



The Phoenix Messenger

FFCA South Middle School 8710 Ancourt Road SE Calgary, AB T2H 1V2 P:403.259.3175

September 2011

Volume 1, Issue 1

Matter of Principal

It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

It's the most wonderful time of the year
 With the kids **alarm clocks jingle bells**
 And everyone telling you "Be of good cheer"
 It's the most wonderful time of the year
 It's the hap-happiest season of all
 With those **new school year greetings** and happy meetings
 When friends **come ready for fall**
 It's the hap- happiest season of all!

Welcome back or welcome to the *South Middle School Campus*. By the time this newsletter reaches you we will have hosted our first ever BBQ Open House. This event was attended by over hundreds of people with good food, good conversation and many opportunities to learn about our campus. The energy around our campus is amazing! The sense of community is strong and the opportunities that lie in the year ahead are exciting.

School opening is an exciting time for our community neighbors as well. Neighborhood streets change from a daily calm to areas of congestion around 8:15 AM and 3:00 PM. Please be courteous and consider the following when dropping off or picking up your children from the school.

Avoid double parking.

Watch for signs indicating 'No Parking' and 'No Stopping' zones.

Leave 5 meters between your car and any cross-walk markings. This will ensure children crossing are visible.

Stay clear of school bus zones.

Park 5 meters away from stop signs, yield signs and intersections so that the view of children in the area is not obstructed.

Be mindful of entrances to garages and driveways by staying back 1.5 meters.

If you want to chat with a friend do not block the roadway with your vehicle.

Adhere to school zone speed limits, keep your speed at 30 km/hour or less.

Insist your children use crosswalks, even if you are not able to park near one.

All parking infractions in school zones are subject to a minimum \$50 fine. Please drive and park responsibly and help make our streets safe for our children.

We hope you will enjoy our first newsletter of the school year. Look inside for important dates, student authored articles, bussing news and much more.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."

B.B. King

John Picard,

**Principal
Educator**

Susan Boyd,

Associate Principal



Important dates!

- ✓ Sept 28-Terry Fox run with SEE
- ✓ Sept 29- Magazine Kick off Assembly
- ✓ Sept 29- Hot Lunch
- ✓ Sept 30- PD day, no school
- ✓ Oct 6&7- Learning Conversations, no school
- ✓ Oct 10-Thanksgiving Day, no school
- ✓ Oct 21-Charter School Conference no school

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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.

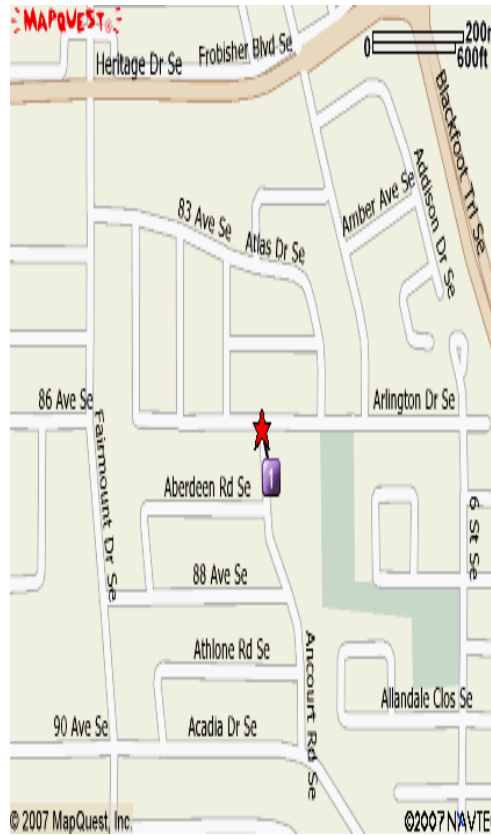
Parking Directions for Parents

88th Avenue SE
Arlington Drive SE (West Side)
Aberdeen Road SE

Please make note of the marked bus zones.

