



The Phoenix Messenger

FFCA South Middle School 8710 Ancourt Road SE Calgary, AB T2H 1V2

January 2012

Matter of Principal

Children learn best when the significant adults in their lives, parents, teachers, and other family and community members, work together to encourage and support them. Schools alone can't address all of a child's developmental needs. The meaningful involvement of parents and family are essential. The idea that a strong partnership between schools and families is essential may seem obvious. In simpler times, this relationship was natural and easy to maintain. Teachers and parents were often neighbors and found many occasions to discuss a child's progress. These days, it can take extraordinary efforts to build strong relationships between families and educators. Schools have to reach out to families, making them feel welcome as full partners in the educational process. Families, in turn, have to make a commitment of time and energy to support their children both at home and at school. The effort involved in establishing and maintaining these connections is well worth it! Our experience is that significant and meaningful parent involvement is possible, desirable, and valuable in improving student growth and performance. (Adapted from *The Home-School Team: An Emphasis on Parent Involvement*, Students thrive when their parents become part of the classroom, By James P. Comer, Norris Haynes)

At FFCA we offer means for families and students to reflect on the teaching and learning that happens each day. On Monday, January 30th, at the South Middle School campus, students will bring home surveys for families to complete. This is an opportunity for families to share their thoughts, provide feedback and ask questions about teaching and learning at our campus and at FFCA. These surveys should be returned by Monday, February 6th. Students will also have an opportunity to share feedback during February. Later in the month the feedback will be shared with staff as they review their professional goals for the academic year.

Also note, that learning conferences will occur at the South Middle School on January 26 and 27. This is an opportunity to discuss student progress and goal setting in advance of report cards which will go home on March 8.

“Destiny is not a matter of chance; It is a matter of choice.”

William Jennings Bryan

John Picard, Principal Educator

Susan Boyd, Associate Principal

Mission

To provide a safe and caring environment where academic excellence, character development, parental involvement and staff leadership are valued and fostered.

Vision

Excellence in student achievement and character development through distinctive teaching and learning.

Important dates!

- **Jan 26&27**
Learning Conversations
- **Feb 10-Wordle Day**
- **Feb 16/17-PD Days**
No School
- **Feb 20-Family Day**
No School
- **Feb 24- Hot Lunch and Jersey Day**

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Have you heard the news?

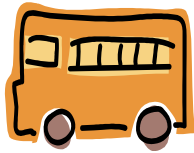
The bus zone on Ancourt Road has been extended!

This will allow our buses to park in a safer manner and provide for greater driver and pedestrian visibility around the buses.

Please be aware of the parking signs around the school.

When dropping off or picking up students please consider parking close to one of our two crosswalks so your child(ren) can safely cross the street.

When parking in front of our neighbors homes please be mindful of their driveways to ensure owners can easily access their homes.



Hello FFCA families!

We are looking for donations for character incentives draws we will be holding throughout the year.

Students in our school will be given tickets for positive behaviors such as: helping or encouraging other students, picking up garbage without being asked, volunteering within the school and community, or standing up for a friend or classmate. We will have a draw bin where students can place their tickets, which will be drawn for a variety of prizes at whole school assemblies throughout the year.

Please email Mrs. Newell if you have anything you can donate.

Thank you,

House Leagues Committee

michelle.newell@ffca-calgary.com

The Second of February

There's only the day the
whole long year,
That I hope and pray the
sun won't appear.

The second of February,
you all know,

The groundhog goes
searching for his shadow.

If he should find it, the
story is told,

We'll have six more weeks
of winter's cold.

But if it is cloudy, his
shadow's not there,

There'll soon be warm
weather and days will be
fair.

So please, Mr. Sun, for
just this one day.

Find a big dark
cloud - and stay away!

SPELLING BEE NEWS

Our school-wide Spelling Bee took place on January 10th and it was a nail-biter. Many teachers noted just how good the spellers were this year-students were spelling words some of us teachers cannot even pronounce! Despite tough competition, reigning champion Kaleigh B. took the win, making this her second victory in a row. Kaleigh's winning word was chihuahua. Kaleigh will move on to the Regional Bee, held at the University of Calgary, in March. Congratulations to all spellers who participated in our Bee!



SMS is Going to Science Fair

For the first time in several years, SMS is planning to send several students to the Calgary Youth Science Fair. Some students have already been looking at possible project ideas.

It's now time to begin the projects, so students should contact Mr. Wiebe if they plan to go to the science fair. Parents, if you are interested in having your child participate, contact Mr. Wiebe at kevin.wiebe@ffca-calgary.com.





