



WIZARDS PTA NEWS

Woodlin Elementary Parent Teacher Association Newsletter

November 2009



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Principal's Corner

One of the questions that we are asked most often by parents is how they can help their children with homework. The faces and names may change, but the scenario is often the same. Parents have always attempted to help their children with homework. This help ranges from a short occasional explanation to total completion of the task by the parent. Whatever the case, problems exist. In an attempt to cope, parents will use trial and error, bribery, threats, reasoning, and anything they hope will work.

There is little doubt that the intentions of parents are good. However, it is not the motive that creates the anxiety and tension for both parents and children, but the techniques employed.

For some children, school can be a stressful place. Taking into account work demands, social pressures, concern over parental approval, fear of failure, and so much more, children may need the home as a haven to unwind. If they encounter stress in the form of parental agitation during



homework, then where can they "hang their hat?"

For those of us who work, it might be comparable to working all day at a job that has its share of stresses and coming home to a tense environment. Think of how long you might be able to handle such a situation. Also keep in mind the alternatives that we have as adults if the pressure gets to be too great. Children do not have the same options. The following techniques are provided to facilitate the process of homework and prevent frustration and disappointment.

(cont. on page 2)

Woodlin Holiday Book Bazaar

Start your shopping early at the Woodlin Holiday Book Bazaar, which will be held on Thursday Dec. 3 from 5:30 to 9 p.m. in the All Purpose Room.

In addition to a great selection of gifts for family and friends, there will be story read-alouds with surprise guests and a contest drawing for a free gift. Pizza will be served

from 6 to 6:30. Look for more news in your child's backpack later this month.

For more information or if you'd like to volunteer to help, email Sydney Trent and Bruce Seeman at trents@washpost.com.



Principal's Corner, cont.

SET UP A HOMEWORK SCHEDULE

Many children benefit from a set homework schedule. For some, the responsibility of deciding when to sit down and do homework is too difficult. These children may decide to do their homework after school or after dinner. This is a personal choice and has to do with learning style. However, once the time is determined, the schedule should be adhered to as realistically as possible. This will also relieve the problem of having to "hunt down" or "corral" children to do their homework. After a while, this will become a natural part of their schedule.

Check homework assignments at the end of the night. Anxiety is exhibited by some children over the thought of possibly bringing incorrect homework to school. Therefore, it is important for parents to take time each night to check homework. This offers children a feeling of accomplishment, a source of positive attention, and a sense of security that the work is correct. This sense of academic security may carry over to the classroom and offer children more confidence with class work. However, if it is clear that the child did not understand a particular concept, the teacher should be made aware of it.

DON'T HOVER NEXT TO YOUR CHILD DURING THE HOMEWORK SESSION

This is big problem for some parents. Parents employing this technique are not only setting themselves up for tremendous frustration and anger, but they are also creating "learned helplessness."

Many parents will say that their children cannot work unless they are sitting next to them. It is not that children are unable to work, but that they choose not to. Work stoppage occurs when a parent attempts to break away and no longer provides them with undivided attention. This "dependency" is unhealthy because it is not replicated in the classroom. Thus, such children may put off doing their class work and bring the un-finished work home, where they can have the at-home adult's full attention.

If you are already locked into this type of situation, you should not break away all at once. You should desensitize children a little at a time. Sit at the end of the table for a few days. Then slowly increase the distance between yourself and the child's work until he or she is working alone.

CHECK CORRECT PROBLEMS FIRST

Parents sometimes have a habit of "zeroing in" on the incorrect problems. Next



time your child brings you a paper to check, focus first on how well he or she did on the correct problems, spelling words, and so on. For the answers that are incorrect say, "I bet if you go back and check these over you may get a different answer." Now the child will go back and redo the problems without animosity or feelings of inadequacy. In contrast, if you focus on the incorrect problems and become angry, when the child returns to the work area he or she will likely be more involved in coping with the loss of parental approval rather than finishing the task.

You may want to check small groups of problems at a time. Many children benefit from immediate gratification. Have your child do five problems and then come back to you for checking. Zero in on the correct ones, and after they are checked send the child back to do the next group. In this way the child gets immediate feedback and approval and the necessary motivation for the next assignment. Additionally, if the child is doing the assignment incorrectly, the error can be detected and explained, preventing the child from having to redo the entire assignment.

