January 20, 2010

Dear Edgemont Montessori Families,

The PTA sponsored Edgemont Reads 2010 Read-a-Thon Committee invites your family to fend off the cold and warm up to reading! The Read-a-Thon encourages Edgemont students to read each day, and emphasizes the important link between reading and learning. To kick-off the Read-a-Thon, students will participate in a school-wide used book sale, Friday, January 22. Please send your child to school with a few quarters so they can participate in the sale.

The Read-a-Thon will begin on Friday, January 22 and end three weeks later on Thursday, February 11. Each student is encouraged to set a daily goal and a total Read-a-Thon goal for minutes read or read to. Submit this goal using the Reading Pledge Form included in this packet. Each student that signs up and sets a reading goal will receive a Read-a-Thon prize. Students may keep track of their reading time on the enclosed calendar. Once they have read halfway to their total goal, they will submit the enclosed Half-way Goal form recording their minutes read, and receive a second Read-a-Thon prize. At the end of the Read-a-Thon, students will submit the final form indicating the total number of minutes read during the three-week challenge, and receive a final Read-a-Thon prize. These final forms should be returned by Friday, February 19.

Each class with 100% participation will enjoy a special treat in celebration of their commitment to reading, and their teacher will receive a gift certificate to Watchung Booksellers. Additionally, we encourage students to find sponsors to pledge money toward their reading goals. Proceeds benefit the enrichment of our children’s educational environment at Edgemont. The sponsor forms are included in this packet and should be returned with the pledges no later than Friday, February 26.

Strengthening your child’s reading skills will increase comprehension and his or her ability to analyze, understand and respond to life’s challenges. Reading enriches a child’s inner world and gives them new tools to think creatively and understand the feelings of others. Eventually, reading will become your child’s most powerful educational tool. Because reading has been directly linked to writing skills, we know that reading will improve your child’s communications skills, and will help them better express their knowledge.

Please see the attached tips and strategies for help setting an appropriate goal for your child, and for ideas to encourage reading. If you have questions about the Read-a-Thon, please contact any member of the Read-a-Thon Committee.

Reading is a skill that lasts a lifetime. Please join the Read-a-Thon challenge and warm up to reading!

Sincerely,

The 2010 Read-a-Thon Committee
Sharon Richards Linietsky, Maureen Ohlmuller, Lola Paige, and Co-Chairs, Blythe Eaman and Sarah Holt.
**WARM UP TO READING TIPS AND STRATEGIES**

**Recommended Times**
Listed below are the daily recommended reading times for each grade, in order to make setting a goal easier. Please work with your student to set a daily reading goal given his or her reading level. If you have questions about what is appropriate, please contact a member of the Read-a-Thon Committee or your student’s teacher.

- **Kindergarten:** 10 – 20 minutes
- **First Grade:** 15 – 25 minutes
- **Second Grade:** 20 – 30 minutes
- **Third Grade:** 25 – 35 minutes
- **Fourth Grade:** 30 – 45 minutes
- **Fifth Grade:** 30 – 60 minutes

**Reading Strategies**
Make this challenge fun for the whole family! Take a trip to the library and stock up on books that interest your student. Encourage and praise your student as they participate and engage in reading anything that is appropriate for their reading level, and in any language that is comfortable for them. Did you know that when a child reads a book below his or her reading ability, it boosts confidence, especially of struggling or emerging readers? Encourage your child to read a mix of reading levels.

For students in the younger grades, listening to adults or older siblings read counts as reading time. When reading with your child, ask recall questions about characters, details or symbols in the story in order to build his or her reading comprehension skills. Talk about the story and relate it to your child’s everyday life when possible.

For the families with students in the older grades, consider having them read in one room with others who are reading quietly. Or, try reading out loud as a family one night a week while rotating readers. Help strengthen your child’s reading skills by asking questions about his or her reading in terms of comprehension, recall of details, and discussing the book’s theme or ideas.

To the adults, we encourage you to take the challenge of setting a goal and reading daily as well. When our students see us reading, they learn the value and joy of it.

Have fun reading!