The Poverty Project



The poverty project is a project created by the students of FFCA Lead program in an attempt to raise awareness for homelessness in Calgary while also gathering items needed for the winter.

Items Needed:

10 points:

- Hygiene Items (deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, feminine hygiene items, etc...)
- Underwear/Socks
- Food items (spices, canned goods, pasta, drink crystals, etc...)

20 points:

- Clothing (pants, shirts, shoes, interview appropriate clothing, etc...)
- Winter Accessories (gloves, scarves, toques, etc...)
- Bath towels

50 points:

- Winter Gear (jackets, snow pants, fleece, etc...)

100 points:

- Computer Accessories (mouse, keyboard, desktop screens, etc...)

500 points:

- Computers (laptop or desktop)

The class with the most points wins a pizza party. Each class sets a goal of a min of 500 points, if achieved classes get the chance to dress up their teacher in a silly costume for a day. Donations can be received in each classroom from Jan . 12 until Jan . 25 before they are collected by the Drop in Centre.

Statistics of Homelessness in Calgary

- What is Poverty? – When a family or person is unable to meet their basic needs and wants.
- It is possible to be in poverty but not homeless.
- 140,000 people live in poverty in Calgary.
- 4060 people were recorded homeless in Calgary in 2008, the next count will happen in Jan 2012.

What can you do to help?

- Donate food, basic hygiene products, money to shelters, clothing.
- Raise awareness.
- Volunteer your time.
- Support Calgary's 10 year plan to eliminate homelessness.
 - By Jan 2018 families or individuals should not have to spend more than one week in shelters or on the streets before being provided with a suitable and safe home.



Please contact Ms. Grace at the school with any questions. gina.grace@ffca-calgary.com

Message from Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for FFCA is seeking your input with regards to creating meaningful partnerships with our FFCA parents in support of positive student learning.

The FFCA Board of Directors/Society recently adopted a revised FFCA Charter document.

The new Charter provides a renewed vision and expectation of parents as partners in their child's learning experience at FFCA as outlined in the Charter statement below:

Parent Partnership

Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (FFCA) is a school where parents and staff build strong relationships that support the academic achievement of students. In our school there exists an expectation that 100% of parents will engage as partners, knowing that when they are involved, students learn more, classrooms are enriched, the school improves and the

entire community benefits

Parental partnership is a cornerstone of the culture at FFCA. FFCA expects that 100% of our families will engage in various forms of parental participation. Each FFCA campus will offer an array of opportunities through which parents share their time, talents and abilities.

FFCA challenges parents on a yearly basis to demonstrate this commitment in support of their child's learning experience.

Ultimately, parental partnership at FFCA is characterized by the support and participation of parents at home, at school and in the community. FFCA requires parents to take seriously their responsibility for being effective partners in their child's formal education. As partners, everyone shares in supporting FFCA learners in their pursuit of personal excellence.

This is the commitment that is expected when parents choose FFCA as their school.

To help us create greater definition for this expectation, we ask that you provide us with feedback by answering the 3 short questions found at the survey link provided below.

This survey will be available online until Wednesday, January 25th, 2012.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FFCAParents>

Your thoughts about how we can work together for the benefit of our kids are greatly appreciated.

Get your pictures in the yearbook!

The Yearbook Staff invites students and parents to submit photos for the yearbook. If you've got great photos of school and community events or you and your friends just having fun, we'd like to see them. Our photographers can't be everywhere. Help us get as many photos as possible to create a terrific book everyone will want to have.

Here is how you can submit photos online:

- Go to:
<https://images.jostens.com/login>
- If it does not automatically log you into the site, enter user-name:400113607 and password:sms
- Browse to select the photo(s) you wish to upload.
- Enter information about the photo and provide contact information in case the staff needs additional information.
- Click "Save Details".

It's that easy! Submit your photos today! The last day to submit photos is 6/15/2012.

Thank you, and **Remember that the time you spend taking and uploading pictures can be included in your volunteer hours!**

Sincerely,
Yearbook Adviser and the 2012
Yearbook Staff.

The Yearbook Staff will review all photos and determine final yearbook content. We cannot guarantee that all submissions can be used in the book.



In 2009, there was "S.O.S."
 In 2010, there was "Does the Shoe Fit?"
 In 2011, there was "Murder at Crooked House!"
 In 2012, come to the *South Middle School Grand Theatre* for:

Never After



It wasn't always happily ever after. . . .

