



# The Viking Voice

Issue 02  
September 23, 2009  
Attendance Line: 703-988-8989



Virginia Run Elementary School  
15450 Martins Hundred Drive  
Centreville, VA 20120 703-988-8900

## Calendar of Events:

- Oct. 7 at 7:00 p.m.
  - PTA Meeting
- Sept. 30 & Oct. 1
  - Fall Picture Days
- Oct. 12
  - Columbus Day Holiday

## Articles of Interest:

- PTA General Membership Meeting
- Attendance Policy
- Virginia Run R.E.A.D.S.
- Fall Picture Days
- Target Donates to School
- Emergency Care Card
- Victorious Vikings
- Ethnicity and Race Data
- Supporting Your First Grade Student
- Counselor's Corner
- Fall Book Fair Information
- Spirit Wear
- Freedom Friday
- FLEX (Foreign Language Experience)
- Giant A+ Bonus Bucks
- Community Use Reminder
- Polynesian Dance Club
- Girls on the Run
- Family Story Night and Dedication
- Passport Club
- Campbell's Soups Labels For Education Program
- GT/AAP Programs
- 2009 Parent Information Nights
- PTA Membership Update
- Homeless Mini-Walk
- Great American Fundraiser Update
- Halloween Bingo and Pizza Night
- Familygram—Online Only
- Helping Children Learn

## Principal's Corner

### PTA General Membership Meeting October 7th - 7:00 p.m.

Our first meeting will be held **Wednesday, October 7th**. PTA officers will be available at 6:30 to discuss our programs, fundraisers, and budget before the meeting. We invite you to come and get a close up view of our PTA. We'll also have representatives from various committees to discuss ongoing or proposed activities.

This first meeting allows us to discuss and vote on our proposed budget for the school year. We'll also discuss the many new social programs and educational activities our PTA is sponsoring this year. We look forward to your input!

Virginia Run Elementary  
**PTA**  
everychild.onevoice.®

## Viking Voice Newsletter



The Viking Voice newsletter will be printed bi-weekly instead of weekly. Paper copies will be sent home with the oldest and only student. However, the Wednesday envelope will continue to be sent home weekly.

## Attendance Policy

The following is from Policy number 2232.2 differentiating between excused and unexcused absences.

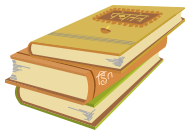
### Excused Absences:

*Absences during prescribed hours shall be considered excused absences for the following reasons: illness of the student, death in the family, medical or dental appointment, observance of a religious holiday, or any reasons for which the principal considers that exemption from attendance is in the best interest of the student.*

### Unexcused Absences:

*Reasons for unexcused absences may include family and/or student vacations, child care situations, nonschool-related activities, missed school bus, or other reasons unacceptable to the principal.*

After the fifth consecutive unexcused absence, the school will refer the student to the attendance officer, who will contact the parent. If the student is absent an additional day after contact with the parent, a conference will be scheduled. If a further unexcused absence occurs, the attendance officer will file a complaint with the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court or initiate proceedings against the parent.



Congratulations to all the Virginia Run students who participated in the summer reading program, Virginia

Run R.E.A.D.S! These students will be recognized for their efforts at a special event on **Monday, October 5, 2009.** All students attending the Awards Luncheon Event need to return the permission slip included in the Wednesday envelope by Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to help at the event, please contact Christy Boyle at [cjboyle@cbc.vacoxmail.com](mailto:cjboyle@cbc.vacoxmail.com). Thank You!

## Picture Day Volunteers Needed!



We are in need of volunteers to help during Picture Days on Wednesday, September 30, and Thursday, October 1. If you would like to volunteer to assist the photographers, please contact Kim Afferton at [afferton@cox.net](mailto:afferton@cox.net). Lifetouch offers a \$20.00 voucher to volunteers!

