

FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Schools and City Brace for Severe Flu Season



MEHMS clinic aide Dana Upton (right) instructs a member of the Huskie's flag team on the proper way to fold the American flag. The flag team raises and lowers the flag each day.



For the past two years, health experts have warned of the increased potential for a flu pandemic. As a result, local, state and federal governments have been working together to develop and fine-tune operational contingency plans to help ensure widespread illness will not totally disrupt services to communities.

Several of our school division's leaders have been meeting with local health officials and city leaders to determine the best course of action in the event of widespread illness here in Falls Church. For example, if the schools and general government had to shut down for a period of two to three weeks, how would the payroll get done? Could healthy employees provide services from home? At what point do we determine when schools or local governments should close because of widespread illness? How do we determine when they should reopen?

While we hope for the best, we must anticipate the possibilities of a worst-case scenario and plan accordingly. At the same time, I want to urge you to take precautions to protect yourself and to protect others against flu. Here is some advice from our local health department:

Get a flu vaccine. You may still become ill, but the vaccine could help lessen the severity and duration of the illness.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Each session at the sink should last at least 20 seconds.

Use hand sanitizer in the absence of soap and water.

Avoid transmitting germs with your hands by coughing into your elbow.

If you have a fever – stay home until your temperature returns to normal. Otherwise, you risk passing along your illness to colleagues and students.

No one can predict when a pandemic will occur, but it takes place when a new strain of the virus appears in humans, causes serious illness and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide. However, whether we face a pandemic or a seasonal flu outbreak, prevention measures are your best defense.

Lois

Pandemic Flu Info Resources

Tune into Falls Church Community Television (FCC-TV) to watch **Pandemic Flu: A Video Guide to Pandemic Preparedness and Response in Virginia**. The informational video, created by the Virginia Department of Health, can be seen on FCC-TV Cox Channel 12 or RCN 2 on the following days and times:

- Monday - Friday at 7:30 a.m.
- Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Or visit: www.vdh.state.va.us/PandemicFlu/

Hand-Wringing Numbers



36% - Percentage of people who never wash hands after coughing into them.

31% - Percentage of people who rarely wash hands before lunch.

14,000 - Number of times a dollar bill is passed during its lifetime.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control & U. S. Mint

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TJ's "Day After" Game a Hit with Kids

The day after 'Back-to-School Night' is hard enough. You're exhausted, mentally drained, and the last thing you want to do is get out of bed...much less worry about what to wear the next day.

At Thomas Jefferson, the staff declared "the day after" an official dress-down day with a twist. Every member of the staff (except one, who shall remain nameless) wore their new Falls Church City Public Schools T-shirt to work and decided to turn the idea into a lesson on observation.

The test: How long would it take dozens of groggy second, third and fourth graders to notice everyone on the staff was dressed alike?

Third grader Ryan Jones may not have been the first person to notice, but he was the first to inquire about it...and before the first bell!

For his keen insight, Mr. Jones was awarded an official TJ Tigers pencil and basked all day in the admiration of his peers.

Proof positive it's the little things that mean a lot!



Among the TJ Elementary faculty and staff decked out in the highly fashionable FCCPS T's are: (top to bottom, l to r) Pat Schillig, Sarah Romer and Jed Frei, Beth Hull, Robin Hopes, Ryan Jones (contest winner) and Katie Stratman, Briana Platt, Deidre Haft, Trudy Taylor, and Juls Talbert.

FCCPS Baby News!

Congratulations to retired TJ Elementary reading specialist, Bonnie Rupp, on the birth of her grandson, Mateo Joseph Menconi. The baby was born July 20th in Denver, Colorado and weighed in at 7 lbs. 14 oz. Due to the high altitude there, newborns are routinely placed on oxygen for two days.



Congratulations to former MEHMS special education teacher, Aimee Meyer



Seggerson, on the birth of her daughter, Sadie Marie. The baby was born on September 13th weighing in at 7 lbs. 5 oz.

Congratulations to George Mason counselor, Rob Clark, on the birth of his daughter Siena Alejandra. His wife Melissa delivered on August 4th. Siena weighed 5 lbs. 13 oz.



FCCPS Travel Journal

Employee: Marybeth Connelly
BIE Community Outreach Coordinator, Central Office

Destination: Road trip to Colorado

Experiences: When my husband Michael and I first got married, we lived in the southwest and this year wanted to share the excitement of the open road with our children. This was their first cross-country vacation experience.

Favorite Sights: Michael and I really enjoyed visiting the Rocky Mountain National Park, where the daytime temperature ranged from nearly 100 degrees at the bottom of the mountains to 45 degrees at the top. Our children were impressed with oil derricks in Kansas, crop dusters in the Great Plains, a herd of buffalo and other animals they wouldn't normally see in Falls Church.



The Connelly family stops along the Continental Divide. Pictured (l-r) Brian, Andrew, Michael, Julie, Marybeth and her childhood friend, Kathy Thompson, who showed the Connelly's around.



Did you know that 2007 marks the 400th anniversary of Captain John Smith's landing at Jamestown? The state of Virginia is celebrating "America's 400th" Anniversary for the next 18 months.

On November 9, classrooms from around the world will participate in a live webcast called Jamestown Live! If you teach grades 3-12, you can sign up to participate by visiting

www.Americas400thAnniversary.com.

