



The Panther PAWS

VOLUME 22

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FEBRUARY 2012

Poplar Tree Elementary

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Chantilly, Virginia 20151

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Sharon S. Williams, Principal

Hallie Dillon, Asst. Principal

Arian Hadley, PTA President

Kathy Dennis and Betsy Pettis,  
Coordinators

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**NEXT ISSUE:**  
**March 2nd**

## Principal's Message~Words of Williams

### *We Celebrate...!*



*We celebrate many famous Black Americans,  
Their talents,  
Their contributions,  
Their dreams.*

*We celebrate their integrity,*

*Their determination,  
and paramount resolve to make a difference.*

*We celebrate their continuous journey  
and blazed trails of hope, peace, equality,  
science, arts, inventions, education,*

*and magical words and music that paint dimensional pictures of  
Their talents,  
Their contributions,  
Their struggles  
Their triumphs,  
and YOUR hopes and dreams—we celebrate!*

~SSWilliams 2011



## Calendar of Events!

|                        |                                                                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 17-February 29 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter eCART Testing Window, Math and Language Arts, Grades 3-6 |
| February 1-17          | Box Tops and Labels for Education Contest!!!                                     |
| February 6-10          | National School Counseling Week!                                                 |
| February 10            | -Report Cards Go Home!<br>-PTA Family Fun Night---BINGO, 6:30pm, Cafeteria       |
| <b>February 20</b>     | <b>Presidents' Day Holiday – NO SCHOOL!</b>                                      |
| February 21            | PTA Meeting, 7:00pm, LA Room                                                     |
| <b>March 10</b>        | <b>Panther Beach Carnival – Catch the Wave, 11:00am-3:00pm</b>                   |
| March 15               | Many Cultures, One School -Heritage Night, 7:00pm, Cafeteria                     |
| March 22               | Odyssey of the Mind Assembly, 2:00pm and 6:00pm, Cafeteria                       |
| <b>April 2-6</b>       | <b>SPRING BREAK!</b>                                                             |
| <b>April 9</b>         | <b>Teacher Workday – NO School for Students</b>                                  |
| April 13               | FIRE and ICE Basketball Game, Chantilly HS, 6:00pm                               |

# Counselors' CAREGRAM

by Mrs. Hoffman and Mrs. Hirsch

## Parenting Programs in the Chantilly Pyramid

The K – 12 school counselors in the Chantilly pyramid are working together to provide a variety of parenting programs to all parents. Below is a list of what the remaining scheduled programs for this school year. ALL parents, regardless of their child's school, are invited to all of these programs. More information is available from Mrs. Hirsch or Mrs. Hoffman

Tuesday, February 7, 2012, 7:15 p.m. (following a brief PTA meeting), Greenbriar East Elementary School

*“Keeping Your Child Safe on the Internet”* presented by Officer Wayne Twombly,  
Crime Prevention Unit of Fair Oaks district Police Station

Thursday, March 22 & 29, 2012 (Two-Part Presentation) 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Brookfield Elementary School

*“1-2-3 Magic Parenting, Discipline & Encouragement”* Phone: (703) 814-8700

Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. Poplar Tree Elementary School

*“Anxiety in Children”* by Dr. James Crist (published author) Phone: (703) 633-7400

Thursday, May 8, 2012, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Brookfield Elementary School

*“Summer Learning at Home”* Phone: (703) 814-8700

## Student Safety & Wellness Office Annual Bookmark Contest

Thank you to all students who entered this year's Student Safety & Wellness Office Annual Bookmark Contest. This contest is sponsored by Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The theme for this year's contest is **“Making My School and Community Drug and Bully Free”**. A winner was selected from each class which were then entered into our school contest. Below are the top three for the two categories.

### Grades K – 3

1<sup>st</sup> place – Clara Kim, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Mrs. Shada's class

2<sup>nd</sup> place – Richa Misra, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Ms Onder's class

3<sup>rd</sup> place – Katelyn Myers, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Mrs. Francis's class

### Grades 4 – 6

1<sup>st</sup> place – Haley Alderman, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Mr. McAdoo's class

2<sup>nd</sup> place – Anu Iyer, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Mrs. Meidlinger's class

3<sup>rd</sup> place – Haley Herman, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Ms Rowland's class

The two first place winners are now entered into the county contest. Best of luck to both of them!



