



# WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

April 2010



## Inside:

Eat your Omega 3s	2
Your Carbon Footprint	3
Spring Fair	5
Principal's Corner	6
Kids Chorale	7
Woodlin Blood Drive	8

## Earth Day

Woodlin celebrates the 40th anniversary of Earth Day...with an EARTH MONTH!

We have a month-long line-up of activities planned for Earth Day, April 22. Please join us!

- An art project by Woodlin students hanging by Woodlin's All-Purpose Room -- come see it!
- An Earth Day-themed display in the front hall
- Earth Day fun facts, announced to students during morning announcements
- Earth Day comes to Woodlin Town Hall meetings and lunches, with Bertie LoPiccolo talking to students about everything from recycling to energy conservation -- throughout April.
- School Earth Day activities on April 22, including:
  - recess-time grow-your-own-lettuce in a baggie, and a worm composting demonstration
  - student planting hardy perennials in Woodlin's front beds



- Farmers Market Tour, Saturday April 24. Meet at the Woodlin parking lot at 10, and we'll walk to the Silver Spring Farmers Market. If you don't want to walk, meet at the fountain in downtown Silver Spring. The tour at the market begins at 11.

Please note: We need volunteers for April 22 events. Please respond to Abbi Lichtenstein at [jams4@starpower.net](mailto:jams4@starpower.net).

## Spring Book Fair also April 22

The annual Spring Book Fair is upon us and there's a lot to look forward to! Aside from the usual wonderful selection of books, we have some especially fun activities planned for the fair's family event on Thursday, April 22 from 6-9 pm. Dress as your favorite book character -- there will be a prize for the child in the best costume! We will also have a lottery drawing, with the proceeds going to our student scholarship

fund and a prize for the winner!

KidsPost reporter Margaret Webb Pressler will be one of our guest readers this year, and Washington Post veteran education reporter and blogger Valerie Strauss will talk to parents about using the best research and sources to help their children excel at school. Our ever-popular Vice Principal Troy Clarke, reading specialist Diane Tencer and teacher Avery

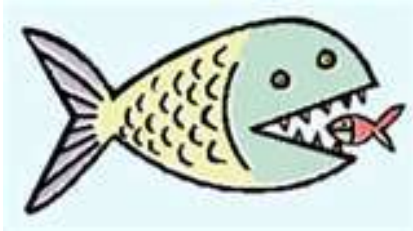
Beeson will also be among our guest readers.

Expect to find plenty of copies of the first in the relaunched Scholastic series, The Babysitters Club, and extra math books in keeping with Woodlin's goals for our children. Ask your child for the book fair flier this week! If you'd like to volunteer, please email Sydney Trent at [sydney.trent@gmail.com](mailto:sydney.trent@gmail.com) or call her at 202-334-4208.

See you there!



## Eat Your Omega-3 Fatty Acids!



*"Families that eat fish 2-3 meals per week are probably getting enough Omega-3s."*

At the March PTA meeting Woodlin parent and international Omega-3 fatty acid expert, Cdr. Joe Hibbeln, MD, spoke about the benefits of getting enough Omega-3 fatty acids. For those of you who missed it -- and we have our fingers crossed that Joe will come back and speak again on this topic -- here are some of the main points from his talk.

- Omega-3 fatty acids are nutrients that are critical for proper brain function, but unfortunately the human body cannot make them.
- Not getting enough Omega-3s can be harmful to a child. Effects can include impaired academic

performance (especially verbal development), greater risk of attention and reading problems, and greater risks of depression and disruptive behaviors. Of course these problems can have many causes, but ensuring adequate Omega-3 fatty acids at least takes care of this cause. Not all kids respond, but very many of those who do are happier and easier to live with. More kids are deficient than you think.

- In adults, inadequate intake of Omega-3 is linked to depression, strokes, and heart attacks.
- Fish is the richest source of Omega-3 fatty acids. Deep sea fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines are the best

sources.

- Families that eat fish two to three meals per week are probably getting enough Omega-3s. Otherwise, supplements are recommended.
- Children should get a MINIMUM of 500 mg per day of EPA +DHA (look on the back of your supplements for this information) and adults should get at least 1,000 mg per day of EPA + DHA. That's between one to three capsules for kids and two to six capsules for adults depending upon the concentration in the capsule.

Don't delay, serve fish for dinner and pick up some supplements for the whole family!

