

November 24, 2009

Dear Families and Friends of Tucson Country Day School:

I hope this letter finds you well. Our Fall flower beds are in, thanks to Jack Cooper and the maintenance crew, our victory garden is thriving, and exciting learning continues in TCDS classrooms every day as we approach the holiday season. This letter will cover the remainder of November and December up to the winter break. There is much information to share!

Winter Concert: Our annual winter concert is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Pantano Christian Church (Houghton and 29th Street). Kindergarten through 6th grade students and Middle School Musical Theater students will be performing. There is plenty of indoor seating at PCC.

Book Fair. Our Fall book fair was very successful, with nearly \$8,000 in sales. Thanks to Ms. Davidson and Mrs. Valenzuela for coordinating.

Fall Festival. According to many TCDS veterans, our Fall Festival was the best ever! A huge number of volunteers made this possible, and Lori Owen's able leadership brought it all together. My 21-month-old son had lots of fun.

Charter Conference. On November 2nd and 3rd, 5 TCDS teachers and two administrators attended the annual Arizona Charter Association Conference in Fountain Hills. There were many excellent workshops, and the participants will be sharing their learning with the rest of the staff at our December staff development session. We also heard many times at the conference that TCDS is very highly regarded among the state's charter community.

SPA Spell-a-thon is coming! This fundraiser allows students to be rewarded and reward the school for good spelling. Study lists will be distributed to students in early December. The test will be given January 15th, and subsequent school bees will determine the finalist to be sent to the Pima County Spelling Bee. We are tying this fundraiser in to the National Scripps Spelling Bee. Let's dream big!

2nd Quarter Report Cards will be mailed home will be mailed home after December 18th.

Focus on Reading. As a staff we have considered the importance of reading and reading strategies throughout the first semester. We invite you to partner with us in promoting a love of reading and increasing reading skills. To that end, we are sending home a newsletter called "Reading Connection" to families from preschool through 4th grade. The newsletter is full of great tips for promoting reading at home. We recommend it to you and your family.

Drama Club put on a series of short original plays last week, and they were great. The plays were written by students in Ms. Johnson's middle school language arts class and were performed by 4th and 5th grade students. Watch for more drama productions in the spring.

Parking lot safety is a constant concern at TCDS. When dropping off children, please do not have your children exit the vehicle until you have reached the east-west "straghtaway" in front of the building. Never drop off or pick up a student before reaching the straghtaway. For "special" loading and unloading that involves extra equipment, please pull up to the curbside before you reach the crosswalk. Thank you!

It's cold! Now that the weather has turned, please be reminded that because we are in the flood plain, morning temperatures at TCDS are 5 or more degrees cooler than elsewhere. Please send your student appropriately clothed. Lost and found jackets have been out on display near the entrance. Unclaimed jackets will be gathered and sent to needy children.

Holiday spirit. Through a dress down, we have raised \$500 for the community food bank. After Thanksgiving, Student Council is launching a holiday food drive. Please send non-perishable food items with your student for this important effort.

Arizona Tax Credit. We've said it before; the tax credit is one of the best ways to support TCDS, and you get your donation back after April 15th! Tax credits for the current year will be accepted through December 31st. Donations can be mailed to the school or dropped off over the winter break. You can also donate online at <http://www.TCDTaxCredit.com>.

Reminder! Students arriving at school before 7:30 a.m. must be signed into before-care.

The inaugural induction of the National Junior Honor Society occurred at TCDS November 16th. We are proud of the 21 seventh and eighth grade inductees and look forward to the leadership and service projects they will be initiating.

Roots and Shoots is a program that is underway at the elementary and middle schools at TCDS. Through the program, students study ways to benefit plants, animals, and people around them. A Roots and Shoots fundraiser lunch is occurring at TCDS on November 25th at the middle school.

Flu update. We're happy to report that the incidence of flu-like symptoms at TCDS has been low compared to the county; 12 students and 2 teachers total. All of those affected are now well and back at school. Because we expect more waves of the illness, we will stay vigilant and continue with our daily precautions.

Library Committee Forming. This subcommittee of SPA will focus on the tasks of filling the coming library with books, cataloguing the books, and staffing the library. Please contact me if you'd like to participate.

Abstinence education was successfully completed at the middle school this week with high participation and many positive reports.

The Early Childhood Ramada is nearing completion. It will be a great source of shade for our little ones.

Early Childhood Presentation. This special event takes place on November 25th at 10 a.m. at the Activity Center, followed by a potluck reception.

Skate Country evening is December 3rd from 6 to 8 p.m.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you for your support of TCDS and wish you a happy, safe, and blessed Holiday Season!

Cordially,

Mark Saliba, Ed.D.