

Important Dates

December 17
Late Start (10am)

December 17
Financial Aid Presentation @ MCHS 7pm

December 18
Orchestra Winter Concert @ MCHS 7pm

December 22 - January 5
No School - Winter Break

January 1
Financial Aid period begins

January 7-9
Talent show tryouts (3-5pm)

January 12
PTSA Meeting GO Conf Room(12:30pm)

January 12-15
Musical auditions (3-5pm)

January 13
Grad Nite Committee mtg - Go Conf Rm.(7pm)

January 14
Late Start (TBD)

January 19
MLK Holiday - NO SCHOOL

January 21-23
FINAL EXAMS - School day ends at 12:20

January 28
Talent show rehearsal (7am-9pm)

January 29
Talent Show - Auditorium (7-9pm)

February 2-6
AP Registration @ lunch

February 2-3
CAHSEE Testing (8am-noon)

February 7
Winter Formal - location TBD

February 9
PTSA Meeting- GO Conference Rm (7pm)

February 9-13
AP Late Registration

February 10
12th grade parent mtg. - Auditorium (7pm)

February 10
GRAD Nite Committee mtg. - GO Conf Rm (7pm)

February 16-20
NO SCHOOL



PTSA NEWS

Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Teachers, and Students:

We are living in exciting times! Girls' volleyball was the CIF Southern Section runner-up, our girls' cross-country team was second in CIF, and our football team played in the CIF championship! Our girls' tennis and golf teams also did very well. Congratulations to our teams and coaches for an outstanding fall sports season. I have had such a good time watching our kids play.

MCHS is currently engaged in a comprehensive school accreditation program by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This accreditation is important to Mira Costa as many colleges and universities require or look favorably upon it. Achieving WASC accreditation requires an involved self-study review that can serve as a powerful tool to improve the quality of education and more effectively serve our students and staff.

Working through the accreditation process, it has come to our attention that we may have some issues regarding communications with our parents and students. Interestingly, at the heart of our communication issues is technology. During our self-study we found that many of you wonder why we have so many systems operating independently and why all of our teachers don't utilize Gradebook Wizard. I would like to take this opportunity to explain our information systems, some known issues and the plans we have to address these issues.

Student Databases

We began (many years ago) with a student database called Aeries which contains grades, attendance, counseling and discipline information and much more. Several years ago we purchased Intouch, which is linked to Aeries. You may access Intouch to get real-time attendance information, progress reports and grades. Although one of the objectives associated with these on-line systems is to reduce printing and mailing costs we do mail a first quarter report card in order to receive information back from the post office regarding incorrect addresses.

Last summer we also engaged the company Infosnap to provide an easy-to-use online registration system. As with many projects of this nature, the system was not launched according to schedule and wasn't available until shortly before registration was due. This caused some consternation, but all things considered registration went quite well. The district is now working with Infosnap to correct any and all issues for a flawless registration next year.

continued on page 2

Message from the Principal (continued from page 1)**Gradebook Wizard**

Last year we piloted the program Gradebook Wizard which gives parents the ability to see all grades (homework, projects, tests, etc.) entered by teachers using the system. This is a wonderful communication tool for parents and students, but it has caused some irritation for both parents and teachers.

One of the most common complaints is that not every teacher uses Gradebook Wizard. When the system was initially piloted last year approximately 50 (out of 105) teachers used it on a voluntary basis. This year I asked everyone to use the system and we now have 84 teachers participating.

We would like to use the grade book option offered by Aeries, because it would require less work on the part of teachers, but we do not have enough (network) bandwidth. With the passage of Measure BB we hope that our technology infrastructure will improve. Regardless, we will use a new system next year that works with Aeries, making it easier for teachers to use and allows the administration to upload schedule changes daily. It is my goal that 100% of our teachers will use an online grade book system next school year.

Please note: If a teacher does not use Gradebook Wizard, you may have your student pick up a Friday sheet in the office (talk to your EA), which can be used to get current grades from each teacher.

Some parents have complained that teachers don't enter grades in Gradebook Wizard frequently enough. Please keep in mind that teachers have up to 180 students. In addition to grading, they are also are

creating lessons, writing assessments, and developing activities. We ask for your patience in allowing teachers an adequate amount of time to complete the grading process.

Because systems like Gradebook Wizard provide timely information, parents are more informed than ever. This is a good thing. However, if there is a question regarding a grade, the student, not the parent, should be the one to address this with the teacher. It is often easily handled between the teacher and student and this teaches the student to be their own advocate. A parent need only get involved if the situation is not easily resolved. We are here to help your child be successful. Let us know when you need our assistance.