## Target Donates to Our School

Do you have a Target Visa or a Target RedCard Charge card? Did you know through the TAKE CHARGE OF EDUCATION program, Target donates up to 1% of all your Redcard purchases to the school of your choice? In order for Virginia Run to take advantage of this donation our school has to be designated by you, the card holder. It is a simple process and can be done online. It takes only a few minutes of your time and costs you nothing at all.

1. Go to [www.Target.com](http://www.Target.com)
2. At the very top of the page (next to the shopping cart), click on "red Cards".
3. Next, under the "Benefits" section (on the left) click on "Take Charge of Education".
4. On the right hand side of the page click on "Enroll Now".
5. From here you may either enter in Virginia Run ES, Centreville, VA or simply type in our school code of 103769. Follow the instructions from there and our school is on its way.



## Emergency Care Card Information

We are still missing quite a few emergency care cards. If you have not turned yours in, please do so immediately. It is imperative that we have this information in case of an emergency.

If you made changes online via Parent View, print a copy and return to your child's teacher.

If you need another form, please contact the main office at 703-988-8900.



## VICTORIOUS VIKINGS AWARDS

**Congratulations to these students for being  
KIND, SAFE, and RESPONSIBLE**

Kindergarten: Brandon D., Thomas B., Savannah P., Cameron G.

First Grade: Anna M., Jordan K., Lara Z., Brayden H.

Second Grade: Alia M., Oscar L., Alexia T., Cole L.

Third Grade: Danny L., Ryan T., Carolyn C., Ellen O.

Fourth Grade: Maggie M., Chris M., Olivia C., Kevin J.

Fifth Grade: Elizalee E., Jacob L., Ashley S., Alexandra H.

Sixth Grade: David G., Chris A., Emily L., Tuan T.

Names are selected by random drawing at each grade level from all Victorious Viking slips earned by students each week. Names may not be drawn on weeks shortened by holidays.

## Parents Please Note:

### New Federal Guidelines for Reporting Ethnicity and Race Data for FCPS Students

The U.S. Department of Education requires all states to collect information on the race and ethnicity of public school students. The federal government has developed a new way to report ethnicity and race that includes new categories. The changes should provide a more accurate picture of the nation's ethnic and racial diversity. Beginning in the 2009-2010 school year, families of all students will be asked to fill out a brief form to update the reporting of their children's ethnicity and race.

Your child's pre-printed form is included in this week's Wednesday envelope. Please fill it out and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. More information is available on the FCPS web site at [www.fcps.edu/news/ethnicity\\_race.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/news/ethnicity_race.htm).



### Supporting Your First Grade Student



The first grade students are settling into their school routine. They're eager to learn and delighted to be in school full time!

Here are three ways to help your student continue to have a good year and be a successful learner.

Set up your child's schedule so that he has enough time to get ready for school and arrive on time. After school give your child a snack and some play time. Your child has been working hard all day! Have a scheduled time and place for homework. It may be that homework is done at a different time each day because of family commitments, but your child will become familiar with the family schedule and know that time for homework is scheduled. Have a bedtime routine that ensures your child will be well rested.

Snuggle on the sofa and read aloud to your child. Have discussions about books. Don't quiz, just have fun. Enjoy stories and nonfiction. What you read aloud will be at a higher level than what your student can read independently. Listen to your child read books at his level. Expect him to use the same strategies at home that he/she's learning in school. Listen to multiple readings of a book so he/she develops fluency and expression.

Think about the work papers that come home and help your child become proficient in areas where you can see he/she's experiencing difficulty. Many children benefit from review at home. Give specific compliments on academic achievement. You'll be boosting your student's self esteem! Most of all get on board and enjoy your child's academic journey!

## Counselor's Corner

Mrs. Leonard and Mrs. Cottrell want to wish everyone a super school year! We are your school counselors and are very excited to welcome everyone back to school and have a great year.

Mrs. Leonard is at Virginia Run full-time and works with grades K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> this year. Mrs. Cottrell is part-time and works with grades 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> this year. We are excited to offer some fun guidance lessons and supportive groups throughout the year. If you have any questions about our lessons or small groups that we offer, or would like for us to see your child individually, please feel free to contact us.

