



FALLS CHURCH CITY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# INSIDE TRACK

NOVEMBER 2007

## FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Is it Budget Time Already?

Lois Berlin, Superintendent



It's just two months since school started, and we're already thinking about next year's budget! Of course, that's standard practice for a school division, but it seems as though we just finalized the last budget. When the economic picture is robust, the budgeting task is a little easier. When it is lean, as it is expected to be in the coming year, the task can be daunting.

On Monday, the school board and the city council met in a joint work session at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School to begin this year's budgeting process. I shared with the city council the aspects of our school division that make it the system of choice for families moving to the area, which is a key selling point for the city. I also shared with the

council members the increasing enrollment projections for the coming years, which will require additional staffing, and I reminded them that in order to attract quality teachers, our salaries need to be competitive with our neighboring school divisions.

City staff shared with us a bleak economic forecast for the coming year. Because real estate assessments are down, revenues are expected to drop. In addition retirement and health insurance costs are expected to go up, which adds to the city's financial burden. City staff will be looking closely at their programs to see if there are any cost-saving opportunities there. Our school administrators will do the same with our programs to ensure every tax dollar is being used as efficiently and effectively as possible

We must be good stewards of our resources, and ensure that we have sufficient resources to continue providing our students with a high quality educational program. The ability to create quality schools is the primary reason Falls Church became an independent city nearly 60 years ago, and it is a tradition no one in this community can afford to do without.

Obviously, this isn't the kind of news I enjoy sharing with you, but you should know the truth, and you should hear it from me. As we move forward, you will hear more about the budget process, and you can stay informed of important budget work sessions and hearings by checking the school board calendar on the division Web site, [www.fccps.org](http://www.fccps.org).

"I awoke  
this morning  
with devout  
thanksgiving for  
my friends, the  
old and the new."

- Ralph Waldo  
Emerson

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Central Office staff Melanie Elliott, Kate Seche, Rhonda Wilhelm, Marty Gadell and Margaret Doubleday model their Halloween looks.



In the GMHS office, Toni Ramos dons a fancy witch hat to go with her smile.

Look inside for additional Halloween photos . . .

## Living in the Read Building

In September, nine FCCPS employees moved into a unique apartment building - the Read Building. This mixed-use structure, located in the center of Falls Church, houses a bank, a fitness club and 26 apartments, nine of which are reserved for FCCPS employees as Teacher Workforce Units (TWU).

One resident is Mt. Daniel secretary **Jill Dodson**, who lives with her son in an “amazing” apartment. Each apartment includes granite



*Jill Dodson and son, Miles, show off the kitchen at their Read Building apartment.*

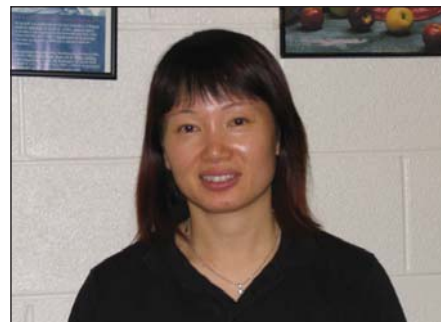
countertops, heavy soundproof doors and custom fixtures.

Because of their central location, residents are able to walk to many places like Mary Riles Styles Library, Cherry Hill Park and the Falls Church Farmer’s Market. They might even be seen walking to school!



*The Read Building on W. Broad Street.*

## New U.S. Citizen



Congratulations to FCCPS’ newest U.S. citizen, **Yuling Zhang**. A bus aide and TJ cafeteria worker, Zhang passed her citizenship test on October 25th and was sworn in as a United States citizen the next day.

A native of China, Zhang has lived in Virginia since 2001, and has worked for the FCCPS for two years.

She is excited to enjoy the benefits of citizenship – and has inspired other foreign-born employees to apply.

## NCTM Conference

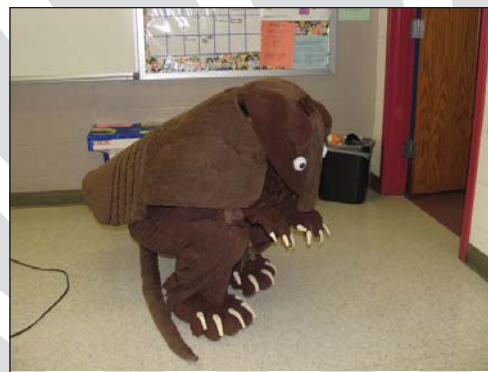
FCCPS math teachers visited Richmond last month for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Regional Conference and Exposition. Attending the conference were TJ teachers **Heidi Lang**, **Mary Kay Howard**, **Jed Frei**, **Sarah Romer**, **Jean Lewis** and **Lisa Allan**, and assistant principal **Bob Palermo**, as well as MEH teachers **Kristin White** and **Kathleen Taylor**.

They brought home great ideas that they are putting into practice in the classroom, and sharing at faculty meetings and with their grade-level teams.

Intrigued? Mark your calendar for April 2009, when more than 18,000 teachers from across the country will gather for the NCTM Annual Meeting in Washington DC.