## 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

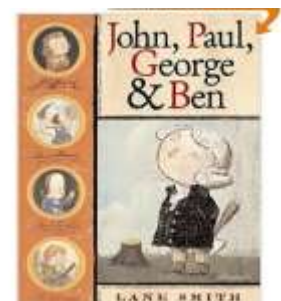
- *Oh Say Can you Seed? All about Flowering Plants*, Cat in the Hat Learning Library by Bonnie Worth

- *The Rickety Barn Show* by Jemma Beeke
- *Mice Make Trouble* by Becky Bloom
- *Oh the Things you can Do that are Good for you! All about staying Healthy* by Tish Rabe

### 3rd Grade Favorites

- *The Magic School Bus Out of this World, A Book about Space Rocks*, by Joanna Cole
- *The Scrambled States of America* by Laurie Keller

- *Jackie Robinson Baseball's Greatest Pioneer* – Graphic Library by Jason Glaser
- *John, Paul, George and Ben* by Lane Smith



## Reduce Carbon Footprint at Home and Abroad

The April 8 PTA meeting kicked off Woodlin's month-long focus on Earth Day's 40th anniversary with well-received guest presentations addressing climate change from two directions: reducing the carbon we put into the air by making our homes more energy efficient, and by removing carbon already in the atmosphere by bringing trees and sustainable crops back to the world's degraded lands.

Our neighbor Dave Deppner of Trees for the Future (TREES), (located at 16th St. and Second Ave.), was recently recognized by the State of Maryland for 20 years' effort to help plant more than 100 million trees in 34 countries. He described TREES' ongoing programs in Haiti to encourage the uprooted urban population to return to the countryside to cultivate diverse and sustainable forest gardens.

Dave welcomes Montgomery County schools to partner with Tree Pals so that young people in different countries can learn how to make our planet more livable in the coming generations. For more information, go to [www.treesiff.org](http://www.treesiff.org) and [www.treepals.org](http://www.treepals.org) or call Dave at 301-565-0630. He

welcomes visitors at the TREES' headquarters, 9000 16th Street.

Marissa Lorenzetti introduced the Alliance for Climate Protection program, "Repower @ Home," sharing inexpensive yet effective ways to become more energy efficient at home. This pilot program in the state of Maryland is seeking community leaders to help educate friends and neighbors on lowering utility bills while maintaining a more comfortable and livable home. Here is Marissa's handout:

### What is Repower@Home?

Repower@Home is an exciting new project of the Alliance for Climate Protection. Our homes consume 22 percent of the energy used in the United States, and much of that is needlessly wasted. Repower@Home empowers homeowners to revitalize their homes, reducing energy waste and creating a cleaner environment.

### Why Repower@Home

By investing in home efficiency, you can reap rewards like:

A more comfortable home

Steps like sealing ducts and air leaks, adding insulation, and using a thermostat correctly create a stable, comfortable environment throughout your home

Cleaner Air

The cleanest energy is the kind you don't use. By eliminating energy waste, you'll be releasing less smog, mercury, and carbon into the environment.

Lower Bills

Your home has the potential to be a huge source of money savings. By investing in your home's energy performance, you can revitalize this potential and stop wasting hundreds of dollars a year.

Interested in learning more about our exciting new program and how you could get involved?

Contact:

Marissa Lorenzetti  
(202) 567-6859

[Marissa.Lorenzetti@climateprotect.org](mailto:Marissa.Lorenzetti@climateprotect.org)



# Reading With Relatives March 26



# PTA President's Message

Welcome back from Spring Break! We are headed into the final months of the school year, and I want to take a moment to thank all of you who have given your time and energy to making Woodlin and its PTA as successful as we are! The Woodlin PTA is proud to boast hundreds of parent volunteers for our myriad activities – we could not do all we do without your help!

As we move into spring and summer, we begin to plan for the upcoming school year. The PTA Nominating Committee is now actively recruiting next year's PTA officers and lead volunteers. If you are interested in taking on a leadership role in the PTA, please contact one of the

members of our nominating committee: [Pat Price](#), [Liora Morie](#) and [Robert Webster](#). Remember, the volunteer roles we offer are rewarding, and not as time consuming as you may fear! You can play an active role in your child's education by being a part of this great work! We have several great events lined up before the end of the school year.



Chris Rutledge

Earth Day activities will take place throughout April – call it Earth Month! Our Green Kids and Earth Day Committee have much to offer – please check out the listserv and elsewhere in this newsletter for details! Thank you to [Linda Katz](#), [Dena Liebman](#), [Bertie LoPiccolo](#) and others on their team for making this all happen!

Cont. on page 5

## NEXT PTA MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 4

ALL-PURPOSE ROOM  
WOODLIN ELEMENTARY

6PM PIZZA  
6:30PM MEETING

**JOIN US!**

## Spring Fair Needs You—May 8

### Volunteers Needed

The Spring Fair is around the corner, in Saturday, May 8 from 4-7 pm. Volunteers are still needed for a variety of activities, including helping with flower sale pick-ups and a 5th grade parent to handle the 5th grade bake sale. The PTA is also looking for student volunteers from Einstein High School and Sligo Middle School to work the fair and receive community service learning hours for the day.

