



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

October 2009



Inside:

September Shining Stars	2
From the Principal	3
Fun Friday Photos	4
Get involved!	7
Dates to Remember	8

Oct 12 Costume Closet

We need your slightly used costumes (for K-5). Bring them to Woodlin on Mon., October 12 at the Open House/Sally Foster pickup, and drop them in the box. Or, drop them by the Main office before October 29. Costumes will be available on October 30, before the Halloween Parade for anyone who needs them.

Questions? Contact Jenny/Albee at jenny.shanefelter@gmail.com or Robyn at robynseabrook@aol.com.



Oct. 23 Dine with Dads...

The Woodlin Parent Network invites **FATHERS, BROTHERS, UNCLES, GRANDFATHERS, COUSINS, FRIENDS** to bring a bag lunch, a blanket, a ball or other recess activity and join us for the fall Dine with Dads (and Other Male Mentors) Day on Friday, October 23, 2009.

Please check your student's backpack for more info.

...Moms, sisters, grandmas, cousins, aunts, female friends – stay tuned! We are planning our first event for Woodlin Women to brighten up this winter.

Oct. 24 Come to Green Expo at our Green School

The Woodlin PTA and our Green Kids invite you and your friends and neighbors to our **GO GREEN EXPO**, Saturday, October 24, 1-3:30 PM.

We're celebrating Montgomery County's 23rd annual Community Service Day, also a national day of service by finding out what

(Continued on page 2)

Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF at Halloween

That knock on your door around Halloween won't just be for tricks-or-treats.

Woodlin students will soon appear with the familiar UNICEF orange boxes collecting change to help kids in need around the world.

Truly "wizards" at collecting funds for UNICEF, Woodlin kids raised more than \$2,200 last Halloween and would like to top that

amount this year. You can help by keeping loose change near the door to contribute. If you have access to your neighborhood list-serve, consider posting a reminder to welcome the Woodlin "kids helping kids."

A little donation goes a long way: Five cents provides iodized salt for one child for a year to prevent mental and developmental disabilities;

\$1 can immunize a child against polio and measles for life. Children who volunteer to trick-or-treat for UNICEF will bring home the orange boxes in their backpacks in mid-October.

To learn more about UNICEF, visit www.unicefusa.org.

- Woodlin PTA coordinator for UNICEF, Lydia Fettig, lydiafettig@yahoo.com.



September Stars Shine

Shining Stars is a new Woodlin program to encourage students to recognize daily positive behaviors exhibited by their peers.

Students are asked to write down instances when they see their classmates do something helpful for someone else or contribute in a beneficial way to the Woodlin community. Children who are not yet able to write will describe their Shining Stars nominations to their teacher or a parent volunteer.

Each classroom has nomination forms and a Shining Stars envelope where children can put their completed forms. Teachers will randomly draw nominations or facilitate a class discussion about nominations, and those names will be posted on a school wide bulletin board at least monthly so other students can see these written descriptions of positive actions.

A list of Woodlin Shining Stars for September follows:

- Hasani Thomas is a shining star for having a good attitude after soccer.
- Alison Sulisty is a shining star for doing what the teacher told us.
- Niya Gordon is a shining star because she helped me get papers.
- Nathaniel is a shining star because he helped me zip up my backpack.
- Max Niles is a shining star because he has helped me to be a better patrol.
- Dana Freeman is a shining star because she is working too hard.
- Aubrey Hobbs is a shining star because he helped me fix up my binder.
- Walter Osborne is a shining star because he started his work right away.
- Lydia Brandt is a shining star because she is being nice.
- Callie Rudecki is a shining star because she always wants to help and makes me happy when she compliments my work.
- Alex Ody is a shining star because she is a hard worker.
- Ben is a shining star because I liked how hard he worked on his moon project.
- Camryn Cross is a shining star because she helped me when I was feeling down.
- Helen Paige Buck is a shining star because when I am sad she cheers me up.



Congratulations all you Woodlin Shining Stars, keep up the good work!

Green School (cont.)

makes Woodlin a green school and learning what all of us can do at home and work to protect our planet through local action.

Check out exhibits and demonstrations to help us conserve energy, save money, and reuse

resources at home and work.

Children will do fun craft projects using recycled materials.

If you'd like to volunteer and/or can suggest an exhibitor, contact Linda S. Katz, lindakatz@aol.com.





Principal Sarah Sirgo

...researchers at Rutgers have found that allowing students to struggle with challenging math problems can lead to dramatically improved achievement and test scores.