In February, our thoughts turn to the people and things that we care about. February is also a great opportunity to think about community service learning projects both at home and at school. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents are reminded they need to complete their five hours of required service learning projects by the end of this third quarter. Almost 70% of all the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students have either started or completed their service learning already! 5<sup>th</sup> grade is kicking off their service learning by collecting chip bags through Terracycle. As the weather warms, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade plans to be Poplar Tree "Litter Patrols." Other grade levels will let you know their specific plans as the months roll along. Look for more information in your child's backpack.

If you and your student would like to volunteer in your community, here are a few websites to begin your search:

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

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

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

Mrs. Hirsch's classroom lessons in **first** grade continue to focus on self-control skills. Students are learning the vocabulary they need in order to think before they speak or act. **Fifth** grade lessons are focusing on responsibility to their communities; students are planning and creating the tools they need to begin their Terracycle project. In **third** grade, students are learning about study skills including assessing their own learning style. Small groups continue in all three grade levels.

Mrs. Hoffman's grade level lessons this month will focus on friendships and how to solve problems. **Kindergarten** is learning about personal space through the story, *Personal Space Camp*. **Second, fourth and sixth** grades will be focused on conflict resolution as a skill for learning how to work successfully with others. Small groups are being formed based on the needs as seen by teachers and students. More information on those will be sent home as notifications to parents.

Please contact us with your questions!

*Carol Hoffman*  
Grades K, 2, 4, 6  
[carol.hoffman@fcps.edu](mailto:carol.hoffman@fcps.edu)

*Shari Hirsch*  
Grades 1, 3, 5  
[shari.hirsch@fcps.edu](mailto:shari.hirsch@fcps.edu)

## **Attention Sixth Grade Parents** **Middle School Transition**

Middle schools are in the midst of planning for next year. Below is a calendar of dates coming up for both Rocky Run MS and Franklin MS. More details and flyers will be coming home soon for all of these. If you have a child who will be attending a different middle school please notify Mrs. Hoffman and we will make sure you get the course registration information.

### **Rocky Run Middle School**

Thursday, February 2, 2012 – 6:15 p.m. – Parent Orientation for rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade students

Thursday, February 9, 2012 – Rocky Run counselors visit Poplar Tree, course registration forms will go home

Wednesday, February 29, 2012 – all course registration sheets due back to Poplar Tree

Thursday, April 26, 2012 (tentative) – rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade visit to Rocky Run

### **Franklin Middle School**

Thursday, February 16, 2012 – Parent orientation for rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade students

Friday, February 17, 2012 – Rising 7<sup>th</sup> grade visit to Franklin

Thursday, February 23, 2012 – Franklin counselor visit to Poplar Tree

## **PARENTS:**

**Do you work in a **science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) career?****

**If so, we need your help! The 5th grade team is creating a database of STEM careers. Research shows that students are more likely to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering or math if they know someone in that career. So we'll use the information we gather from parents like you to help students make the connection between what they are learning in the classroom and careers like yours.**

**If you are willing to help, we'll ask you to complete a short survey about your interests in elementary school, the classes you loved in school, your college major, and your experience in the work place. Your information will only be used to help Poplar Tree students explore the world of science, math, technology and engineering!**

**Want to help? Contact:**  
**Shari Hirsch**  
**School Counselor**  
**[Shari.hirsch@fcps.edu](mailto:Shari.hirsch@fcps.edu)**

## Panther P.E. Playbook

February is chilly in the gym as we “hit the ice”. We will be learning the basic skills of hockey for grades 3-6. They will practice dribbling the puck using both sides of the blade and work with partners learning to pass on the move. Students will learn the basic slapshot and play some modified games.

Safety is our main concern:

\*No highsticking.

\*Always wear your safety goggles.