*GMHS counselor Marcia Schumann announces that “The Witch Is In!”*



*GMHS math teacher Linda Gantz poses as an armadillo.*



*Even TJ’s plaster statue of Thomas Jefferson wears a costume.*



Mt. Daniel physical therapist **Allison Lambropoulos** and her husband, Jimmy, welcomed their third daughter on October 20. Baby Ava Christine weighed exactly 7 pounds. Big sisters Alexis (holding Ava) and Athena are glad to have a baby in the family.



Mary Ellen Henderson PE teacher, **Mark Coffren** became a father on September 5th when he and his wife, Rebecca, welcomed their daughter, Madison, into the world. She weighed in at 6 pounds, 11 ounces. Since her birthday coincided with the start of football season, Madison has already decided that she is a true blue Dallas Cowboys fan. (Her dad had nothing to do with this, really!)

## Wedding Bells



Former Mt. Daniel daycare employee **Carly Halayko** married Alex Welsh on October 6th. After honeymooning in the British Virgin Islands, Carly and Alex are living in Georgetown. Carly now works at the National Gallery of Art. (Yes, the mother of the bride is Mt. Daniel principal Kathy Halayko.)

## FCCPS Travelogue

**Employee: Norma Contreras, GMHS Custodian**

**Destination: Juticalpa, Olancho, Honduras**

**Norma Contreras** and other members of St. Anthony's Catholic Church visited Juticalpa and smaller, surrounding villages during a mission trip from October 1st - 9th. While Juticalpa's agriculture industry has led to relative prosperity, unemployment is very high and



*GMHS custodian Norma Contreras, back from her trip to Honduras.*

people in surrounding communities are very poor. Norma helped deliver food and clothing to 123

## Don't Let Rumors Rule

Harmful rumors and gossip about fellow workers are always going to be a possibility in the workplace. Unfortunately, they are examples of "man's inhumanity to man."

They deplete resilience and undermine productivity. However, you can choose to help shorten the lifespan of harmful gossip with the following three interventions:

**Squelch It:** Discount the rumor by refusing to listen to it.

**Suppress It:** Supply correct information to end rumors quickly.

**Body Block It:** Refuse to let it get past you (and take on more life) by not passing it on to others.

Of course, the best prevention is to assume good will and personal self-control so rumors and gossip don't start.

To that end, it may be helpful to remember an old Turkish proverb: "Who gossips to you will gossip about you."

The Employee Assistance Program is available to serve FCCPS employees and family members.

Office phone: 703-528-8033  
Cell phone: 703-863-6680

families in need, and participated in worship services with them.

She says the experiences help put her life in perspective.

"I learn from these trips that in order for people to live happily, you really don't need that much," she said. "These people are doing the best that they can with what they have, and they are still happy."

Norma says she enjoys helping others through her church. She has also taken mission trips to Panama and Colombia.

## Separated at Birth?

Finally putting to rest the myth that Mt. Daniel Language Arts CIRT and retired first grade teacher, **Carol Monseess**, and children's book character, Mrs. Wishy-Washy, are the same person, Carol posed with her twin sister, Mrs. Wishy-Washy.

Everyone at Mt. Daniel knows Mrs. Wishy-Washy because she visits each classroom and tells the story about how she washed the farm animals that just wouldn't stay clean.

### Celebrate National Children's Book Week

November 12-18, 2007



Mt. Daniel teacher Carol Monseess (l. and r.) poses with "twin sister" Mrs. Wishy-Washy.

## Community Calendar

### FIRSTFriday

Friday, Nov. 2nd; 6:30 p.m.  
Art & Frame of Falls Church  
111 Park Ave.

Performance by GMHS Saxophone Quartet and Brass Quintet. Several local businesses are hosting FIRSTFriday performances and gallery shows. Retail shops and restaurant have discounts. Visit [www.firstfridayoffallschurch.com](http://www.firstfridayoffallschurch.com).

### George Mason University

Initiatives in Educational Transformation  
Master's Degree Info Sessions

Prince William Nov. 7th 4:30 p.m.  
Arlington Nov. 13th, 4:30 p.m.

Earn a Master's Degree while teaching. For more information, visit [www.gmu.edu/iet](http://www.gmu.edu/iet).

### Holiday Craft Show

Dec. 1st 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Dec. 2nd, 11:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
Falls Church Community Center  
223 Little Falls St.

### Submit Your News

Want to be in Inside Track?  
Send stories to **Marybeth Connelly** [connellym@fccps.org](mailto:connellym@fccps.org).

## M.U.S.I.C. Days

Need some leaves raked? How about a babysitter or a birthday party helper? What about musical accompaniment for the event you're planning?

Students from the GMHS Band and Choral program will be working in the community, doing whatever needs doing Nov. 10 and Dec. 1 to raise money for their annual trip - a competition in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The students are not charging standard fees for the work they do. They're asking you to pay what you think is fair. The money will support the band and choral programs.

Contact **Margaret Drawbaugh** [drawbaughm@fccps.org](mailto:drawbaughm@fccps.org).



Entries in the TJ Pumpkin Contest



## Local Treasure

Did you know that Falls Church is home to two of George Washington's boundary stones marking the original District of Columbia line? The boundaries of the 10-mile square Federal Territory were marked with 40 milestones in 1791.

You can see the West Boundary Stone at Andrew Ellicott Park on Meridian Street. You can also see the "South West 9" Boundary Stone near the East Falls Church Metro on Van Buren St.

Both markers have sunk into the ground, and are surrounded by iron fences for protection.