Math Courses and Rigor

At Woodlin we believe that all children are capable of accessing a rigorous curriculum. While we always meet children where they are, we believe that high expectations combined with opportunities to excel, result in success. We cannot achieve success without your help at home.

We believe that opportunities begin with rigor. As a result, we offer on and above grade level math only. There are no "low" or below grade level math classes. Due to the high rates of students ready for acceleration at Woodlin, some parents have begun to think that on grade level courses are a terrible thing. This is not the case. Our math curriculum in all grades is rigorous and provides built in opportunities for challenging work. How many times have you asked yourself if putting kids in rigorous math was the right thing to do? Recently, researchers at Rutgers University have concluded that the experience of challenge in math classes can lead to long term success for students.

While working with minority and low-income students at low-performing schools in Newark for the past seven years, researchers at Rutgers have found that allowing students to struggle with challenging math problems can lead to dramatically improved achievement and test scores. "We've found there is a healthy amount of frustration that's productive; there is a satisfaction after having struggled with it," says Roberta Schorr, associate professor in Rutgers University at Newark's Urban Education Department. Her group has also found that, though conventional wisdom says certain abilities are innate, a lot of kids' talents and abilities go unnoticed unless they are effectively challenged; the key is to do it in a nurturing environment. "Most of the literature describes student engagement and motivation as having to do with their attitudes about math -- whether they like it or not," Schorr says. "That's different from the engagement we've found. When students are working on conceptually complex problems in a supportive environment, they do better. They report feeling frustrated, but also satisfaction, pride and a willingness to work harder next time."

Motivation appears to be the key aspect of achievement that we often ignore in math. The researchers conclude that we need to provide kids with conceptually challenging math problems in an emotionally safe environment. Parents and teachers can help kids view frustration as an opportunity for success instead of an indication of failure, as students experience productive struggles.

If you would like to know more about how to help your child in math at home, consider obtaining the math resources below. Parents have told us that these books are the best tools around to help with the "new" language of math! They may be borrowed from school or you can purchase your own at Amazon.com or another book site.

- ✓ **Math to Learn (Grades 1 & 2)**
- ✓ **Math to Know (Grades 3 & 4)**
- ✓ **Math at Hand (Grade 5)**
- ✓ **Math on Call (Grades 6, 7, 8)**



Fun Friday Earns its Name!



PTA President's Message

It's only October, and the Woodlin PTA has already had a busy year. We would like to send out our thanks for the work of so many volunteers this month:

- **Julie Rios Little** for her amazing job organizing Hispanic Heritage month - Muchas Gracias!
- **All the parents** who came out to support the school's first Fun Friday. Special thanks to **Bertie and Philip LoPiccolo**, **Melita Flannery**, and **Julie Hemming Savage**.
- **Karen Sharp**, **Yvette Harris**, **Pat Price** and **Shelly Duckett** for their work organizing Dinner and Movie Night.
- **Chris Scanlon**, our After School Clubs organizer, for getting our fall session Clubs off to a great start! Thanks also to all the volunteers for the individual clubs including **Krista Middlebrooks**, who is handling Mad Science. Special thanks to our enrichment chair, **Abbi Lichtenstein**. We have a wonderful line up of clubs, and are always looking for new club ideas, so please contact Abbi with suggestions.
- **Sheila Maith** and her membership volunteers – we're approaching nearly 200 members of the PTA, so if you haven't already done so, we encourage you to join our ranks! Visit



www.woodlinpta.org

for a membership form or see page 8 of this newsletter.

- **Jane Curtin**, **Lois Trojan**, **Lynne Yao**, **Mary Press** and the other Sally Foster team members, for another great year. We're well on our way to funding all the great events planned for 2009-10.
- **Michael Horowitz**, our PTA treasurer, for preparing this year's PTA budget. It was a difficult job in such anxious financial times, but he and his team provided a comprehensive, easy to understand document. The budget will be formally ratified at our October PTA meeting.
- **Laurie Yankowski**, for organizing our first dining out event of the year, at the Big Greek Restaurant.

As always, we can use a few good people to fill volunteer positions. Contact Lisa Alton if you can help!

We have a number of great events coming up, profiled elsewhere in this newsletter! It's never too late to get involved in PTA—we'd love to hear your comments and suggestions, and remember that we are working hard to benefit all of the children in our Woodlin community.

Chris Scanlon

Ready, Set, Breakfast!

"Eat your breakfast. It's the most important meal of the day!" Why do people always say that?

Well, imagine your child is a car. After a long night of [sleeping](#), the fuel tank is empty. Breakfast is the fuel that gets your kid going so he or she can hit the road and have a productive day at school.

What Should You Feed Them?