Looking Forward

In summary, our goal is to have two online systems—one for registration and a grade book system that is used by all teachers. In the mean time, we ask for your patience and support.

It's that wonderful time of the year. I'm counting my blessings, and I hope you are, too. My daughter just relocated from Texas to Redondo Beach, and for the time being, resides just down the hall. We are having such a great time!

I hope you all have a truly relaxing holiday with those you love.

With Warm Regards,
Julie Ruisinger
Principal



Katelyn DeCoste - Visual Arts

Congratulations to the 2008-2009 PTA Reflections Art Contest Winners!

The 1st place winners in each category will go on to be judged at the District level.

Visual Arts

1st place: Katelyn DeCoste
2nd place: Holly Madrid

Photography

1st place: Marie Lauzon
2nd place: Robin Janotta

Literature

1st place: Austin Siegemund-Broka
2nd place: Alka Nath
3rd place: Karsten Kaczmar



Holly Madrid - Visual Arts

From the President's Corner....

This time of the year lends itself to reflection and appreciation . . .

I am so fortunate to be a part of the wonderful Costa community and I am so grateful to the:

Generous parents who have given their support through time and money to make MCHS a fantastic school for our children.

Wonderful, caring teachers, administration and staff who give of themselves to our students each and every day.

Outstanding students who never cease to amaze me with their academic achievements, athletic feats, artistic and musical creativity, generosity, insight and kindness in the many hours of volunteering and charitable work and their enthusiasm for life.

THANK YOU ALL!

With warmest regards,
Cindy

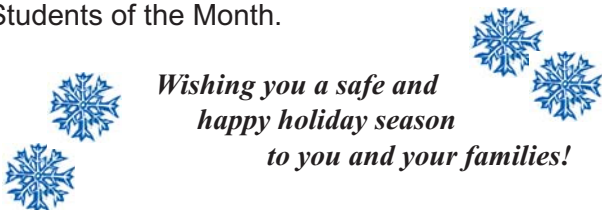
A few reminders . . .

* Please be generous and give to the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF). Without your support, our school would not be able to offer our children the quality education that we have all come to expect. MBEF grants over \$700,000 to MCHS. We need your help!

* Remember to check our [PTSA web site](http://www.mchsptsa.com) www.mchsptsa.com for current information about what's happening at MCHS.

* It's not too late to join the PTSA. Note, PTSA members/donors are eligible to purchase the PTSA's MCHS Student Directory. See the membership form at the end of this newsletter.

* Come to our next PTSA meeting on Monday, January 12th at 12:30pm in the Guidance Office Conference Room. We'll be honoring our fall PTSA Students of the Month.



MBEF Provides Over \$700K in Grants to MCHS

Thanks to donations made to MBEF students at MCHS benefit from a breadth and depth of programs that would not be available otherwise.

MBEF makes the following possible:

- Elective Courses
- College and Career Counselors
- Science Lab Assistant
- Librarian
- AVID program
- PACE program/Rocky Wilson
- Model United Nations Novice Conference
- Technology Director and Lab Specialist

Mira Costa families have donated \$300,000 to MBEF - much less than the amount MBEF provides to MCHS.

Every donation makes a difference. Please give what you can to ensure that these wonderful programs are maintained.

**This holiday season
provide the gift of education.
Visit www.mbef.org to make
your donation today.**



MBEF has currently raised \$1.9MM.
The fundraising goal is \$2.8MM.

A donation from every MBUSD family goes a long way to meeting this goal. Please donate what you can. Thank-you!



Reflections Contest
Marie Lauzon
Photography - 1st place

Are You Part of the "Safe Space Program"?

Safe Space is a small, but important, way that parents can help address the issue of students and substance abuse. By making a commitment to the Safe Space Program you demonstrate, along with the majority of Mira Costa parents, that you do not believe that alcohol and substance use is acceptable behavior for Mira Costa students.

Currently 77% of households are registered with the program. Only 10% of Freshman families are registered—the lowest number since the program's inception. If you haven't already done so, please visit the [Safe Space website](#) to learn about the program and register. Our goal is 100% participation.

If you have questions or would like more information about Safe Space or issues involving students and substance abuse, please contact Rocky Wilson, Ph.D., MCHS Student Intervention Advisor at rwilson@manhattan.k12.ca.us.