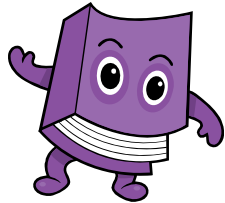
Our lead up game is called Zone Hockey. This is a fun game because students will have a chance to dribble and pass the puck without defense converging on them. Each team has zones and will pass through to get to their other zone. Opponents are never in the same zone, which makes the game safer and achieves the ultimate goal of student learning.

Grades K-2 will be learning how to use racquets, sticks and paddles. They will concentrate on the grip, stance and striking. We will be working in stations and as always fitness will be amongst the activities.

It should be a fun February. We want to also work on our cardiovascular fitness this month since it is American Heart Month. Fitness is a big part of our PE program and this month we get to really talk about how important it is to exercise your whole life.

*PE Teachers ~ Rob Thompson, Greg Stuart, Diane Morris*

## Library News *Mrs. Uncles & Ms. McMillan*



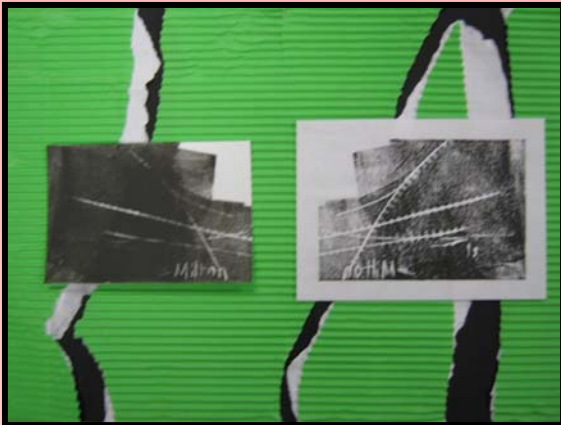
Now that we are into the second half of the school year, this is a good time to look for those missing library books. If your child receives an overdue notice from the library, please help him/her to locate the books and return them to the library so that they will be able to check out some new books.

It's not too early to be thinking about the summer book fair. The books for the next book fair will arrive on April 20. We'll need volunteers to help set up the books and we'll need volunteers to work during the book fair days. The book fair will be open beginning April 23rd and will be open through noon on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Look for the sign-up sheet that will go out in the March “Panther Paws.”

Our fifth grade students have been learning how to do research and make a bibliography. Third and fourth grade students are learning about reference resources and sixth grade students have completed a career unit as well as learning about locating books in the library. The sixth grade students have also been learning about news casting by presenting the morning news show every school day.

Kindergarten students have begun to locate books on the shelves and how to return a book to the shelves in order to make another choice. Our first and second grade students have been hearing stories related to their math and social studies curriculums. Things are busy in the library!

Read Across America Day is coming on March 2. Look for information in your child's Friday folder later this month on our reading incentive aimed towards celebrating reading. We are looking for some guest readers for that day. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Uncles in the library.



Our specialized classes are continuing their journey in abstract art. They each created an assemblage using various art techniques including printmaking!

Kindergarten classes have finished winter portraits AND weaving placemats, which should both be coming home soon.

First Grade classes are learning how to add detail to paintings and have been working hard on a picture capturing an important family memory.

Second Grade classes are beginning a weaving project inspired by nature, which had them using new painting techniques to create texture—washes, layering and blending colors.

Third Grade classes are beginning their journey into printmaking by creating a print that expresses a specific emotion. They are also in the middle of a ceramics project, which will be glazed and fired soon.



Fourth Grade classes have finished a long term painting project exploring the regions of VA, which turned out really nicely! They will soon begin a ceramics project that will have them expand their 3D media skills.



Sixth Grade classes continue to 'learn' how to draw and have been amazed with the artwork that they've produced by turning off their left brain and 'getting in the zone'.



## "Note-able News!"



*Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without." (Confucius)*

Sixth Grade Chorus begins this month and will culminate with performances on June 6 & 7, 2012. This year's sixth grade show will be "Poplar Tree's Got Talent: A Sixth Grade Variety Show."

25 Poplar Tree Sixth Graders will perform in the Chantilly Elementary Honors Choir at the Chantilly High School Choral Showcase and Spaghetti Dinner. The event will be on Thursday, March 8, 2012 at 7:00 pm. Parents and fans can buy tickets online at [www.chantillychoral.org](http://www.chantillychoral.org).

