



Principal's Corner  
Sarah Sirgo

## Effective Teacher Conferences

Beginning in November we schedule our annual parent teacher conferences. As you can imagine, it takes a lot of time and preparation to conduct these conferences and ensure that each family gets out of the brief time we have what they hope. While some parents look forward to school conferences, others come in with hesitation. Conference time is important because it gives parents the opportunity to meet with the teacher to discuss a range of topics such as academics, behavior, and socialization. We hope that during the conference you will gain insight into how your child is progressing and further your relationship with your child's teacher. To make the most of conference time, consider the following tips.

### BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

- Make a list of your questions and concerns. If you go into the meeting with a list you won't forget what important issues you want to discuss. The teacher will have an agenda because s/he has a limited amount of time to meet with each student's parent(s), but let the teacher know you also have items you would like to discuss. Most teachers will try to be accommodating and give you

an opportunity to share your concerns.

- Be on time. Typically scheduled conference times are limited in the amount of time because the teacher has many parents to meet. If you are not on time, you will likely have your conference time shortened because the teacher has been encouraged to stay on schedule. By being on time, you ensure the likelihood you will get the most possible time to discuss your child with the teacher.

### AT THE CONFERENCE

- Start the meeting in a positive way. Smile or give the teacher a compliment. This will help to put the teacher at ease and allows an effective discussion to develop.
- Be an active listener. Look at the teacher while s/he is speaking to you. Don't be distracting by tapping a pencil, answering your cell phone, and shuffling papers. The purpose of the conference is to discuss your child in the classroom environment; the topic is important so pay attention.
- Expect to hear both positive and negative remarks about your child. A parent should not go to a conference expecting to hear just compliments about their child. The conference is an opportunity to cooperate and develop ideas on how to make the most of your child's educational experience.



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- If the teacher uses words or educational jargon you don't understand, ask for clarification. You need to understand what the teacher is attempting to tell you.
- Stay focused. You are at the conference to discuss your child, so make it a point to not discuss irrelevant issues. Don't talk about last month's PTA meeting or what happened down the street. Remember your time is limited, and you are there to discuss your child's education.
- Don't waste time discussing issues the teacher cannot change. The teacher does not likely develop the policies of the school, and in many cases, curriculum is developed by the district, not the teacher. Remember the purpose of a conference is to discuss your child in the classroom, and the teacher will provide you with that information during a conference if you don't get the teacher off track.
- Take some time to discuss with your child information you received at the conference. Highlight areas where your child is making steady progress and suggest areas where your child may need to work a little harder. Help your child with suggesting some ways s/he could improve in weaker areas. Perhaps studying five more minutes a night, more pleasure reading to develop literacy skills, or getting to bed a bit earlier.

Conferences are important meetings for both parents and teachers. The meeting offers both parties an opportunity to learn important information from each other and devise a plan to ensure that a child is given the necessary tools to succeed in the classroom. Make the most of your conference time because your child and his/her education is important.

*Excerpts from School Pages by Julie Johnson*

## AFTER THE CONFERENCE

- Thank the teacher for taking time to meet with you and discuss your child.
- You should have a good idea about your child's behavior and academic progress. Also, you should have some ideas for activities or strategies you can use at home to further enhance skills learned at school.



*Coming Up*

## Holiday Book Fair

Mark your calendars now for Woodlin's Holiday Book Fair, to be held on Thursday, Dec. 2 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the gym. This festive community event offers a great chance to get some holiday shopping done while raising critical funds for Woodlin. The PTA will provide pizza from 6 to 6:30. Then step inside for loads of fun: holiday face painting, contests, guest story readings and more. Assistant Principal Troy Clarke and kindergarten teacher Sharon Grotzky will be among our guest readers this year.

Volunteers are still needed.

**If you're willing, please email Sydney Trent at [sydney.trent@gmail.com](mailto:sydney.trent@gmail.com)**

## February 13<sup>th</sup> Woodlin Winter Festival and Auction

Mark your calendars for Feb. 13, the date of Woodlin's annual winter festival and auction. Please consider donating something to the auction and volunteering your time at the winter festival. This is a huge event for Woodlin, and it really takes a village! If you haven't had time to volunteer at Woodlin because your week is just too busy, this is a perfect weekend opportunity to scratch off that item off your to-do list.

