

# The Waples Mill Connection

The Waples Mill Connection is online at:  
[www.fcps.edu/WaplesMillES/InformationforParents/PTA.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/WaplesMillES/InformationforParents/PTA.htm)

A Bi-Weekly School and PTA Newsletter

September 29, 2009

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### October's Character Trait: Respect

- |            |   |                        |
|------------|---|------------------------|
| Oct. 12    | Columbus Day Holiday  |                        |
| Oct. 16    | SCA Induction Ceremony<br>Grades 2 – 6, Cafeteria                               | 3:00 p.m.              |
| Oct. 22    | Grade 6 Field Trip<br>Innerquest  | 10:00 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. |
| Oct. 23    | Vision & Hearing Screening<br>Kindergarten, Grade 3 & New Students to<br>County |                        |
| Oct. 26-30 | Red Ribbon Campaign Against Drugs   |                        |
| Oct. 28    | Wear Red Day  |                        |
| Oct. 29    | Picture Day!  |                        |
| Nov. 2 – 3 | Student Holidays  |                        |
| Nov. 4     | Grade 1 Field Trip<br>E.C. Lawrence Park  | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.      |
| Nov. 9-13  | Library Book Fair   |                        |

**October 16:** "Connection" deadline for October 27 issue

## On Matters of Principal

Dear Waples Mill Parents and Guardians,

Starting a new school year signifies growth and a new beginning. This is the time of year when everyone is energetic and displays a "can-do" attitude. It is this "can-do" attitude that guides our instructional planning and data analysis. During the late summer, we received a summary of our SOL scores and are pleased with the preliminary SOL and Academic Yearly Performance (AYP) results. Congratulations to everyone—Waples Mill made AYP! This is a strong accomplishment. This year 81% of our students were required to pass the Reading SOL and our total percentage was 97%. Our Math pass was 95% and 79% was needed to pass the Math SOL. Next year the Commonwealth of Virginia requires these percentages to increase to 85% for Reading and 83% for Math. I have great confidence we will continue to be successful.

As students settle into school this year, we are focusing on enhancing instructional practices that will meet individual

student learning needs. As a school, we are learning and implementing research based literacy practices that offer stronger opportunities for students to participate and learn about reading and writing that is fun and joyful. Some of the authors we are referencing are Irene Fountas and Gay SuPinnell, who have written numerous books on the teaching of reading and writing. Our teachers are creating communities of learning within the classroom and learning strategies for thinking about reading and their learning. Students will increase their reading abilities as they understand what "Good Readers Do" by participating in Reader's Workshop. This is a model of reading instruction that meets every child where he or she is in learning and increases that knowledge. During our reading lessons, students should develop attitudes and habits about literacy and learning that will last a lifetime.

Throughout the building and within our community, we will continue to focus on building relationships and creating trusting learning environments. We are fortunate to live within a neighborhood where there is a dedicated focus on learning. Every member of our community demonstrates a drive for continuous learning and is on a shared journey that makes teaching and learning the core purpose of our work. Whether focused on instruction or operations, all our decisions need to be aligned to our shared purpose of greater learning and achievement.

To further strengthen our school community as a web of learning, Waples Mill is excited to join the growing list of Fairfax County Public Schools that are implementing the PBS program. PBS is an acronym for Positive Behavior Support, a program that promotes a school-wide positive learning approach to discipline. The objective of PBS is to improve school climate, teach students to be responsible members of our school community, and reduce challenging student behaviors in a proactive, positive, and consistent manner.

Our goal is to use this program to recognize the positive expected behaviors regarding the 3R's: Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness, which we call "Eagle Expectations." These are the behaviors we want to see in children every day. We want every adult to recognize as many students for demonstrating these behaviors as possible. This year, we will focus on teaching behavioral expectations, recognizing positive student behaviors in a consistent, clear manner, and following through on behavioral consequences.

This program will be responsive to the changing needs of our community. All staff and parents are invited to participate in this process to make it reflective of our common concern and commitment to the children attending WMES. We welcome your questions and comments. The Waples Mill staff is enthusiastic

about the PBS program and the positive impact it will have on our school community.

