



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

February 2010



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Winter Festival is Almost Here

Mark your calendars for the upcoming Winter Festival Feb. 21 from 2 pm to 5 pm. Come and enjoy the fun, entertainment and activities. Highlights will include the Silent Auction, Armand's Pizza, a bake sale, craft room, bingo, moon bounce, Velcro Wall and tumble bus. The popular teacher raffle will return, as will the used book/media sale, which includes movies, music and computer games. Magician Andy Lees will also perform.

Please bring all of your family and neighbors. This is a community event that supports our school, and it is one of our largest fundraising events of the year.

to make this a great event and looking forward to seeing you there.

Melita Flannery--Winter Festival Committee

Don't forget that we need your help to make this happen, so please consider donating your time. Look for more information about the event, collection of donations and volunteer opportunities on the website, listserv and future flyers. We are working hard

*** INSIDE ***

 See our special
Black History Month
 Newsletter starting
 on Page 7

Dine out at **Eggspectation** February 23

Woodlin's next "Dining Out" fundraiser will be at Eggspectation in downtown Silver Spring on Wednesday, Feb. 23.

Eggspectations will donate 15 percent of sales from people who mention Woodlin or have a flyer about dining out night. Please consider going to the restaurant, or taking out.

After-School Club Registration Goes Online

Process Tweaked

Woodlin is pleased to offer a range of after school club offerings. Each year, we spend significant time working with the PTA to select, advertise, and coordinate club offerings for all students. In our efforts to enhance our work, we considered the feedback we received from families and have made the following changes to our clubs registration. These changes are effective for the spring

2010 registration window which goes from Feb. 23 - March 6. Spring clubs will begin the week of March 16 and go through May 13.

- A separate check must be written to the appropriate payee for each club for which a student registers. Families may no longer bundle Mad Science, Fun Clubs, and independent club payments. This will minimize the potential for errors.

Cont., page 6





Principal Sarah Sirgo

"Children will see that math is much more than knowing facts and number operations; it involves estimation, geometry, probability, statistics, and more."

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 make connections with families about what to expect with math and how to help at home. This article is the second in a series of 3 about math. We hope that 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 www.ed.gov and was designed for parents.

What Our Children Are Learning

You probably remember studying "arithmetic"-- adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing when you were in elementary school. Now, children are starting right away to learn about the broad ideas associated with math, including problem solving, communicating mathematically, reasoning, and number sense. Listed below are a few of the key math concepts that appear in elementary school math books and classroom instruction today.

✓ **Algebra:** Algebra is a generalization of arithmetic in which letters of the alphabet represent numbers or a specified set of numbers, and are related by operations that hold for all numbers in the set. Children use algebra when they solve problems

like $4 + \square = 7$, with letters replacing the box as children get older.

✓ **Arithmetic:** Arithmetic is the knowledge and the ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers and fractions. For example: $5+1$, $10-5$, 6×2 , $3 \div 12$, and $\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{2}$.

✓ **Calculus:** Calculus is about how quantities change. By understanding calculus, people can use math to make predictions about things that change over time.

✓ **Estimation:** Estimation is the act of approximating or guessing the number value of something. We use estimation regularly to determine how many, how heavy, and how full. Being a good estimator also helps a child know if answers on calculators or other computer-generated data make sense.

✓ **Geometry and spatial sense:** Geometry begins with children recognizing shapes by their characteristics and extends to their being able to use formulas and algebra to determine important details about each shape. For example, $a = \frac{1}{2} (b \times h)$ is the formula for determining the area of a triangle.

✓ **Measurement:** Measurement is determining lengths, areas, volume, time, and other quantities. Children need to know common units of measure such as inches or kilograms and how to use

measurement tools.

✓ **Number sense:** Number sense is understanding the relative sizes of numbers and how to use them, whether doing arithmetic, estimation, measurement, or classification.

✓ **Probability:** Probability is determining the likelihood that something will happen, often expressed as a fraction or a ratio in 10 , $1/10$.

✓ **Statistics:** Statistics is the collection and analysis of numerical data. Taking a census and counting people is a statistical activity.

How Will Math Look in Your Child's Classroom?

As a result of the recent effort in mathematics teaching to include understanding in the teaching of math, from basic through advanced levels, the picture of your child's math class may, indeed, look different from what you remember when you were in school. For instance:

★ Children will be expected to know their math facts with an understanding of how facts relate to each other.