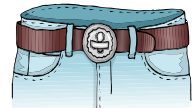
Please pick up and drop off students near crosswalks so that students have a place to cross.

Please do not block residential driveways.



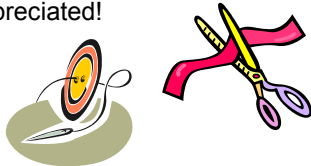
Lost and Found

With just being a few weeks into school we already have items in the lost and found. These include uniform items. Please label your child's items clearly so they can be returned to them.



Scrap Booking Club

We are starting a scrap booking club for students in Grade 5-8. We are looking for things such as paper, punches, adhesive, brads, buttons, stickers. Any supplies you have to donate would be appreciated!

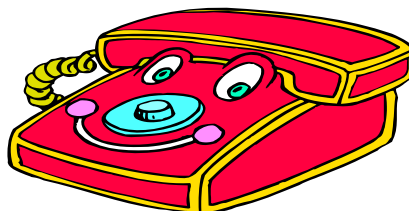


Students Riding Other Buses

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.

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.



Campus Contact Information:

Phone: 259-3175

Fax: 259-3008

E-mail:
davmail@ffca-calgary.com

Please call all lates or absences in to Mrs. Conaghan or email.

Book Fair News



Come journey to the Scholastic Book Fair at SMS school library, **October 5 – 7, 2011.**

Students will get to preview the fair during class time on Oct. 5th, but we would encourage parents to join us during the **Family Event** on Thursday and Friday during Learning Conference interviews. You could win \$50 worth of FREE books for your family and your child's teacher. You can also check out the **Classroom Wish List** program where donated books from the fair help to build the classroom libraries.

Book Fair Dates:	Wednesday, Oct 5	Class previews
	Thursday, Oct 6	8:30am – 9:00pm
	Friday, Oct 7	8:30am – 1:00pm

Did you know that for every \$10 you spend at the Fair up to \$6 goes directly back to our school? Your support of this vital literary fundraiser is key to our obtaining new books and resources for our library and classrooms.

Need volunteer hours? Email Mrs. Gabel if you are interested in helping set up, or man the library during the fair. All help is greatly appreciated. janet.gabel@ffca-calgary.com

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Academic Recognition

South Middle School has made some changes this year to the criteria of academic recognition. Honours will be 80% or above in all core subjects, electives and specialty classes.

Honours with Distinction will be 90% or above in all core subjects, electives and specialty classes.

The distinct difference will be that each core subject will need to meet the target (80% or 90%), not an average of all four. As well students will be expected to meet these targets in their electives and specialty classes as well.

5% improvement will be recognized individually in each of the four core subjects

1st Term Recognition Assembly Thursday Dec 1 8:40-9:35. Watch for upcoming Kids in the Community Info request as we look to recognize outside of school achievements as well.

SMS COUNCIL NEWS

Hello to all South Middle School parents and students. My name is Laura Freeman and I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you on behalf of the SMS School Council. Another school year is well under way and off to a great start. We have started this year off with our first annual SMS Welcome Back BBQ!

The SMS School Council has a great group of parent volunteers on board; I am so pleased to be a part of this group. This is the 4th year that I have been Chairperson and I have enjoyed it immensely.

Our first meeting of the school year was held on Monday September 12th. School Council meetings are scheduled to be held on first Monday of the month and take place in the teachers' lunch room at 6:30 pm. SMS Council Members are volunteers who have been elected to work together for parents and with parents for the enhancement of the school.

More specifically we are here to:

Provide a forum for parents to give input on various school functions

Attempt to enhance communication between school and home

Discuss and make decisions on such things as:

- Fundraising and how that money will be spent
- Hot lunch program
- Community building activities
- Other events for the school
- And much more!

If you would like to have a say in any of these topics, please feel free to join our monthly meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 3rd at 6:30 pm.

If you are unable to come to our meetings but would like to give your input/suggestions please feel free to send an email to: mlrfreeman@shaw.ca. Your comments will then be directed to the appropriate council member.