(cont. on page 6)

"Parents sometimes have a habit of 'zeroing in' on the incorrect problems. Next time... focus first on how well she or he did on the correct problems..."

Listserve Membership at Record Numbers

The Woodlin PTA listserve currently has almost 420 members. This is the largest it has ever been, and is over 100 more members than just two years ago. This makes the listserve an excellent communications tool for Woodlin parents.

We would love to have 100 percent of our parents on the listserve. If you know someone who has email but currently is not on the list, please encourage them to join.

Growth in the listserve membership is due

primarily to the hard work of **Sharon Bisk** and **June Krell**, who put together the PTA directory. They have faithfully forwarded the email address of every person who checked the "Add Me to the List serve" box on their directory forms.

To subscribe to the Woodlin listserve, send an email to woodlnpt-subscribe@yahooogroups.com. To unsubscribe, email woodlnpt-unsubscribe@yahooogroups.com.

--Deb Ferrin,
PTA Listserve Moderator

Mark Your Calendars for Pizza!

It's Dining Out WEEK at Armand's Pizza!

From Monday, Nov. 9 through Sunday, Nov. 15, Armand's Pizzeria -- Seminary Road and Georgia Avenue -- will generously donate 20 percent of its sales--from Dine In, Carry Out and Delivery--to Woodlin ES!

Please visit Armand's between Nov 9 and 15 to help Woodlin raise money. Tell friends, neighbors, post to listservs, etc.

The ad at right must be presented for Woodlin to receive 20 percent donation.

Questions? Please contact Laurie Yankowski at lyankowski@petersoncos.com.



FUNDRAISER FOR Woodlin Elementary PTA AT ARMAND'S PIZZERIA Monday Nov 9th thru Sun Nov 15th

Armand's will donate 20% of your purchase to
The Woodlin Elementary School PTA.

**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE THE FAMOUS ALL
YOU CAN EAT PIZZA & SALAD BUFFET WILL
BE AVAILABLE FROM from 6-8 pm all week long**

*This offer applies on dine-in ,carryout & delivery orders
Please turn in this flyer to your server, driver or cashier.*

**Please give this flyer to your server, driver or cashier.*

ARMAND'S CHICAGO PIZZERIA

1909 Seminary Rd. Silver Spring MD
phone- 301.588.3400



The Expo also kicked off the UNICEF Drive Fundraiser.



Councilmember George Leventhal visits our Green School.



Thanks to all the Green Kids for your work!!

Go Green Expo a Success

On Saturday, October 24th at Woodlin, the PTA sponsored Go Green Expo Day in honor of Montgomery County's 23rd Community Service Day.

With the help of our student Green Kids Committee, the event fostered a keener awareness of how to better protect our planet. Local government agencies, non-profits, and local vendors demonstrated innovative ways to: conserve energy by use of wind and solar power; conserve water; plant more trees, recycle more materials, compost, and enjoy greener living.

A big hit for the kids and adults was the **bright green "Go Electric Now Scooter"**. Watch out Harley David-son! Kids had a blast: transforming ordinary rocks into "pet" rocks; guessing how many pennies it took to sink their aluminum foil boats; decorating light switches; and making recycled paper circles.

There were bunches of snacks to enjoy: Snider's organic apples, raisins, and animal cookies. **Honest Tea** generously donated bottled teas for the adults and juices for the kids—a big hit. We were also entertained by **Philip LoPiccolo** playing his electric guitar powered by solar power!

Thanks to the student Green Kids Committee for their work on the Expo:

Luisa DuSilva, Abigail Oswald, Emma Scanlon, Chloe Rutledge, Dana Tandoc, Ella Douglass, Avery

Smedley, Inistar Shifa, Jordan Crosby, Devin Humphrey, Dante Vito, Samar Haddad.

