



# WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

March 2011



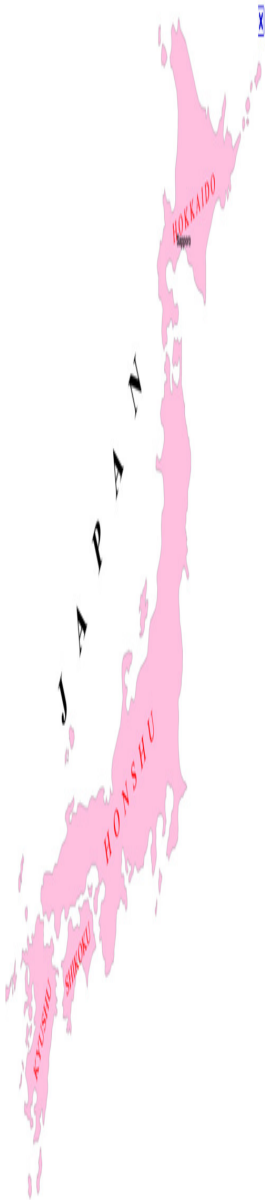
## WOODLIN'S CONNECTION TO JAPAN

The earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan have also touched the Woodlin community. As many of you already know, Matti Cohen's family has been directly affected. Matti's mother, Chieko, is from the town of Yamada in Iwate Prefecture. Matti's parents met in Yamada and his brother, Sam (now at Sligo Middle School) was born there. More than 75 percent of the town was destroyed. One of two middle schools was burnt to the ground and more than half the starting population is still listed as missing. Miraculously, Matti's extended family in Japan are all ok. Nevertheless, the hardship they face is difficult to imagine. These photos give a sense of the reality: <http://bit.ly/fdOzDw> and <http://bit.ly/fADzY6>.

Many Woodlin students and families have reached out to ask how they might best help. Based on the costs of shipping and the dwindling supply of gasoline in Japan, monetary donations are the best option at this point in time. Funds will be required for several years to help rebuild and reconstruct the local industries. Please consider donating to one of the reputable international aid organizations listed here: <http://www.google.com/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html>.

Matti's father, Drew Cohen, is currently in the process of establishing a foundation to provide direct support to the town of Yamada. As soon as a foundation is set up, Drew will post information for it on his website ([www.dcbengoshi.com](http://www.dcbengoshi.com)) to give our community the opportunity to directly see the impact of donations as Yamada rebuilds. A number of Woodlin families have expressed an interest in helping to support a local school as it rebuilds. We've thought of a fund drive to donate to school playground equipment.

If interested, please consider joining the Friends of Yamada on Facebook: (<http://on.fb.me/gkBunp>). Contact Drew Cohen ([drew.cohen@comcast.net](mailto:drew.cohen@comcast.net)) or Gillian Huebner ([gillianhuebner@gmail.com](mailto:gillianhuebner@gmail.com)) for more information about how to get involved in the Woodlin-Yamada connection.



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# Shining Stars

Shining Stars is a program that was started last year 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 last month include the following:

Shining Stars for March

**1st grade: Abigal Call, James Ramey, Mattias Cohen**

**3rd grade: Elizabeth Molnar, Aaron Grice**

**4th grade: Claire Hibbeln, Anna Johnson, Sofia Pererira**

## Staff Appreciation a Success

The Staff Appreciation Birthday Luncheon sponsored by the Woodlin PTA on March 9 was a big success. The teachers and staff enjoyed a lunch of roasted chicken and black beans (from Inka's) with many delicious salads and desserts made by Woodlin families. **Teacher Appreciation Week will be May 2 – May 6.** Keep a lookout for fliers about how you can contribute and say "thank you" to our wonderful Woodlin teachers and staff.

Staff Appreciation Committee

Jeannette O'Connor, Monica Kerns and Eve Zimmerman



## Principal's corner

Sarah Sirgo

**As many of you know, I read the book *NurtureShock* last year and used many of the articles as fodder for my monthly articles. I continue to read articles by one of the authors Po Bronson, not because I always agree with what he says, but because he causes me to pause and think. As we approach the annual season of standardized assessments, I thought this article below was one worth sharing with you.**

### **This is Your Brain on a Test:**

December 15, 2009

Carol Dweck and Jennifer Mangels had Columbia undergraduates wear a Quick-Cap or device that measures electrical activity on the scalp while taking a computerized trivia test. The students worked through over 200 questions, covering topics from geography, religion, world and US history, math and science, literature, and art history. These questions were chosen because they'd ring a bell of familiarity – students felt like they *should* know the answer, but often weren't quite able to recall it. Example: In what country is Kathmandu? The computer adjusted the level of difficulty just slightly, so that most students felt a little frustrated, getting about 60% of the answers wrong. If they were

below that level, the computer might feed them an easier question – “Who was the Confederate General at the Battle of Gettysburg?” – but if they were above the level, they got “Who was the Union General at the Battle of Gettysburg?”

Students typed in their answer. A couple seconds later, they saw a green light or a red light to indicate if they were accurate. A few seconds after that, they were shown the correct answer (i.e., General Robert E Lee, or General Meade, respectively). This gave them a chance to learn from their mistakes.

