



School Update  
November 6, 2009

Join Us Next Summer for a Mexican Adventure!

### Informational Meeting

**When:** Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009, 7:00PM

**Where:** MSA – Cafeteria

**Who:** Parents and Students interested in the trip

For the past two years, Mrs. Jones and I have traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico. Rarely have I been so taken with a city and surrounding area. As a result, I have worked with Passports, Inc., a student travel organization, to create a trip for our students. Passports, Inc. is the same organization that has arranged the trip to Paris this spring for Mrs. Turner.

Whether you are studying Spanish, taking art classes, enjoy history, culture and archeology, like to try different foods or just enjoy visiting a very special place, this trip is sure to be fun. Attached is an itinerary for the trip. It is packed with tours and excursions that Mrs. Jones my two daughters, and I have participated in. We all found them exciting and informative.

Oaxaca (pronounced "Wa haka") is difficult to describe. At close to a mile high, it is the sprawling capitol city of the State of Oaxaca. There is a beautiful colonial city center that has been preserved. From the inviting zocalo (central plaza) to the Cathedral of Santa Domingo and the Regional Archeological Museum, runs a pedestrian street many blocks long. On either side are shops, museums, restaurants, etc. that extend for many blocks. All are within easy walking distance. The zocalo is always an inviting spot to eat, stroll, buy crafts from local vendors and just sit and watch the passers-by. At night, it becomes what I can only describe as a miniature Times Square, complete with restaurants, street performers, vendors, concerts, parades and families out to spend a pleasant evening. The only thing that seemed a bit out of place was the Burger King about a block off of the zocalo. However, it is very popular with the locals!

Oaxaca is considered "Old" Mexico, steeped in tradition and history. It is a favorite destination for Mexican nationals looking to explore the long and diverse history of this very large country. It has not traditionally been a major destination for Americans because of the difficulty of getting there. Until recently, the only way for Americans to get to Oaxaca was to fly to Mexico City and take an expensive regional flight or they could take the bus over the mountains for about five hours. Recently, however, Continental Airlines has opened service from Houston to Oaxaca, which has created some competition among the other airlines.

The surrounding area is home to additional archeological sites as well as numerous arts and crafts. If you have ever been to the Mexican pavilion at EPOCT, you might remember the beautiful and fanciful carved wooden animals on display at the entrance. Those are all from Oaxaca. Throughout the region are weavers, potters, and many other artisans worth meeting and seeing how things are traditionally made. Everything is “hecho in Mexico.”

If you have ever wanted to visit “old” Mexico, or you would like your student to experience it first hand, this will be a great opportunity. All high school students are invited to apply. We will be reviewing any behavioral issues that would make it difficult for a student to travel with us. Middle school students are invited, but must be accompanied by a parent. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting next Thursday.

Dr. Bill Jones, Principal

- MSA bid a fond farewell to our German Exchange students this past Saturday. MSA is proud to be the host school of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) for Manatee County. In conjunction with five other Manatee County schools, we hosted a total of eighteen exchange students during the month of October. The American students accompanied their partners on weekend daytrips such as Sea World, beach picnics, and an overnight Manatee Encounter in Crystal River, as well as hosting them at their home schools. The American students will be traveling to Germany to stay with their exchange partners in June where they will travel through Austria and Southern Germany, as well as spending time in Gelsenkirshen, Germany.

If you are interested in learning more about the GAAP program please contact Mrs. Cole at [hcole@msfta.org](mailto:hcole@msfta.org). It is a very affordable way to travel abroad.

- A reminder to any science student – Science fair projects are due on November 23/24 or before. Also, if students need assistance or have questions, please have them contact their science teacher.
- Please remind your child to keep up with their school work. We are entering a period of time when we all get busy, and a steady reminder from home would be helpful to your child. Also, ask your child how they organize their work/homework. Students often need help with organizational skills, and helping them with organizing an agenda/date book would be very helpful.
- Parents of Seniors – please check the guidance web site for an updated list of scholarships. Ms. Baker and Ms. Joyner just updated their site to include some great scholarship opportunities!! Don’t miss your chance to get some extra money for college.

- Attention High School parents: Bright Futures requires all students who apply for the scholarship to have community service hours. You can start to accumulate these hours in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. We know that our students are heavily involved in many volunteer activities. Please make sure to document these for Bright Futures as well as many other opportunities available.
- If you have any concerns about your child's performance in class, please make sure to contact your child's teacher!
- Check the website for many activities that are going on here at MSA over the next many months. We are entering the busy season! We hope to see you at an upcoming event!

### Upcoming Events

#### November

- 11 No School – Veterans Day
- 12 Mexico Summer Trip Info Meeting
- 12-14 FTC Theatre Conference
- 16-17 Show Choir Performance at Charter School Conf.
- 19-21 Honk! Jr. Performances
- 25-29 Thanksgiving Break

#### December

- 3 5 week grading period ends
- 7 Band Winter Concert
- 8 Orchestra Winter Concert
- 10 Chorus Winter Concert
- 21-Jan 1 Winter Recess

#### January

- 5 Return to School

*Please check the website for more dates and times  
[www.msfta.org](http://www.msfta.org)*