Coming Spring 2012
 A Kopec/Wangler/Gindin Production



UNIFORM CONSIGNMENT SITE 2011-2012

FFCA Families are able to buy and sell gently used uniform items by accessing the Consignment Store within the FFCA website.

To access the site, go to your Campus Home Page, and select the link to “Family Log In”.

- Choose “Consignment Store” for your shopping needs, and “Your Consignment Items” to put an item on the site and manage your account

For any questions of how to use the site, please contact Wanda Olson at wanda.olson@ffca-calgary.com .

Please note: All buying and selling of items is done between the families - no payments or collections are available on the site. To purchase an item, simply email the family posting the item and ask for photos or set up a time for viewing and payment.



Parking Directions for Parents

“Don’t be discouraged or put off some idea you may have by people saying that it hasn’t been done before or that nobody ever did it that way. That’s all the more reason to try.... Concentrate on your goal and don’t let anyone dissuade you and you can do miracles.”

Norm Crosby

88th Avenue SE
Arlington Drive SE (West Side)
Aberdeen Road SE
Please make note of the marked bus zones.
Please pick up and drop off students near crosswalks so that students have a place to cross.
Please do not block residential driveways.



Character Fund

Dear FFCA Stakeholders.

CHARACTER FUND ANNOUNCEMENT

The ASC (Association of School Councils - is a FFCA Council membership consisting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs from all FFCA campuses) held a meeting on January 11, 2012. The ASC resolved to reserve disbursement of the Character Fund applications pending further review and recommendations from the Character Fund Committee. All applications will be held in trust until such time.

Thank you,

Laura Freeman

ASC Chairperson

Auction News

The ASC (Association of School Councils) has made a decision at our meeting held on January 11, 2012 regarding participation in the on-line auction. Although this has been a popular FFCA fundraiser in which participation was community-wide; we have been unsuccessful in finding an on-line auction provider that meets our needs. We have experienced many difficulties with past on-line auctions and thus the negatives outweigh the positives. We are currently trying to find an alternative FFCA school-wide activity that is suitable for all campuses. We are asking if any stakeholders have any ideas on a one-school event please send to their campus council chair.

Thank you,

Laura Freeman

Chairperson ASC

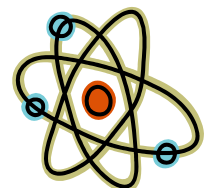
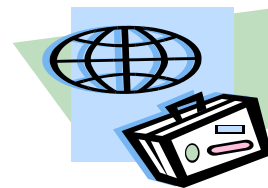
Science Center

On Monday, January 9th, the Grade 8 classes went to Telus Spark, the new science center. For our first hour of looking around, we had 4 options. They were: Being Human, Earth and Sky, Energy and Innovation, and an open studio. Being Human showed things you can do with your body, such as using your senses. In Earth and Sky there were many things, like being a DJ with raindrops or exploring the effects of avalanches and mudslides. Energy and Innovation was, in my mind, the #1 best exhibit. In this exhibit you can be an animator, take apart computers to see how they work, and you can build a robot! Last, but not least, was the open studio where you let your mind wander and have fun.

Of course, we didn't see all the exhibits; we did challenges as well. There were two challenges that we did, Water for All and Hydraulic Challenge(s). In Water for All we had to make filters for "water" from the Bow River and test it for purity after each. In the Hydraulic Challenge you could choose between creating a water show, unloading blocks from a dump truck, or moving a marble up a wall. All of these involved hydraulics.

Now, after going on the website, I found there are over 100 new exhibits, adult nights, and you can have a party there, which means there is something for Everyone.

Ivan M. 8H



Adopt a Family

Again this year South Middle School was involved in helping to provide a wonderful Christmas for a couple of families in our community. Our Adopt-A-Family and Angel Tree project was a wonderful overwhelming success. Some of our grade 8 students helped organize and wrap all of the gifts that came in and were donated to the families. The families were so very grateful that they were going to be able to celebrate Christmas with their children knowing that they would have some gifts under their tree and a full Christmas dinner.

Thank you to all of the families that participated in this wonderful experience.

Gina Grace



Ice Skating

- Feb 1 9:00-10:00 am 5F, 5B and 5HU
- 10:15-11:15 am 6B,6Land 6N
- 11:30-12:45 am 5P,5HO and 5HY
- 1:00-3:00pm Whole School
- Feb 2 10:45-11:45 am all Grade 8
- Feb 2 1:00-2:00 pm 6E,6W and 6K

Hitmen against SMS : Jan31 from
10:15-11:30am.