We would also like to welcome you to contact us for any reason. If your family encounters changes throughout the year, either financially or in your family structure, please know that we are delighted to help in any way that we can.

**Have a Super School Year!**

### FALL BOOK FAIR INFORMATION

Summer travel may be over but the excitement and adventure of reading great new books is just around the corner! The "Read Around the World" Book Fair is coming to Virginia Run, so please mark your calendars for the following dates: Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> and Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> - Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you are interested in helping with the Book Fair, please contact Kelly Carper at **[kellycarper@verizon.net](mailto:kellycarper@verizon.net)**.

Volunteering to help with this important event is a great way to get involved and support our school. More details about this exciting event will follow.

### Have you ordered your Spirit Wear?



The last day for fall Virginia Run Viking Spirit Wear is Thursday, October 1. If you would like to place an order for fall delivery, please have your order form and check into the school office by Thursday, October 1.

Order forms will be available in the school office and if you have any questions you may contact Kathy Lerche via e-mail at **[lerchek@verizon.net](mailto:lerchek@verizon.net)**.

Also, if you are not able to place an order now there will be Viking Spirit Wear available at the Holiday Shoppe in December. There will be great new items for holiday gift giving!



# Freedom Friday

Throughout the school year, Virginia Run students are going to celebrate "Freedom Friday" to honor our veterans and show our school spirit. The phrase "Freedom Friday" reminds the students that being an American means having freedom that aren't found in other countries.

As young Americans, our students need to learn about those Americans, in and out of uniform, who fought for our freedom. We are learning to honor those who work to make our country safe and strong and free. This year we are celebrating "Freedom Fridays" by wearing red, white and blue. Everyone is invited to participate and show their American Pride on "Freedom Fridays."

"Freedom Friday" dates for 2009-2010 are:

September 18	October 16	November 20	December 18
January 15	February 12	March 19	April 16
May 14	June 18		

## FLEX (Foreign Language Experience)

**FLEX Registration is now open Online. We are offering before-school classes in Chinese, French, German and Spanish this year for Grades 1 through 6 (Spanish is also offered to Kindergarteners). Please go to the VRES website for the link to register. First come, first serve, so register early! If you want to use paper registration, please email Kim Guidash at [kguidash@cox.net](mailto:kguidash@cox.net) for more information.**



## Giant A+ Bonus Bucks



It's never too late to register your card!  
If you still have not registered, go to [http://www.giantfood.com/aplus/pin\\_aplus.htm](http://www.giantfood.com/aplus/pin_aplus.htm).

**Our code is 01856.**

Did you register last year?  
You need to **re-register** this year!  
5 minutes of your time will provide valuable fundraising money for our school.



## Building Use Reminder:

Please remind children to keep their voices down while you are using the school building for your community activity.

We will have to cancel the building use if we receive complaints from the teachers because you are too loud. Also, any destruction of school property/items will be an immediate cancellation.



# Virginia Run Elementary School Presents



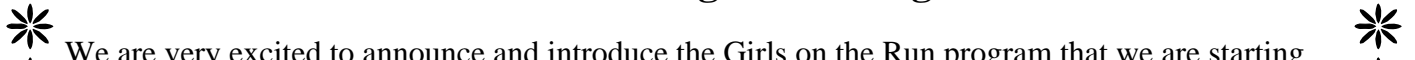
## Polynesian Dance Club for Fitness, Fun and Facts



**Polynesian dance** promotes physical fitness and self-discipline while increasing self-esteem. The primary emphasis of the club will be on the dances, music and language of Hawai'i, but will also include exploration into the lands of Tahiti and New Zealand. Club meetings will be held both before and after school and are open to students in grades 1-6. Exact dates and times are yet to be determined. For more information please contact Mrs. Bundens at 703-988-8900 or [spbundens@fcps.edu](mailto:spbundens@fcps.edu).