THE MIRA COSTA IMPACT PROGRAM

IMPACT Student Support Group

Available to all students at MCHS, this is an excellent forum for students to explore reasons and behaviors related to substance abuse. Discussions focus on advantages and difficulties of sobriety, while allowing students to express feelings and attitudes that often lead them to addiction.

Tuesdays from 3:05 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. in Room 24

Group Facilitator – Coleby Lombardo, school outreach counselor with the Torrance Memorial Thelma McMillan Center for Chemical Dependency Treatment.

IMPACT Parent Support Group

Any parent may attend this group on a drop-in basis. The main purpose of the Parent Support Group is to help parents understand how to support their child during a time of decision and change related to their involvement or association with alcohol or drugs. Parents have a chance to ask questions and receive resources related to helping the family through this decisive period.

Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in Room 57

Parent Facilitator – Kim Smith 310-502-0277

Questions? Call Rocky Wilson @ 310-318-7337, x5102

GRAD NITE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

G.R.A.D. Nite (Graduates Resisting Alcohol and Drugs) is an all-night celebration sponsored by the GRAD Nite Booster Club following the graduation ceremony on graduation day

Planning an event for over 500 graduating seniors that will truly appeal to them is an enormous undertaking. The G.R.A.D. Nite 2009 committee has already reserved a spectacular venue and formulated a pro-forma budget. But we can't do this without your help.

To encourage maximum participation the ticket price does not cover the actual cost of the event. We're asking everyone to **consider a financial donation to help subsidize the cost of this event** and to help maintain the tradition of an exciting, well-attended GRAD Nite.

A great G.R.A.D. Nite this year encourages future seniors to participate when it's their turn.

For more information please contact Linda Ensbury at (310) 372-3795 or by email at gradnite09@gmail.com.

Please see the donation form at the end of this newsletter.

BOOKS



Thank you to all who donated books to the library. Hundreds of books were received, many that will be added to the library collection and some that were used to begin the "book swap" program.

The library will continue to gladly accept donations of high school appropriate fiction and non-fiction books in good condition. You may drop them off during regular library hours with Mr. Henderson.



Reflections Contest
Robin Janotta
Photography - 2nd place

MIRA COSTA HIGH SCHOOL College & Career Center

How Will We Pay For College?

Financial aid is certainly an important topic this year because of the economic downturn. Students and parents alike need to educate themselves about financial aid opportunities and how they can best finance a college education in these hard times.

Many students don't realize they may be eligible for financial aid to attend college. Student financial aid is defined as money provided by federal and state governments to help students pay for college. The U.S. Department of Education provides billions of dollars in aid each year. In Fiscal Year 2006, federal student aid programs provided approximately \$77 billion in aid to more than 10 million people.

Eligibility for federal student aid is usually based on financial need. Financial need, in turn, is determined as a result of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), available at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

We will be holding a workshop on how to complete the FAFSA on Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 pm in the MCHS auditorium.

At its simplest, a student's financial need is the difference between the cost of attendance at a college (COA), and the amount the family is expected to pay, called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). If you would like an early indication of your financial aid eligibility, you can go to www.FAFSA4caster.com, a

free online tool that instantly calculates your EFC. If you use the FAFSA4caster, you must still complete the FAFSA to be eligible for aid, but the FAFSA4caster prepopulates certain information for you on the FAFSA.

The FAFSA will be available starting on January 1 and is due by March 2. We recommend that students and parents save time by requesting a PIN, or personal identification number, before applying for aid. The PIN can be used to sign the FAFSA electronically. The PIN also allows an applicant to access his/her FAFSA, to make corrections to the FAFSA, and to access online information about any federal aid the student has received. A student who fills out a FAFSA4caster receives a PIN automatically. You can also request a PIN online at www.pin.ed.gov. Both students and parents should request a PIN because at least one parent of a dependent student must sign the FAFSA.

Financial aid is only one aspect of funding a college education. There are also savings plans, scholarships, and other opportunities to help families. For more information about financial aid, go to our website at <http://www.miracostacc.com/financial-aid/>. If you have questions, you can also contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID.

Wanted - College Brochures

Do you have *recent* college brochures that you no longer need?

Please donate them to the CCC.

We will make them available to other students.

Financial Aid Workshop

The CCC presents a financial aid workshop for parents and students on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7 - 8:30pm, in the MCHS auditorium.

Guest Speaker:

Steve Bryant, USC Director of Financial Aid

Topics:

- ▶ What is Financial Aid?
- ▶ Who's Eligible?
- ▶ Submitting the Federal Student Aid Application
- ▶ An overview of the financial aid process

Mark your calendars!