★ Children will be doing more than arithmetic. Children will see that math is much more than knowing facts and number operations); it involves estimation, geometry, probability, statistics, and more.

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PTA President's Message

Let's Go and Explore Math!

Hello everyone, and welcome to the chilliest month of the year. The PTA has big plans in mind to keep everyone busy, and hopefully warm, this month!

As I write this letter, ongoing Black History month events are taking place. These included a combination pot-luck and presentation as well as Math Night activities during our regularly scheduled PTA meeting. Linking cultural and academic topics together made for a very rewarding and



inspiring evening, and helped us see the focus the Woodlin community places on academic advancement for all! Many thanks to **Sabrina Thomas** and the **Black History Month team** and **Anne Mutti** and **Marie Hull** for their Math Night plans!

Plans continue to take shape for the Woodlin Annual Winter Festival and Silent Auction. This event,

taking place February 21, will feature fun activities, athletic opportunities, games, book and jewelry sales, and of course a Silent Auction. The Winter Festival is a highlight of every school year. Pulling together these events are a huge undertaking – thank you to **Melita Flannery** and **Laura Stewart** for all they are doing! We'd like to make a special plea to get in touch with **Jen Sawin** if you have any items you'd like to donate to the Silent Auction – unused Christmas presents or personal services make for great auction items. You'll find that many members of the Woodlin community would love to purchase what you have to offer.



Finally, I want to draw your attention once again to the MCPS budget process. I encourage you to visit <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/> to learn more about the process and the role you can play in advocating for our children.

Have a great month!

Chris Rutledge, PTA President



When is it too cold for outdoor recess?

Q: What is the Montgomery County policy on outdoor recess?

There is no MCPS policy specific to recess. Each school in the county makes similar decisions, but primarily makes an independent assessment based on temperature, (including wind chill factor); the condition of the play surfaces; weather forecasts; and the number of days the children have

already been inside. The MCPS Wellness Policy and Regulations encourage physical activity during the day, after the day, and before the day for kids, staff, and the community. These are broad strokes of healthy things to do. For more information go to the following website:

- www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jpg.pdf

Q: When does Woodlin cancel outdoor recess?

When the air and wind chill are in the low 20's or 10's in temperature, students are kept inside for recess. This is for the safety of students and the supervising adults. While many students run around and are dressed appropriately, others are not and extended time at freezing temperatures can

be a hardship for the adults and students. We have frequent requests from our families with students who suffer from asthma to stay in for recess. While this does not directly influence our decision, it is an additional topic that we consider. However, even in the cold winter months, we believe outdoor recess is an important and valuable part of the student's day. Teachers agree that students perform best at school when they have an opportunity for vigorous outdoor play, so we try to get them out whenever possible.

Q: Why aren't teachers available to watch children during recess and lunch?

MCPS teacher are under

Cont., page 4

Woodlin third grader **Heather Parkin** won a prestigious county-wide writing contest, The Young Author's Contest, with the below poem, The Sea. Heather's poem will now move on to compete in a statewide competition. Thanks to Mrs. Tencer for entering Heather's poem in the contest.



Sea

by Heather Parkin

Wonders of the ocean world.
It is a land which into man can be hurled.
Wonders, wonders of the sea.
I can hear them calling me.
Whales, sharks, dolphins dance.
Truckfish, coral, otters prance.
Swimming wonders, what a sight.
Beauty, beauty, day or night.
The sea is a wonder to us.
There's a whale as long as a bus!
The sea is something for which we should care
It is really quite rare.
So please, take care of the sea.
It's quite important to you and me.



Principal's Message (cont.)

- ★ Children will be striving to achieve high goals: Children will achieve high standards of understanding, complexity, and accuracy set for them by their parents, teachers, schools, and states.
- ★ Children will be actively involved in the study of mathematics: Children will do tasks that involve investigations, talking and writing explanations for their thinking.
- ★ Children will be working with one another: Children collaborate to make discoveries, draw conclusions, and discuss math.
- ★ Children will be evaluated in a variety of ways: Teachers will use many

different ways to determine if children know and understand math concepts, including writing samples, projects, or written tests.

