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The Weekly Courier

Thursday, December 4, 2008

Dear ACMS Community:

I hope that each of you had a safe and restful holiday last week, whether you stayed home or traveled to be with friends and family. For me, Wednesday through Sunday afforded a chance to slow down and relax, and good thing, because heading into the month of December has reminded me just how busy and filled the calendar is here!

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This week provides a good example of the wide range of activities taking place during the day and evening at ACMS. On Monday, students returned to classes, and many of them jumped right into planning presentations for next Wednesday's "Humanities Night", a showcase of student work in language arts and social studies. You can read more about the event in the flyer later in the Courier, but suffice it to say, students have put a good deal of deep thinking into the pieces they will be sharing with the public that night. After school on Monday, a group of students worked together on tasks designed to strengthen their mathematical problem solving skills in a weekly tutoring session offered by Nicole Johnson, our Hands on Atlanta team member. On the other side of the building, Mrs. Gardner gave feedback to the 7th and 8th grade students preparing for their performance of *Schoolhouse Rock* in January's Georgia Junior Theatre Festival.

On Tuesday, the buzz of activity continued, with three separate groups involved in meetings and events after school. Several 8th grade students worked on creating beautiful holiday wreaths to sell as a fundraiser for their trip to Washington, D.C. in May. Meanwhile, the girls basketball team held its first practice, set to embark on the journey of the upcoming season (the boys team will start practice soon), and Everyday Leaders, a student-led community service group, met to further develop their service project idea.

Wednesday afternoon and evening the lights stayed on late as parents, students, and teachers gathered for conferences to discuss students' performance in the first few months of the year and set goals for the months ahead. Conferences are set to continue into this evening.

And there's still important work to be done tomorrow! The monthly parent coffee is Friday morning from 8:30 to 9:15 in the media center, and this month it is "Coffee with the Board Chair", as Gigi Conner, ACMS Governing Board Chair, will solicit parent feedback on some proposed changes to the ACMS By-Laws. Hopefully many of you can attend. Also on Friday, the half of our 8th graders will pay an information visit to Tech High School for an opportunity to explore the school's educational program (the other half will go next Friday).

With all that's happening at ACMS these days, I hope each of you has a chance to participate in some way, but also to take a moment to stop, breathe, and remember what all of this work is for—our students.

Sincerely,
Matt Underwood
Principal

Calendar

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

December

Wednesday, December 3 and Thursday, December 4 – Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences (more details mailed home with end of term reports)

Wednesday, December 10 – PTCA Meeting: Humanities Night! – 6:30 PM

Thursday, December 18 – ACMS Governing Board Meeting – 7:00 PM

Friday, December 19 to Friday, January 2 – NO SCHOOL – Winter Break

January

Monday, January 5 – Classes Resume

Thursday, January 15 – ACMS Governing Board Meeting – 7:00 PM

Monday, January 19 – NO SCHOOL – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Wednesday, January 21 – Georgia 8th Grade Writing Assessment

Monday, January 26 to Wednesday, January 28 – 6th Grade Trip to Jekyll Island

Announcements, Reminders, Brief Notes, Etc.

Please remember that the school building does not open until 8:00 each morning. If you drop your students off prior to 8:00, they will have to wait outside, regardless of the weather conditions, as there is no supervision until 8:00. Thank you for your cooperation!

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

Parent-student-teacher conferences are coming up on Wednesday, December 3rd from 2:30 to 7:00 and Thursday, December 4th from 4:00 to 8:00. More information will come in the mail with term one reports. If you would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, please contact Maria Larson in the main office to do so.

It's not too late to order a holiday wreath! Please contact Natalie Riley at nriley@atlantachartermiddle.com if you'd like to order a handmade holiday wreath made by 8th grade students as a fundraiser for their trip to Washington, D.C. in May.

