



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

January 2010



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Going a Step Further to Help Our Children Succeed

Most of us know Erin Garcia as a caring and cheerful professional who cares for our children when they are sick or injured during the school day. Each day, she takes care of a steady stream of children with splinters, cuts, bruises, tummy aches and other ailments. However, over time, Erin began to notice something. The same youngsters came to her office over and over again. These kids were not sick or hurt. She reasoned that a few were trying to get out of class. But many seemed to need a hug or a reassuring word. It was then that she decided to

become a **volunteer staff mentor** to Woodlin students. She has been a mentor for two years.

Once a week Erin spends time with her mentees during the school day. They may eat lunch or breakfast together, do homework, play games, work on special projects, or just talk. She stresses that what they do is not as important as the fact that they do it together. "A mentor is a guide, somewhere between parent and friend,

who helps a child navigate uncertain terrain. Mentoring takes a little time, effort and energy, but it is a unique opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child," says Erin.

(cont., page 6)



Erin Garcia, Woodlin Health Technician

Math Night—February 2nd

The PTA and the Black History Month Committee will celebrate together Math Night and Black History Month during the February PTA meeting.

Anne Mutti and Marie Hall, Math Night co-chairs, have put together a fun-filled set of math activities that all Woodlin students and families can enjoy together that evening and at home.

Families will play games using dice and cards, tossing bean bags, cutting

paper into shapes, and much more. Playing these games, children will learn or enhance their knowledge in multiplication, fractions, addition, probability, geometry, and more. And--children can also win prizes.

Families will not only learn that math can be fun, but through these activities, they will learn facts about noted African American mathematicians, and other noted African Americans in related fields (engineers,

physicists, etc.).

Math Night co-chairs are looking for volunteers to help run each activity center, which will be an absolutely fun job! Please contact Anne Mutti, anne_mutti@hotmail.com, 301-608-2689; or Marie Hall, mariehull@gmail.com, 301-587-3831.

Hope to see you on Math Night!

Abbi Lichtenstein
Enrichment Chair



"The February PTA General Meeting will combine both Black History Month activities and Math Night."

President's Message

Winter activities already well underway

Welcome back from an extra long Winter Break! While the Holidays may have lasted a bit longer than expected, you should know that many PTA volunteers have been working hard even over the vacation to make sure the spring semester is as exciting and activity-packed as the fall.

By the time you read this, we will have already held the annual Woodlin Dance. This year's event featured a step routine by many of the students. The dance served as a kickoff to Black History Month. The 2010 Woodlin PTA Black History Committee has many other fun, educational and exciting activities for the children this year. A big thanks goes out to **Sabrina Thomas** and her team, **Charolette Anderson, Aisha Burgess, Shelly Duckett, Yvette Harris, Yvonne Moore, Pat Price, Robyn Seabrook, Karen Sharp and Diana Arrington**, who are helping make this event a winner.

This year's Black History Month theme will focus on

math, science and technology. In that vein, the February PTA General Meeting will combine both Black History Month activities and Math Night. It's sure to be a huge hit. Thanks also to **Anne Mutti** and **Marie Hull** for helping on the Math Night elements of the meeting.

Hundreds of Woodlin students are enjoying clubs during this winter session. Thanks to the PTA volunteers who coordinate the clubs – **Chris Scanlon, Sarah Osbourne, Krista Middlebrooks**, and Enrichment Chair **Abbi Lichtenstein**. In fact, so many children are enrolled, we had to schedule an extra activity bus to get them all home!

Also sure to be fun are two activities still being planned as of press time – a family game night and a kickball game – check the listserv and website for details!

The PTA's biggest fundraiser of the year, the Woodlin Winter Festival and Silent Auction, is fast approaching; please read more on



page 3 about getting involved. We need your help!

Lastly, on a more serious note, it's no surprise that Montgomery County and MCPS face significant financial challenges in the coming years. Threatened budget cuts will impact all of us and our families. I encourage you to visit <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/> to learn more about the budget and <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/community/participation.shtml> to see the schedule of public budget hearings. Remember, we are our children's best advocates!

Chris Rutledge
PTA President

Thanks for Operation Gratitude!

Warm thanks to the Woodlin families who contributed left-over Trick-or-Treat candy to OPERATION GRATITUDE.

Candy went to our troops to give to children in

Iraq and Afghanistan with the cooperation of Fenton Family Dental (downtown Silver Spring).

Fenton Family Dental then donated \$20 to our

children's UNICEF collection total of nearly \$1700.

Linda S. Katz



Send in 2009 Snider's Receipts by January 31st!

The deadline for submitting our 2009 Snider's receipts is fast approaching, so please gather all those holiday receipts and any other 2009 receipts you might still have floating around your home!

