



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter December 2008

Volume 2, Issue 5

PRESIDENT'S CHAT



This is a time of year when many of us focus on giving and receiving gifts. And, I am reminded that a gift, especially in these tough economic times, need not cost money. Here are some gifts that you can give to Woodlin, now or any time of year:



Give thanks: Thank a staff member, parent, or volunteer for something they've done. It doesn't have to be elaborate—a simple note or verbal thank you goes a long way.



Give greetings: If you see someone at school whom you've never seen before,

say hello or wish them happy holidays.



Give help: Offer another family a ride to a school event, or babysit so that they can go to a school function.



Give a challenge: Suggest to a neighbor or other parent that they might consider volunteering for a school event.



As you can see, the spirit of giving may take many forms and I hope that you will consider these opportunities during this holiday season.



President Lynne Yao



I also want to offer some special thanks of my own:

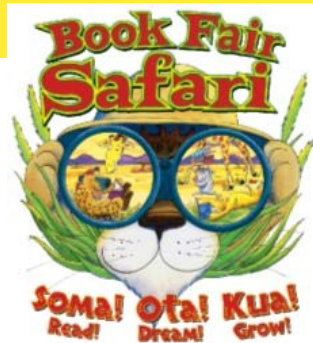
We have had a wonderful month, and I want to thank the following volunteers: Monica Kerns, Jeannette O'Connor, and Eve Zimmerman and for their special teacher and staff appreciation event; Alexis Ruffin and Evita Smedley for their leadership at the recent book fair; Krista Middlebrooks for stepping in to be the coordinator for the Mad Science program; Chris Scanlon and Abbi Lichtenstein for putting together a great schedule of afterschool club offerings; and to Christine Sonnabend for her coordinating babysit- (continued on page 2)

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Holiday Book-tastic Bazaar!

Wow, the Woodlin community really knows how to have a fun time, with no shortage of good cheer on hand! There were long crowded lines and waits to match, at the December 2 Holiday Book Bazaar, but the room buzzed with laughter and friendly chatter. Everyone was a great sport. We had a terrific night of sales and were able to fund scholarship books, and, importantly



qualify for spring 2009 book fair vouchers for all grade level classrooms.

Again, thanks to all for a successful night supporting the book fair, with a special holiday ho-ho-ho to the folks who made The Scholastic Book Fair possible (See Applause! Applause! Applause! page 6).

Happy Reading!
—Alexis Ruffin and Evita Smedley
Book Fair Co-chairs

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, Jan 10

Dance at Woodlin.

6:30 to 9:00 PM

All Purpose Room



Woodlin Elementary

PTA

everychild.onevoice

Why Should I Care About Study Circles?

We began our work with this provocative quote, *"We have run away from race for far too long. We are so afraid of inflaming the wound that we fail to deal with what remains America's central social problem. We will never achieve racial healing if we do not confront each other, take risks, make ourselves vulnerable, put pride aside, say all the things we are not supposed to say in mixed company — in short, put on the table our fears, trepidations, wishes and hopes."* ~ Harlan L. Dalton, author of *Racial Healing*

Imagine a room with ten to fifteen Woodlin Elementary School (Woodlin ES) families, teachers and administrators sitting in a circle. It's a truly diverse group of people. There are men and women, Blacks, Whites, Asians, Native Americans, and Latinos. They represent different religions and generations.

For six weeks, this small group of diverse people agree to meet each week with two trained facilitators who lead an in-depth discussion on racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement at the school.

During their time together, they share stories—passionate, sad, angry, and happy about their life in- and outside of Woodlin. They cry and argue and share fabulous pot luck dinners. Emotions are high. Some threaten to quit, but none do. They keep going. During that time, something special happens. This group of people begin to see



Montgomery County Public School Study Circle

people who are different from themselves through changed eyes. As they listen to each other's stories, they begin to understand how a person of another race, gender, religion, or age sees the world. They begin to get a glimpse of new possibilities and answers for more inclusive and more satisfying relationships within their neighborhoods and across communities.

"The Study Circle experience built a bridge toward the vision of a school community that lives and breathes the 'whatever it takes' philosophy. The research tells us that parents and staff must work together, but there are barriers that prevent that partnership from being effective. The process and discussions turned us from generic catego-

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President's Chat

(continued from page 1)
ting for various school functions.



Speaking of babysitting, there will be some changes to the babysitting that we offer at PTA meetings. Unfortunately, we have learned that our PTA insurance policy does not provide coverage for gym activities, so the gym will not be open for PTA meetings the rest of the school year. Also, insurance rules require that all babysitters must be high school students or older. We will be coming out with a new babysitter sign up policy in January, so stay tuned.