### Girls on the Run Program at Virginia Run



We are very excited to announce and introduce the Girls on the Run program that we are starting this year. Girls on the Run is a life-changing, experiential learning program for girls. The program combines fitness with encouragement in positive social, emotional, mental and physical development.

We are starting this Fall and beginning with our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls. The program meets twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00 a.m.- 9:00 a.m.. We will enjoy fun activities along with some fitness each meeting. Snacks are provided for the girls, along with a water bottle, two shirts and entry into the Reindeer Romp 5K in December.

Registration for the program begins on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. The maximum number of participants is 20, so please sign up early. When registering your daughter, you are also welcome to sign up to be a buddy runner for the 5K in December. Each girl is asked to have a buddy runner, and the race fills up quickly, so registering as a buddy runner early is best. In order to register you can visit the Virginia Run website and click on PTA info. There you will find a link for the Girls on the Run registration. If you encounter any problems, you can also visit [www.girlsontherunofnova.org](http://www.girlsontherunofnova.org). Once registered you can send in a check for \$163 made out to the Virginia Run PTA and put it to the attention of Angie Leonard. Please know that no girl is turned away from the program due to financial difficulties.

Ms. Smith, Mrs. VanLahr and Mrs. Leonard will be helping to coach the program this year. We would welcome parent volunteers as well. If you are interested in helping to run the program with the coaches, please contact Angie Leonard (703.988.8924). If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact one of us and we'll do our best to help.

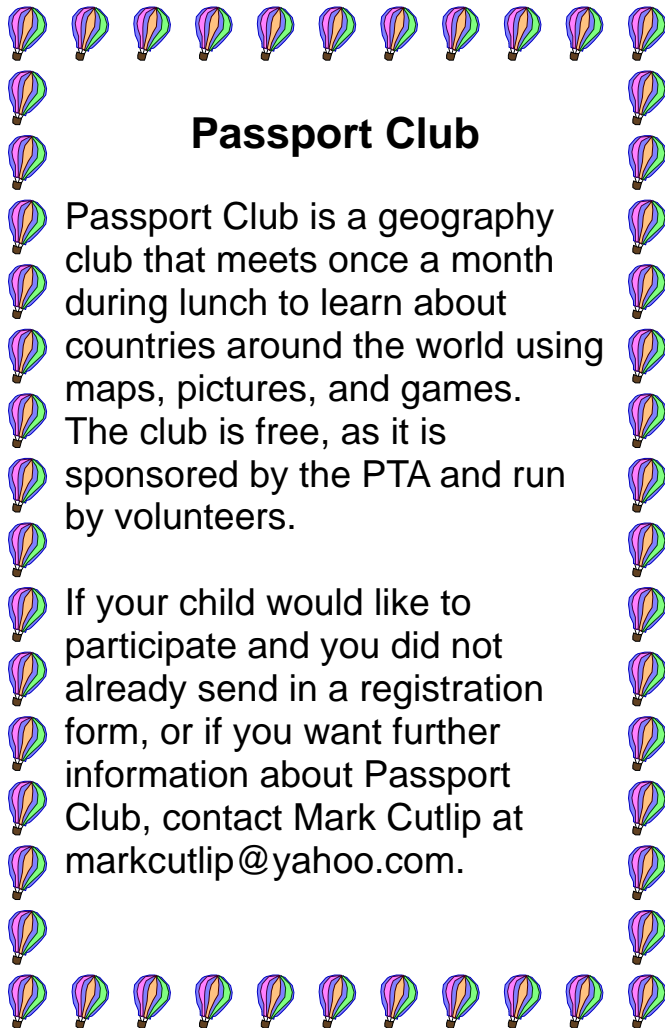


## Family Story Night and Dedication Thursday October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm



Have you seen the newly renovated story area in the library? Please come and bring the family for an evening of stories and refreshments to dedicate the Becky Parsons Memorial Reading Book at the Virginia Run Library. Becky Parsons was passionate about quality children's literature and had a long history of working with children's books in Fairfax County. Her granddaughter, Savannah, is a second grader here at Virginia Run.