Safety operations are extremely important to us at Waples Mill and this year, as we strive to ensure safer conditions during dismissal, we have revised our Kiss and Ride Procedures. During afternoon dismissal, students will safely wait in the cafeteria until their ride pulls up in the "Kiss and Ride" lane. In the cafeteria, children are seated within groups based upon their departure status; e.g., childcare facility or grade level. This way, when a child's name is radioed into the cafeteria, the student quickly proceeds in a safe manner to directly enter his departing vehicle. If you prefer to park your car and walk to the cafeteria door to pick up your child, you are certainly welcome to do this. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we implement and streamline this safety measure.

Thanks for a great start to the 2009 – 2010 school year and for joining our journey toward learning. Please let us hear from you if you have suggestions. It is our communication and collaboration that will strengthen our Waples Mill Learning Community.

~ Linda Thetford, Principal

### **Conservation Science Update**

Summer was as busy as ever, so there is much to report on since June. Waples had three broods of bluebirds, three also of tree swallows, and seven of purple martins (total of 23 babies). We also hosted a bird-banding demonstration by the Smithsonian Institution in mid-July, in which 10 children helped band 15 birds from six species.

We also initiated a two-week summer stewardship program, a collaboration between FCPS and many conservation organizations including the Fairfax County Park Authority, the northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, the Virginia and Fairfax County Departments of Forestry, and Meadowlark Gardens. The students learned about birds, trees, butterflies, dragonflies, watersheds, composting, recycling, and a host of other topics.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is currently raising monarch butterflies for the fourth year in a row and will soon tag them and send them on their way to Mexico. Google "Monarch Watch" if you'd like further info on this exciting project, as well as Journey North's "Symbolic Migration" to see the types of activities Waples students are doing. Our hillside meadow around back sprouted milkweed this year, so we had caterpillars right outside our back door, as planned, as well as in our wetlands.

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade is set to visit the Chesapeake Bay in early October to learn about habitats and watersheds aboard an authentic skipjack (an oystering sailboat). Waples is one of the few elementary schools in the region to work with the Bay Foundation on such endeavors, all part of our "demonstration site" philosophy to undertake good conservation science programs and then help others to do likewise.

Saturday, October 10 is the Potomac Conservancy's annual native seed collection day at Arlington National Cemetery. Please email [sean.duffy@fcps.edu](mailto:sean.duffy@fcps.edu) if you would like to participate. Also, please email if you can help out around school a little bit, have a rototiller that can be borrowed for a few hours, would like to help recycle aluminum cans for the fire department, or (especially) if you have drawing skills that can be utilized to create diagrams for our proposed handicap-access garden, which will be situated right in front of the school.

~ Sean Duffy, Conservation Science Coordinator

### **Spanish FLES Program**

¡Hola! The new school year has started off wonderfully in Spanish FLES. The FLES program at Waples Mill expanded this year to include both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Each class receives two half-hour lessons per week exclusively in Spanish in activities that are closely tied to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curriculum. Señora Shahin continues to teach the 1<sup>st</sup> graders while Señorita King joined Waples Mill this year to work with the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Each year, a new grade will be added to the program until all 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders are enjoying one hour of Spanish per week.

Learning a second language from an early age has been proven to have a positive impact on reading, writing, and mastering one's own language. It is a key element to the success of today's youth, who will be entering a progressive, global society, in which being proficient in multiple languages will be extremely beneficial. Students exposed to multiple languages at an early age will have many of the key skills and traits needed for the future, as well as an understanding of other cultures and the diversity that surrounds us.

Students in all grade levels are invited to visit the Spanish FLES Blackboard site to enjoy the songs and activities that are posted there. In addition, we will continue the daily Spanish Word of the Day on the morning news program to ensure that all Waples Mill students are exposed to Spanish. Look for our word of the day the next time that you visit the main office. ¡Gracias!

### **Library News**

Welcome back to the library for the 2009 – 2010 school year. I have been thrilled to hear from so many of your children about the books they read over the summer. Nice work parents! And thanks to all our new and returning Parent Volunteers who help in the library. Your support is invaluable.