Snider's will donate 1 percent of your pre-tax shopping bill to Woodlin. You can send the receipts in your child's backpack (in an envelope clearly marked "SNIDERS RECEIPTS") or drop them in the SNIDERS PTA box in the Woodlin mailroom.

In 2008, Woodlin received over \$2,500 from Sniders receipts.

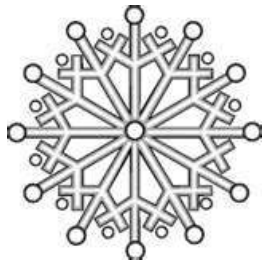
Please make sure the receipts are legible; don't cut or write on the Snider's receipts. If you have questions,

please contact Bernadette Sweeney via email at berna411@yahoo.com or call 301.512.1819.



Also, don't forget to enter your Safeway Club and Giant Bonus cards at the register each time you grocery shop so Woodlin benefits from your patronage. Woodlin received more than \$1,400 last year from these programs. If you have yet to designate your cards in support of Woodlin, please email Heather Lair at heatherlair@yahoo.com for assistance.

Bernadette Sweeney



Mark your Calendar Feb. 21 Winter Festival & Silent Auction

A highlight of the school year, Woodlin's Winter Festival and Silent Auction, is right around the corner on Feb. 21 from 2 to 5 pm.

The PTA still needs lots of volunteers to both work at the fair and auction, and help prepare for them.

On the day of the festival, planners Melita Flannery and Laura Stewart are looking for volunteers to **set up, take photos, run the snack bar and sell food, help in the art room, set up and help run the book fair**

and jewelry table, monitor the gym and break down the festival and clean up. We also need a 5th grade parent to help with the bake sale.

Please contact Melita (wflannerv@verizon.net) or Laura (laurastewart@starpower.net) to get involved.

\$\$\$

The Silent Auction is already shaping up to have lots of enticing items for bid, like dinners out, theatre tickets, Capitol Steps CDs and even a Redskins collectible football autographed by Santana Moss!

But auction co-chairs Adriana Niepa and Jenn Sawin still need your help to make this event the best fundraiser possible. Volunteers are needed now to follow up on our mailing to prospective

donors by making phone calls to those who have donated items in the past. And additional volunteers are needed on the day of the auction to set up, staff and tally bids. Please email woodlin.auction@yahoo.com to let Adriana or Jenn know how you would like to help.

Also please consider what YOU could donate to the auction. In the past, Woodlin families have given a week at a vacation home, a hand-knit shawl, swing dance lessons, and even amazing family food dishes, like grandma's chocolate cake. We would be happy to accept your donations of gently used books, CDs, DVDs for our book and media sale, and of course you'll never know who can use that holiday gift that you can't – donate it to the Silent Auction!

Under the Lights at the Woodlin Dance



Black History Month

The 2010 focus for Black History Month is math, science and technology. Many people are not aware of the many contributions that black people have made to these fields. We will share some of the well known and more obscure black history facts with you through the February Newsletter. Students will also hear a black history fact each morning at school.

Woodlin kicked off Black History Month a little early with the annual Woodlin dance. Our student performance was a success despite the weather delays that prevented us from having our final rehearsal. Everyone had a great time. We appreciate the support of everyone who came.

During the February PTA meeting, we will collaborate with the Math Night Committee to bring a fun-filled evening of math activities (see article on page 1).

We will also have our annual potluck dinner with soul food/comfort food dishes from different cultures. Watch for an

article about soul food in next month's newsletter, written by Woodlin Fourth Grade Teacher Deborah Grant.

It's not too late to get involved. The committee is looking for volunteers to come discuss career options in math, science or technology during school town meetings on Feb. 8 and Feb. 22. Please contact Sabrina Thomas at stthomas@ms2kplus.com if you are interested in participating. It will only take five to 10 minutes of your time.

Finally, Black History Month is only as successful as those who support our efforts. We appreciate all of you who have and will support these activities.

The Black History Committee

- Diana Arrington
- Charlotte Anderson
- Aisha Burgess
- Yvette Harris
- Yvonne Moore
- Pat Price
- Karen Sharp
- Sabrina Thomas

Still Looking to Volunteer?

If you're still looking to volunteer for the PTA, we have a great job for you! The PTA seeks a coordinator for the room parent network. With upcoming Valentine's Day parties and other fun room

activities, this would be a rewarding job, and a great help to the PTA.

Contact Chris Rutledge at crnkar@yahoo.com for information!