Thanks go to the volunteers who helped make the Expo a great success:

Lydia Morris Fettig, Alice Stephens, Quinn Pittman, Dave Dickerson, Vickie Rocha, Dena Leibman, Evita Smedley, Albee Shanefelter, Chris Rutledge, Noelle Kurtin, Jenny Shanefelter, Kathleen Boucher, Yael Traum, Abby Hoffman, Karen Sharp, Kitty Brim, John Moynihan, Laurie McWright, The Savages-- Carl, Jeremiah, Ella, Lucy, Melita Flannery, Alice Witt, Brendan Witt, Liora Moriel, Dylan Stephens, Suzanne Harris, Rayna Klein, Philip LoPiccolo, Monica Feit, Heather Lair; Bernadette Sweeney; Barbara Jazzo, Carolyn Weber, Sarah Orrick, Hannah Bisk, Julia Madsen, Ronald Ramsaran, Griffin Rowell, Gabe Schrier, Rachael, Lia.

A big thank you for those I may have left out—if I did, please forgive me.

And a huge thanks to Expo committee members, **Linda Katz and Bertie LoPiccolo**, who did a fantastic job planning and running this event that involved a huge amount of networking and outreach with local organizations, businesses and the Montgomery County Council.

--Abbi Lichtenstein
Enrichment Chair

Woodlin Goings-On

The past few weeks have been busy for Woodlin and for the PTA!

- Special thanks to **Linda Katz, Lydia Fettig, Bertie LoPiccolo, Abbi Lichtenstein and countless others** who made the **Go Green Expo** an amazing event! We had many exhibitors, and of course, the Green Kids, show how we can make the planet a better place.
- What would Halloween be without Trick or Treat for UNICEF? Students helped raise money for this worthy organization – thanks to **Michele DeVito, Lydia Fettig, Monica Feit, Linda Katz, and Ms. Grant** for organizing this annual event.
- Speaking of Halloween, thanks to **all the room parents** for planning such wonderful parties. Thanks go to **Albee and Jenny Shanefelter** and **Robyn Seabrook** for organizing Woodlin's "costume closet," which ensures that any child who needs a costume can wear one

for the annual parade.

- By the time you read this, we will have held International Night – each year kids and families celebrate their heritage and learn about each other through food and great company! Thank you to **Fida Adely, Dena Leibman, Camille Torfs-Leibman** and **Marijke Torfs** for coordinating the sights, tastes, and sounds of our global Woodlin community!
- Keeping our school community connected is no easy task in our busy world, but thanks to **Sharon Bisk** and **June Krell** we sent out the annual edition of the fantastic Woodlin School Directory.
- We hope your children have enjoyed the diverse opportunities offered by our after school clubs. We are in need of a few important volunteers in this program. Please see **Abbi Lichtenstein** or **Chris Scanlon** if you can offer your time to help enrich our kids.



PTA President Chris Rutledge buys popcorn at October's Movie Night

- Finally, we have a special event planned for the December PTA meeting that includes a holiday book fair! Please see **Sydney Trent** or **Bruce Seeman** if you are interested in helping with the event.

On behalf of the PTA, I hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving, and I hope to see you at one of the upcoming school events.

Chris Rutledge
President, Woodlin PTA



Copier training for volunteer parents

Copier training for parent volunteers! Please join Mrs. Bacon on Thursday, November 19 at 10 am to be trained on using the school's copier. Volunteers must be trained in order to use the copier. Another training session will be offered on December 17 at 10 am.

--Alice Stephens

Halloween Fun!



OMG!! It's Gabriella and Troy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Homework, cont.

"[Nonverbal] messages, especially negative ones, can be communicated easily without your awareness."

NEVER LET HOMEWORK DRAG ON ALL NIGHT

Sometimes parents will allow a child to work on homework for several hours or until they finish. This is fine if the performance of the child is consistent or the assignment realistically calls for such a time commitment. However, in the event that a child is no farther along after one or two hours than after ten minutes, you should stop the homework activity. Allowing a child to linger hour after hour with little progress will only increase feelings of inadequacy. Write the teacher a note explaining the circumstances. Concerns can then be worked out.

There may be several reasons for this behavior pattern. First, the child may not have understood the concept in class and therefore will not be able to finish the assignment at

home. Second, the child may already have feelings of helplessness. In this case, waiting long periods of time may result in parents completing an assignment. Third, the child may have serious learning difficulties, especially if this is a pattern, and may be overwhelmed.

BE AWARE OF NEGATIVE NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

Parents will often say to me that they never get frustrated or yell while working with their children on homework. However, not all communication is verbal. Nonverbal communication—including grimaces, body stiffness, sighs, raised eyebrows, and other types of body language—matters. Many messages, especially negative ones, can be communicated easily without your awareness. If children are sensitive, they will pick up these messages, which can only

add to the tension of the homework relationship.

