



The ECHO



Welcome Back to School!

On behalf of the RCV Parent Teacher Association (PTA), welcome back to school! Whether you're a new or returning family, we can't wait to show you what the PTA has in store for this year! We warmly invite you to join us at any or all of the following events to have some fun, make some friends, and learn more about all the activities we have planned for this year.

- **Thursday, September 6 (6:30-8:30PM):** Ice Cream Social
 - *Bring the entire family to this free PTA event in the All Purpose Room where you can meet or re-connect with other RCV parents and kids. FREE ice cream for everyone!!*
- **Wednesday, September 12 (6:30-8:30PM):** Back to School Night
 - *All parents are encouraged to attend Back-to-School Night. This is an evening for parents to gain a better understanding of curriculum and grade level plans for the school year and to learn more about your child's instructional program. We'll also be launching our new PTA website at Back to School Night!*
- **Tuesday, October 2 (7:00-8:00PM):** First PTA Meeting of the year!
 - *Get the latest school updates from Mr. Burns and Ms. Carr and brainstorm ideas for how to use existing PTA funds. Meetings are open to everyone, and are held in the RCV Media Center.*
 - *FREE childcare will be provided by BAR-T for children aged 3 years (potty trained) to 12 years old.*
 - *We are happy to arrange translation services for PTA meetings! Please email your request to rcvptapresident@gmail.com at least 48 hours in advance to allow time to coordinate this service.*
- **Friday, October 12 (6:30-8:00PM):** Family Fun Night (BINGO)
 - *Gather with the school community in the All Purpose Room to play bingo, eat pizza, and yell for one more turn on the Bingo card!*
- **Tuesday, October 23 (5:00-9:00PM):** Chipotle Restaurant Fundraiser
 - *Come out to Chipotle, grab dinner and hang out with friends and teachers after school!*

We hope to see you at some or all of these events!

Sincerely,

Your RCV PTA



RCV PTA GOOGLE CALENDAR

For a complete calendar of RCV PTA events, please visit the website address listed on page 2 to view our new RCV PTA Google calendar. This calendar will continue to be updated throughout the year as new events are scheduled, so we hope you'll find it a useful resource!

MCCPTA FALL TRAINING

For anyone who is interested in learning more about specific PTA roles, activities, and processes, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) will host their FREE Fall Training on **Saturday, September 15 (9:00AM-3:00PM) at Quince Orchard High School**. All PTA members are welcome to attend!



Summer Updates

Many of you participated in the End of Year PTA survey last year, and we've been working hard over the summer to make sure your voices are heard.

This year we'll be making a few changes based on the survey results:



- **Online Directory** (also available to print as a hardcopy): With a 50/50 split between people preferring online vs. hardcopy directories, we decided to try a FREE online directory program (**AtoZ Connect**) which has been used with success by many other schools in our area and which still gives us the ability to print for families that prefer using traditional hardcopy directories. Perhaps the best feature of AtoZ Connect is that its automation will allow us to release the directory *much* earlier than we have in the past – *we anticipate this year's directory will be available by mid-October!*
- **More Variation in Event Days:** A number of families mentioned that they are unable to attend Friday night events. To give *all* children at our school the chance to participate, the PTA will be mixing some Thursday night events into our schedule. We're also excited to try holding our first-ever weekend event this year, with the end of year Carnival being held on a **Sunday** afternoon (May 19, 2019). Mark your calendars!
- **PTA Meeting Agendas and Minutes:** At the suggestion of many survey responders, we'll announce PTA meeting agendas in advance of each meeting and will provide as much detail as possible to help prioritize your attendance. *Remember, you do NOT have to be a PTA member to attend our PTA meetings* – anyone who is interested in the topics being discussed is welcome to attend. For parents who aren't able to attend but would like to know what's going on at RCV, PTA meeting minutes will be posted on the RCV PTA website within 48 hours after the meeting occurs.
- **New Selection of After-School Activities:** This year we're excited to offer an even wider variety of options for before & after-school enrichment activities, including new partnerships with companies such as the STEM Academy After School Club and Imagination Stage.
- **New and Improved PTA Website:** We've been busy spending the summer building a brand new PTA website, and we're excited to launch it at Back to School night! Among other things, our new website will offer users the ability to make online payments, view current volunteer opportunities, see our calendar of events, and hear the latest PTA announcements!