Also, please put aside any books you have that you no longer need. The event features a used book sale.

**Laura Stewart**



### *Looking for all Woodlin Volunteer Hours*

Montgomery County Public Schools collects and tracks volunteer hours for every school in the county. Previously, Woodlin has used only the volunteer log-in sheet in the front office, however this only tracks the volunteer hours that occur during school. We are allowed to report volunteer hours for any event that directly benefits the students or the school. So for instance, school beautification, planning meetings or events, volunteering for activities etc. call all be counted. For those events that occur outside of normal school hours and are NOT recorded in the volunteer log, please email Kerri Dorsey at [kerri.ms@comcast.net](mailto:kerri.ms@comcast.net) with a record of monthly volunteer hours by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Questions can also be directed to Kerri.

**Kerri Dorsey**

### **A conversation with Woodlin teachers**

**The NAACP Parent's Council Presents a panel entitled, "A Teacher's Perspective: An intimate conversation with a select Woodlin Teachers."**

**The panel will be held Tuesday, Nov. 30 at 6:30 pm in Woodlin's Media Room.**

**Please RSVP and send any questions you may have for our Teacher Panel to: [tgoodpark@yahoo.com](mailto:tgoodpark@yahoo.com) or [robynseabrook@gmail.com](mailto:robynseabrook@gmail.com).**

**Refreshments will be served!**

**Tommie Goodpark**

### **Support for parents of students on IEP or 504 plans**

**The Woodlin PTA will host a "meet and greet" for parents of students on Individualized Education Programs and 504 plans. Come meet PTA Outreach chair Liora Moriel and Wendy Baumert, special needs liaison on Thursday, Dec. 9 from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the home of Liora Moriel and Susan Kirshner, 8905 Woodland Drive in Silver Spring.**

**This will be an opportunity to get to know other parents, share ideas and concerns and find support and allies.**



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## PTA President's Message Chris Rutledge

It's hard to believe, but we have already completed one quarter of the school year, and Thanksgiving is drawing near. Now is a good time to think about all the things we should be thankful for at Woodlin and in our community.

I'm thankful that so many members of the Woodlin family are committed to protecting our environment and serving others. Linda Katz and a team of dedicated volunteers created another amazing Green Expo last month, and dozens of children and parents came out to learn how they can help save energy and protect our natural resources. As an added benefit, several area charities were on hand to accept donations of furniture, toys and clothing – they told us how grateful they were for our support!

I'm thankful to be part of a diverse and vibrant community, rich with families of all national backgrounds, ethnicities, races, religions and sexual orientations. Thanks to Dena Leibman and Fida Adely, we enjoyed a wonderful Woodlin World Night on Saturday, where these backgrounds were celebrated and shared.

I'm thankful that parents, teachers and staff can work together so well, and that Woodlin is welcoming to all family members who wish to visit. In October, over 200 families were

represented at both the Open House and Dining with Dads/Fun Friday – that's more than half of the families who go to Woodlin!

I'm thankful for the dedicated, caring and brilliant teachers who spend so much of each day with our children – and for volunteers such as Jeanette O'Connor, Eve Zimmerman and Monica Kerns who lead events like the teacher birthday celebration we're hosting in November.

I'm very thankful for all of the PTA Board members who work so hard to keep things running! I'm thankful for the Woodlin leadership, Ms. Sirgo and Mr. Clarke, who proactively make sure that problems are addressed before they grow. The presentation on Woodlin's approaches to bullying demonstrated that commitment.