We are looking for volunteers to help throughout the day. You can help us unload the nursery truck in

the early morning, assist with orders or sales in the hours leading up to the fair, or help during the fair. We could also use some extra hands to haul flowers into the school after the fair ends.

To volunteer for the fair, please contact Shelly Duckett at [duckettshelly@yahoo.com](mailto:duckettshelly@yahoo.com).

If you can help with flower pick-ups, please contact flower sale coordinators Vickie Rocha or Michael Horowitz, 301-588-6078 or [horocha@msn.com](mailto:horocha@msn.com).

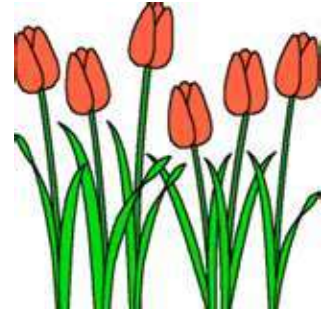
### Pick up Flowers

Thank you to everyone who placed pre-orders for the

Woodlin PTA's flower sale. If you pre-ordered, you will be able to pick up your flowers during the spring fair on May 8. A limited selection of baskets and annuals will also be for sale.

If you can't come to the fair, you'll be able to pick up flowers earlier that day. Someone will be at the stand to help you with your order.

If that's not an option, please arrange to have a friend or neighbor pick up your order. We are able to keep flowers in the school for Woodlin staff and teachers ONLY.



*"We are looking for volunteers to help throughout the day."*

## PTA President's Message, cont.

The Spring Book Fair is also this month: mark your calendars for Thursday evening, April 22. We have a great selection of books for purchase, and fun activities for everyone. Remember that proceeds from this event help to purchase books for all of our teachers to use in their classrooms. What a great way to enrich our children's' classrooms! Thanks to [Sydney Trent](#), [Bruce Seeman](#) and [Alexis Ruffin](#) for organizing this event. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact either Sydney or Alexis.

And, of course, the Woodlin Spring Fair is fast approach-

ing on May 8! This year promises to be even bigger and better than ever! We will have games, moon bounces, and of course a basketball tournament for the kids and families to enjoy, and have expanded the community service tables! Please contact [Shelly Duckett](#) if you are interested in volunteering for this year's event. And remember, the Spring Fair is not a fundraising event; we sell tickets just to defray the cost of the amusements and games. The real purpose of this event is for the Woodlin community to spend a fun afternoon together and celebrate spring!

Looking forward – many thanks go to [Kerri Dorsey](#) for organizing our first Blood Drive on May 23rd – volunteers are needed now, so please contact her to help.

Finally, please be sure to come to PTA meeting on May 4. We will elect new officers at this meeting, and it is important for the new officers that will be elected that you come out and show support for their candidacy. I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting, and at all the other events that will be taking place this spring.

*"...come to the PTA meeting on May 4. We will elect new officers ... and it is important for the new officers that you come out and show support for their candidacy."*



*"While the data suggests that there is a weak relationship between academic achievement and homework completion at the elementary level, we cannot wait until middle or high school to develop the academic persistence and effort necessary to reap the benefits seen later in a child's schooling.."*

## Principal's Corner

There are many topics in education that spark passionate debate. The purpose and intention of homework is one. Some families agonize over the nightly homework ritual and wish it would just disappear. Others tell us that students should have more homework and develop stronger work ethics. Regardless of where you stand on the issue of homework, it is a topic worth discussing.

One of the challenges with homework is the different perspectives on the purpose of homework. The most common purpose of homework is to have students practice material already presented in class to reinforce learning and facilitate mastery of specific skills. However, homework can also be completed for other reasons, including:

1. Preparation for material that will be presented in future lessons.
2. Extension of previously learned skills to new situations.
3. Integration of learned skills to produce a single product, such as book reports, science projects, or creative writing.
4. Non-instructional purposes such as providing communication between families and children or to inform parents about what is going on in school.
5. To develop initiative, responsibility, self-

direction and organizational skills in students.

Three types of studies have been used to examine the relationship between homework and academic achievement. One type compares students who receive homework with students who receive none. Generally, these studies reveal homework to be a positive influence on achievement. However, they also reveal a relationship between homework and achievement for high school students that is about twice as strong as for junior high students. The relationship at the elementary school level is only one-quarter that of the high school level.

Another type of study compares homework to in-class supervised study. Overall, the positive relationship is about half as strong as in the first type of study. These studies again reveal a strong grade-level effect. When homework and in-class study were compared in elementary schools, in-class study proved superior.