We are:

Laura Freeman

Shelley Murray

Dean Schattenkirk

Debbie Matheson

Yalonda Saunders

Tracy Prokopetz

Susan Brightwell

Tara Seaborn

Kris Emery

Catherine McLean

Tara Millington

Candace Kraushaar

Chairperson Shelley Murray

Vice-Chair

Treasurer

Secretary

Volunteer Coordinator

Fundraising Coordinator

Hot Lunch Coordinator

Hot Lunch Coordinator

Uniform Representative

Andy's On Mail Coordinator

Community Service Coordinator

Teacher Representative

**Volunteers needed!
Share your money
management and life
skills with the next
generation!**

On **November 16, 2011**, the students at **FFCA South Middle School** would like to participate in the Junior Achievement **Dollars with Sense (DWS)** program.

Junior Achievement is a non-profit organization that provides business and finance

Dollars with Sense

programs free of charge to schools.

DWS is a program that is designed to encourage students to develop the financial literacy necessary to make informed decisions in their financial futures using budgeting, planning and investments.

We are in need of volunteers to share their experiences and insights. As a volunteer you will work with students in one 4-hour session in the

morning.

Training is provided free of charge. Please contact Matt Mitchell at 403-781-2581 or e-mail at mmitchell@jasouthalberta.org to sign up for this event!



ALPACAS NEEDED

SMS Needs Student Volunteers to Reach Even Higher

As we begin the school year, three groups of student volunteers are being recruited. The groups have been named with our mountaineering theme in mind.

LAMAs (Laptop Mobility Agents) are being trained to move laptop computers around the school wherever they are needed.

ALPACAS (Always reliable People that recycle containers) will be trained to organize and supervise our recycling program.

Coming soon: SHERPAS (Some Honourable Electronically Ready People Always Serving) are a voluntary group that will meet weekly to learn about installing, maintaining, and trouble-shooting computer technology. Last year this group, aka the Tech Crew,

solved problems all over school. Our biggest achievement was getting the laptop cart and power cords organized so that the computers stayed in excellent condition all year long. Students from all grades are welcome. Interested students should listen for announcements about the first meetings in the week of September 19th.

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.

We may walk over to Subway during lunch hour or bring lunch in time for period 4. All of the siblings that attend our campus, whose families have volunteered 20 hours, enjoy this opportunity.

Counselor's Corner

Welcome back to another great year at South Middle School. I hope this finds everybody relaxed and ready for routine to jump back into our busy lives.

I'm excited to welcome back our returning students and families and I look forward to meeting all of our new students and families. Here is a brief overview of some of the services I can provide at the school for your child and/or your family. Please feel free to contact me any time and I look forward to talking with you.

Professional school counselors provide culturally competent services to students, parents/guardians, school staff and the community in the following areas:

- Individual Student Planning – school counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish personal goals and develop future plans.
- Responsive Services – Responsive services consist of prevention and/or intervention activities to meet students' immediate and future

needs. These needs can be necessitated by events and conditions in students' lives and the school climate and culture, and may require any of the following:

- *individual or group counseling
- *consultation with parents, teachers and other educators
- referrals to other school support services or community resources
- *peer helping
- *psycho-education
- *intervention and advocacy at the systemic level

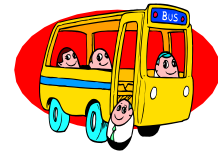
School counselors develop confidential relationships with students to help them resolve and/or cope with problems and developmental concerns.

I will be running a leadership program on Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 at the school. I only have spots for 15 students in grade 7. Please contact me ASAP if you are interested. The program will run from Sept.21 -Nov.23. The students will work through modules including: Leadership, personal wellness, communication, teamwork, problem solving and decision making, conflict management, diversity, planning and organization and leisure education.