★ Children will be using calculators to solve problems: They will use calculators not as crutches but as tools to solve more complex problems with bigger numbers than they could do otherwise. Children with good knowledge of math facts, number sense, and reasoning about math will be able to use the calculator most effectively.

★ Children will be using computers: They will be developing databases, spreadsheets and computer graphics, while solving problems.

Indoor Recess (cont.)

contract to have a duty-free period during the student lunch and recess period. Moreover, this is the only time during the day that teachers have to eat lunch and is often used for team meetings and planning.

Q: Do you need parent volunteers to provide additional supervision and assistance to children during these periods?

Volunteers are always welcome at Woodlin. However, the administrators and teachers consider the current level of adult supervision adequate for safety. Woodlin provides safe spaces for children to play, adult supervision, and developmentally appropriate play equipment.

Moreover, students are taught appropriate social skills and safety rules, and neither bullying nor aggressive behavior is tolerated.

If families want to see changes to indoor recess options, fewer students per indoor recess classroom, or more options for organized play outside, then we would welcome regular adult volunteers to make that happen. In many cases the decision to have indoor recess is made at the last minute. We watch the temperature and weather conditions closely in the morning in hopes of being able to go outside. Decisions for indoor recess are typically made by 11 am daily and

the first recess begins at 12 noon.

Q: What happens during indoor recess?

Indoor recess takes place in the classroom during the same 30-minute time period in which outdoor recess occurs. During that time, students at each grade level are divided into two or more classrooms. The gym is not an option because it is being used for regularly scheduled classes. Children have a range of interests and we provide a range of choices, commonly including board games, computer games, drawing, reading, writing, talking with friends. The option of videos is also offered. If a parent does not want their child to watch a video, they should inform the child or teacher

and we will make sure they participate in an alternate option. Vigorous play is not a safe or viable option in an indoor recess classroom setting due to the furniture and space constraints.

Q: How are children supervised?

The same supervision that occurs during outdoor recess occurs during indoor recess. As a result, we divide the children into two rooms with one or two adults to watch the students.

If families are interested in volunteering for recess please contact Ram Kurup, chair of the Health & Safety Committee of the PTA at ramashiyakrup@gmail.com

Evita Smedley and Sarah Sirgo

NAACP Corner Haiti Crisis

The NAACP is collecting funds for Haitian earth-quake relief. Online donations can be made on the NAACP website at www.naacp.org. Checks and money orders should be made out to "NAACP4Haiti" and sent to our national headquarters at 4805 Mt. Hope Dr., Baltimore, MD 21215.

For those who are concerned about Americans currently in Haiti, or the fate of Haitian-Americans, the U.S. State Department has set up a toll free number: 888-407-4747.

For more information about the coordinated U.S.

response to the catastrophe, go to www.whitehouse.gov. If you or your organization can provide services to the people of Haiti, please contact the Center for International Disaster Information at (703) 276-1914.

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 January for helping others and/or doing something positive for the Woodlin community.

You can visit the Shining Stars bulletin board near the school's front office.

1st grade: Brenlynn Falcon-Muse, Holly Middlebrook, Ella Yankowski.

2nd grade: Elizabeth Olsson, Jennifer Lopez, Sam Bole, Ella Douglas, Chase Stingley, Aaron Grice, Elizabeth Molsen, Elizabeth Molnar, Aethan Cubitt,

Liam Hull, Allison Jones, Preston Bieber.

3rd grade: Ellen Plumart, Helen Bertot, Andrea Bisk, Rohan Kurup, Heather Parkin, Rhyen Gaulden, Meghan Plumart, Amanda Rutledge, Julia Williamson, Ruth Messay.

4th grade: Edward Ortiz, Aubrey Hobbs, Helen Paige Buck.



Readers' Lunch Bunch Suggestions

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:

1st Grade favorites

- *Ready or Not, Here I Come! A Math Reader* by Teddy Slater



- *The Best Bug Parade Math Start Comparing Sizes* by Stuart J. Murphy
- *Wish for a Fish: All About Sea Creatures* by Bonnie Worth
- *Eat My Dust: Henry Ford's First Race* by Monica Kulling
- *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* by Sean Covey

Third Grade Favorites

- *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women Right's Pioneer* Graphic Library by Connie Miller
- *Eli Whitney and the Cotton Gin* Graphic Library by Jessica Gunderson