The PTA is already planning some great events for the 2009. Our first PTA meeting of the New Year will be held on January 8, 2009. Also, we are planning to kick off our celebration of Black History Month with a Legends of Motown Dance on Saturday, January, 10. And, this information hot off the press: the Board of Education has decided that schools will be closed on January 20 in observance of the Presidential Inauguration. Finally, I want to offer my sincere wishes to the entire Woodlin community for a happy, healthy, and joyful holiday season and New Year.

—Lynne Yao

MOTOWN LIVES AT WOODLIN

The Black History Month Celebration will kick-off a little earlier this year. The committee will sponsor the annual dance on Saturday, January 10, 2009 from 6:30pm to 9:00pm in the All Purpose Room at Woodlin Elementary.



"The Legends of Motown" is the theme for Black History Month and we have carried this theme over to the dance.

Many of you grew up on some of the classic Motown recording artists, like the

Supremes, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder and Smokey

**Legends of MOTOWN
DANCE & IDOL PERFORMANCE
Saturday, January 10, 2009
6:30pm - 9:00pm**

Robinson. Motown Records has influ-



enced the world with its innovative music and has emerged as a cultural phenomenon.

Bring your family to the dance and we will have a special treat in store for everyone. Students who volunteer from all grade levels will participate in the "Legends of Motown Idol Performance" (a medley of Mo-

(continued on page 4)

Silent Auction Is Coming!

The Silent Auction is one of the PTA's biggest fundraisers and a big part of Woodlin's fantastic Winter Festival. Mark your calendars for February 8, 2009 when a wide array of fabulous items will be awaiting your bid.

The Silent Auction coordinators need a team of dedicated volunteers to make follow-up calls to local business from whom we have solicited donations (early January) and lots of help the day of the event.

We also need the Woodlin community to make donations. Think what your family can offer—pet sitting services, the use of a vacation home, tickets to sporting events—use your imagination! Then contact Lisa Alton about your donation. It's not too soon.

To offer your help, contact Lisa Tenley Alton at lisa@altoncreative.com or Chris Rutledge, crnkar@yahoo.com. Wizards, we need YOU!

—Lisa Alton, Silent Auction Coordinator

Winterfest Is Almost Here

We are looking forward to our annual winter festival. We will again feature our used book/media sale and a used jewelry sale as well as new jewelry (just in time for Valentine's Day!) If you are cleaning out your books, movies and computer games, consider donating them to our sale.

In addition to the silent auction, we will have entertainment provided by Spiny Johnson, a former Harlem Globetrotter. Kids and adults will really enjoy this performance. There will be games, a craft room, a moonbounce, and

SAVE THE DATE
Woodlin's Winter Festival
Sunday, February 8, 2-5pm

food and drinks too!

This event "takes a village" in volunteer effort. Stay tuned to the listserve for more details and your chance to volunteer for an hour during this event.

For further details/questions, contact Jane Curtin at jane_curtin@yahoo.com.

—Jane Curtin,
Winter Festival Committee

NEW Night!

NEXT PTA Meeting

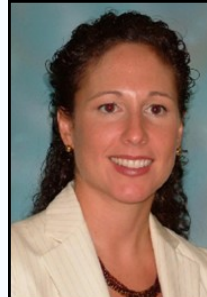
Date: Thursday,
January 8th

Time: 6:00 Pizza
6:30 Meeting

Place: Woodlin
All Purpose Room

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Cyber Safety



Principal Sarah Sirgo

A joint project by the State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Department of Police and Montgomery County Public Schools is dedicated to providing information to parents and students about Internet safety. The information below is from a new publication produced for families and available online at:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/cybersafety/>

Educating children about the Internet is the first step in ensuring they are safe online. Parents can improve Internet safety by setting family rules for using the Internet. The Montgomery County Public Schools supports Internet safety by using technology protection measures to examine the content of Internet sites and block inappropriate content. Parents also can set monitoring or blocking filters on home computers. However, only through partnerships between parents and children can safety be ensured.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is intentionally embarrassing, humiliating, threatening, or targeting an individual or group of people using e-mail, instant messaging, social sites, blogs, mobile phones, or other technological methods. Cyber bullying comes in many forms, including the following:

- Flaming—sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages directed at another person in private or in a public forum.
 - Harassment—repeatedly sending a person offensive messages.
 - Masquerade—pretending to be someone else and posting false information or placing another in danger.
 - Outing and trickery—sending or posting sensitive, private, or embarrassing material about a person.
- Contact police whenever cyberbullying involves death threats or other forms of violence to a person or property. Victims may have a legal right to claim damages for defamation, invasion

of privacy, or intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Parental Control Tools

Restricting access to Web sites is an effective way to help keep kids safe on the Internet. There are three places where you can find the tools to help you limit what your child can access while he or she is surfing. Internet Service Providers, such as Comcast and Verizon, offer a range of parental control features, often for free. Many Web browsers, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, have controls that you can adjust to enforce parental control rating systems. Blocking or filtering software, such as Cyber Patrol and CYBERSitter, are available at your local computer or retail store. Install this on your home computer. Parental filtering or blocking tools are very useful, but they are NOT 100 percent effective.



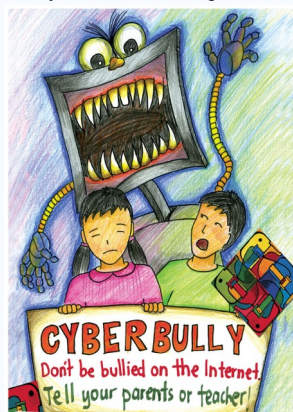
Warning Signs

The FBI has listed several warning signs taken from actual investigations involving child victims. Signs include large amounts of time spent online, presence of porn, mysterious phone calls, receipt of unexplained gifts, hiding the computer screen as parents approach, and withdrawing from normal activities and social interaction. If there is a suspicion of any of those signs, consider the following steps:

- Talk with your child about your suspicions.
- Review what is on your child's computer. If you don't know how, seek advice from a knowledgeable person.
- Use the Caller ID service to determine who is contacting your child.
- Remove the computer from your child's bedroom.
- Immediately contact your local or state police, the FBI, or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, should an alarming event occur via the Internet.

Tips for Parents

- Always supervise young children when they are on the Web.
 - Locate the computer in a central area.
 - Help your children find information online.
 - Make computer use a family activity—get to know your child's online and other friends.
 - Don't allow children to give out personal information, such as home address, phone number,
- (continued on page 4)



MOTOWN LIVES

(continued from page 2)

Songs and a skit) that will be performed during the dance and again at Town Meetings during Black History Month.

We'll also play age appropriate music for Woodlin students and snacks will also be provided.



Permission slips for students interested in participating in the "Legends of Motown Idol Performance" will be sent via back pack mail soon. Rehearsals will take place during recess at the end of December and beginning of January.

For all those who graciously volunteered to participate on a Black History Month Committee, check your e-mails this week for follow-up details on how you can help.

Please feel free to contact Sabrina Thomas with any questions at 301-587-1159 or sthomas@ms2kplus.com. —*Sabrina Thomas, Black History Month Coordinator*

SNIDER'S RECEIPTS DUE!

Just a reminder to turn in your Snider's receipts to the PTA, and Snider's will donate a portion of all receipts



back to Woodlin! Simply put your dry, preferably uncrumpled, receipts in an envelope or baggie, paperclip, or whatever, and send in via backpack mail or drop in the box in the workroom near the main office. We'll be accepting 2008 receipts until early January, but turning yours in as you get them allows me to avoid a big crunch at the end.

Thanks and Happy Holidays!

—*April Osajima, Snider's Coordinator*

Cyber Safety

(continued from page 3)
or school name.

- Discuss the difference between reliable and unreliable sources of information with your child. Remind children that everything they read on the Internet may not be real.
- Consider rating, blocking, monitoring, and filtering applications for your computer.
- Set reasonable rules regarding time of day, length of time, people with whom they may communicate, and appropriate areas for them to visit online.

Students Internet use at school

Students should report to teachers any inappropriate sites they may have accessed. Students should tell a teacher if someone on the Web asks to meet them face-to-face or sends inappropriate information. MCPS has a Web security officer who assists students and parents with information on Internet safety, password protection, computer viruses, and privacy issues. Call 301-279-3669 on weekdays.

Popular Internet Sites for Kids

- Myspace.com. As a parent, create your own account and see what your children and their friends are posting.
- Facebook.com. You must be "invited" to join. College and high school students each have special meeting areas.
- Friendster.com is similar to Myspace.com.
- YouTube.com lets users upload, view, and share video clips.

•miniclip.com and runescape.com are online gaming Web sites.

E-mail and Chat Acronyms

New language, acronyms, and slang are created daily on the Internet.

Below are a few examples.