Readers' Lunch Bunch Picks

The following kids book suggestions come from Shannon Parkin, a Woodlin mom who spends time at the school each week reading to students of different grades and who has a lot of knowledge about children's books:

1st grade favorites:

- *Busy Bugs* by Jayne Harvey
- *The Magic School Bus Lost in the Snow* by Joanna Cole
- *The Golden Rule* by Ilene Cooper
- *On Beyond Bugs, All About Insects* by Tish Rabe
- *Captain Invincible and the Space Shapes* by Stuart J. Murphy.

3rd grade favorites:

- *George Washington Leading a Nation* by Matt Doeden
- *The First Moon Landing* by Thomas Adamson
- *The Magic School Bus Takes a Dive: A Book about Coral Reefs* by Joanna Cole



- *Sir Cumberence and the Great Knight of Angleland* by Cindy Neuschwander

- *Ordinary's Mary Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson

Shannon also recommends two website to look for good children's books: www.schoollibraryjournal.com/community/Reviews/47085.html, where parents can find reviews by school librarians, including reviews of the latest Spanish books for kids.

In addition, www.kidsreads.com is a terrific site that provides reviews of everything from great classics to the latest "cool and new" books.

--Shannon Parkin

Jump Rope for Heart

Save the date Feb. 5. That's when Jump Rope for Heart, a student council-sponsored fundraiser, will take place. Details to follow next month.



School Improvement Committee Update

Mathematics is a vital lifelong skill. Students in elementary school that demonstrate proficient or advanced levels of understanding of number relationships, increase their chances of participation in higher level mathematics courses in middle and high school. Thus, students increase their chances of acceptance, but more importantly, successful completion of college.

In January, a subgroup of teachers and parents from Woodlin's School Improvement Committee met to discuss and create ways to increase number sense as students travel

throughout the building daily. Below are three ideas that will be implemented at Woodlin in the coming weeks:

1. **Number of the Month** -- A number will be posted on construction paper in various locations around the building. Led by classroom teachers, students will have the opportunity to share and write ideas about what comes to mind with a particular number. For example, for the number 12 students might respond with answers such 12 months in a year, a dozen eggs, 6 + 6, etc...

2. **Estimation jars** will be placed on a small table at a centralized location. One jar will be used as a benchmark jar in order to help students make estimations about the second jar. The items inside of the jars will be changed monthly and students will be able to record their estimations in class. The actual amount in the jar will be read during town meetings. A student who records the correct answer will be able to share his/her thought process during a town meeting.

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"In January, a subgroup of teachers and parents ... met to discuss and create ways to increase number sense as students travel throughout the building."



First Get-Together for LGBT Parents & Allies

Liora Moriel and Susan Kirshner, who do Woodlin outreach on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, invite LGBT parents, their children and allies to come to a family play-date at their house on Feb. 13 from 4-6 pm.

Liora and Susan will provide snacks and drinks, as well

as fun stuff for kids to do. This will be an opportunity for parents to get acquainted and think together of ways to reach those who are shy and watchful, as well as discuss any other ideas.

This is a new outreach by the Woodlin PTA, which is proud to reach out to and include all.

Liora and Susan live in Woodside Park, right off Georgian Ave. and Spring St. Please contact them lioram21@yahoo.com for directions and suggestions.

Liora Moriel and Susan Kirshner, LGBT Outreach

"A good mentor needs to be a good listener, interested in helping a young person, and open minded."

Mentoring (cont. from page 1)

Erin stresses too that mentoring is not just for troubled children. It can also benefit children who are shy or anxious at school, have a large number of brothers and sisters, or are experiencing life changes such as divorce, re-marriage, death or family financial worries. "A mentor is just one more

caring adult looking out for a child," says Erin. "We have a good number of dedicated staff and community members who volunteer to mentor children but unfortunately, not all children who need a mentor have one. A good mentor needs to be a good listener, interested in helping a young person,

and open-minded."

Those interested in mentoring a child, please contact Woodlin counselor Mindy Rosenberg at mindy-rosenberg@mcpsmd.org

Evita Leonard Smedley



December Shining Stars

Shining Stars is a Woodlin program to encourage students to recognize daily positive behaviors by other students. Kids are asked to write down when they see a peer do something positive or helpful. The following is a list of students recognized in December for helping others and/or doing something positive for the Woodlin community. You can visit the Shining Stars bulletin board near

the front office of the school.

1st grade: Zion Jackson, Carly Klein, Jayden Campbell and Sydney Nutakor.

2nd grade: Elizabeth Olsson

3rd grade: Jonas Feit, Andrea Bisk

4th grade: Ellis Maclean, Jenny Witt, Hasani Thomas, Shesh Batni, Justin Anderson, Joey Curtin

5th grade: Camryn Cross, Jackson Prettyman, Maxwell Niles, Roger Jenkins, Rose Sainfinin, Morrocco Parker, Callie Radecki, Resha Ahemd, Ryann Watson, Julia Raytselis, Martin Juarez, Gabrielle Sherba, Jeannie Ferrin.