Any breakfast is better than no breakfast, but try to avoid doughnuts or pastries all the time. They're high in calories, sugar, and fat. They also don't contain the [nutrients](#) a kid really needs. Just like with other meals, try to eat a variety of foods, including:

- grains (breads and cereals – whole grains are best)

- [protein](#) (meats, beans, and nuts)
- fruits and vegetables
- milk, cheese, yogurt

Need More Convincing?

Kids who don't eat breakfast are less able to learn at school, get less iron (an important nutrient) in their diets, and are more likely to have a higher [body mass index \(BMI\)](#), which is a sign they may be overweight.

On the other hand, **kids who eat breakfast do better in school**, are more likely to participate in physical activities, and tend to eat healthier overall.

So tomorrow morning, fuel up with a healthy breakfast!

Excerpted from <http://kidshealth.org>

--Monica Feit, health and nutrition committee leader



What's on the Menu?

The traditional:

- eggs
- French toast, waffles, or pancakes (try wheat or whole-grain varieties)
 - cold cereal w/milk & fruit
- whole-grain toast, bagel, or English muffin
 - yogurt with fruit or nuts
 - fruit smoothie
- hot cereal, such as oatmeal (try some dried fruit or nuts on top)

Some weird (but yummy) ones:

- banana dog (peanut butter, a banana, and raisins in a long whole-grain bun)
- breakfast taco (shredded cheese on a tortilla, folded in half and microwaved; top with salsa)
- country cottage cheese (apple butter mixed with cottage cheese)
- fruit and cream cheese sandwich (use strawberries or other fresh fruit)
- sandwich - grilled cheese, peanut butter and jelly, or another favorite
- leftovers (they're not just for dinner anymore!)

Volunteer Orientation—Oct. 14



Please join us for coffee & Woodlin Elementary School's Volunteer Orientation!

Wednesday, October 14, 2009 at 9:30am in the All-Purpose Room.

Orientation will include: volunteer opportunities that are available, school tour, copier training, volunteer guidelines, and more

(everyone must be trained on the copier before using it)

If you have any questions, please contact Alice Stephens, Volunteer Coordinator, wagap@yahoo.com or 301-587-3009.

The Sally Foster fundraiser raised more than \$11,000 for Woodlin!

Sally Foster Fundraiser A Big Success – Pick up on Monday, Oct. 12

The early numbers are in and, thanks to your hard sales work and generous direct donations, the Sally Foster fundraiser raised more than \$11,000 for Woodlin. That's over \$1,000 more than last year and the online orders are still coming! Special thanks to packet staplers, order talliers, and skit thespians, including: Perry Beamer, Teddy Beamer, Victor Chupka, Joey Curtin, David Curtin, Lynne Yao, Phil Curtin, Mr. George, Mary

Press, Krista Middlebrooks, Deb Ferrin, Diana Arrington, Ms. Beeson, Chris Rutledge, Mr. Clarke, Mark Sullivan, Ms. Grotsky, Ms. Cross, and Ms. Roberts.

For those who did not order online, pickup will be on Monday, October 12th (Woodlin's open house) from 9:30 – 11:00, and again 1:30 – 5:00 in the school's All Purpose Room. These are the only times for order pick-up, so if you are not able to come to the

school, please arrange for a friend or neighbor to collect your order for you on Monday.

And remember that you can order online all year and Woodlin still gets a portion of the sales when you enter account number #499069.

Thank you for making this a great start to the year!

Jane Curtin & Lois Trojan, Sally Foster Fundraiser Co-Chairs

The grand total of their donation was \$500!

A Big Greek Thank You!

Woodlin's first Dining Out event of the school year at **The Big Greek Cafe** was a huge success! Thanks to everyone who came out in support of our school and enjoyed a delicious Greek feast with fellow Wizards.

The Big Greek Cafe generously donated 20 percent of the day's sales to our school. The grand

total of their donation was \$500!

The Big Greek Cafe was thrilled with our new relationship -- thanks to Ms. Kalargyros' suggestion -- that they would like to offer ALL Woodlin families a 10 percent discount during the month of October. Simply mention "Woodlin" when ordering to receive the school discount.

The Big Greek Café is located at 8223 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910, www.biggreekcafe.com

The next Dining Out event will be held in November. More information to follow via email and backpack mail. Thank you all for your support!"

Mondays will be Spirit Day at Woodlin this year.

Spirit Wear Update

Kudos to Michelle Radecki for coordinating a fantastic spirit wear sale!

Thanks to her hard work, our Town Meetings will be filled with Wizards showing their school pride. Look for orders to be distributed in three weeks.