Ms. Waldman's advisory is doing a toy collection for this season holidays. If you have old toys that you are willing to donate please bring them to school and we will make sure they get to a good home. It is our intention to share the toys with an orphanage in Atlanta. We will be providing hot chocolate and donuts to the students who bring in the most toys to give away. Thanks for your cooperation in this community project!

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.

Parent/Guardian Midyear Survey Reminder

Each year, ACMS solicits feedback from parents/guardians in order to evaluate our effectiveness in carrying out the mission of the school. This feedback is collected via two online surveys—one at midyear, the other at the end of the year. To access the survey, please visit the ACMS website at www.atlantachartermiddle.com and click on the link to the “ACMS Parent/Guardian Midyear Survey” for your student’s grade level. The password to access this survey is ACMSPARENT. Your feedback is important to us, so please take some time to complete this survey. If you need a paper copy of the survey, please contact the school’s main office. Students will be completing a similar survey as well.

Thank You!!!

Thank you to everyone who has already completed the midyear survey!

Mrs. Riley would like to thank all of the parents and students who helped make wreaths for the 8th grade fundraiser.

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.

The **media center is need of volunteers** to help during lunch from 11:50-12:50, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday each week. If you are interested, please email Jacob Edmison at jedmison@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...

6th Grade Humanities – Ms. Devine

In 6th grade Humanities, students have been working on their “Up-standers in European History” project. For this project, students have selected a notable person from European history to research. In groups, students have researched important information about this person’s life as well as the ways that this person challenged authority, spoke out for injustice or stood up for change during his/her lifetime. Additionally, students have reflected on how the world is different today because of this person. In groups, students will be writing a report on their notable person, creating a tri-fold board, dressing as this person and presenting their projects during Humanities Night on December 10th. Students will also present their projects in class as well as participate in a classroom summit, an event that all “notable persons” will attend to answer questions on world conflict and events.

6th Grade Carrera Classes

Academic Enrichment – Mrs. Dowdell

Fractions are still at the forefront of our math focus for this week. Since our young people have been on vacation, we will crank their minds back up with a quick round of Math Trivia where they will have to calculate problems involving fractions quickly, and accurately employing the various rules they’ve learned for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions. How many of them (16 students total) will get all answers correct? 1/2? 2/3? 4/5? Are you smarter than a 6th grader?

Next week, we'll start to focus on some writing essentials in hopes of bringing out scholarly writing in all of our young people! Until then:

“Writing changes the world, one word, one sentence, one paragraph at a time.”

Anonymous

FLSE – Ms. Estlund

We are focusing on where young people see themselves in 10 years (in college, living in their own loft apartment, owning a cat, getting ready for medical school, traveling the world to study biology, becoming a flight attendant, living in Hawaii, etc) and how their choices and behaviors in the next few years may affect those goals. The classes on Monday were quite focused on obtaining their goals and creating a solid foundation to achieving these goals. They respect and listen to each other very well. I am inspired by their compassion towards others and determination to create their future. They are a shining example of our future!

Job Club – Ms. Dunn

The new session of Young Entrepreneurs Club is in its second week! Students are working on holiday music that will be recorded. Students will be divided into 5 groups. Each group will pick a song that they want to perform, or re-write. Also, each group will come up with an original song. There will be a total of 5-6 songs on the CD. The class will vote on which group had the best original song. Additionally, students need to bring in their favorite recipes after the Thanksgiving break, which they will make in school and sell.

Students also need to submit a proposal to Mr. Underwood regarding dates for the Bake Sale and Present Wrapping Service. They should pick a Wednesday to bake when we come back from break, and Thursday and Friday to sell the goods. They can pick two Wednesday's to bake. There is a sample proposal for the students that we did for Fall Festival. A lot needs to be done because we only meet for 6 weeks instead of twelve.