Compiled by Shannon Parkin

Principal's Corner

Our school improvement team continues to work on improving student learning in math. One of the action items from the committee was to spend time making connections with families about what to expect with math and how to help at home. This article is the first in a series of 3 about math. We hope this information will be a useful tool to frame the conversation about math and help all of our children meet and exceed our expectations. This information comes from the www.ed.gov and was designed for parents. This newsletter also contains an update from Woodlin Assistant Principal Troy Clark on specific steps the school is taking to promote number sense.

Introduction

As our children go about their daily lives exploring and discovering things around them, they are exposed to the world of mathematics. And since mathematics has become increasingly important in this technological age, it is even more important for our children to learn math at home, as well as in school.

Attitude Counts

How do you feel about math? Your feelings will have an impact on how your children think about math and themselves as mathematicians. Take a few minutes to answer these questions:

- Do you think everyone can learn math?
- Do you think of math as useful in everyday life?
- Do you believe that most jobs today require math skills?

If you answer "yes" to these questions, then you are probably encouraging your child to think mathematically. Positive attitudes about math are important for your child's success.

Helping your child learn to solve problems, to communicate mathematically, and to demonstrate reasoning abilities are fundamental to learning mathematics. These attributes will improve your child's understanding of and interest in math concepts and thinking.

Important Things to Know

1. Problems Can Be Solved in Different Ways. While some problems in math may have only one solution, there may be many ways to get the right answer. Learning math is **not only finding the correct answer**, it's also a process of solving problems and applying what you have learned to new problems.

2. Wrong Answers Can Help! While accuracy is always important, a wrong answer could help you and your child discover what your child may not understand. The wrong answer tells you to look further, to ask questions, and to see what the wrong answer is saying about the child's understanding. It is

highly likely that when you studied math, you were expected to complete lots of problems using one, memorized method and to do them quickly. Today, the focus is less on the quantity of memorized problems and memorized methods and more on understanding the concepts and applying thinking skills to arrive at an answer.

3. Doing Math in Your Head Is Important.

Have you ever noticed that today very few people take their pencil and paper out to solve problems in the grocery store, restaurant, department store, or in the office? Instead, most people estimate in their heads, or use calculators or computers.

4. It's Okay to Use a Calculator.

In fact, students are taught to use calculators at young ages and are often required to use them to do homework and take tests. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), for example, permits the use of calculators for its timed tests. Many schools teach computer courses that include how to do spread sheets, statistical display, and computer-assisted designs for mechanical drawing and graphics. Schools often sell calculators to families at a low cost or supply them for all students to use. Knowing how to use a calculator and computer is a benefit for all students.



Principal Sarah Sirgo

"While accuracy is always important, a wrong answer could help you and your child discover what your child may not understand."

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The Wizards PTA News is published 10 times per year. Newsletter Editor: Mary Boyle; Layout: April Osajima

www.woodlinpta.org

JANUARY

Dates to Remember

- 18 No School--Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 25 No School—Professional Day for Teachers
- 31 Last day to turn in 2009 Snider's Receipts

FEBRUARY

Dates to Remember

- 2 PTA Meeting/Math Night/Black History Month
- 5 Jump Rope for Heart
- 13 LGBT Parents and Allies get-together
- 15 President's Day
- 21 Winter Festival and Silent Auction

School Improvement (cont. from page 5)

3. Math strategies taught to students in grades K-5 will be posted around the building. The strategies will be updated as grade levels change math units and new concepts are taught.

As students go to lunch or specials, teachers will highlight the ideas mentioned. Teachers can also opt to take classes into the hallway and use the resources as a mini lesson.

The School Improvement Committee is excited about these ideas and will

monitor the effectiveness as we collect feedback from students, teachers, and parents.

Troy Clarke, assistant principal



Join the Woodlin PTA!
For the 2009-10 Year
Everyone must rejoin and pay dues every year!

The Woodlin PTA depends on your membership dues and donations to support our many programs, services, and events. Membership fees are only \$10 per person—a small investment toward making Woodlin a great place for YOUR kids to learn and grow.

Parent/Guardian #1: _____

Parent/Guardian #2: _____

Student(s): _____

Teacher(s): _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please add my email address to the Woodlin PTA list serve!

Total # of PTA members : _____ X \$10 = \$ _____

Additional tax deductible donation: \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please return this form with cash or check (payable to "Woodlin PTA") to school in your child's backpack. Address the envelope to "PTA Membership." THANK YOU!