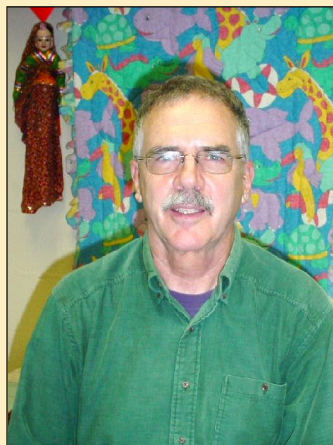
For K-12 SOL-linked plans, visit www.JamestownJourney.org

Did You Know...

Mount Daniel clinic aide Timothy O'Connell is a licensed marriage officiant? He obtained his credentials several months ago and has already joined dozens of couple in matrimony.

"I am a legal wedding officiant in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, and in most other states by reciprocity," O'Connell said.

So if you know some folks who want to tie the knot, Timothy's extension is 5643!



(Photo by Donna Viscardi)

Husky Henry Heralds Henderson's Heros

Great! You stayed past the horrible headline. But the idea it promotes has been a hit.

"Henry" is a stuffed husky dog who is "awarded" to teachers at MEH who provide creative ways for students to learn and offer a positive learning environment.

Principal Ann McCarty, Henry's original owner, first delivered him to language arts teacher Karin Ritchey and encouraged others to visit to see her fun and unique approaches to lessons.

Ritchey then visited other classrooms and decided Henry should next move to Kathleen Johnson's classroom. He did, until Ms.

Johnson, last week, awarded Henry to Rory Dippold who has Henry now sitting on top of the world. Literally. Stop in and see.



Henry's heros to date (l to r): Karin Ritchey, Rory Dippold and Kathleen Johnson.

News To Use

Borders Offers Educator Discount

Borders-Tysons Corner is having its annual 25% off sale for all educators, active and retired, and anyone employed by a school system.

The 25% off sale runs from Thursday, October 12 through Tuesday, October 17 and applies to all regularly priced books and music. DVD's are discounted 20% and you will save 10% on electronic items.

Smithsonian Teacher's Night

Discover all that the Smithsonian Institution has to offer you and your students, including free resources and an opportunity to meet Smithsonian educators.

Friday, October 20

6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

National Postal Museum

Registration required.

Details at

www.teachersnight.org.

Flu Shot Clinic

A flu shot clinic has been scheduled for FCCPS staff and family members over 18.

Thursday, October 26

From 3:00-5:00 pm

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School Cafetorium

\$23 per person

Participants must send a check payable to **Associates in Medicine** to Rhonda Wilhelm in the HR Office (x5614) by Friday, October 20.

Flu shots are also available from your local physician.

Newest School's Newest Tradition: 'Buh-Bye'

When the final bell rings on Friday's at MEH, the place clears out in a hurry. Students and staff scurry out the doors. But it's not to the weekend they run, at least not yet.

Everyone (teachers, support staff, custodians, office staff, maintenance crews) heads to the bus loop...just to wave goodbye. "The initial idea was to do something nice for the students at the end of a great week," said assistant principal, Vincent Baxter. "But it's turned out to be an emotional high for

us, too."

So if a student tells you his favorite part of school is Friday afternoon, ask him *where* he goes to school so you can truly understand.



Friday afternoon in the bus loop at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School. Staff members wave goodbye to students at the end of another great week.

Calendar of Events

First Friday Music 10/06/06

Falls Church's First Friday event at 2 Sisters Coffee (255 W. Broad St.). **George Mason High School students** and their popular band **Basmati** will perform from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm.

Fall Church Farm Day 10/07/06

Farm Day is at **Cherry Hill Park** in Falls Church from **10 am – 3:00 pm** on October 7. Admission is free, but some activities have a fee. For information, call 703-248-5171.

Health & Wellness Fair 10/12/06

FCCPS & Falls Church General Government have combined efforts providing Falls Church employees with the biggest, best health fair yet! There will be vision and blood pressure screenings and demonstrations of classes such as yoga and Jazzercise.

3-6 pm at the Falls Church Community Center

GMH Band/Chorus Breakfast 10/14/06

Applebee's on West Broad St. will be flipping the flapjacks from **8-10 am** to benefit the George Mason High School music program. Cost: \$6. The breakfast includes 2 sausages, 2 pancakes and a drink. See any band or chorus member for tickets.

International Family Picnic 10/15/05

The annual International Family Picnic, sponsored by FCCPS, will be held at Cherry Hill Pavilion from **3-6 pm**.

The event is free and those attending are asked to bring a native dish from their own country or another foreign country to share.

Volleyball, soccer, a pinata and other games are planned for children of all ages.

Falls Church Spooktacular Halloween Carnival 10/28/06

This carnival has been a popular event for local children for more than 30 years. It is free and directed toward children aged infant through 5th grade.

All events are held at the Falls Church Community Center. The Carnival runs from 6 pm to 7 pm for infants through 2nd grade and 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm for 3rd through 5th graders.

Calling All Employees!

Do you have a story to tell, an event to publicize or a milestone to celebrate?

Send your information to FCCPS

Communications Director Karen Acar at kacar@fccps.org.

