Dear Parents/Guardians:

**EcoFest**

Last Saturday, we sponsored our **First Annual EcoFest**, which was a great success!  Thank you to Ms. Gado, Ms. Mako from MVMS and Ms. Noel-Nussbaum for all they did behind the scenes to coordinate and implement this wonderful event.  I also want to thank Mrs. Miers-Bond, Ms. Ayres, Ms. Bocklund, & Ms. Lashley for coordinating and/or representing vendors and services, and I want to thank Ms. Roberts, Ms. Ireland and Ms. McCabe for attending and supporting EcoFest. We had sponsors and vendors from the following organizations in no particular order:

**The Robinson Nature Center** - If you haven’t had an opportunity to visit, you should definitely consider spending a morning or afternoon over there.  The facility is beautiful and they have a lot of information and activities to keep people of all ages interested.  The address is: 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044 and the phone number is 410-313-0400 if you want information about booking birthday parties there.  The hours are: Wed – Sat 9 – 5 & Sun 12 – 5.  Admission for adults $5.00 & children (3 – 17) $3.00; children under 3 are free.

**Viridian Energy –** Did you know that you can now choose your power company within BG&E?  Viridian Energy is one of the choices, and enrolling with Viridian is easy.  BG & E will continue to send bills and deliver the electricity to your home or office.  The difference is that Viridian will be listed on your bill and give you the new rate.  You do not have to sign a long-term contract and enrollment takes less than 5 minutes.  You have a couple of options: Every Day Green, which is a 20% renewable energy option and Pure Green, which is 100% renewable.  If you are interested, you can contact Chris Schipper, Independent Associate at 410-972-1741 or switchitgreen@gmail.com or visit the website: www.viridian.com/switchit green.

**The Old Colony Company** – They produce handcrafted soaps, lotion bars and other home goods in partnership with local farms, artisans, craftpersons and cottage industries.  For more information, contact: joe@theoldcolony.com.

**Patapsco Valley Heritage Greenway** – This organization works with volunteers to build a foundation for a greener future.  As an organization, the members are dedicated to preserving, protecting, interpreting and restoring the environment, history and culture of the valley.  Volunteers help to remove junk and trash and plant trees.  A person may volunteer to be a stream walker/watcher, a stream captain, to participate in stream cleanups, lead hikes, plant trees, help with the newsletter or serve as a committee member.  If you are interested in donating, you can make a check payable to: The Friends of the Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway, Inc., which is a nonprofit corporation.  Mail to FPVHG, P.O. Box 96, Ellicott City, MD 21041.

**TLV Tree Farm** – This farm has been providing activities and food to our community for over 100 years.  Throughout the year, families can participate in cutting their own Christmas trees, going on hayrides and choosing pumpkins, picking strawberries and purchasing fresh meat, chicken and eggs.  For more information, call 410-489-4460.

**Sharp’s At Waterford Farm** – This is another local farm that has been in Howard County since 1903.  They are open from mid-April through mid-November.  With 520 acres of farm and woodland and animals that you can see up close, you and your family can enjoy your time by having a picnic, walking on a nature trail, seeing a lazy creek or going to the farm museum and greenhouse.  Visit farmquestions@sharpfarm.com or call 410-489-2572 for more information.

**Breezy Willow Farm** – This is a community supported agriculture program.  Everyone who joins this program participates in the harvest all season.  By joining you support the local economy, help the environment and buy fresh and healthier foods.  Every week, you will receive an assortment of 8 fresh and local fruits and vegetables in addition to eggs and your choice of bread from The Great Harvest Bread Company.  Once a month you will also receive another item such as honey, jam, cheese, etc.  If you go to Breezy Willow to pick up your food, you can also pick your own spices.  There are 7 pick-up stations all over the county.  For information, go to [www.breezywillowfarm.com](http://www.breezywillowfarm.com/) or call 410-442-1807.

**Sandy Spring Community Supported Agriculture** – Similar to the Breezy Willow Farm program, this program offers a 25 week season from Monday, May 7 – Monday, Oct. 22.  Vegetable share is $768.00 and optional fruit shares run 22 weeks for $212.52.  The pick-up closest to us is the Howard County Conservancy and you can pick up your food between the hours of 2 – 7.  Produce comes from Lancaster Farm Fresh and checks and e-checks are accepted.  There is also a payment plan available.  For more information and a list of vegetables, go to [www.sandyspringcsa.com/join/heres-what-we-got-in-2011/](http://www.sandyspringcsa.com/join/heres-what-we-got-in-2011/)

**SOLgenics** – Our very own Troy Osten (parent) is the President of SOLgenics a company that helps to make solar energy affordable and hassle-free.  If you are interested in learning more about this company, please contact Mr. Osten at 301-633-6709 or go to [http://www.SOLgenics.com](http://www.solgenics.com/).

**Maryland’s Food Gardening Network**, University of Maryland Extension – For more information you can go to the website at growit.umd.edu or the blog at groweat.blogspot.com. You can also get your questions answered from the Home and Garden Information Center at hgic.umd.edu or by calling 1-800-342-2507.