Self-Expression – Mr. Goodson

In our Self-Expression component we are preparing for the production of our Holiday CD to be sold before the winter break. We will begin recording next week at Earthshaking Music. Soon in stores audiences will be able to enjoy renditions of holiday favorites performed by the Snow Globes, J&H Productions, Spice Sisters, J Bells, and Pandamanium.

Power Group – Ms. Wiafe

This week students tried their hands at ‘Breaking the Ice’. As part of this month’s aim to learn and rehearse socialization skills, students were provided the opportunity to role play various scenarios in which they were required to start a conversation or discussion.

7th/8th Grade Science – Mrs. McHardy

7th graders are finishing up their study of mitosis and how it relates to cancer. Students have watched a few documentaries about cancer survivors, in addition to having the opportunity to discuss childhood cancer with our very own Ms. Gardner, who was diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma as a child. We are moving on to blood and the circulatory system.

8th graders completed their element baby books, complete with birth certificates and element images. Students are currently using their knowledge of the Periodic Table to create a Periodic Table of everyday objects, some of which include a Periodic Table of baseball players, cars, fashion, music, and candy. All Periodic Tables are due on Monday.

7th/8th Grade Math – Mrs. Riley

7th grade math students have started their unit on integers. We have practiced comparing and ordering positive and negative numbers. We have also studied the absolute value of integers. We will continue to work on operations with integers including adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. This is a difficult, but critical skill for 7th grade students, and we will spend most of our time this term working with integers.

8th grade math students are completing their unit on exponents and square roots next week. They have their final project over this unit due on Tuesday, December 9. We will then progress into equations and inequalities. The students will be learning how to graph inequalities on a number line.

Technology – Mr. Torsch

Sixth Grade Technology

The sixth grade students have just completed their fictional stories in which they rewrote classic fairy tales. The tales consisted of “switching” the protagonist and antagonist characters, showing the differences in perspectives between characters. The other option, which seemed wildly popular, was to develop a completely new fictional tale, with original characters and setting. All stories were accompanied by images found on the Internet through image searches, and were then posted on “storyboards” which are now hanging in our hallway.

Seventh Grade Technology

The seventh grade students are also finishing their first project of the semester, developing an invention to benefit mankind. The students had to develop a product, market the product, write a 30 second commercial, and have a “business meeting” in order to sell their products to prospective buyers. The commercials and the presentations will be held the beginning of this week, and will finish on Wednesday.

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.

The next PTCA meeting is Wednesday, December 10 at 6:30 PM. It will be a special “Humanities Night” event with students presenting work from their language arts and social studies classes.

The latest issue of Atlanta Parent Magazine is here! Pick up a copy in the front office.

BUY AN ACMS T-SHIRT TO SHOW YOUR SCHOOL SPIRIT OR FOR A GIFT FOR THE HOLIDAYS
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH STARTING AT 8AM - \$10 per SHIRT - Help support the PTCA!

High School Transition News

The 8th graders will be visiting Tech Charter High School on Friday, December 5th (8A) and Friday, December 12th (8B). Please return the permission slips to Kristin Lee.

If you were unable to schedule a conference on December 3rd, please email Kristin Lee at klee@atlantachartermiddle.com to schedule a time to meet with Ms. Lee to discuss the magnet school application procedure and your student's file.

Tech Charter High School Informational Session, Monday December 8th, 630pm at Tech High

Atlanta Girls School - Open House January 11, 2009 at 2pm. Call 404.845.0900 ext. 279 to schedule a visit.

Prospective Parent Meetings at Paideia - December 8 from 730-900pm

Here are some helpful websites for families interested in private schools:

A How to Guide to Choosing a Private School in Atlanta

<http://www.atlantaparent.com/08-01-January2008/jan08-art4.html>

Georgia Independent School Association

<http://www.gisa-schools.org/>

For more information about high school transition, please contact Kristin Lee, ACMS Counselor, at klee@atlantachartermiddle.com.

“LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MADNESS!”: ACMS HUMANITIES NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10 – 6:30 PM



Purpose:

To showcase student work in the humanities—language arts and social studies—to an audience of parents, guardians, and community members in order to promote understanding of the curriculum at ACMS

Student Work Represented:

6th Grade – Students will present their research on an up-standing individual from European history in the form of display boards, reports and role-plays.

7th Grade – Students will present in written and artistic forms their analysis of the question “Mao Zedong: Hero or Villian?”

8th Grade – Students will present a “primary source” that they have created based on the first draft of their research paper on a topic of Native American culture.

Order of Events:

6:15 to 6:30 – Students arrive at school and begin to set up

6:30 to 6:50 – An Introduction to the Humanities Curriculum with Mr. Underwood & ACMS Students

6:50 to 7:15 – Student Work Rotation #1

7:20 to 7:45 – Student Work Rotation #2

The students and staff of ACMS hope to see you at Humanities Night!!!

*Atlanta Charter Middle School
820 Essie Ave., SE, Atlanta, Georgia 30316
Voice 678-904-0051 Fax 678-904-0052*

****\$10 off for ads placed before December 15, 2008!*****

Dear ACMS Parents:

Support our school and recognize your student—post a Personal Display of Affection (PDA) ad in the ACMS yearbook!

The yearbook is one of our favorite school traditions. Students anticipate reliving the school year through photos, student portraits and event highlights. Soon your child will be bursting with excitement to review the yearbook. Imagine the surprise when your child finds a personal message from you!

To order a PDA for your student, please return the enclosed PDA Order Form, along with a favorite photo of your student. Please identify the photo (to avoid damaging the photo, write the name on a sticker and place it on the back of the photo rather than writing on the photo). Provide a personal message to be printed next to the photo. If you have any questions, please contact **Jacob Edmison**, yearbook adviser, at **(678) 904-0051**.

Thank you for supporting our school!

Sincerely,
Jacob Edmison

P.S. Business ads are also available. Please contact Jacob Edmison (jedmison@atlantachartermiddle.com) for information and rates.

Yearbook PDA Order Form

Yes, I want to post a PDA for _____ in the yearbook!
(print student name)

Ad Size <small>(check one)</small>	Price	Maximum number of words in message
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/8 page ad	\$30.00	15 words + 1 photo
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/4 page ad	\$50.00	30 words+1 photo
<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2 page ad	\$100.00	50 words+2 photos
<input type="checkbox"/> Full page ad	\$200.00	100 words+3 photos

Place a personal message in this space.
 If you need additional space to write your message, attach a separate sheet of paper.

Enclosed is a check* for \$ _____

Signature: _____

** Make checks payable to Atlanta Charter Middle School*

Please send this order form, along with a photo, to the following address:
Atlanta Charter Middle School
820 Essie Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30316

Or return to Jacob Edmison at ACMS

BABY PICTURES

The yearbook needs the eighth graders' baby pictures, so please make sure you give us your pictures! These pictures will be used for a photo montage in the yearbook .

December 8th is your last chance to get them to Mr. Edmison. You may not get your picture back, so give us a copy. Write your first and last name on the back of the copy.



Thank you!

Sincerely, The ACMS yearbook staff

ACMS Extracurricular Activities

ACMS Sports

Basketball has begun! Basketball practice is Tuesday & Thursdays from 4 to 6. At present, girls practice at the ACMS and the boys practice is located at the Grant Park Recreation Center. Students must have a valid physical on file with the school in order to practice and play in games. All athletic fees are due before the first game, Friday, 12/12.

Athletic fees:

Free: \$30.00

Reduce: \$35.00

Full Pay: \$40.00

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

Chess Club

ACMS CHESS CLUB has started. It meets every Friday from 7:40 am to 8:30 am. All skill levels can participate. Chess Club will meet every Friday morning that school is in session. IT'S FREE! For more information contact Bob Peatman at 770/865-7918 or peatmanb@gmail.com.