- *Amelia Earhart Legendary Aviator* Graphic Library by Jameson Anderson
- *Young Riders of the Pony Express* Graphic Library by Jessica Gunderson
- *Marie Curie and Radioactivity* Graphic Library by Connie Miller
- *Adventures of Riley: Safari in South Africa* by Amanda Lumry

Enjoyed by all

No Excuses: How What you Say Can Get in Your Way by Dr. Wayne Dyer

Compiled by Shannon Parkin



UMD's Gymkana wowed students at a Town Hall Meeting in February



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www.woodlinpta.org

FEBRUARY

Dates to Remember

- 13 LGBT Parents and Allies Get-Together
- 15 President's Day—No School
- 21 Winter Festival and Silent Auction
- 23 Dine Out at Eggspectation
- 23 Afterschool Club Registration Begins
- 26 Early Release Day

MARCH

Dates to Remember

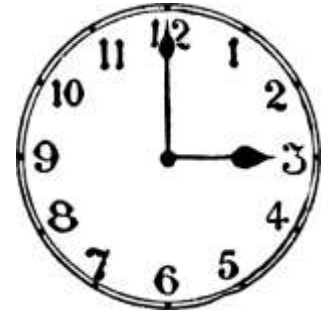
- 2 PTA Meeting
- 26 Reading with Relatives
- 29-31 Spring Break (scheduled)

After-School Club Registration (cont.)

- Clubs selection will NOT be on a first come first serve basis. This is a change from previous years. In order to be equitable in our registration process, all students interested in a club will receive their selection. However, once the number of registration requests exceeds the number of available spaces allowed a lottery will be conducted. A computer program will use a random number generator to select students. This lottery will be held at the conclusion of the registration deadline and all decisions will be final. No individual clubs coordinators will select students for over-enrolled clubs and preference will no longer be given to families who turn in their forms first.
- Confirmation or rejection letters will be sent out to all students. Families will be notified both when their children get into the club of choice as well as when they do not

get in. Letters will be sent out in the week following the club registration deadline. Due to the fact that clubs registration forms go through various individuals, families are encouraged to confirm receipt of the registration form with the specific club coordinator noted on the front of the registration packet.

- Club registration deadlines will no longer be flexible or extended. All families are encouraged to use the school website, call the school, or check their child's backpack for registration packet information.



These changes were identified as improvements by the parent volunteers who coordinate clubs and the school. We thank you for reviewing these important changes and understanding that they were made in the interest of providing an equitable and transparent process for all children.

Sarah Sirgo

Fifth Grade Choral Concert



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Count, Step, Explore, Innovate: Math, Dance, Science and Technology

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Woodlin PTA's Black History Month Committee

**Sabrina Thomas,
CHAIRPERSON**

Committee Members

Charlotte Anderson
Diana Arrington
Robyn Seabrook
Yvonne Moore
Yvette Harris
Aisha Burgess
Pat Price
Karen Sharp

Black History Month Newsletter

Publisher:

Sabrina Thomas

Editor: Pat Price

Our Legacy in Math and Sciences

Even before our nation's founding in 1776, African slaves and their descendents made major contributions to the advancement of science, medicine and math in America.

The list of names of black American pioneers in science, math and technological innovation is long and rich. It includes scientists like Benjamin Banneker, born in Maryland in 1791. The son of a slave who was unable to attend college, Banneker nevertheless published early astronomical charts and almanacs that helped engineers design the cityscape of Washington, D.C.

The list also includes business entrepreneurs such as Minerva Breedlove, also known as Madame C.J. Walker, an early 20th century beauty products mogul who mastered the principals of chemistry to

revolutionize women's hair care.

It includes Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., the son of Caribbean immigrants. During the mid 20th century in East Harlem, New York City, he overcame family hardship and the low expectations of some medical school officials to become an Ivy League-educated



Dr. Alvin Poussaint,
Cosby Show advisor

psychiatrist. Over the past half-century, Dr. Poussaint has also served as an advisor to U.S. presidents and Surgeon

Generals, and he remains a leading expert on people of color and health care in the United States.

It is a list that stretches right up to our present day, and includes Mae Jemison, and Neil deGrasse Tyson, two black American scientists who lead major research institutions that encourage us to see the skies and the universe through fresh eyes. Another contemporary name on that list is Dr. Sylvester James Gates, Jr., a leading physicist.