**SPOTLIGHT ON MOVEMENT AND RHYTHM:** The child's body, so often in motion, is eager to respond to the rhythms of music through creative movement and dance. Response to the organization of musical rhythms can help the child to gain confidence in the coordination and use of the body. To have confidence in the use of the body is an invaluable asset in the child's relationship with others in everyday life.

**FEBRUARY SONG OF THE MONTH:** "We Are the World"

By Charlie Ring, Cindy Noble and Sarah Pramstaller  
Poplar Tree General Music and Chorus Teachers

## TECH TALK

**Beginning with the spring 2013 test administration, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) will require that the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards of Learning (SOL) writing test be administered online.**

All students who are scheduled to take the grade 5 writing tests in spring 2012 will also participate in the online field test. The SOL writing field test has an online multiple-choice component and an online short-paper component. Each component of the test will be given on separate days after the students complete the paper/pencil test. Poplar Tree will be taking the online field test during in late March 2012. This test is to evaluate the online testing environment for use in 2013 and results from this test will not be shared with schools or parents. The regular paper/pencil test administration of the writing test will occur as scheduled during the week of March 5-9, 2012.

For more information on the online Writing Field Test visit the VDOE website at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/english/2010/online\\_writing/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/online_writing/index.shtml) . This website also contains a practice tool that students can use at home to familiarize themselves with the online test taking environment.

IF you have any questions about the 2012 Writing Online Field Test please email me at [sthimons@fcps.edu](mailto:sthimons@fcps.edu)

February 2012  
Volume 2, Issue 2

Timeline for AAP Level IV  
Decisions

**March-April 2012** Central  
Selection Committee meets

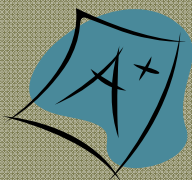
**End of April 2012** Eligibility  
decisions mailed

**May 1-11, 2012** Full-time AAP  
orientations held at Level IV sites

**June 1, 2012** Appeals due to AAP  
Office

**Fall 2012** Eligible students, grades  
3-8, may attend full-time Level IV  
AAPs beginning 1st semester 2012  
-13

**Report Cards**—Parents of Level  
III students will receive a report  
card this quarter and again at the  
end of the year.



**Contact Information:**

**Laura Moorhead**  
**Advanced Academics**  
**Resource Teacher**

[laura.moorhead@fcps.edu](mailto:laura.moorhead@fcps.edu)

# Poplar Tree

## Advanced Academics Newsletter

### Level I Lessons in the Classroom

**Grade K** – Students talked about the difference between recycling and reusing. Examples of both were shared. Students then came up with their own examples of reusing and drew pictures of them.

**Grade 1** — How maps are made and from what perspective they are created was discussed. Students then explored what things in their classroom would look like on a map. Samples were examined. Maps of the classroom were then created by each student.

**Grade 2**—What is a tradition was discussed and students gave examples of a tradition that they observe. They wrote a description of their tradition and drew a picture.

**Grade 3**—The patterns in Math, and how they fit together, were discussed. A discussion on rubrics and graphic organizers was reviewed and students created a “mind map” a graphic organizer that allowed them to separate and identify the different sub-disciplines of Math..

**Grade 4**—The difference between brainstorming and

categorization were explored. The students brainstormed all things they could think of that pertain to weather. They then took those words and put them into groups with similar characteristics. They discovered that the same words could be part of multiple groups.

**Grade 5**— Visualization was explored and its usefulness discussed. They explored how visualization can help you identify things. They were then given a “stick figure” and instructed to make it into something that was not a person.

### Level III Pull-out Lessons

**Junior Great Books** – Students read stories and then discussed the stories from questions that they came up with as they were reading. Most of the questions centered on author meaning and how each piece of the story led to a holistic understanding of the story.

**Word Masters** – The first test or “challenge” has been completed and the words and definitions have been distributed to the students for the second “challenge”. That will take place the week of February 20th.