If you are interested in information about promoting environmental stewardship through **Green Lawns**, you can go to the website at [www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension) or go to [www.growinggreenlawns.org](http://www.growinggreenlawns.org/).

**Live Green of Howard County** – Join in on Thursday, April 19th for a county-wide spring cleaning.  You can get outside for just 20 minutes and do a quick cleanup of litter around your business, school or neighborhood.  If you participate, please contact Howard County’s Department of Environmental Sustainability at 20minutecleanup@howardcountymd.gov to let them know if you participated and how many bags of trash you collected.  Check the website livegreen@howard.com for more details.

**The Howard County Conservancy** at Mt. Pleasant – The Conservancy was founded in 1990 as a way of preserving land and providing educational activities for the county.  The Farm is 300 years old and operated now as a nature reserve and educational facility.  The Conservancy focuses programs on local animal and plant life found in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and they are an educational partner with the HCPSS since 2003.  You can go on a free guided nature hike, which is offered the 2nd Saturday of each month or hike the 4 miles of maintained trails daily.  Hours are from Wed – Saturday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; however, they are closed on Saturdays during the winter season. For more information go to their site at [www.hcconservancy.org](http://www.hcconservancy.org/) or call 410-465-8877.

**Howard County Library** – Did you know that you can get FREE online tutoring for your child?  Help is available from 2 p.m. – 12 a.m. for students in grades 4 -12.  Real tutors will help with math, science, English and social studies.  Go to [www.hclibrary.org](http://www.hclibrary.org/) for assistance.

**Natural Lawn of America** – is a leader in environmentally responsible lawn care.  Their products contain natural organic and organic-based sources.  For additional information, go to [www.nl-amer.com](http://www.nl-amer.com/).

**Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy**, Fall 2012 – By attending this academy, you will be trained as a volunteer community leader to serve as Master Watershed Stewards to protect, restore and conserve local watersheds.  You will play a key role in restoring the Chesapeake Bay to reduce sediment and nutrients flowing into Howard County’s streams, lakes and rivers.  The Academy is sponsored by Howard County Govt., Columbia Association, Center for Watershed Protection, University of Maryland Extension and Howard County Legacy Leadership Institute for the Environment.  Contact Lori Lilly, Center for Watershed Protection at lal@cwp.org.

**Sun Nurseries** – This nursery is on Bushy Park road in Woodbine, Maryland.  They have a nice selection of edible plants for your landscape and they will provide you with planting, staking and watering instructions so your plants flourish.  For more information, you can visit [www.sunnurseries.com](http://www.sunnurseries.com/) or call 410-442-2090.

**Recycling in Howard County** – Every resident should know what to and not to recycle.  Paper, plastic, cans, glass and cardboard can all be recycled.  Please leave lids & caps on containers.  Paper towels, tissues, foil soiled plates and cups and foil gift wrap can’t be recycles.  Styrofoam, packaging for electronics, CD jewel cases, motor oil containers, pesticide or solvent bottles, VHS tapes and plastic electronics can’t be recycled.  Propane cylinders, beach or lawn chairs, pots and pans and scrap metals can’t be recycled.  Window glass, drinking glasses, mirrors, ceramics, crystal, cookware and light bulbs can’t be recycled.  The Alpha Ridge Residential Convenience Center CAN take: Antifreeze, appliances, automobile batteries, carpeting and foam, cooking oil, electronics, scrap metal, motor oil, propane tanks, reusable building materials, lawn chairs, playhouses, coolers, totes and laundry baskets, tires, used clothing and shoes, and yard/wood water.  You should also consider donating to Goodwill or The Salvation Army or use Customer Take-Back programs at places like Best Buy, Home Depot, etc.  The county will provide free bins for backyard composting.  For more information on recycling, please go to [www.HowardCountyRecycles.org](http://www.howardcountyrecycles.org/).

Thank you again to all of the vendors, organizations and sponsors of our EcoFest.

**Sierra Club** – The Sierra Club was found in 1892 and continues to thrive today.  You can learn about the Sierra Club by going to their website at [www.sierraclub.org/healthycommunities/toxics/](http://www.sierraclub.org/healthycommunities/toxics/) or contact clean.water@sierraclub.org.   The Sierra Club will provide citizens with a list of things we can do to reduce the threat to aquatic life.  You can obtain information on our impact on wildlife, Endocrine Disprupting Compounds (EDCs) and the products that are causing these problems.

**Howard County Conservancy** – This is right in our backyard located at 10520 Old Frederick Road in Woodstock.  The Conservancy offers programs, events, walks and lectures throughout the year.  For information on volunteering, conservation easements, bird watching, composting demonstrations, gardening, or summer camp programs, go to [www.hcconservancy.org](http://www.hcconservancy.org/) or call 410-465-8877

Thank you so much for all you do to support our school and students at MRHS.  Have a great long weekend.

Sincerely,

Dr. Adrianne Kaufman, Principal