Dr. Gates, Jr., who spoke to members of the Woodlin Elementary School community during its Black History Month celebration earlier this month, is the John S. Toll Professor of Physics at University of Maryland, and
(Continued on page 6)

Count, Step and Dance

Stomp, clap, stomp, clap, stomp, clap. It looks like a pattern learned in kindergarten, but it is a part of step dancing, an African-American tradition.

Step dancing, often called "stepping" is a form of dancing that uses feet and hand claps to sound like drum beats or other rhythms. Step dancing uses math to coordinate steps and rhythms. This style of dancing was made popular by African-American sororities and fraternities—organizations dedicated to improving the lives of

Americans—and African Americans in the military during World War II. Enslaved Africans in the United States first used stepping to communicate without their master's knowledge.

Many Woodlin students had the opportunity to perform step dancing at the January dance. Stepping is now used in some school districts to help teach students mathematics and science in a creative and entertaining way.

Researching Our ABC's



Dr. S. James Gates, Jr., researcher, college professor and researcher

Dr. Gates is a theoretical physicist who has researched the string theory. This theory hopes to explain the building blocks of everything that is around us. He is currently John S. Toll Professor of Physics at the University of Maryland.

Gates enjoys research and has written many articles and books, but he also enjoys teaching and encouraging young people to learn about and pursue careers in science and mathematics.

Gates told PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) that researching physics is joyous and, "It belongs to everybody, just like great art and great music belongs to everybody. Great science belongs to everybody".

Kennedy Centers Honor, and a National Medal of Arts.

For Johnnetta B. Cole, former president of a leading Historically Black College, Spelman University in Atlanta, it was an interest in anthropology, too, that started her onto the path toward educational excellence. Born in Jacksonville, Florida, during a time of severe racial discrimination and segregation laws--also known as the "Jim Crow" era, when state rules and regulations kept schools, libraries, and most other public spaces racially separate--Cole was determined to be successful.

Our Legacy in Math and Sciences

(Continued from page 5)
member of President Barack Obama's Council of Science Advisors on Science and Technology.

The list continues to grow with each passing year, adding the names and accomplishments of African-American scholars in science who will come of age in this century.

Together, along with Banneker, Walker, and the brave World War II fighter pilots known as the Tuskegee Airmen, they occupy a little-known corner of our nation's history: the tinkerers, math whizzes, and stargazers who helped the United States become a global force in science and technology for much of the past century.



Madame C. J. Walker, inventor, businesswoman

Some of these pioneers utilized sharp math skills and their knowledge of the "soft sciences" (including sociology, physiology, and anthropology) to become leading performance artists or high-impact educators.

For example, Katherine Dunham of Illinois was a ground-breaking artist who led a major dance company for more than fifty years. But she began her academic career in a science-related discipline that informed her later work as a revolutionary dancer and cultural innovator. After graduating high school, Dunham enrolled at the University of Chicago, where she received undergraduate and graduate degrees in anthropology. Her field work took her to the Caribbean Island nations of Barbados, Jamaica, and Haiti, where she immersed herself in the Afro-Caribbean dances and rituals that inspired her to form her own troupe back in the States.

Before her death in 2006, she had received a raft of top awards for her work as a revolutionary choreographer and ethnographer, including a



Katherine Dunham, anthropologist, dancer

A studious and precocious child, she completed high school early, and enrolled at Fisk University in Tennessee at age 15; she later transferred to Oberlin College in Ohio, received an undergraduate degree, and went on to receive a graduate degree and a doctorate in anthropology, both from Northwestern University near Chicago. In 1987, she was named President of Spelman College, the leading university for black women in America, becoming the first black woman to lead that institution. During her tenure as President of Spelman, Cole launched a massive fundraising and capital improvement drive, raising more than \$113 million for the university over a decade.

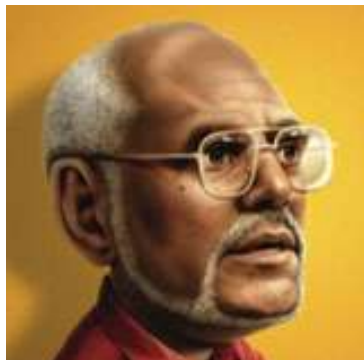
Cole's confident grasp of math, science, and several humanitarian disciplines made her a formidable expert on many fronts, and last year, she was chosen to lead the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art. Cole is slated to begin that role in March of this year. In a recent interview, she said one of her top priorities for the new museum will be fundraising -- further proof of the value of a sound education in mathematical principles.