But whether they wanted to learn was an entirely different question.

That was the purpose of the scalp cap. It measured activity in the brain's attention systems – just how vigilantly were the students paying attention when they found out of their answer was correct or not? And were the students bothering to pay attention a moment later, when they saw the correct answer? Fundamentally, this study separated students who just wanted to do well on the test from students who really wanted to learn new material.

Before the testing, the students had filled out a questionnaire to assess their motivation personality. Based on their responses, Dweck and Mangels split them into two groups. One group was concerned, primarily, with being better than others. They agreed with statements like, “You have a certain amount of

intelligence and you can't do much to change it," or "It's important to me to be smarter than other students." The other group disagreed with those statements, and instead agreed to comments like, "It's very important to me that my coursework offer real challenges." This latter group wasn't into comparing themselves. Let's call these two groups the Grade-Hungry and the Knowledge-Hungry.

These attitudes had a significant impact on the EEG readings – the students' motivation personality was visible in the brain waves, on a millisecond to millisecond graph.

The **Grade-Hungry** students paid extremely close attention to the moment of green light/red light – they really were obsessed with whether they got the answer right or wrong. But immediately after, their attention systems took a break. They checked out, and they weren't really paying much attention when the correct answer flashed by.

Respectively, the **Knowledge-Hungry** paid attention (but not quite as obsessively) to whether they were right or wrong, and they paid significantly more attention to the correct answers. They took advantage of the chance to learn. This contrast was most dramatic when each group got an answer wrong. The Knowledge-Hungry activated deep memory regions, indicating they were storing these new facts away for later. Such activity was not nearly as deep in the Grade-Hungry, suggesting a far

more cursory interest; instead, their brains seemed to feel threatened by learning they'd gotten an answer wrong. Their brains indicated a far more emotional, fearful response. They clearly did not like being wrong, and they didn't care that Katmandu is in Nepal.

Not surprisingly, when the students were later surprised by a retest, consisting only of the questions they'd gotten wrong the first time around, the Knowledge-Hungry kids did far better.

***What do you think? Is your child a grade hungry or knowledge hungry student?***

PTA President's Message  
PTA President's Message

***Chris Rutledge***

Hello to Spring!

Here at the Woodlin PTA, there is much to discuss. The item foremost on many families' minds, I'm sure, is the work of the McKenney Hills Boundary Committee. Although the Montgomery County Board of Education will vote in November on the final boundaries, now is the time to have your voice heard. We will host a special PTA meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the boundary options that have been presented to date. Please come! More information

can be found here:

<http://woodlinpta.org/newparents/mckenney.hills.html>

Also important this month is the work Woodlin families have done in support of relief efforts in Japan. The earthquake, tsunami and nuclear threat faced by our friends and family overseas are frightening indeed. Many thanks go to Drew and Chieko Cohen and the committee of families they have worked with to coordinate Woodlin's efforts. Elsewhere in this issue you will find more details on how you can help.

We also will celebrate spring this year with two great events: The Spring Book Fair on April 7<sup>th</sup> and the Spring Fair on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Both events are full of fun activities and games for all.

Another item I want to flag for you is the Geography Bee, in May. Get your little ones studying the atlas now!

Thank you again to all of Woodlin's families who work to make these events successful. The PTA is you and you are the PTA!

Chris



### **SPRING FESTIVAL COMING ...**

Get ready for this year's fabulous Spring Festival on May 7<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 7 pm. Moon bounces, massages and Marcus' music!! 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 Alumni. Save the date! We'll also be looking for some volunteers, so please contact us if you think you can spare an hour or two!!

Charlotte: [charjustin@verizon.net](mailto:charjustin@verizon.net)

Liz: [lizgayaldo@hotmail.com](mailto:lizgayaldo@hotmail.com)



### **WOODLIN'S 10TH ANNUAL GEORGRAPHY BEE**

Woodlin Wizards – The World Awaits! Participate in the Geography Bee and you'll have the world at your fingertips! All third, fourth, and fifth graders are encouraged to accept this challenge -- and there are plenty of ways parents can help, too. The competitions will be held at 2:00 pm on the following dates:

- 5th grade: April 14
- 3rd grade: May 12
- 4th grade: May 19

Packets will be distributed approximately 7 weeks prior to each Bee and all students are encouraged to complete theirs and get their chance to try out for their class team. Every student who does complete their packet will receive an official **Woodlin Wizard Geography Bee water bottle!** Even cooler prizes

are in store for each class team member and the winning team for each grade.

Parents, encourage your child to complete their packet – it is a great way to do something fun together and gives your whole family a chance to brush up on their knowledge of the world.

Contact [Jane Curtin](#) for any questions.

## *Know Your Food project*

Woodlin students planted 37 veggie boxes at our recent PTA meeting with the direction of Blair student and Woodlin alum Hannah Weintraub and her team of Blairites.

Now Hannah is planning to bring her **Know Your Food** project to Woodlin PTA's Spring Fair on Saturday, May 7. Students will have a chance to plant pots and other containers with seeds that will yield healthy veggies to enjoy.