**Debate**— The students learned about estate taxes and inheritance taxes and then addresses the fairness

issue regarding taxing people on the money they leave to their heirs. Relative fairness of estate vs. inheritance taxes was also explored. .

**Jason Project**— Students explored potential, kinetic and dissipated energy. They did an experiment where they dropped three different balls from the same height that had different weights. They made observations about the relative height of the bounces, why the second bounce was always smaller than the first and asked many questions. They then had the opportunity to play the

Create a Coaster on the computer, using everything they had learned.

**Chess** — .Students are already asking about the Chess Tournament and when it will start. I plan to start near the end of this quarter.

**Problem Solving**– Students continue to work with our new strategy games and problem solving activities.



# LITERACY LINKS

“A man who does not think for himself does not think at all.”

~Oscar Wilde



One of the most powerful learning experiences for students is thinking about how they are learning. Metacognition, put simply, is thinking about thinking. Metacognition may increase learning outcomes. Moreover, by engaging students in the consideration of the processes and strategies that got them there, students may be more able to replicate those outcomes independently.

Good readers are actively engaged when reading and learning. They monitor their comprehension by knowing when comprehension is occurring and they use fix-up strategies when they don't understand. This kind of *thinking about thinking* is called Metacognition.

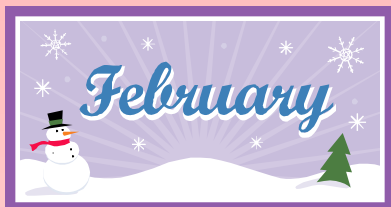
## How you can help at home.

Use the following phrases to help your child with metacognition skills:

- Connect: "This reminds me of....." or "I liked...."
- Predict: "I think I know what is coming next..."
- Question: "I wonder what it means to...."
- Summarize: "The most important thing I've learned so far is...."
- Infer: "This must mean that..."

## PTA President's Message

Dear Poplar Tree Families:



A BIG round of applause to Lisa Bartram and Lisa Carlson for organizing two fantastic Talent Shows! There is a lot of talent among our students and it was a lot of fun to see them perform.

At the PTA General Membership meeting on January 17th , the Nominations Committee was approved. Thank you to Chelese McClain, Ellen Bliss, and Laurie Senio for serving on this important committee. They will be putting together the slate of nominees for officers for next year's PTA. If you are interested in serving as a PTA officer, please let Chelese McClain ([cpmclain715@yahoo.com](mailto:cpmclain715@yahoo.com)) know right away.

February 10th is Bingo Night. Watch for the registration form coming home soon and come on down for an evening of family fun.

The February PTA meeting will be February 21st at 7pm in the Language Arts Room. We will be recognizing our Reflections winners and our School Board Member Kathy Smith will be our special guest.

FCPS has released its proposed FY2013 proposed budget. Information on the budget is available at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) or come to our February meeting to hear more about it from Kathy Smith. If you want to comment/advocate for something in the FCPS budget, let the school board know at [SchoolBoardMembers@fcps.edu](mailto:SchoolBoardMembers@fcps.edu). Get involved!

Regards,

*Arian Hadley.*

**PTA President**

**[hadley@mindspring.com](mailto:hadley@mindspring.com)**

**(703) 817-0296**

# FAMILY FUN NIGHT FEB. 10

Mark your calendar, FAMILY FUN NIGHT is right around the corner! This great event with a Valentine's twist will be held on Friday, Feb. 10 starting at 6:30. Sponsored by the Poplar Tree PTA, tickets are \$3 a person and include 5 games of Bingo, 1 can of soda and snacks. Bring your best sweetheart(s) for a family night out to kick off the Valentine's Day weekend! Red carpet/date night dress encouraged. Pizza can also be pre-ordered for \$2 a slice, so make it an easy night out, dinner included!

Advance registration is strongly suggested as this event often sells out. Look for the FAMILY FUN NIGHT flyer and registration form in this edition of the newsletter, and also in Friday folders Jan. 27 and Feb. 2. Return your form to school as soon as possible to guarantee your spot. Registration is limited to 320 people due to space considerations.