Thank You to Our Many Volunteers!



G.R.A.D. Nite Mailing Crew

Many thanks to the mailing crew who helped get the word out to Costa families about GRAD Nite '09:

Leslie Afzali
 Leslie Askanas
 Yvette Cavender
 Cynthia Copeland
 Patti Garrity
 Karen Kane
 Ellen Kubo
 Denise Norden
 Dana Nutten
 Tracey Ells O'Banion
 Sarah Olsen
 Marlene Rich
 Kyung Stanfill

Special kudos to student Tim O'Banion and parent alum Karen Hirsch who also pitched in!

Thank you also to Banner Stationers in El Segundo which so generously donated the envelopes and printing for over 2000 letters.

\$ So Many Ways to Save with \$ \$ the MCHS Cash Card \$

\$15 buys you one MCHS Cash Card, providing **discounts at some of your favorite local merchants for an entire year.**

Every student should have 1 - every household should have 2 or 3!

Save at Manhattan Car Wash, Subway, Johnny Rockets, Patterson's Cleaners, Spyder, Surf Concepts, Ken and Kent's Deli and more — every time you go! Just show your MCHS Cash Card at time of purchase and enjoy your discounts.

EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ONE.

Send your self-addressed stamped envelope and check made out to MCHS PTSA for \$15 per card to:

Janine Bozeman
 1207 19th Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
 Call with questions: (310) 376-6554
 or email J9Bozeman@aol.com

**Thanks for your support of MCHS
and the PTSA!**

Calendar of Events

For a comprehensive calendar of events at MCHS please [click here](#).

For other MBUSD schools click on "view options" in the upper left of the calendar and choose the school you wish to view.

Questions or comments regarding this newsletter?

Do you have content you want considered for publication in the PTSA e-Newsletter?

Please send an email to Darren Sepanek @ newsletter@mchsptsa.com





Mira Costa High School
S.R.A.D. Nite 2009

Sponsorship Opportunities *

Presenting Sponsor \$10,000
--

On Site Presence:

- Presenting Sponsor signage prominently displayed at venue entrance

Advertising:

- Presenting Sponsor credit with logo in Beach Reporter “Thank You” ad
- Presenting Sponsor credit on committee website with possible link to Sponsor’s website
- Presenting Sponsor banner at MCHS during graduation and then displayed on Artesia Boulevard
 - Presenting Sponsor listing on electronic marquee

Value Added:

- Logo/Presenting Sponsor on collateral materials (stationery, flyers, posters, tickets, sweatshirts)

Major Sponsor \$5,000

On Site Presence:

- Major Sponsor signage prominently displayed at venue

Advertising:

- Major Sponsor credit in Beach Reporter “Thank You” ad
- Major Sponsor credit on committee website with possible link to Sponsor’s website
- Major Sponsor banner at MCHS during graduation and then displayed on Artesia Boulevard
 - Major Sponsor listing on electronic marquee

Value Added:

- Logo/Major Sponsor on collateral materials (stationery, flyers, posters, tickets, sweatshirts)

Activity Sponsor \$500

On Site Presence:

- Supporting Sponsor signage prominently displayed adjacent to a GRAD Nite venue activity

Advertising:

- Supporting Sponsor credit in Beach Reporter “Thank You” ad
- Supporting Sponsor banner at MCHS during graduation and then displayed on Artesia Boulevard
 - Supporting Sponsor listing on electronic marquee

*Some of the advertising credits and listings will be limited by deadlines to allow for preparation of the materials. For example, if you would like to be listed on the sweatshirts, we will need your donation and logo by no later than March 31, 2009. Please contact Linda Ensbury at (310) 372-3795 to discuss logo transmission and deadlines.

We are a 501(c)(3) organization.



Mira Costa High School
S.R.A.D. Nite 2009
Graduates Resisting Alcohol & Drugs Booster Club
P.O. Box 1079, Manhattan Beach CA 90267-1079
Tax ID# 95-4786227
Sponsorship Form

Name of Student (if applicable)

Name of Sponsor: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Phone: _____ **e-mail:** _____

_____ **Presenting Sponsor (\$10,000 or more)**

_____ **Major Sponsor (\$5,000 -- \$9,999)**

_____ **Activity Sponsor (\$500 -- \$999)**

_____ **Other (please list amount) \$** _____

Please indicate how you would like your name to be listed when we formally recognize sponsors: _____

Please make your check payable to:
GRAD Nite Booster Club
Please mail your check and this form in the enclosed
envelope or to:
GRAD Nite Booster Club
PO Box 1079
Manhattan Beach, CA 90267-1079

Please contact Linda Ensbury at (310) 372-3795 or by email at gradnite09@gmail.com with any questions.