Once they are in, **Mondays will be Spirit Day at Woodlin** and all children will be encouraged to wear Woodlin gear or school colors (blue and white) to school.

Thanks to everyone who helped Michelle sell the

shirts (Amy Williamson and Ely Sullivan in particular) and to our families who participated.

Get Involved!

A Rainbow Welcome



LGBT Outreach Sub-Committee is Organizing—Join Us!

We all know how wonderfully diverse our Woodlin community is. Our children are exposed to a rich tapestry of youngsters their age, it's one of many reasons we love the school!

We are adding to our

welcoming of children and parents of diverse backgrounds one more facet: sexual orientation. The Woodlin PTA is happy to announce the addition of an LGBT outreach sub-committee.

October 11 is National Coming Out Day. There will be a national march on the DC mall. This is the perfect

time to form a sub-committee of LGBT parents and our allies to create a warm, safe space for our children and ourselves.

If you would like to join us, please contact: Liora Moriel & Susan Kirshner, parents of kindergartners Ben and Noah Moriel-Kirshner, at liorasusan@hotmail.com.

International Night — November 7

Come Celebrate Woodlin's Diversity!

Featuring:
Anansegromma of Ghana
November 7, 2009
7:00 – 9:00

Ways to participate:

★ **Bring a dish** for our table of international foods. It's potluck!



★ **Set up a display table** with games, handicrafts and other items from a country you feel connected to (contact Fida Adely to arrange your table display)

★ **Submit photos** of your family in traditional or folk dress for our "Children around the World" slide

show (send photos to Dena Leibman)

★ **Come dressed up** and show off your traditional garb

★ **Eat, dance and celebrate!**

Questions? Contact the organizers: Dena Leibman: denaleibman@yahoo.com or Fida Adely fidaadely@yahoo.com

Co-Chair Still Needed for Silent Auction

The PTA is still in dire need of a Silent Auction co-chair.

Jennifer Sawin has generously volunteered to be one of the chairs but we need two volunteers to make the auction a success. What does volunteering for the Auction entail?

1. Send out solicitation letters -- we have the companies and addresses all ready for you! The mailing needs to go out in mid-November.

2. Keep track of incoming donations.

3. Write brief descriptions of donations for the catalog -- or just update the ones from last year.

4. Assign volunteers to 5 to 10 businesses each to secure action items.

5. Plan the actual event -- we've done it for years and can provide you with step-by-step instructions.

The chairs typically split up

the tasks and work with a team of volunteers. Is it a lot of work? Well, yes, but it is manageable (Chris Rutledge and I have done it for the past few years and Chris works full time, me part-time and I have a 3 year old! I even helped out with the Auction on bed rest!)

Please, consider joining Jennifer in this important PTA fundraiser and an event that is loved by Woodlin families and the community.



Have a friend you'd like to spend more time with? We'll take 2 of you for this job -- 3 chairs will make it an even more manageable task!

Questions? Call me and I'll give you the straight scoop. Lisa Alton, 301-565-3134.

Woodlin PTA
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www.woodlinpta.org

OCTOBER

Dates to Remember

- 12 Pick up Sally Foster
- 12 Woodlin Open House
- 12 Costume Closet Drop-off
- 14 Volunteer Orientation
- 16 No School
- 23 Dining with Dads and other male Mentors
- 24 Community Day of Service, Green School
- 30 Halloween Party & Parade

NOVEMBER

Dates to Remember

- 2 No School
- 3 PTA Meeting
- 7 International Night
- 11 Early release day
- 12 Early release day
- 25 Early release day
- 26-27 No School—Thanksgiving



Join the Woodlin PTA!
For the 2009-10 Year
Everyone must rejoin and pay dues every year!

The Woodlin PTA depends on your membership dues and donations to support our many programs, services, and events. Membership fees are only \$10 per person—a small investment toward making Woodlin a great place for YOUR kids to learn and grow.

Parent/Guardian #1: _____

Parent/Guardian #2: _____

Student(s): _____

Teacher(s): _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please add my email address to the Woodlin PTA list serve!

Total # of PTA members : _____ X \$10 = \$ _____

Additional tax deductible donation: \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please return this form with cash or check (payable to “Woodlin PTA”) to school in your child’s backpack. Address the envelope to “PTA Membership.” THANK YOU!

Donate while you buy groceries! You can help the PTA every time you shop at Safeway or Giant. Please provide your store card number, and we will register it so that every time you shop, a percentage of your purchase is donated to the Woodlin PTA. (You must re-register every year.)

Giant card number: _____ **Safeway card number:** _____