Adult and teen VOLUNTEERS are needed to help at this event. Teens needing service hours are welcome. Please contact Co-Chairs Lori Barnes ([loriwbarnes@gmail.com](mailto:loriwbarnes@gmail.com)) or Jen Brunner ([jenbrunner@verizon.net](mailto:jenbrunner@verizon.net)) to volunteer or if you have questions. C'mon out and have some fun!



Thank you to all of the K-3rd grade parents for supporting the December Staff Appreciation Cookie Exchange!

The Cookie Exchange was a huge success again this year thanks to your support!

Charlotte Matthews, Chairman, Staff Appreciation



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## National School Counseling Week February 6-10

Please show your appreciation with a note of thanks to Mrs. Hirsch and Mrs. Hoffman

# VALENTINE LUNCHEON

## February 14, 2012

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(Sponsored by the 4th-6th grade classes)

The Poplar Tree Elementary PTA invites you to participate by donating a variety of dishes for the staff to enjoy.

4th grade families please donate desserts  
5th grade families please donate sandwiches  
6th grade families please donate garden, pasta or fruit salad

Please drop off your donation in the front office by 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 14th.. Each donation should serve at least 12 people. If you need to make other drop off arrangements please contact Charlotte Matthews at 703-378-7904 or Charmfan@verizon.net

Thanks for your participation.



We are rolling out the Red carpet and the winner is.... Your Class! when you clip the most Box Tops and Labels for Education !!

We want to award your class with a **Pizza and a Movie Party.**

In addition.... the "Best Supporting Student" who brings in the most labels for that class will win a **Rave Motion Pictures Gift Card !!**

Drop off your entries to our collection boxes between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 17<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to include your name, your teacher's name and the total number of labels with your entry.

Good luck .... We'll see you at the Movies!



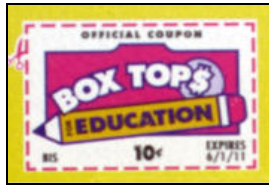
Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity enclosed :

# of Box Tops \_\_\_\_\_

# of Labels for Education \_\_\_\_\_



Please be sure to check all expiration dates on Box Tops. Expired entries will not be counted. Also, include only the Label for Education UPC code , not the entire product label. Your attention to these details will make processing your entries much more efficient.



Be sure to get your Carnival Spirit Wear. Order forms go home February 3rd and must be turned in by February 10th!



# PLAY-WELL TEKNOLOGIES ENGINEERING WITH LEGO® CLASS!

AT POPLAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OPEN TO GIRLS & BOYS

Grades 2-6

**Beginning Monday(s) March 26th, 2012**

**TIME: 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM**

Play-Well TEKologies provides project-based programs designed to teach principles and methods of engineering, architecture, and science to grades K – 8<sup>th</sup>, utilizing LEGO™ and other building systems. We strive to build problem-solving skills, provide an opportunity for creative expression, foster a greater appreciation of how things work, and encourage the qualities of inquisitiveness, self-reliance, and self-confidence in children. We do this in the context of fun-filled engineering and architectural projects that both the children and our instructors enjoy!

**ENGINEERING FUNDAMENTALS- CLASS FEE: \$16.00 PER SESSION**

**NUMBER OF SESSIONS: 8**

**VISIT [WWW.PLAY-WELL.ORG](http://WWW.PLAY-WELL.ORG) FOR ON-LINE ONLY CLASS REGISTRATION**

**REGISTRATION OPENS ON FEBRUARY 6TH**

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## **Engineering FUNDamentals**

Do you like building things? Design and build motorized machines, catapults, pyramids, demolition derby cars, buildings and other constructions out of LEGO® bricks. While exploring engineering, architecture and physics, students will develop problem solving and critical thinking skills. Returning students are given new projects that build on previous projects and concepts.

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Class size is limited and enrollment is on a  
First come first served basis.

All materials will be provided.

This After-school Enrichment Program is sponsored by the Poplar Tree PTA. PTA contact: Chelese McClain cpmclain715@yahoo.com

If you would like more information on Play-Well TEKologies, please contact Errol Thompson at 703.831.7112 or visit our website at [www.play-well.org](http://www.play-well.org).  
Play-Well TEKologies is not affiliated with the LEGO® Group.