



# WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter April 2011



## Inside:

<b>From the Principal</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>From the President</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Geography wizard</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Woodlin Math night</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Book suggestions .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Spring Festival .....</b>	<b>5</b>

## Shining stars

Shining Stars is a program that was started in 2009 at Woodlin to provide an opportunity for students to nominate their peers when they see them perform positive actions that are helpful to the school community. Shining Star nomination folders have been placed on each teacher's desk.

Please encourage students to nominate their classmates when they observe Woodlin Wizards helping each other. Students who received Shining Stars in April include:

**1st grade:** Kiyon Daley, Norah Bailey, Lily Barker, Sasha Hornady, Milo Shanefelter

**3rd grade:** Jennifer Lopez, Liam Hull, Ella Douglass, Elizabeth Molnar

**4th grade:** Ashley Hernandez, Jacob Douglas, Jacob Wollman, Eleanor Donahue, Martha Huson, Melanie Salazar, Ruth Messay, Madison Cowan, Jessie Williams, Anderson Rowell, Gaby Chuke, Ella Douglas

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**5th grade:** Armando Galvez



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## Principal's corner

**Sarah Sirgo**

Over the past five years I have written more than once about the idea of “Attribution Retraining.” This idea can be described as teaching students to attribute their success or failure not to intelligence, luck, or task difficulty, but to effort. Further, it is the idea that smart is something you can get and a reflection not of your innate intelligence, but your mind paired with strategy use and effort.

This idea has been tested out in practice. At Life Sciences, a health-science magnet school in Harlem, a study was done with two groups of students. The researchers split the kids into two groups for an eight-session workshop. The control group was taught study skills, and the others got study skills and a special module on how intelligence is not innate. These students took turns reading aloud an essay on how the brain grows new neurons when challenged. After the module was concluded, the researchers tracked students’ grades to see if it had any effect. The students who had been taught that intelligence can be developed improved their study habits and grades. The only difference between the control group and the test group were two lessons, a total of 50 minutes spent teaching not math but a single

idea that the brain is a muscle. Giving it a harder workout makes you smarter. Ever since that New York magazine story was published, it’s been common now to tell kids the brain is like a muscle, and intelligence is malleable.

I think the question of whether or not intelligence is as malleable as we think is a good one to ask. As children develop and grow, their brains change and there is data to show that children’s intelligence scores do change over time. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that learning doesn’t happen in a vacuum and you must pair your capacity with effective use of strategies and skills. I do believe that the brain is a muscle that paired with the right tools can be pushed beyond our current limits. I hope you will challenge your children to see that effective effort and strategy use is what leads to success and when you tell them “You’re smart”, what you add to that statement are the things they did that led to their outcome. As we tell the students, “We believe in you”, “You can do it”, and “I won’t give up on you”. These critical messages about effort and our shared commitment to student learning are the foundation of rigor and excellence in our children.

## PTA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CHRIS RUTLEDGE

Hello Woodlin families!

Thank you to the many parents (I counted over 60) who came out to the McKenney Hills meeting on March 29. For those who could not attend, we reviewed the five current options on the table for redistricting Woodlin and Oakland Terrace. A subsequent meeting of the Boundary Committee was held on April 14<sup>th</sup>, at which we shared the Woodlin viewpoint. Please watch the listserv for more updates.

Thank you to Abbi Lichtenstein, Bertie LoPiccolo and Donald Collins for serving as the Nominating Committee. Several PTA positions and many volunteer roles are open and need filling for 2011-2012. As the Committee compiles a list of the open slots, they will promote it to the community. I hope you will take the time to review these and sign up. Woodlin is renowned for our extensive activities and offerings, but they only occur through the active participation of our families!

Of course, chief among these openings are those of President, Vice President and Secretary. At the May 3 PTA meeting, we will conduct elections for those three spots. Watch the listserv for final details as to who is running. At the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, we will also discuss the PTA budget for the year, and vote on the level of donation we can provide the school.

**Please attend, and note that we intend to start the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting a little early, at 6:20, so we can accommodate another annual tradition – Math Night.**

Anne Mutti and Bob Webster have a fun night of pi and pie planned, with games and activities that focus on the fun side of math! Be there, or B-squared!

Please also mark your family calendars for May 7 – the date of Woodlin's annual Spring Fair! Charlotte Anderson and Liz Gayaldo have games, rides and activities planned that will help us all Spring into the warmer season!

Lastly, I hope you all will plan on coming to the final PTA meeting of the year on June 7. At this meeting, we traditionally thank the parent volunteers who have made a huge difference in the school whose children are leaving Woodlin. This year, we have an especially large list of parents to thank, and we want to send them off in style!

Have a great Spring Break!

Chris Rutledge



### Geo Bee Season is Here

It's Geo Bee season, and it's in full swing! The fifth grade Bee was a huge success, with Ms. Jones' class putting in an impressive victory. The winning team members are: Shesh Batni, Victor Chupka, Daniel Monge, and Max Webster. Elaine Adams and Cullen Yankey were the alternates. The new format was a hit and all the teams demonstrated that they are true Geo Wizards! The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Bee is May 12 at 2:00 pm, followed by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Bee May 19 at 2:00 pm. Parents, come out and support your teams - you'll be impressed by their knowledge of our world.