ADN	Any day now
AFAIK	As far as I know
AFK	Away from keyboard
A/s/l	Age/sex/Location
BAKB	Back at keyboard
BBL	Be back later
BCNU	I'll be seeing you
BRB	Be right back
CUOL	See you online
DIKU	Do I know you?
F2F	Face to face
g/f	Girl friend
GGOH	Gotta get outta here
KIT	Keep in touch
OL	the old lady
OM	the old man
P911	Parents are in the room
POTS	Parents are looking over my shoulder
SPST	Same place, same time
SYL	See you later
TAW	Teachers are watching
TTYL	Talk to you later
WTGP?	Want to go private?
YBS	You'll be sorry

—*Sarah Sirgo*

Testing Date Change for Highly Gifted Programs

The original testing date for the third grade students who had applied for elementary school highly gifted programs was to be January 20, 2009, but that date will be changed.

"This is to inform you that your school's testing date, originally scheduled for Jan. 20, 2009 is being rescheduled so that there is no conflict with Inauguration Day. We will be contacting you with the new date as soon as we have it. As mentioned earlier, letters will be mailed from DCCAPS directly to the homes of students who have applied, confirming the receipt of the application and letting them know the test date.

"We apologize for any inconvenience, but given the attention that the inauguration is drawing, we felt that January 20th would not be the most conducive for testing!" (DCCAPS is the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services. It is part of the MCPS Department of Enriched & Innovative Programs.)

—*Diana Arrington, Gifted and Talented Liaison*

Junior Great Books Training Offered In January At Woodlin!

We will be offering training at Woodlin in early- to mid-January to parents interested in becoming volunteer leaders for the Junior Great Books program. Mrs. Tencer will lead a half day training class, during the school day.

Once trained, parents can lead book discussion groups with advanced readers in grades 3-5—over 50% of the Woodlin students in those grades (and possibly 2nd grade)—using the Jr. Great Books materials. We want to offer this program to as many classes as possible, depending on the volunteer pool, after the end of this marking period.

For those interested in doing the training, now is the time to do it! If you have questions, please contact Julie Kaplan, at jubekaplan@starpower.net or 301-495-3129. Please indicate your availability with days of the week and times that work well for you.

Woodlin's Jr. Great Books program is supported by the Woodlin PTA, and is led by parents like you who are interested in expanding learning opportunities for our kids. The program is fully supported by the school, takes place during regular school hours, and allows parents to actively support the students' core curriculum. We definitely need more volunteers to continue this program this year.

For more information about the Jr. Great Books program, check out the website at www.greatbooks.org, or review the materials at Woodlin by contacting Mrs. Tencer.

Remember, we can only offer this valuable program if additional parents volunteer!

—Julie Kaplan,
Junior Great Books Coordinator

Why Should I Care About Study Circles?

(continued from page 2) ries of 'parents' and 'staff' to individuals with faces, names and experiences. Instead of finding out what is different about each other as a tool to divide us, we figured out what we all have in common and created a shared purpose. It was hard to hear others speak a truth that was not our own, but from that discord grew a greater appreciation for our joint desire to create a school where all students can achieve at high levels..."

Sarah Sirgo, participant

"I highly recommend Study Circles for all parents. Yes, we are in a "post-racial world", and we did all the work twenty years ago so things are great now... wrong. I learned a lot. It's one thing to know the not

so great statistics about young African American males, and another to see the pain on a mother's face when her son has been the subject of extra scrutiny and treated rudely.

"Racial diversity and inclusion means sharing leadership roles, listening carefully to ideas for activities before leaping to judgment, and sitting down for coffee. That makes our school a richer place for our children. We need all the parents, teachers and staff working as one for all the children in the Woodlin Community. Study Circles can make that happen."

Linda Mack, participant

"Study Circles are only the beginning it will take our entire community to achieve these ambitious objectives.

"Let us all work together for this wonderful change. If we can believe it, we can achieve it."

Yvonne Moore, participant

This is the world of Study Circles, an initiative of the Montgomery County Public Schools. The goals are to remove racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement, build a unified group of parents, teachers, and students, create group action to address barriers to achievement and encourage an environment in which racial and ethnic issues are talked about openly and productively.

Stay tuned to see what you can do to be a part of this exciting program.

—Yvette Moore-Harris,
Bertie Lopiccolo, and
Evita Smedley

PAINLESS FUNDRAISING

Here are a few quick and simple ways to contribute to the Woodlin PTA.



Cut out the School Box Tops on cereal boxes and other products.

