

The Chalkboard

DON'T FORGET! | December 24-January 13

DECEMBER 19, 2007

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30
31	1 2008 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6
7 School Open	8	9	10	11	12	13

Upcoming events: **1/16** PTA general meeting **1/21** Holiday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) **1/25** Early dismissal (12:15 P.M.)

Greetings and Happy Holidays to All:

We have almost begun our Winter Break—it is amazing how fast this year has gone!

When we return, we will embark upon more learning experiences, administration of the second DIBELS test for grades K-3, and the DCBAS for grades 3-5.¹ This work will build upon the skills learned in the first two advisories and counts on a lot of support from administrators, teachers, and friends.

We need to let our students know that they are doing well, but can always do better. We need to look at some of their weakest areas and help them to grow. The same applies to many of the simple everyday behavioral issues that we face. We need to encourage our learners to understand that school is a place to live, grow, and learn. This can only happen if we focus and spend our time wisely both learning and developing positive and strong social habits. We are working hard to bring about a good combination of two worlds: the educational and the social. We want our students to enjoy learning and to engage in activities that will make them responsible and ready for tomorrow's workforce.

Fullan (1997) states, "Nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by schools and families/community working together in partnership..."

We at Stoddert value the strong partnership we have with parents and community. As we enter 2008, let's all take a good look at our school's needs and move together as a team so that we can make Stoddert an even stronger learning community; one that can be a model for other public and private schools in the area. We are proud of our children, parents, and community.

We want to wish each and every one a happy and healthy New Year. May your families enjoy celebrating any holiday that is close and dear to your hearts and cultures; as you do this, spread joy, happiness, and learning to all those around you.

Enjoy the holidays and we thank each and every one of you for your support during 2007. We look forward to an even more productive 2008.

¹ DIBELS is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills test; the DCBAS is a test given in preparation for the DCCAS.

Sincerely, Dr. Andriana Kalapothakos, Principal

Carrying a Heavy Load

During this time of year, we parents carry a heavy load. In addition to our jobs in and out of the home and caring for our families and children, we further busy ourselves with sending greeting cards to friends far and near, baking goodies for our neighbors, lighting up our homes on these cold, dark evenings, and traveling to visit relatives and friends or hosting them in our homes.

In the meantime, our children are also carrying a heavy load — in the form of a heavy and cumbersome backpack! If your child asks you to carry his or her backpack, it might be because the backpack is too big and/or the straps are not fitted to the child's small frame. A quick search of the internet brought up several websites regarding the correct fit of backpacks for children. I got these tips from a website written by Chris Adams, a human factors engineer and industrial designer. You might want to check out his site yourself. It's got great tips for the comfort of our kids:

ergonomics.about.com/od/ergonomicsforchildren/ss/cbpfitguide.htm

- The backpack **should be no larger than the child's back**. It should sit 2" below the shoulder line and no more than 4" below the belly button.
- The width of the backpack should be about an inch or two wider than the ridges of the shoulder blades. A size chart on the website suggests backpack sizes for children ages 4 to 18: (i.e., 4 years old: 11" x 6"; 8 years old: 14" x 7.5").
- A chart also suggests **maximum backpack weights** for children based on their weight (according to The American Physical Therapy Association, the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and the American Chiropractic Association).

Adams also says that the backpack should have wide, padded straps and a padded back. A waist strap is ideal for distributing the weight of the backpack to the hips, and a front strap between the two shoulders helps with weight distribution and discourages slouching. Children should carry the backpack on both shoulders, flat items should be packed against the back, and heavy items should be packed in the bottom. The shoulder straps should be tightened to keep the backpack firm against the back and no more than 4" below the belly button or waistline.

If we can help lighten the load of our children, maybe they'll be more likely to help us with the heavy load we parents carry!

Happy Holidays to you and yours from your PTA. We hope to see you at our meeting on January 16, 2008. Safe and happy holidays!

Shari Gilbert, Co-President

Book Fair Thanks

Thanks to organizers Claire Dejou and Ms. Bruce and to all the volunteers who made the Fall Book Fair a success!

The Big Chili

December means holidays, snow, and upcoming vacations, but it also means that the Big Chili planning is getting into high gear. The Big Chili is the PTA's biggest fundraiser and your help can make it the best one yet. We need energetic volunteers to help get out letters to all our past donors and to spearhead solicitations from the community. If you'd like a "behind the scenes" job you can work on at your own pace, we have plenty of those as well.

Contact Molly Evans (evans.cohen@gmail.com or 337-0134) or Terri Thompson (stoddertmom360@yahoo.com) with questions or for more information.

Fillmore Calendar

The **Winter Concert will be postponed** until January because we were having a venue problem. We are aiming for January 17 at the chapel at American University but we haven't gotten final confirmation.

Open House for Pre-K through Grade 2 students.

January 30 (morning) and February 1 (evening)

Grades 3-5 Festival Evening

for dance, drama, and musical theater

February 1 (7:00-8:30 P.M.) at Fillmore

There is an exhibition of about 100 pieces of art representing all the Fillmore schools at the Guy Mason Rec Center through December.

Get Your News

Sign up to receive Stoddert updates by email. Just send a request to Wendy Sefsaf at wfelizali@aol.com and you will be added to the list.

Stoddert Directory Updates and Corrections

If you've found any incorrect information in the Stoddert directory, please send the corrections to Molly Evans at molly.evans@starpower.net. We'll post updates here and on the website, www.stoddert.org.

TOWNSEND

Blair	5th: Clark
Madison	3rd: Chatalian
4756 Eastern Avenue NE	
Washington, DC 20017	202-297-0528
Leon Townsend	

blairmadisontownsend@comcast.net