The event is free but reservations are required as space is limited. Email Amy Jeffries ([amyjeffries@cox.net](mailto:amyjeffries@cox.net)) to reserve a space. Hope to see you there!



### Passport Club

Passport Club is a geography club that meets once a month during lunch to learn about countries around the world using maps, pictures, and games. The club is free, as it is sponsored by the PTA and run by volunteers.

If your child would like to participate and you did not already send in a registration form, or if you want further information about Passport Club, contact Mark Cutlip at [markcutlip@yahoo.com](mailto:markcutlip@yahoo.com).

### Campbell's Soups Labels for Education

Virginia Run is again participating in the Campbell's Soups Labels for Education program this school year.

Thank you to everyone who collected UPC labels last year. We have accumulated over 1900 points and are hoping to earn even more this year! Participating products include Campbell's soups, Swanson broths, and V8 Splash.



For a complete list of participating products, visit [labelsforeducation.com](http://labelsforeducation.com). Please look for a labels collection form coming home soon in your child's Wednesday envelope. Questions? Contact Julie Ann Weston at [jewel192@aol.com](mailto:jewel192@aol.com).



## GT becomes AAP

# ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

GT officially got a new name in fall of 2009, when it became ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. The four levels of AAP services are:

Level I - Critical and Creative Thinking Strategies in grades K-6.

The Advanced Academic Resource Specialist and the Classroom Teacher teach nine higher order thinking strategies across all subject areas and grade levels. The strategies are embedded in lessons that incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> Century thinking skills and extend and enrich the Program of Studies (POS) and the Standards of Learning (SOL). Student responses to the lessons are also used to collect evidence of advanced academic potential in order to ensure equity and increase access to advanced academic programs.

Level II - Differentiated Lessons in Areas of Academic Strength in grades K-6. Differentiated lessons are offered to students in areas of specific academic strength. The AAP Resource Specialist collaborates with Classroom Teachers to provide additional challenges and resources within the general education program.

Level III - Part-Time AAP in grades 3-6. Students identified by a local school screening committee for advanced academic services (Level III) are challenged through models and strategies designed to extend and enrich the POS and SOL in the four core subject areas. Students receive direct instruction from the AAP Resource Specialist in their local schools.

Level IV - Full-Time Advanced Academic Program in grades 3-8. Students found eligible for placement in a full-time advanced academic program (Level IV) through a central selection process receive a highly challenging instructional program in the four core subject areas. The Level IV program is designed to meet the needs of advanced learners with a strong emphasis on higher level thinking, problem solving, and decision-making.

**Fairfax County** is having **Parent Meetings** to discuss **Advanced Academic Level IV programs** on the following days and locations:

McLean HS - Thursday, 10/8 @ 7:30 PM

Oakton HS - Tuesday, 10/13 @ 7:30 PM

Annandale HS - Thursday, 10/15 @ 7:30 PM

West Potomac HS - Monday, 10/19 @ 7:30 PM

For more information, please visit the AAP website: [www.fcsp.edu/DIS/gt](http://www.fcsp.edu/DIS/gt) or Judy Gartlan, AAP Resource Specialist: [judy.gartlan@fcps.edu](mailto:judy.gartlan@fcps.edu) VA Run - M,T, W and Greenbriar West - TH, F.

The Advanced Academic Programs Office



## 2009 PARENT INFORMATION NIGHTS

The Advanced Academic Programs Office is holding four parent information nights. After a brief overview of Advanced Academic Programs grades K-12, there will be a break-out sessions for parents interested in learning more about each of the following: the screening process for full-time advanced academic programs, part-time advanced academic services, and middle and high school advanced academics opportunities.

Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>  
McLean HS

Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>  
Oakton HS

Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>  
Annandale HS

Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>  
West Potomac HS

Meetings will be held in the auditorium from 7:30 to 9 p.m. and are open to the public; no registration is required. Directions are available at [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com).