We are a 501(c)(3) organization.



Please Support Your School and Teachers
by
Donating to the MCHS PTSA for 2008-2009

PTSA Members Names:

_____ at \$15 each \$ _____ Dues

Donation Level and Amount:

Please check your donation level and enter amount on the donation line.

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Mustang...\$10,000+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Mustang Circle...\$5,000-\$9,999 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platinum...\$1,000-\$4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gold...\$500-\$999 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver...\$200-\$499 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze...\$15-\$199 | \$ _____ Donation |

***MCHS PTSA's suggested donation is **\$200 per student**.

PTSA Directories:

Only PTSA members are entitled to purchase MCHS Directories. Donate \$250 or more and receive one free copy!

Quantity of Directories _____ at \$20 each \$ _____ Directories
 Total membership dues/donation (Tax Deductible) \$ _____ Total
 =====

Payment Information:

- ____ Enclosed is a check (payable to **MCHS PTSA**) for my entire payment.
 ____ Please bill my credit card for my entire payment (\$50 minimum to charge).

Credit Card: MasterCard Visa Name on Credit Card: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Billing Address/zip code: _____

Signature: _____

Matching Donations:

____ My company (_____) will match my donation. I have enclosed the necessary forms (or will provide them).

Please fill out the following important information:

Name: _____ (as you wish it to appear in published lists).

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Student(s) Name and Grade: _____

- Check here if you want your gift to be anonymous.
 Check here if you want your information sent to National PTA and CA State PTA to receive informative articles.

**MCHS PTSA donors will be acknowledged in the PTSA newsletters. Contributions can be mailed to
 Mira Costa High School PTSA, 1401 Artesia Blvd., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266**

If you have a child, you have a reason. And now, you have a donor form.

All it takes now is a moment of your time, and a desire to help make our schools better.

Not just for kids in general, but for your child.


Every donation effects every child in some way. Even things like health assistants in the nurses' offices and librarians wouldn't be there for your

child if it wasn't for your generosity.

So please, take a moment right now.

You can charge your donation to your credit card. Or send us a check. Or make a pledge and send us your donation in installments.

Thank you!

DONOR LEVELS	DONATION OPTIONS	OFFICE USE ONLY
<p>Dream Team: \$ 50,000+</p> <p>Valedictorian: \$ 25,000 - 49,999</p> <p>Honor Roll: \$ 15,000 - 24,999</p> <p>Leadership: \$ 10,000 - 14,999</p> <p>Benefactor: \$ 5,000 - 9,999</p> <p>Patron: \$ 2,500 - 4,999</p> <p>Super Circle: \$ 1,500 - 2,499</p> <p>Sponsor: \$ 500 - 1,499</p> <p>Donor: \$ 250 - 499</p> <p>Contributor: under \$ 250</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> My total donation of \$_____ is enclosed. (Make check payable to Manhattan Beach Education Foundation.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Charge my total donation of \$_____ to my credit card. Amex/Visa/MC#_____</p> <p>Signature_____ Expiration_____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am making a total pledge of \$_____ Please check pledge payment method: ___check ___credit card Please choose your pledge payment date - or, if you'd like to break your payments into installments, up to four dates: ___Oct. 1 ___Dec. 1 ___Feb. 1 ___April 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please send information on the MBEF Endowment Fund</p>	

Please complete the information below. It helps us keep accurate records and acknowledge your donation.

Mr. Mrs.
 Ms. Dr.

Donor Name: _____
First Last

Mr. Mrs. Phone Email
 Ms. Dr.

Spouse Name: _____
First Last

Phone Email

Address

City Zip

I want my gift to be anonymous This is a new address.

Parent Grandparent Community Supporter

MBUSD Administrator Teacher Staff School _____

<u>Child</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		

Company Gift Match Information

Employer _____

Enclosed is a matching gift form. Please process.

I have applied with my company for a match.

My donation and company match will be sent by my employer.

Not sure. Please check and email me at _____

QUESTIONS? Call MBEF at 310-303-3342, or visit our website at WWW.MBEF.ORG. Tax ID#95-3881166.

Manhattan Beach Education Foundation P.O. Box 1110, Manhattan Beach, CA 90267. Fax 310/303-3828