Be sure you have registered your Giant and Safeway cards to Woodlin Elementary. You have to renew each card every year.

Use www.schoolpop.com or www.boxtops4education.com or when shopping on-line. Part of your purchase can benefit Woodlin.



—Chris Rutledge,
Fundraising

Parent Resource Center

This December we celebrate **Eid'ul-Adha** (Muslim holiday to celebrate Abraham obedience to God's will), **Hanukkah** (Jewish holiday celebrated for eight days to commemorate the dedication of the Second temple in Jerusalem), **Christmas** (Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Christ), and **Kwanzaa** (African American holiday celebrates African culture with seven principles). Happy Holidays!

—Shelly Duckett, Parent Resource Center Coordinator

GREEN TIPS



Decorate with LED lights instead of conventional lights and save utility costs and energy.

Save this year's holiday cards for next year's gifts. Instead of buying gift tags use cut cards to place on gifts.

Applause! Applause! Applause!

Scholastic Book Fair Thanks

Thanks to all those who came out and supported the Scholastic Book Bazaar. A special thanks to Woodlin Parents: Jane Curtin, Laurie McWright, Susan Morawetz, Alice Witt, Vicki Rocha, Shelly Duckett, Chris Rutledge, Scott Adams, Lauren Jones, Lisa Walker, Shelia Maith

Superlative cast of Sligo Middle Schoolers: Dina Pinsky, SomeSarwanh Phongwarinr, Nadia Raytselis, and Alyssa Adams

Woodlin crew: 3rd graders Julia Raytselis and Elaine Adams, faculty and staff Ms. Tencer, Ms. Athanas, Mr. Huntley, and the original Wizard himself, Mr. George, with storytellers Ms. Sirgo and Mr. Clarke

—**Alexis Ruffin and Evita Smedley,**
Scholastic Book Fair Co-chairs

Staff Appreciation Lunch Thanks

Thanks to everyone who contributed to a very successful Staff Appreciation Lunch celebrating July- December birthdays of teachers and staff. They were treated to a lasagna lunch with many homemade treats and salads.

Thanks to the following parents who contributed their time, money and homemade treats: Vicki Hadfield, Bertie Philip, Kathryn Greenwald, Fida Adely, Gupta's Family, Drew and Lisa Ades, Tawana Davis, Leigh Trail, Eric Johnson, Chris Rutledge and Noelle Kurtin, Yvette Nowens, Susan Morauetz, Cynthia Mackie, Linda Elam, Marguerite Giebel, Zwedli Family, Donna Madden, Sue Fedor, Karnie Hudson, Michelle Radecki, Jane Curtin, Robin Brady, Wendy Baumert, Carol Woodside, Rowell Family, Jay and Ram Kurup, Adreana Niepa, Cheri Sharpe, David and Janice Ellis, Martha Kyriiliobor, June Krell, and Lynne Yao.

IMPORTANT SCHOOL DATES

12/22 Monday, 5th Grade Chorus Concert, 7PM

12/24—1/2 Wednesday to Friday

No School, Winter Break

1/6 Tuesday, First Day of After School Clubs

1/8 Thursday, PTA Meeting

1/10 Saturday, PTA Dance

1/19 Monday, NO SCHOOL, MLK Jr. Holiday

1/20 Tuesday, NO SCHOOL, Inauguration

1/23 Friday, 2nd Marking Period Ends

1/26 Monday, NO SCHOOL, Prof. Day for Teachers

1/28 Wednesday, Instrumental Concert, 7 PM.

Consult School Calendar for more information.

We also wanted to send a special thank you to James Stroy for providing us with balloons for the event

—**Jeannette O'Connor, Eve Zimmerman and Monica Kerns, Staff Appreciation Coordinators**

International Night Thanks

Thanks to all who came to Woodlin on Saturday night and contributed a variety of great food and some really fabulous country displays for International Night. The all-purpose room was buzzing with families enjoying the buffet and dancing to the world music of Nada Brahma. The Einstein Latin dancers earned loud applause as they demonstrated the merengue and salsa. Special thanks to Yvette Harris and her band of top-notch helpers who did what was needed when it was needed.

Once again, I was impressed by our community's marvelous diversity and the welcoming spirit of our school.

—**Julie Rasicot International Night Coordinator**

WOODLIN PTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Parent/Guardian #1:

Parent/Guardian #2:

Student name:

Teacher:

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Add my e-mail address to the Woodlin PTA listserv.

Number of PTA members: _____ x \$10 = \$ _____

Tax-deductible donation (PTA membership not required): \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____