For additional information contact:

Advanced Academic Programs Office at Lacey Center 703-846-8670

Advanced Academic Programs Office web site: <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt>

## PTA Membership Update

PTA Membership continues to grow. So many staff, students and parents are on the Road to Success. It is not too late to join. Help PTA in maintaining the excellent programs and events that we support throughout the year to make your children's education an exceptional endeavor. There is still another week to get your membership in to qualify for a drawing for free family admission to all PTA social events this school year, a free yearbook and the class choice of a donut/juice breakfast or ice cream party for the class that is the first to reach 100% participation! Three families have already won reserved parking at Back to School Nights. They are the Hagemeyer family, Tursic Family, and the Schettini family. If you have misplaced your form they are available in the main office or online on the PTA Link on the school's website. Every membership matters. Help us Lead the Way and Join VRES PTA on the Road to Success. Membership questions can be directed to the membership chairperson, Barb Castro at [rcastro6@cox.net](mailto:rcastro6@cox.net).

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### Community Outreach Program **Help the Homeless Mini-Walk** October 19, 2009

Volunteers are needed for our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Help the Homeless Walk. Volunteers are needed the day of the walk for the following:

- 9:00-10:00 – blow up balloons in gym
- 12:45 – 1:30 – organize and hand out t-shirts
- 1:20 – 2:30 – help chaperone the walk

If you can help, please email Boo Glowacki ([jjglowacki@verizon.net](mailto:jjglowacki@verizon.net)) or Melissa McKee ([mckee20120@verizon.net](mailto:mckee20120@verizon.net)). Thanks!

# FUNdraiser Update



We still have a long way to go to reach our goal of raising \$16,000 for the PTA. There is something for everyone in the brochures and EVERY order counts! You can order online at [www.gafundraising.com](http://www.gafundraising.com), school ID number **1395227** or submit your paper orders by this Friday, **September 25<sup>th</sup>**. Please make checks payable to VRES PTA. THANK YOU!

Any student selling 5 items or more is eligible to enter the daily drawing and wins a ticket to the Rick Smith Jr. show! Sell 12 items and win a VIP pass to the show! Sell 20 items and win a Flying, Screaming Monkey! Sell 40 items and win a Limo to Lunch! PLUS, the top 3 classes (based on participation) win an ice cream party for the class.

Congratulations to Alexandra H. in Mr. Bower's class who won the \$100 ReachOut drawing.

Last week's lucky winners in the daily drawing were Taylor W., Sammi C., Chris L., Allie W. and Caroline Colby O.

QUESTIONS???? Contact Mary Setash, 703-815-1337, [msetash@aol.com](mailto:msetash@aol.com)



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### Halloween Bingo and Pizza Night



Look for further information in upcoming an Viking Voice and save the date to take part in this popular Virginia Run tradition:

October 30, 2009  
Pizza served 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Bingo begins at 7:00 p.m.

To volunteer, please contact Lynn Shawkey at 703-322-0744 or [ldjm@hotmail.com](mailto:ldjm@hotmail.com). We need volunteers to set up on the day of the event and to work half-hour shifts.

### Welcome to the new online version of Familygram!

Due to budget cuts, Familygram will no longer be provided as a print publication and will only be available electronically. A short summary of each article with links to the full story can be found on the main page, or you can jump directly to any article by using the links in the left column. A link to a printer-friendly version is also available at the top of the right column. We welcome your comments about our new format.

Highlights include:

Direct From the Superintendent: Student Achievement, H1N1 Virus, and Budget Top Issues at Start of 2009-10

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Update

New Attendance Policies and Practices in Place

School Bond Referendum to Be on November 3 Ballot

What's New With Keep in Touch (KIT) for 2009-10

Important Immunization Requirement: Do You Have a Student Entering Sixth Grade?

Telephone Parent Information Line Available in Korean and Spanish

FCPS Advanced Academic Programs

School Clinics Renamed Health Rooms and Clinic Room Aides Renamed School Health Aides to Better Reflect Services

Make the College Connection at the 34th Annual College Fair and College Night Programs

FCPS Is Now on Facebook and Twitter

Do You Have a Nominee?