Hannah describes the inspiration for her project: "A few months ago, six Blair High School students were assigned the daunting task of making some sort of change in the community. After a few meetings we started the **Know Your Food** project to promote local and sustainable food through farmers markets

community supported agriculture, and home gardens.

"We reached out to Woodlin Elementary hoping to teach children about the health, environmental, and economic benefits of local and sustainable food sources. Woodlin allowed us to work with them, and at the March 1 PTA meeting, we hosted an activity night for Woodlin students. At the activity night, students learned about local food by playing games and planting their very own garden boxes.

"An astounding 37 students came out to participate and the night was a great success. Students planted a variety of vegetables including snap peas, lettuce, radishes, and beans. The night was a lot of fun and we thank the entire Woodlin community for their tremendous show of support.

"For more information on the **Know Your Food** project and Woodlin activity night, please contact [locallyown.locallygrown@gmail.com](mailto:locallyown.locallygrown@gmail.com). And don't forget to water your seedlings!"

Blair **Know Your Food** team - Hannah Weintraub, Peter McNally, Jacob Bucholz, Maddie Mitchell, Abby Weisman, and Devin Rutan.

Submitted by Linda S. Katz,  
Community Service/Woodlin ES  
PTA

**MOVIE AND CONVERSATION:  
PLEASE JOIN US**

Woodlin is like Lake Wobegon: all our children are special!

Some, of course, are more special than others, and our outreach continues to parents of Woodlin students with special-needs. This time, we will screen a movie, including Samuel, that deals with ways an educational community—parents, children and teachers—can work together to ensure that no child is left behind socially.

The event will take place on Thursday, April 7, from 7-9pm, at the home of Liora Moriel and Susan Kirshner (mothers of Ben and Noah, first graders). Mrs. Rosenberg, our fantastic guidance counselor, will facilitate the conversation.

**DATE: April 13**  
**TIME: 7-9pm**  
**PLACE: 8905 Woodland Dr., zip 20910 (tel. 301-587-6379)**  
**Metro accessible: Silver Spring (RED LINE). We are just off Georgia/Spring intersection.**

*Hope to see you there!*

Liora Moriel, PTA Outreach Chair  
 Wendy Baumert, Special Needs Liaison



**SPRING BOOK FAIR APRIL 7-8**

Mark your calendars now for this year's spring book fair April 7-8 in the gym! There will be free pizza on a first-come, first-served basis at the big family event Thursday, April 7 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Then step inside for a good time! This is the biggest book fair of the year so the shelves will be stocked with many wonderful titles and gift items. We also have a very special lineup of guest readers, including Principal Sirgo, fourth grade teacher Avery Beeson, KidsPost editors and best-selling children's author Mary Quattlebaum, who will be reading and signing her newest book, *Pirate vs. Pirate: The Terrific Tale of a Big, Blustery Maritime Match*. In addition, Woodlin treasure Fred Bowen will be on campus hosting the annual family discussion about his book *Winners Take All* with fifth graders and their parents, after which he'll stop in the fair to chat and sign his book!

Donate to our fair scholarship fund at the family event Thursday evening and be entered into a drawing for a free book. Children: write an essay of 400 words or less about your favorite hero or heroine - from fiction, non-fiction or your own life -- and earn a chance to win a prize! The winning entries will also be read aloud at the family event.

Check your child's backpack in coming days for more details.

Teachers and students will have an early chance to preview the books during school hours on Thursday, April 7 in the gym, and the fair will be open to students, parents and the community at large from 9 to 5 on Friday, April 8.

We hope to see you at this exciting Woodlin community event, and a big thank you to the many parents who have volunteered to staff the fair this year!

Co-lead volunteers Sydney Trent, Bruce Seeman and Alexis Ruffin

### **Book Suggestions from Readers' Lunch Bunches**

Several times a week, Shannon Parkin, a mom of two at Woodlin, meets with some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders to read to them during their lunch times. She has listed some of their favorite books from these students:

#### **First Grade Favorites for March**

Clam-I-Am: All About the Beach by Tish Rabe\_\*

Ice is Nice !: All About the North and South Poles by Bonnie Worth\*

Whale of a Tale!: All About Porpoises, Dolphins and Whales by Bonnie Worth\*

#### **Third Grade Favorites**

Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady of the World by Ryan Jacobson @

Oh Say Can You Seed? All about Flowering Plants by Bonnie Worth\*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women Right's Pioneer by Connie Miller@

Wish for a Fish: All About Sea Creatures by Bonnie Worth \*

#### **Fourth Grade Favorites**

Elizabeth Blackwell: America's First Woman Doctor by Nathan Olson @

Sacajewa: Journey Into the West by Jessica Gunderson@

The Lost Hero by Rick Riordan

My Last Best Friend by Julie Bowe

**\*indicates part of the Cat in the Hat Library**

**@indicates one of the Graphic Library Biographies**

**All of the books in the Cat in the Hat Library and most of those in the Graphic Library Biographies are available under the 4 for the price of 3 deal at Amazon.**

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](mailto:shparkin@verizon.net)