--Amy Alexander

Creative African American Innovators



Do you remember Aladdin moving on his carpet or the special effects from *Beauty and the Beast*? Dr. Marc Hannah, one of the founders of Silicon Graphics, is one of the computer scientists who helped to create the computers that graphic artists use to design those awesome special effects. He was also awarded the Kilby Young Innovator award.



Helping to solve problems is what Bob Moses does. His daughter wanted to study algebra, but her middle school didn't teach the class. He taught algebra to a small group of students at the school. Afterward he was inspired to develop The Algebra Project to help inner city youth develop math skills. He believes learning math is a civil right.



As a high school student in Baltimore, Maryland, Patricia Edmonds, began to develop a process using laser lights and a robotic arm to distinguish paper and plastic. This invention may help automate the process of sorting recyclables and to eliminate the need to use hands.



Debbie Allen is a multi-award winning director, producer choreographer--the person who designs dances and teaches it to the dancers-- dancer, and actress. She directed episodes of *Everybody Hates Chris* and other television shows and movies. Allen received fame as a dancer in Broadway plays and a dance teacher in the television series *FAME*. Allen is also a graduate of historically black college Howard University.

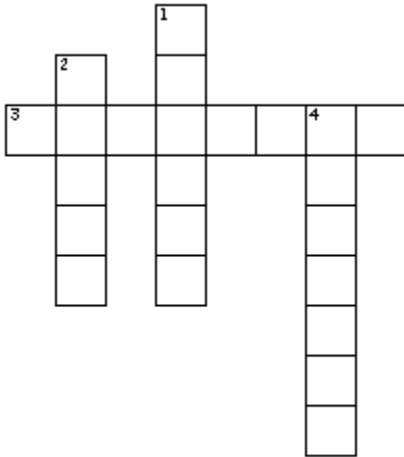


Maryland native Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806) was a skilled and mostly self-taught mathematician and scientist. He helped survey Washington DC and published an almanac, a book that forecasts weather and makes other scientific predictions. He wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson saying blacks were not inferior and slavery should end. Banneker was a remarkable man who believed learning was a lifelong goal.



Jane Cooke Wright is a world-renown physician who studied and developed new techniques for administering cancer chemotherapy. She was a leader in study of anticancer drugs and was the first African American to become the Associate Dean of the New York Medical College. Dr. Wright started a study for strokes, heart disease and cancer at the college.

Last Names Only



Fill in the last names of these creative African Americans.

Across

3. Surveyed Washington DC

Down

1. Designed computers

2. Physicist and speaker at PTA meeting

4. High school student scientist

A Giant Thanks

This year's Black History Month events and Math Night would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the following people:

Black History Committee Members

- Charlotte Anderson
- Diana Arrington
- Robyn Seabrook
- Yvonne Moore
- Yvette Harris
- Aisha Burgess
- Pat Price
- Karen Sharp

Math Night Committee Members

- Anne Mutti
- Marie Hull
- Sarah Osborne
- Abbi Lichtenstein

A special thanks to Amy Alexander for the article and other contributions. As always, a special thanks to all the school staff who helped to make this event a success as well as our school administrators, Ms. Sirgo and Mr. Clarke, for their support.

*--Sabrina Thomas,
Black History Month Chairperson*

FREE FAMILY-FRIENDLY Local Black History Month Events

2/17 Black College Fair, Richard Montgomery High School, 6-8 PM. Contact Henry Thompson for more information lookuphmt@aol.com.

2/20 African American Pioneers in Aviation, National Air & Space Museum, 6th & Independence SW, 10-3PMHear about the exploits of Bessie Coleman in story and performance; listen to Tuskegee Airmen tell their stories; meet the first all female, all African-American commercial flight crew; and find out about space from NASA engineers and an astronaut.

2/24 Storytelling with Charlotte Blake Alston at Silver Spring Library 8901 Colesville Road 7 PM Call 240-773-9420

"Let My Stories Tell You Who I Am." Stories for all ages. Join us as storyteller Charlotte Blake Alston breathes life into stories from the African and African-American oral and cultural traditions.

Who Am I? Fill the correct name in the blank space.