Service Animals in FCPS Buildings

To view the latest issue, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/mediapub/publicat/familygram/backtoschool2009/index.html>



**Virginia Run Elementary  
Help the Homeless Mini-Walk  
Monday, October 19, 2009  
1:20 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

In order to raise awareness of the needs of the homeless in our community, the Virginia Run PTA, in partnership with the Fannie Mae Foundation, will sponsor the Help the Homeless Mini-Walk. The Proceeds from our walk will go to Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM), a local organization that provides life essential support to those in need in western Fairfax County and to Northern Virginia Coalition of Churches and Businesses (NOVACO), a local organization that supplies housing and services to victims of domestic abuse.

If you would like your child to participate, please **sign** and return the enclosed permission slip and registration form along with the registration fee (\$15 for children, \$25 for adults) **BY OCTOBER 7th!** Each child must have a separate **signed** registration form and permission slip. Please place the check (made out to "Help the Homeless"), registration form, and permission slip in an envelope marked "Help the Homeless" to receive a "Help the Homeless" t-shirt.

**If you misplace your forms, they can be found on the Virginia Run Web site**

[www.fcps.edu/VirginiaRunES/](http://www.fcps.edu/VirginiaRunES/). Simply click on the PTA button and you will find the link to the forms.

Would you like to help with the Walk in any way? Contact Boo Glowacki ([jjglowacki@verizon.net](mailto:jjglowacki@verizon.net)) or Melissa McKee ([mckee20120@verizon.net](mailto:mckee20120@verizon.net))



*Remember...Every foot counts!*



I give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the Help the Homeless Mini-Walk on Monday, October 19, 2009 at 1:20 p.m. His/her teacher is \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that it is my responsibility to pick up my child after the walk at 2:30 in the Virginia Run Elementary School gym. If my child is in grades K-2, I understand that I must chaperone my child on the walk or designate another adult chaperone.

Parent/guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

For children in grades K, 1 & 2, my child's chaperone is (please check one):

\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_ Other (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

# Helping Children Learn

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

Virginia Run Elementary School  
Centreville, VA

September 2009

## IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

### Encourage attendance all year long

Good attendance has a huge effect on your child's school success. In fact, kids who miss a lot of school—even in the early grades—are more likely to drop out. They have more problems learning material and fall behind easily.

One school district asked families why their kids missed school. Here are their top answers—and some ways you can deal with those problems:

- **Your child feels sick.** If she doesn't have a fever of over 100° and she isn't obviously sick (vomiting, severe coughing, diarrhea), your child can probably go to school. If you do keep your child home, don't make it a "fun" day.
- **Your child won't get up.** Make bedtime earlier. Help her get ready for school the night before.
- **You need your child at home to help with younger kids.** If you work and need child care, be sure to have a backup plan if your sitter gets sick. It's not fair to ask an older child to miss school to care for younger kids.
- **Your child is worried.** Talk with your child. Is it a spelling test that worries her? Help her review the words. If it's something more serious, talk with the teacher. Together, you can probably solve the problem. Meanwhile, tell her the rule is that she *will* go to school—every day.

Source: Joyce L. Epstein and Steven B. Sheldon, "Present and Accounted For: Improving Student Attendance Through Family and Community Involvement," *Journal of Education Research* (Heldref Publications, [www.heldref.org/jer.php](http://www.heldref.org/jer.php)).



## MOTIVATING YOUR CHILD

### Get focused on good habits this year

The beginning of the school year is an important time for your child to develop good habits. Here are some to focus on:

- **Planning ahead.** When your child faces a big task, teach him to divide it into small parts. Then he should set a deadline for each section. This makes projects less intimidating. Best of all, it gets them done on time.
- **Being organized.** Inside the door, use a box or shelf as a place for your child to stash all the stuff that has to go to school tomorrow.
- **Managing time.** Make sure your child doesn't commit to too many activities. Always leave time for family and homework. Set a good example yourself by putting family first.

## WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

### Your involvement matters!

Research shows that children benefit when parents are actively involved in their education and their lives. You can:

- **Talk** to your child about school.
- **Keep** a learning-friendly home.
- **Encourage** reading for pleasure.
- **Be aware** of what he does with friends.
- **Keep** in touch with your child's teacher.
- **Attend** your child's games or events.

Source: Susan J. Paik, "Ten Strategies That Improve Learning," Educational Horizons, [www.pilambda.org/horizons/v81-2/paik.pdf](http://www.pilambda.org/horizons/v81-2/paik.pdf).

## MAKING TIME COUNT

### Make the most of mornings

Kids thrive at school when they can spend time with parents at home. So if you have to work in the evening:

- **Do some school tasks** in the morning. Get up early to check your child's homework. Help him review for a test.
- **Make breakfast** the main family meal. Sit down. Talk about the school day to come.
- **Plan as much family time** as possible on weekends (or whenever your days off are scheduled).



## HOMEWORK

### Set up a 'homework hub'

Children need a quiet area for studying. But that doesn't mean your child has to be banished to her room. Some children like to have people around, especially parents who can help. If your child feels this way, brainstorm about a distraction-free spot that might work for her.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### How can parents encourage school friendships?

**Q: My son's best friend moved this summer, and he's having trouble making new friends. He says school is "no fun" without his buddy. What should I do?**

**A:** Your son's reaction is common. School just isn't the same without good friends.

Start by talking with his teacher. What does she see in class? Does your son have friends in school? (Kids have been known to exaggerate.) Does he eat lunch by himself or with other classmates? If students get to choose partners, is he always the last one to be picked?

Then ask the teacher about why your son might be having problems. Are there things he does that seem to annoy other students? Perhaps there are social skills you can practice with him. You may want to meet with the school psychologist or guidance counselor as well.

Meanwhile, have your son invite a classmate over after school. (The teacher might be able to suggest someone.) Plan an activity they're sure to love, such as watching a movie or playing in the backyard.

Finally, let your child pursue his hobbies. He might want to play on a soccer team or take an art class. This will help him meet kids with similar interests. Having pals *outside of school* can give him confidence to socialize at school.



## PARENT QUIZ

### Is your child building responsibility?

The more your child acts in a responsible way, the more likely she is to do so again—and the lessons you teach at home will show up at school. Answer these questions *yes* or *no* to see if you're helping your child be responsible:

1. **Is your child** responsible for getting herself up and ready for school?
2. **Do you have** a regular homework time in your house?
3. **Does your child** know that choices have consequences?
4. **Is your child** responsible for getting her homework back to school?
5. **Do you refuse** to rush an item to school if your child forgets it?

**How did you do?** Each *yes* answer means you are helping your child be responsible. For each *no* answer, try that idea from the quiz.

*"Nothing strengthens the judgment ... like responsibility."*  
—Elizabeth Cady Stanton

## BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

### Goals make the year great

Goals can keep kids motivated all year long. Talk with your child about setting some this year. Does she want to improve math skills? Should she contribute more in class?

Have your child put her goals on a chart. Check them off as they are completed. Celebrate progress! Compliment your child and put stars on the chart to highlight her success. Setting goals is a perfect way for children to recognize how much they can achieve at school.

## DISCIPLINE

### Back up words with actions

Here's a key to good discipline: Before you name a consequence, be sure you can follow through with it. Don't say, "If you don't quiet down, we'll never go to the movies again." Kids will know you're not serious, so they may not obey. Try saying something like "If you don't quiet down, we're not going to the movies tonight."

## ENCOURAGING READING

### Read mysteries as a family

Children of all ages enjoy reading aloud with their parents. If you stopped this habit after your child left preschool, start it up again. Reading mysteries is a fun way to begin.

Take turns reading chapters aloud. Who can guess what might happen next? How do you think the story might end? Have your child write down ideas and check them later. This is a skill that will help your child no matter what he's reading—a mystery book or a history book!



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