May 3 is Woodlin's Family Math night!! This year we are Going Buggy for Pi! Join us for a fun family night of math games. The kids (and parents too) will have the chance to:

- Make bugs with marshmallows
- Go fishing for gummy worms
- Make pies using fractions
- Practice basic facts while flinging gummy bugs
- Explore pi (and have a piece of pie while they are at it!)
- And lots more!!

Math night starts at about 6:50 -- Come earlier though for pizza at 6:00 and a short PTA meeting at 6:30.

Questions or want to help?? Email Anne Mutti at [anne\\_mutti@hotmail.com](mailto:anne_mutti@hotmail.com).



### Thanks for a Fabulous Book Fair

We wanted to extend a huge "Thank you!" to everyone who helped make the book fair a success -- and of course that includes EVERYONE in the Woodlin community who came out to support the fair April 6-8, some despite worries about a possible government shutdown. We matched last spring's sales almost dollar for dollar at just over \$8000, which means \$2000 in cash profit for the school and over \$1500 in

credits toward Scholastic books as a result of holding two fairs annually. We use those credits to buy dozens of books for Woodlin classrooms and students and this year will have a few hundred to spare for the school library. The fair really is worth all of the work that goes into it, especially at a time of reduced resources.

We had a small army of volunteers out there over the 2.5 days of the fair. First a shoutout to Alexis Ruffin, who has been organizing Woodlin's book fairs throughout her daughters' years at Woodlin. Bruce and I are very grateful for her training and help. This fair was her last as a Woodlin parent -- though don't be surprised if you see her next year. She's passionate about the fair and it shows! Other volunteers who made the fair this year: Hilary and Jeff Baker and daughter Lily Barker (first grade); Sheryl and Joe Klein; Rachel Posell; Martha Teitelbaum; Robyn Seabrook; Jan Leighley; Therese Lowe; Krista Middlebrooks; Pam Kelly; Cheryl Peterson; Leticia Barr; Anne Salzman; Chris Rutledge; Phil Curtin; Mike Lichtenstein and Woodlin second-graders Olivia Seeman and Cecilia Kelly. Many Woodlin alumni also lent a hand. They include: Alyssa Adams; Rayna Klein; Alexandra Seeman, Alexandra Melinchok; Olivia Hagman; Avery Harwood; A.J. Mejia and Gabe Schrier. We also had wonderful help from guest readers Ms. Sirgo and Ms. Beeson, as well as setup help from Ms. Grotzky and Ms. Jones and logistical help from Ms. Bacon, Ms. Athenas and PTA secretary Diana Arrington. And, of course, a special THANKS to Mr. George for so graciously letting us use the gym each year for the fairs.

Please email [sydney.trent@gmail.com](mailto:sydney.trent@gmail.com) if you have any suggestions for future fairs or wish to volunteer next year!

Co-lead volunteers Sydney Trent and Bruce Seeman

### April Book Suggestions from Readers' Lunch Bunches

Several times a week, Shannon Parkin, a mom of two at the school, meets with some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders to read to them during their lunch times. Below are some of favorites:

Both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders have enjoyed making choices about how their books' plot will develop. I have been reading the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders books from the Choose Your Own Adventure series. I have been reading the 4<sup>th</sup> graders books from the Interactive History Adventure series.

#### Third Grade Favorites – All from Choose Your Own Adventure

**The Abominable Snowman** by R. A. Montgomery.

**Journey Under the Sea** by R. A. Montgomery.

**The Lost Jewels of Nabooti** by R. A. Montgomery.

#### Fourth Grade Favorites All from Interactive History Adventures

**The Titanic** by Bob Temple

**The California Gold Rush** by Elizabeth Raum

**The Wild West** by Allison Lassieur

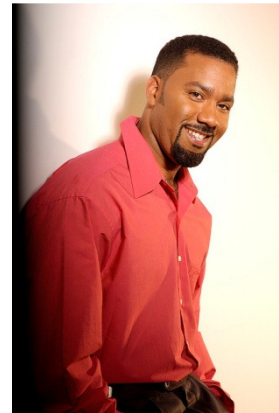
**World War II** by Elizabeth Raum

Compiled by Shannon Parkin (mother of Heather (grade 3) and Carl (Kindergarten))

If you have any questions about any of the books suggested on this page, feel free to email me with your questions.

shparkin@verizon.net

### Spring Festival Featuring Marcus Johnson May 7



Get ready for this year's fabulous Spring Festival on May 7 from 3:00-7:00! Moon bounces, massages and music from Marcus Johnson. Plus LOTS more including great food, a non-perishable food drive for A Wider Circle, a raffle to benefit our after school clubs with excellent prizes, and a green project from a Woodlin alumnus. Save the date!!! We'll be looking for some volunteers too so please contact us if you think you can spare an hour or two!! Face painters, balloons and clowns, oh my!"

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