The third type of study correlates the amount of homework students say they complete with their achievement test scores. Again, these surveys show the relationship is influenced by the grade level of students. For students in primary grades, the correlation between

time spent on homework and achievement is near zero. For students in middle and junior high school, the correlation suggests a positive but weak relationship. For high school students, the correlation suggests a moderate relationship between achievement and time spend on homework.

Grade level is important when teachers assign homework. Impact of homework on achievement increases as students move through the grades. At the high school level, for every 30 additional minutes of homework completed daily, a student's GPA can increase up to half a point. Elementary students should be assigned homework to establish good learning and study habits. While the data suggests that there is a weak relationship between academic achievement and homework completion at the elementary level, we cannot wait until middle or high school to develop the academic persistence and effort necessary to reap the benefits seen later in a child's schooling.

At Woodlin, we all homework assignments will be clearly explained in the classroom and when returned homework will be checked for its quality and completion. Homework completion will be reflected under the Learning Skills Section of the report card for grades 1-5 using the code (I, L, F, R, NI)

Cont., next page.

## Summer Chorale Coming

For 15 years, former Woodlin teacher and current Woodlin substitute teacher Joan Phalen created and ran the Woodside Kids Chorale, a group of mostly Woodlin students in grades K-5 that performed highlights from a Broadway musical each summer. A few years ago, Woodlin parents [Melissa](#)

[Robinson](#) and [Clay Kaufman](#) took over the tradition and have continued it. The Woodside Kids Chorale will gather again this summer, beginning right after Memorial Day with a performance in July and a community service performance on Labor Day.

The Kids Chorale is open to all interested students (even pre-k, if they can sing and sit for the 45-minute long rehearsals each week).

For more information, contact Melissa Robinson at [melbrobinson@verizon.net](mailto:melbrobinson@verizon.net)



"Woodside Kids Chorale... [performs] highlights from a Broadway musical each summer."

## 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. March's Shining Stars:

**2nd grade:** Jon Poindexter  
**3rd grade:** Caroline Tagong, Heather Parkin

**5th grade:** Nora Ellis, Lucy Savage, Samantha Lan.



## Principal's Corner, cont.

explained on the back of the report card. The time allotted to homework will increase gradually from grade to grade. The following is a list of approximate daily time allotments (may vary according to day and/or assignment).

- Grades K-2 = 10 – 30 minutes
- Grades 3-4 = 30 – 45 minutes
- Grade 5 = Up to 60 minutes

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of assign-

ments and to seek further explanation if needed, not the parent. We expect our students to organize his/her time to work on assignments with family support. Students are responsible for turning in assignments on time and in grades 3, 4, & 5 students are responsible for recording daily assignments in their required assignment book.

While children should assume the major responsibility for completing homework assignments, families are encouraged to

take an active interest in homework by providing a study area that is quiet, comfortable, and free from major disturbances. In addition, families should monitor daily and/or weekly assignment sheets/books and encourage children to complete homework on his or her own as much as possible and assist only as needed. Together, we can develop the organizational and academic skills that will lead to future success!

"It is the student's responsibility to be aware of assignments and to seek further explanation if needed, not the parent."

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#### Dates to Remember

22 Earth Day  
 22 Spring Fair



#### Dates to Remember

4 PTA Meeting  
 8 Woodlin Spring Fair  
 23 Woodlin Blood Drive  
 31 No School—Memorial Day

## PTA is Looking for a Few Good People

The PTA nominations committee -- Liora Moriel, Pat Price and Robert Webster -- is recruiting for the PTA board! If you would like to sit on the board, please contact Liora at [lioram21@yahoo.com](mailto:lioram21@yahoo.com). The board is especially in need of someone willing to serve as Treasurer.

The Woodlin PTA is inviting and inclusive. Whoever you are—parent, guardian, grandparent, role model—you are part of our warm and welcoming community. We would like the board to mirror the actual make-up of our students. We know how many backgrounds our children represent, and we want to see

that mix in our PTA so it will continue to be a meaningful association whose goal is to help the teachers and administrators do the best job they can for our kids.

Please contact us at [lioram21@yahoo.com](mailto:lioram21@yahoo.com) if you would like to nominate anyone or nominate yourself!

## Red Cross Blood Drive Coming to Woodlin

On Sunday, May 23, Woodlin will host a Red Cross blood drive from 10 am to 4 pm.

Information will go home through backpack mail by mid-April. Students will be given a sheet to sign up their parents, grandparents, and neighbors. The students will receive points redeemable for prizes. In addition, the class that signs up the most donors and volunteers will get a pizza party. The Red Cross will hold a raffle for all donors, with the winner getting a package of four movie tickets.



Woodlin still needs volunteers for the event, three per hour. This would be a great way for a high school student or scout troop to earn community service hours.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Kerri Dorsey at [kerri.ms@comcast.net](mailto:kerri.ms@comcast.net).