AVOID FINISHING ASSIGNMENTS FOR YOUR CHILD

Some parents will complete an entire assignment for their child. While their motivation may be to help, the end result may be very destructive. Children tend to feel inadequate when a parent finishes homework. First, they feel a sense of failure. Second, they feel a sense of inadequacy since they can never hope to do the assignment as well as mommy or daddy. Third, it can foster increased dependency and feelings of helplessness on the part of children. If children cannot complete an assignment, and they have honestly tried, write the teacher a note explaining the circumstances. Most teachers will understand the situation.

Excerpted from A Survival Kit for the Special Education Teacher

Sally Foster a Big Success Thanks to Whole School Effort

Raising over \$11,000 in this economic environment is not easy. But that's just what our students, parents, teachers, and administrators did through our Sally Foster fundraising effort. We thank everyone for helping our students sell the gift wrap and chocolates and solicit donations, and for supporting them with your time and energy. It takes an entire community to accomplish this feat.

Very special thanks to the following wonderful people for helping meet the truck (at 7:00 am!) on delivery day, unloading pallets, sorting, confirming each item and distributing orders: **Annie Huson, Lynne Yao, Melita Flannery, Mary Press, Noelle Kurtin, Julie Rasicot,**

Anne Mutti, Krista Middlebrooks, Candace Olsson, Pam Kelly, Susan Morawetz. It could not have happened without you. Thanks to **Mr. Vasquez and Mr. Huntley** for opening the school before dawn and keeping everything cleaned up as the unpacking and distribution whirlwind unfolded. And kudos to **Ms. Hale** for her help and patience again this year during the sale.

We also congratulate the following prize winners:

- Top sellers **Preston Bieber, Ella Yankowski, Aaron Grice, Dynasta Harris, and Justin Jankowski,** who received certificates at Town Meeting and special prizes for their outstanding sales efforts.
- **Auster Pittman, Ellen Plumart, Alexandra Davis, Xander Hosler, and Henry Dorsey** for being the lucky random drawing winners from among all participating students. These students had an afternoon of fun at school with **Mr. George.**
- **Ms. Cross' first grade class,** which had a pizza party to celebrate their class having the highest participation rate in the whole school!

We are so pleased that this fundraiser's success will play an important role in helping provide another year of fun and academic enrichment for all of our children.

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

"It takes an entire community to accomplish this feat."



Dining with Dads

We saw a phenomenal turnout at the Parent Network- sponsored "Dining With Dads." Over 200 men, including dads, granddads, father figures, and other great male role models, came to have lunch with our children. Thanks to all who attended!

Woodlin PTA
c/o Woodlin Elementary
2101 Luzerne Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

President: Chris Rutledge
crnkar@yahoo.com
Vice President: Diana Arrington
Secretary: Evita Smedley
Treasurer: Michael Horowitz

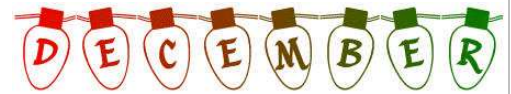
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www.woodlinpta.org

NOVEMBER

Dates to Remember

- 9 Armand's Week begins
- 10 McKenney Hills Design Meeting (3:30pm)
- 11 Early release day
- 12 Early release day
- 13 Teacher Birthday Lunch
- 19 Copier training
- 20 Fun Friday
- 25 Early release day
- 26-27 No School—Thanksgiving



Dates to Remember

- 1 Final McKenney Hills Design Meeting
- 3 Woodlin Holiday Book Bazaar
- 17 Copier training
- 24-31 No School—Holiday/Winter Break

Attention K-1st Families

A new school is being built on the grounds of the former McKenney Hills Learning Center. Some current Kindergarten and 1st Grade students at Woodlin Elementary and Oakland Terrace Elementary may eventually be students at this new school. MCPS wants your input into the design. Anticipated schedule (subject to change) is for school to open in August 2012. For more info, visit WES website or see the sign in front of the school.

Woodlin Spirit Shines Every Monday!

Reminder: Every MONDAY is School Spirit Day at Woodlin.

Have your child show their school spirit by wearing their Woodlin shirts (new or old) or blue and white!



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!