Lastly, I'm grateful for the children of Woodlin. Seeing them participate in events such as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade concert makes me realize how quickly they grow up, and how we should savor every moment! Thank you,

**Chris**

PS- Don't forget the Book Fair December 2<sup>nd</sup> – it's a great chance for holiday shopping



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## Woodlin wins when you use your Giant/Safeway Cards

Please register your [Giant](#) and [Safeway](#) retail loyalty cards to support Woodlin. If every family participated, Woodlin could earn more than \$10,000 annually! Our Giant ID is #00913. Our Safeway ID is #6589421. You must reregister your cards each year. If you need help with this process, please see below:

Woodlin participates in retail "loyalty" programs sponsored by Safeway and Giant. Once your card is registered in support of Woodlin, the school receives 1 percent from your purchases at the register during the school year. One key benefit (once your card is registered) is that you do NOT need to save receipts when shopping at Giant or Safeway (but please keep saving your SNIDERS receipts!)

For Woodlin to benefit, you must register your retail card numbers each fall. There is no cost to you and Woodlin generally earns \$1,400 from these programs.

Below are instructions about how to get your cards registered:

1) If you have registered your card for Woodlin in the past two years, kindly send a quick email to [WESretailcards@gmail.com](mailto:WESretailcards@gmail.com),

authorizing the school coordinator (a PTA volunteer) to sign you up again.

2) If you provided your card numbers when you joined the PTA this fall, thank you, you are all set.

3) If you are new to Woodlin or have never registered your cards, please email the following to [WESretailcards@gmail.com](mailto:WESretailcards@gmail.com):

- Giant Bonus Card Number - 12 digit number and last name
- Safeway Club Card Number - 11 digit number, first and last name, home address

If you don't know your card numbers, cannot find them, and simply use your phone number at the register, please email me your name, address, and the phone number you use (and whether it is Safeway and/or Giant) and I will have Giant and/or Safeway customer service look it up. Please take a moment to think about the last name the card is registered under (i.e., is it your maiden name? Your husband's last name?)

The sooner you get registered, the sooner Woodlin begins to benefit. This is an easy way to help the school and it costs you nothing. If every family participated, Woodlin would make well over \$10,000 each year! Please send in your information today!

For questions, please contact Heather Lair at [WESretailcards@gmail.com](mailto:WESretailcards@gmail.com).



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## Thanks to all who helped with Recycling Fair

A huge, heartfelt thanks to all who attended, contributed and volunteered at Woodlin's PTA's Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Fair. Woodlin families, friends and neighbors donated to **A Wider Circle** "at least 5 (!) vans-full of items" such as kitchen equipment, car seats, towels, bed linens, children's books and toys. These items "go directly into the homes of people living without their basic necessities," said Anne Thompson, director. "We are very grateful."

([www.awidercircle.org](http://www.awidercircle.org))



tallied "a lot of great donations" - more than 22 large bags of warm winter and other clothing plus shoes for adults and children - too much to fit in one car, so the Habitat for Humanity truck delivered these to the Interfaith Clothing

Center [www.communityministrymc.org](http://www.communityministrymc.org)



([www.habitat-mc.org/restore/](http://www.habitat-mc.org/restore/)) and



(<http://communityforklift.com>) collected building tools, lighting, small electronics, and holiday decorations. Nearly 4 dozen of our used athletic shoes are destined for Ghana to be sold to raise money for sustainable agriculture projects.



PERPETUAL PROSPERITY PUMPS FOUNDATION

NEVER BEFORE HAS SO MUCH BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITH SO LITTLE

([www.PPPAfrica.org](http://www.PPPAfrica.org)).



Our PTA earned \$20 from **Operation Gratitude** for its collection of Halloween candy, which our troops will give to children in combat zones. We also donated 3 boxes of Beanie Babies for distribution overseas.

Thank you too for donating your old cell phones and other small electronics, giving extra credit to Woodlin's recycling program.

Thanks to the great volunteers who pitched in - some spontaneously. Among them: Bertie and Phil LoPiccolo, Liora Moriel, Abby Hoffman, Cheryl Peterson, SSL students Oscar Reyes and David Deweaver, Ann Salzman, Ashley Simmons and her mom Mrs. Simmons, David Kramer, Ramesh Kurup, Carolyn Weber, Renee Hosler, and Chris Rutledge.

Our green exhibitors donated time, talent and knowledge: Woodlin GreenKids, Pyramid Atlantic, Master



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Gardeners, Conservation Montgomery, Audubon (games), NOAA, Do Good Adventures for Families, Crest Design, EZ Flyer Bikes, Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Clean Currents (Green Neighborhood Challenge), Washington Gas Energy Services, PEPCO, and Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (recycling, watershed management).