Attendance - Notify the Office

When a child is going to be late or absent from school, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the office and inform the office of the reason for the lateness/absence .

Please contact the office at
403-259-3175 ext. #221.



Counsellors Corner

Please check our school website as I post upcoming parent workshops and resources on there regularly. My postings are on the top right side of the website under Counselor's Corner. I also have many resources in my office so please feel free to contact me any time at the school.

Welcome to a new year and for many of us an opportunity to make new resolutions. One resolution that comes up for children and adults alike is to get better organized. Here are a few tips that can help in this process. The important part of this is the maintenance step. Do not get too frustrated with it and if it gets a bit out of control again, refer back to these skills and try again.

Teach Organization Skills to Students at Home

- **Label where things should go.** Affix pictures or text on clear plastic containers to show what goes in each container.
- **Schedule an after-dinner cleanup.** Set aside five minutes after dinner to clean up the common areas in the house (living room, countertops, mudroom). Set a timer, put on some lively music, and have the family pitch in. Make it a daily routine!
- **Have your child stay put when cleaning up his work area.** Instead of taking away the stuff that belongs in other rooms, have him make piles. One for the bedroom, one for the kitchen, one for the playroom. If he walks off to another area, chances are, he will get sidetracked.
- **Buy your child a corkboard and pins** -- for hanging up important papers that might get lost on a cluttered desk.
- **Assemble a homework supply kit.** Place in a see-through plastic container, with a lid, everything she will need to complete assignments -- from crayons and a glue stick to a calculator and dictionary. With this system, it does not matter where your child chooses to study. The necessary supplies can accompany her anywhere.
- **Provide plastic sleeves for notebooks** -- and insert them into your child's notebooks or binders for storing important papers that are not three-hole-punched.
- **Color-code entries on a calendar** -- one color for school-related stuff, another for sports, a third for social activities.
- **Take a photograph of what neatness should look like** -- whether it's in a backpack or your child's workspace. Have your child compare his work to the photograph and critique himself. Did he do a five-star job (his work looks exactly like the photo), a three-star job (only a couple of things out of place), or a one-star job (he made an effort but seemed to run out of steam)?
- **Put up a large whiteboard that includes a space for a calendar.** Give each family member a different-colored marker to write down tasks and events for the week, so each can easily spot his or her own.
- **Have your child design a system that works for him.** An organizational system that works for you is unlikely to work as well for your child.
- **Take out the academic component.** When helping your child organize his backpack or workspace, don't say anything about his terrible handwriting or a paper his teacher has marked up with comments. Continue organizing. You are working on organization, not academics.
- **Ask permission before going into his backpack to assist him in organizing it.** You wouldn't want him going into your purse or briefcase without asking first.
- **Make organization a family affair.** Sometimes entire families are organizationally challenged. If so, admit your difficulties and ask the family to choose a problem to tackle. Design a system and get a commitment from family members to stick with the program for a few weeks to see if it helps. Hold a meeting after one week to evaluate and fine-tune the system, and decide on a reward if everyone makes it through week two.

Tackle one mess at a time. Parents' biggest downfall is having kids organize their room, backpack, and homework space all at once. Choose one task, get that system up and running, and, after a month or two, move on to another task.

Gina Grace

School Counsellor

gina.grace@ffca-calgary.com

403-259-3175 ext 128

BUS DELAY NOTICES

Go to <https://www.ffca-calgary.com/myhome/familydefault.asp>

And login with your family user name and password

Once you are logged in you can click on [Bus Subscriptions](#) in the Family Zone Menu and choose the bus route(s) you want delay notifications for. Campuses will also receive the delay messages in the same manner as you – please do not call them to ask about delays as they will have the same information as is available to you. The campuses will not be calling you in the event of a delay.

Bussing Expectations

We would encourage all parents/guardians to review our **Transportation Handbook** that provides information on topics such as bus stops, behavior and passenger information. The document is available at the following link:

[http://www.ffca-calgary.com/FFCA/Parent Info/Bus%20Routes/Transportation%20Handbook%202010-11.pdf](http://www.ffca-calgary.com/FFCA/Parent%20Info/Bus%20Routes/Transportation%20Handbook%202010-11.pdf)



Parent Information:

The *2011/2012 Curriculum Handbooks for Parents, Curriculum Summaries* and the *Curriculum Express for Parents* are available on the Education website in English at www.education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/handbook.aspx



Dismissal Doors

At the end of day students should leave the school through the grade level exits. If a student is being picked up by a parent or guardian that is in the school the front door may be used. This should allow us to have a less chaotic front office area during dismissal. Thanks for your cooperation.