While you await the website launch date, take a sneak peek of our new RCV PTA Google calendar at the website address below!

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=rcvptapresident%40gmail.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York

New Reading Initiative

Did you know that with the loss of RCV's Focus School status, we now qualify for the **MCPS Reading Initiative**? This program provides an extra instructor in Grades 1 and 2 during the literacy block to provide students with more small group instruction and individualized attention as they learn to read. As a result, Grades 1 and 2 class sizes will actually be reduced to 14 kids (or less) per teacher during literacy periods!

While the MCPS Reading Initiative program only applies to Grades 1 and 2, it's worth noting that the accelerated math program that is already in place for Grades 4 and 5 has a similar effect of reducing student to teacher ratios for all math classes in Grades 4 and 5.

Want to learn more about it? Come join us at the next PTA meeting!

Meet the Board

With 4 of our 5 fabulous previous PTA officers having reached their 2-year term limit at the end of last year, the 2018-19 school year brings with it an (almost) entirely new PTA board, listed below:

Role	Name	Contact Info
President	Rachel Schiffenbauer	rcvptapresident@gmail.com
Treasurer	Trisha Armstrong	trishaja99@gmail.com
Secretary	Kate McClure (<i>returning officer</i>)	kdmclure@comcast.net
Vice President (Social Activities)	Crystal Hillard Co-VP, Erika Murray	clhillard08@gmail.com benke78@hotmail.com
Vice President (Fundraising)	Michelle Levit Co-VP, Kara Fisher	mlevit217@gmail.com rcvpta.kara@gmail.com

Please feel free to contact any of us directly with questions or comments about PTA activities!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Immeasurable thanks to all the outgoing PTA board members: Amy Smith, Melanie Breslyn, Klaire Marino, and Katherine Fiske. Your hard work, dedication, and leadership has made RCV into the wonderful community it is today – thank you for giving us such a great foundation to build on!!!

Sauna Hill – our long time amazing cultural arts assemblies coordinator has decided to step down but is passing all her knowledge on to **Anna Johnson**, who has kindly volunteered to tackle this critical role!

Kara Fisher for organizing playdates for incoming Kindergarteners over the summer, and **Sarah Flynn** for volunteering to help bring our PTA newsletters back to life!

Carol Hart and **Crystal Hillard** for working together to create a fantastic slate of after school activities for our kids to enjoy!

Thank you also to **all** the parents who brought in food and supplies for the back-to-school staff breakfast – the tables were literally overflowing with goodies and the staff loved it all!! **Thank you!!!**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Will joining the PTA require me to attend meetings and volunteer lots of hours?

A: No! We are all busy parents and recognize that life includes many competing priorities. We encourage you to attend PTA meetings and volunteer at events, but neither of those is required. There are many ways to get involved with very short time commitments or flexible schedules, but you can also help just by becoming a PTA member.

Q: What should I expect at PTA meetings?

A: Meetings typically begin with our principal and assistant principal, Mr. Burns and Ms. Carr, communicating the latest news from RCV and MCPS. **Parents always find these updates extremely valuable!** Past updates have included up-to-the-minute information on projected class sizes, teacher assignments, test scores, school funding, etc. PTA meetings give parents an opportunity to ask questions, communicate concerns, and raise suggestions directly with our school administrators. Agendas for upcoming PTA meetings will be posted online in advance of each meeting!

Q: Can I bring my kids to PTA meetings?

A: Absolutely!! During PTA meetings, we partner with BAR-T to offer free babysitting to children who are 3 years (potty trained) to 12 years old. Younger kids are welcome to attend meetings too, but would need to be monitored by you in the meeting area. Don't worry, we're all parents, so we all understand the struggles that come with trying to keep a toddler quiet!