Special thanks to Honest Tea and Statland & Katz Insurance/Financial Services for healthy drinks, apples, and snacks.

Warmly,  
Linda Sobel Katz (Sabrina, 1st, Litton)  
Karla Kramer (Lucas, K, Bradshaw)  
Community Service/Woodlin ES PTA

*Sally Foster*

## Fall Fundraiser Wrap Up



Congratulations to our fall fundraiser Prize Winners:

Ms. Mitchell's 2nd grade class - winners of the Pizza Party

Ella Yankowski - 1st place, winner of the Nano

Justine Ballard - 2nd place, winner of the Shuffle

Logan Poore - 3rd place, winner of the iTunes gift card

We also recognized our top fundraisers in each grade with a stuffed monkey: Jonathan Yitbareck, Darby Poore, Yonathon Solomon, Olivia Seeman, Sam Bole, William Flannery, and Jordan Crosby.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to the entire Woodlin Community for its generous support, sales and donations. With your help, we were able to raise over \$8000 for our school. We'd also like to thank the Gayaldo Family for their generous PTA donation and the volunteers who helped us organize the fundraiser: Joan Mahtesian, Alison Adkins, Abigail Hoffman, Lynne Yao, Jane Curtin and Krista Middlebrooks.

Woodlin PTA also had a little "bonus" this year because of the Election Day Bake Sale! Thank you to all the bakers. The voters really look forward to the treats! A special thanks goes out to Pat Price and June Watson, whose hours and hours of manning the table ensured our being able to offer food and drink to every single voter! Also as a direct result of the Bake Sale, PTA now has a 55 cup coffee urn, which is available for all PTA events. Yes, even you Super Moms and Dads can use a little extra pep now and then!

Thank you!



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**Josephine Monmaney  
Bernadette Sweeney  
Sally Foster Chairs**



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## Dining out night benefits Woodlin

Thanks to Laurie Yankowski for the first Woodlin Night Out at Flippin' Pizza. Lots of Woodlin families came out and Flippin' Pizza's generous donation of 50 percent of proceeds came out to \$800! Please think about them the next time you need a pizza break. Look out for more fabulous opportunities to earn the PTA money by eating!

☆☆  
**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 September and October for helping others and/or doing something positive for the Woodlin community. You can visit the Shining Stars bulletin board at Woodlin.

**1<sup>st</sup> grade:** Ben Moriel -Kirshner, Lily Barker

**2<sup>nd</sup> grade:** Asia McBae

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade:** Karina Amaya, Teddy Beamer, Aethan Cubitt, Savannah Henry

**4<sup>th</sup> grade:** Ashley Hernandez, Julian Tarr-ebina, Daniel Ellis, Anna Johnson, Betsua Cuevas Hernandez, Catherine Edge, Andie Bisk, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Sullivan.

Compiled by Shannon Parkin



## Suggestions from Readers' L Bunches

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:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade favorites

[Oh, the things you can do that are good for you!](#) [All About Staying Healthy](#) By Tish Rabe

### 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade favorites

[The Magic School Bus Going Batty: A Book About Bats](#) by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degan

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Favorites

[No Excuses: How What you Say Can Get in Your Way](#) by Dr. Wayne Dyer

Picky Peggy

[Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler](#) by Margery Cuyler

[Stacey Coolidge's Fancy Smancy Cursive Handwriting](#) by Barbara Esham

[Picky Peggy \(Science Solves It\)](#) by Jennifer Dussling

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade favorites

[Red Pyramid](#) by Rick Riordan

[The Word Eater](#) by Mary Amato and Christopher Ryniak

[The Sister Grimm: The Fairy Tale Detectives](#) by Michael Buckley

[Best Shorts Favorite Short Stories for Sharing](#)  
Selected by Avi with Carolyn Shute

By Shannon Parkin (volunteer reader and parent of Heather Parkin 4th grade and Carl Parkin 1st grade)