News from the Library

As students continue to use both our school libraries and the public library, we encourage them to learn how to locate information and books on the shelves. Students struggle with this. Below is a public website, that has been put up by teachers from the University of Texas. It is called "Order in the Library" and it works on finding and shelving items, with both alphabetic order and Dewey Decimal order. I strongly encourage students to work their way through the program.

Web link:

<http://users.ece.utexas.edu>

If you have any questions about the library, online catalogue and the library skills information, please contact me.

Janet Gabel

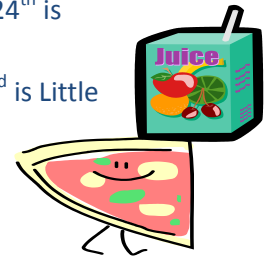
Librarian SEE/SMS

Janet.gabel@ffca-calgary.com

Hot Lunch News

February 24th is Jugo Juice

March 23rd is Little Caesars



2011-2012 Public Board Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held in the Central Office Boardroom* on Wednesday evenings beginning at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise specified**

January 18, 2012

February 15, 2012

March 14, 2012

April 18, 2012

May 16, 2012

June 13, 2012

*FFCA Central Office is located at: #240, 688 Heritage Dr. SE, Calgary (go to "Contacts/Central Office" to access map)

Students Riding Other Buses

We **do not** offer bus passes due to full buses and shared busses with other campuses. If working on a project with a classmate you will need to make alternative arrangements.

Susan

Goldsmith

Transportation

Coordinator



The CanLearn Centre|Calgary Learning Centre offers a multitude of programs for both students and their parents.

Test Ready

Grades 7-9

Strategies for dealing with test anxiety as well as studying and exam preparation are introduced to help students be more successful. This after school program is 4 Wednesdays and offered throughout the school year.

Next program begins... *January 18!* Organization and Study Skills

Grades 7-12

This student and parent program offers helpful strategies to develop a well-organized approach to learning. Organization and Study Skills is offered throughout the school year.

Next program begins... *January 25*

Write On!

Grades 7-9

This intensive small group program gives students the opportunity to improve their essay writing skills. Write On is 4 Wednesdays and offered only once this year.

Program begins... *March 7!*

CanLearn Centre/Calgary Learning Centre

3930 20 Street SW
Calgary Alberta T2T
4Z9

t 403 686 9300 x 131
tf 1 877 686 9300
f 403 686 0627



CASUAL DAYS: 2011-2012

MARCH 23 COSTUME DAY

JANUARY 20 BACKWARDS DAY



FEBRUARY 24 JERSEY DAY APRIL 27 TWIN DAY



May 25 No Theme Day



LOGGING YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS

Please remember to log your volunteer hours . You can check and/or enter your hours by going to <http://www.ffca-calgary.com/myhome/> and entering your user name and password. Then choose on the right hand side; "Family Volunteer Hours"

Thank you to all our families for your endless efforts in keeping the South Middle School a great place!

For the first 5 hours you volunteer you are sent an email thank you. For 10 hours you are sent a thank you card in the mail with an Andy's buck for your child. For 15 hours a pen and a carabineer.

Did you know that at the SMS campus we will treat your child to lunch when your family volunteers 20 hours for FFCA.



February 2012



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Bricks 4 Kidz 3:20-4:20	2	3	4
5	6 Mad Science 3:30-4:00 Chestermere Town Hall Meeting Gr 6 Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	7	8	9	10 Spirit Wordle Day	11
12	13 Mad Science 3:30-4:00 Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	14	15	16 PD DAY NO SCHOOL	17 PD DAY NO SCHOOL	18
19	20 FAMILY DAY NO SCHOOL	21 Talent Show Audition Grade 5 11:50-12:45	22 Talent Show Audition Grade 6 11:50-12:45	23 Talent Show Audition Grade 7/8 11:50-12:45	24 Hot Lunch Jugo Juice Casual Day Jersey Day	25
26	27 Mad Science 3:30-4:00 Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	28 Gr 6 Freedom City Presentation	29 Autism Presentation Period 5 Grade 5,6W and 7W			

Campus Contact Information:

Phone: 259-3175 Fax: 259-3008

E-mail: davmail@ffca-calgary.com

Please call in all lates or absences to

Mrs. Conaghan or email. cindy.conaghan@ffca-calgary.com