU, and is currently employed as a Material Program Manager at Raytheon. Colleen adores shoes, baking, and helping others.

You sure helped out the school, Colleen, and baked up a successful fundraiser. We have big shoes to fill finding our next volunteer!



WAY TO GO ALDRIDGE!

Our *All Dressed Up And Ready To Go* Check Writing Campaign raised
\$23,409

To the parents, staff, youth and PTA volunteers, Silent Auction donors, the Dads' Den Band, contributors of cake walk goodies, and those of you who turned out and joined in the fun:

THANK YOU!!!

Parents' Input Wanted on Textbook Choices

All textbooks up for adoption will be available for review by the public through January 15, 2010, at the Plano ISD Administration Building. Parents can review the proposed textbooks offered by several publishers and submit their comments to be considered by the district. A link to the school district's textbook adoption packet, which outlines the adoption process and includes key dates for adoptions and a comment form, is posted on the pisd.edu website along with a list of subject areas for textbook adoption this year.

Petition to Allow District to Control School Start Date

The PISD Council of PTAs is petitioning the state to allow local control of the school calendar. The Council believes that parents, school staff and residents of communities should be able to help select a school calendar that works best toward addressing their communities' concerns and enables their students to achieve the highest academic success possible. If you support local control for the start date, visit <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/txschoolstartdate/> and submit your signature.

PACE Referrals

PACE provides services for academically gifted and/or talented students in grades K-12 who have demonstrated the need for advanced, differentiated instruction. The Plano I.S.D. conducts open, rolling referral, meaning that any student may be referred at any time during the school year; however, elementary students are assessed in the second semester. Students may be referred for the gifted program by teachers, parents, principals, counselors, or by the students themselves. Students are assessed at their home campus during the regular school day.

Grades 1-5 (assessed in March / April) Referral deadline is **February 19, 2010**. Contact **Nancy Harrison**, Aldridge's Gifted

Important Upcoming Dates

PTA Meeting & 5 th Grade Holiday Music Performance	Dec. 10	6:30 p.m.
Ocelot Assembly & Dad's Den Performance	Dec. 18	8:00 a.m.
Class Holiday Parties	Dec. 18	Various Times*
Early Release	Dec. 18	Noon
Winter Break (No School)	Dec. 21 – Jan. 4	
Classes Resume	Jan. 5	

*Check with your homeroom mom for class party times; please note that all parents helping with classroom parties must complete, in advance, a volunteer application online at www.pisd.edu.

Wilson Transfers

If your child attends Aldridge on a school transfer and you wish for your child to attend sixth grade at Wilson Middle School for the 2009-2010 school year, you must obtain a new transfer to Wilson. Sixth-grade openings are limited, and transfers are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Beginning January 4, 2010, transfer applications will be accepted at the Plano ISD Administration Center, 2700 West 15th Street, Plano TX 75075. The Student Services Department hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Transfer fee is \$50. Please note that no bus transportation is provided to Wilson transfer students.

PTA School Directories

This month school directories will be given to PTA members' children to take home. If you don't receive your directory, please check your child's backpack. If it's not there, e-mail our Directory Chairperson, **Rebecca Ballard**, at rebecca.m.ballard@gmail.com. It's still not too late to join the PTA if you'd like a school directory. Act quickly—there will be a limited quantity of directories left. Contact **Kris Rodriguez** at krodriguez@tx.rr.com to join.

Science Program Registration

Sci-Tech Discovery after-school program information and enrollment form will be going home with students in early December. This program will be on Thursday afternoons (beginning on January 14th) from 3-4 p.m., and enrollment will be limited. Keep in mind that parent volunteers are needed to make this program possible. Look for news about Family Science Night coming in January!

Holiday Fund-Raising Opportunity

Try to use the Box Tops Marketplace for your holiday online shopping. It's easy to register, and our school gets a percentage back when you shop from select online retailers. Just visit www.boxtops4education.com and go to "the marketplace".

Keep Clipping Box Tops

We've already raised over \$400 from the Box Tops you've given us. Hats off to **Tammy Garcia** for coordinating this initiative! Let's keep Tammy busy by turning in your clipped Box Tops in the school office.



Season's Greetings from Aldridge Kids Saving the Earth

Let's talk about the Holiday Tree. If you decorate a tree in your home during the holidays, you may want to consider buying a Norfolk pine, fig tree, or indoor houseplant that can be used every holiday season. Or think about getting an artificial tree that can be reused every year. Or you might want a real tree.

Actually, buying a real tree from a tree farm is good for the Earth. Do you know why? It takes 8 to 12 years for a tree to grow, and all of those years the growing tree is helping the Earth. Many of us worry that cutting down that tree will hurt the Earth. If you cut one from a national park or protected habitat that would not be a good thing. However, tree farms replant millions of trees each year, and that's great for the Earth. A live tree helps the Earth in the following ways:

- While it is growing it removes carbon dioxide from the air all year long. That helps to slow global warming
- It helps reduce air pollution by absorbing toxic gases and changing them to more breathable air.
- It helps to filter particles of dust, ash, pollen and smoke.
- Its roots help absorb water into the soil and hold the soil in place.
- It helps to provide a habitat for wildlife.

More good things...

A real tree can be composted to help the Earth. Check to see if your town has a tree-recycling program. If not, ask them to start one. You can also cut up your tree and put it in a composting area in your yard. If you have to put it in the trash make sure it isn't in a bag. A real tree can be used as mulch for pathways and compost for your garden.

Have a greeniful holiday season, and start thinking about some green New Year's resolutions for 2010!

Outstanding Ocelots: History Fair District Winners*

For Individual Display Presentation: 3rd Place for "Lets See How Far We've Come: The History of Prosthetics During War"

For Group Media Presentation: 1st Place for "Women's Fashion: 100 Years of Innovation"

Reflections Winners*

Thank you for your participation in the *Reflections* program! We had 81 entries and are so impressed by your children's ideas of what beauty is to them. On behalf of the PTA, thanks for your support, help and time taken with this program.



**Please note that because of privacy policies, students' names will not be posted on the PTA website.*