



# GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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## DECEMBER

- 12/17 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip  
12/24-1/2 Winter Break

## JANUARY

- 1/7 Geography Bee, Grades 4-6  
1/8 JIP Information Night, 7 p.m.  
1/14 GT Parent Info Meeting, 9 a.m.  
1/19 Holiday – No School  
1/20 Inauguration Day – No School  
1/26-27 Teacher Workdays – No School



## Newsletters to go Electronic

Beginning January 2009, we will start using electronic notification to send our school and PTA newsletters. The newsletters will be sent via "Keep in Touch" (KIT). This is the same system through which FCPS communicates emergency messages such as cancellations, delayed openings, and early closings.

We will send our first KIT message before the end of the year. If you do not receive a KIT message from GFES, please send an e-mail to office assistant Ms Griffin at: [maureen.griffin@fcps.edu](mailto:maureen.griffin@fcps.edu), and she will update your primary e-mail address.

## Thank You

The staff and administration wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the wonderful staff holiday luncheon that was sponsored by the PTA on December 15th. Special thanks to Lia Grassi and Tina Woolston for coordinating the event! Thanks, also, to all the other parents who either prepared the delicious food, helped to serve that afternoon, or donated gift certificates for the event. Your time, efforts, and thoughtfulness are greatly appreciated!

We wish all the Great Falls students and families a safe and happy holiday season!

## Renovation News

You may have noticed that the first grade wing has been closed off and it will soon be under heavy renovation. Over the next few weeks, safety fencing will be installed around the back of the building.

**Beginning Monday, December 22, the back parking lot will be unavailable for parking and Kiss-and-Ride will be slightly altered.**

This is a good time to remind all our bus riding students to take the bus instead of using Kiss-and-Ride. This will help alleviate the heavy traffic flow at Kiss-and-Ride and Walker Road.

## Winter Break

Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, is the last day of school before winter break. **This is a full day of school.** We will follow the regular 3:05 dismissal time. Kindergarten will Follow the normal Tuesday schedule as well.



Great Falls Elementary School and office will be closed Wednesday, December 24, 2008 through Friday, January 2, 2009. Students and staff return to normal hours on Monday, January 5, 2009.

## Japanese Immersion Program Enrollment

Parents of 2008-2009 kindergarten students interested in having their child enter the Japanese Immersion Program for the 2009-2010 school year, are invited to attend an information night on **Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**, in our school cafeteria. Applications for enrollment will be sent home in a January Tuesday Packet. If the meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, it will be rescheduled for Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>.



### SCA Food Drive

The SCA collected almost 700 cans of food during November's food drive. The much needed food, toiletries, and baby items were donated to SHARE.



### An Important Note About Trading Cards and Toys

Please remind your child to keep trading cards and toys (such as Bakugans, Littlest Pet Shop items, etc.) at home. Bringing these items to school can result in frustration and hurt feelings and they are not appropriate for the school environment. Do not hesitate to contact the administration if you have any questions regarding this.

### Applications for Elementary Magnet Schools

Beginning on January 2, 2009, Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences and Hunters Woods Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences will be accepting applications for the 2009-2010 school year lottery process. To be eligible to apply, a student must be at or above grade level in language arts and math and demonstrate positive interpersonal and school behavior. Applications, the application process and timeline schedule will be available in the GFES office. Applications must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2009. For further information regarding Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences, visit [www.fcps.edu/BaileysES](http://www.fcps.edu/BaileysES). For questions regarding Hunters Woods Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences, visit [www.fcps.edu/HuntersWoodsES](http://www.fcps.edu/HuntersWoodsES).

### GIFTED AND TALENTED (GT) PROGRAMS-LEVELS OF SERVICE

**A Gifted and Talented Parent Information Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., January 14<sup>th</sup>, in the GFES cafeteria.**

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) offers a continuum of gifted services for all students in grades K-8. Learning experiences are designed to develop higher-level thinking through enrichment, acceleration, and extension of the Program of Studies. Teachers, administrators, and GT resource teachers work together to provide the following Levels of Service:

- > **Level I GT services** provide lessons in critical and creative thinking skills for all FCPS students in grades K-6.
- > **Level II GT services** include differentiated instruction at an advanced level for many FCPS students through collaboration between the classroom teacher and the GT resource teacher. The Young Scholars Model included in this level is designed to find and nurture gifted potential in students from historically underrepresented populations through more challenging curriculum and instruction. Middle school students who take one or two Honors classes are receiving Level II services.
- > **Level III GT services** for identified students include the GT school-based program in grades 3-6; in middle school, students take three Honors classes.
- > **Level IV GT services** are for those students found eligible for the full-time GT center program in grades 3-8 or taking full Honors at the middle school.

#### SCREENING

Multiple criteria are reviewed to determine eligibility for all FCPS gifted services. Formal identification begins with Level III services. The local school GT committee determines student eligibility for school-based GT services. The countywide GT Central Selection Committee determines eligibility for GT center placement.

#### TESTING

Each fall all FCPS second grade students, as well as students in third through seventh grade who are missing an ability test score, are administered the Cognitive Ability Test and/or the Naglieri Nonverbal Test. A second grade GT center screening pool is established using these test results. Students in the second grade pool are automatically screened for GT center placement. Parents may exercise their one-time retest option during the September/October testing cycle.

#### REFERRAL

Parents/guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the GT center screening process by completing and submitting a **Gifted and Talented GT Center Referral form to the local school principal no later than February 6, 2009**. No late referrals will be accepted. Second graders **not** in the pool and **all** third through seventh graders are screened only by referral. Forms are available on the GT web site and in the Parent Information Packet available at the local school.

For additional GT Programs information, visit the GT web site: [www.fcps.edu/DIS/qt](http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/qt) or contact the Lacey Center 703-846-8670.