Gina Grace
School Counselor
South Middle School
gina.grace@ffca-calgary.com
403-259-3175ext.128

Bus News

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%](http://www.ffca-calgary.com/FFCA/Parent_Info/Bus%20Routes/Transportation%20Handbook.pdf)



Andy's on Main

Andy's on Main is scheduled to open Monday Sept 26,2011. We are in need of Parent Volunteers committed to Monday-Friday 11:20-12:20 pm as well as some parents on an on call basis. Its an excellent opportunity of putting in your volunteer hours.



"The words that have most impacted my life are those of an old college professor: The only time you have to succeed is the last time you try."

Philip H. Knight

Counselor's Corner

Welcome to the exciting and always eventful days of adolescence and middle school. This is just a reminder that we are all experiencing this time in our students lives together. Welcome to SMS.

And suddenly it's upon your child. Adolescence. You remember the sweaty palms, crushing insecurities, trembling fear of saying something embarrassing, doing something embarrassing, or worst of all, being seen with your embarrassing parents. It seems like only yesterday ... but you suddenly find yourself in the position of authority and guidance: you are the Embarrassing Parent.

"Adolescence is a time of turmoil," explains school psychologist Laurie Zelinger, Ph.D., "Kids may reject parent values in order to experiment with finding their own identity." Yeah, you've noticed a lot of that going on lately. So what's an embarrassing parent to do? Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Parenting Coach Lori Landau advises that "the more we can support them through this important developmental period, the smoother the road toward adulthood will be."

Try to remember that a seemingly rude, sullen, disrespectful preteen is just a child trying to cope with the dizzying and confusing changes that come with adolescence. Landau notes that "the process of defining an identity is not what preteens are paying attention to, but it hap-

pens just the same. They are paying attention to fun, friends, what they want, what they wear, and what they get to do. Incorporating their sense of reality will help you guide them toward success." And the best way to do that is to listen to what your child has to say with as little judgment as possible.

"Beginning in middle school, children's thinking has become more flexible," says Zelinger. "They are developing reasoning skills where they can think about abstract concepts and can begin to hypothesize." Landau emphasizes the fact that adolescents are beginning the all-important task of finding their place in the world, and pondering how they can contribute to humanity. "Coming into this stage, preteens already have some beliefs about what they can do in the world in terms of establishing friendships and pursuing talents or about their self-worth, but what we see emerge is the ability to notice and think about such things: self-reflection."

Okay, so there are lofty thoughts of contributions to humanity, but there are also major physical changes. According to Zelinger, adolescents experience a significant "growth spurt" around the age of thirteen (boys) and eleven (girls). Of course, children don't all develop at the same rate: combine this fact with the hyper-attentiveness to peer response that comes with this age and you have a perfect storm of in-

security. "A zit or bad hair day can influence their mood for (seemingly) an eternity," according to Zelinger.

Although adolescence is a sweaty and stressful time, it also marks the start of your child's ability to truly empathize with others, and to consider how he or she can make the world a better place. By keeping the lines of communication open and providing a sympathetic ear, you will be a guide to your child through the rocky waters of adolescence. And that's an embarrassing parent any kid would be lucky to have.

Please feel free to contact me any time at the school.

Gina Grace- School Counselor-
South Middle School

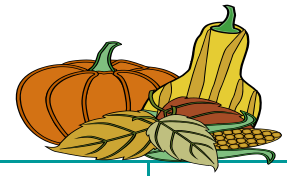
Gina_grace@ffca-calgary.com
403-259-3175 ext.128


When it's said and done, it's how much hard work and fun you've had that can add up to a greater success than all the money in the world. Enjoy your life, and smile a lot.

Marvin Hamlich

Composer, Pianist

October 2011



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Canada Olympic Park Grade 7 Outdoor Education Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	4	5 School Photos Gala Wear 	6 Learning Conferences	7 Learning Conference	8
9	10 No School 	11	12	13 Fish Creek Park Gr 8 Outdoor Education	14 Gr 7 Bridges Field Trip	15
16	17 Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	18	19	20 Photo Retakes Gala Wear 	21 Charter School Conferences	22
23	24 Toastmasters 3:30-4:30	25	26 Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra Grade 5	27	28 Hot Lunch	29
30	31					