One item that I discussed with all classes in our first two weeks of school is that there are two times when students must pay for library materials that have been checked out to him or her: 1) when the student loses the item, or 2) when the item is returned in such a state that it cannot be loaned out to others (having been soaked in the rain, pages ripped out, drawn in, food stained, etc.). The student's library privileges will be limited if either of these situations occur and the cost of the book is not paid. Please call me if there are special financial hardships involved.

Secondly, one way the library has found to give open access to materials for all of the age groups we serve, i.e. pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, is to mark those books that are particularly appropriate for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, or Middle School, with a blue dot on the back. Some examples of "blue dot" books are "Bone," "Hush," "Bloody Country," etc. These books entail more mature themes or slightly stronger language than the rest of the books in our collection. Parents of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, you are welcome to write a note to me, stating that you would prefer your son or daughter not read any blue dot books. If I do not have a note from you, I will allow 6<sup>th</sup> graders to check out these blue dot books. Parents of students in 5<sup>th</sup> and lower grades, you are welcome to write a note to me stating that you give permission for your student to check out blue dot books if you think they are ready for them. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and lower without a note will not be able to check out blue dot books.

Finally, the dates for the Fall Book Fair this year are November 9 – 13, with the Book Fair staying open until 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11. Please mark your calendars, as these fund-raisers are the reason why the library has been able to buy new computers, arrange for guest author visits, and order monthly National Geographic magazine subscriptions for your students. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at the library or e-mail me at [cathleen.payne@fcps.edu](mailto:cathleen.payne@fcps.edu).

~ Cathleen Payne, Librarian

### **WMES's First Annual "Hole-A-Ween" Golf Tourney**

The tournament is Thursday, October 29, at South Riding Golf Club. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. and Shot-Gun start begins at 1:00 p.m. A buffet dinner is included and space is limited to 100 players. Don't delay, we already have over 50 registrations. Register as soon as possible to assure you get on the greens!

Forms can be found in the "Golf Tourney" inbox at WMES, on the PTA website ([www.wmespta.org](http://www.wmespta.org)), or can be sent via e-mail. We still have a few Hole Sponsorships available. Have your company or family name showcased on a hole for only \$60, demonstrating your support for our fabulous school!

Please contact Shirl Sayadian for registration forms, sponsorship forms, or if you have any questions, at [sayadianfamily@cox.net](mailto:sayadianfamily@cox.net).

### **Reflections**

"Beauty is..." The deadline for PTA's Reflections Program is **Tuesday, October 20** at 4:00 p.m. Have your child think about what beauty is and what it means to them. Then have them create an original piece of artwork in one of the six categories: Literature, Musical Composition, Photography, Visual Arts, Dance Choreography and Film/Video Production.

Beginning October 5 there will be a box in the school lobby to submit your student's entry. Entry forms and category details can be found on the PTA Web site, [www.wmespta.org](http://www.wmespta.org).

Grade division is: Primary: Preschool -Grade 2; Intermediate: Grades 3-5; Middle/Junior: Grades 6-8. Each participant will be given a certificate and recognized by our Principal and PTA President at the November Reflections Reception. There will even be cake and ice cream at the reception.

You can check out what other kids did last year at the Reflections Program gallery online at <http://www.pta.org/reflections/gallery/>.

Contact Lisbeth Moore at [lisbeth@cox.net](mailto:lisbeth@cox.net) or 703-648-1457 or Suzanne Chanseman at [pta@beanedesign.com](mailto:pta@beanedesign.com) or 703-989-3360 if you have further questions.

### **Our Volunteers are The Best!**

You might ask, "The Best" at what? Our volunteers are "The Best" at giving of themselves, their professional advice, and their unique talents that allow us to run a top-notch organization. I am continually impressed by everything our volunteers accomplish and the skills that exist in our parent population. Additionally, our volunteers are "The Best" at turning mundane tasks into hours of laughter and camaraderie.

If you would like to be a part of this tremendous school community, consider becoming a volunteer. Not only is it a great way to meet your neighbors, families with whom your life will be intertwined for many years to come, but it undoubtedly makes Waples Mill Elementary a better school. As a volunteer you will provide skills and talents that help us run a more successful PTA, by raising funds to purchase equipment, and, yes, by performing mundane tasks so that our teachers and instructional aides can concentrate on their students.

One of the tasks keeping instructional aides away from their classroom duties is managing the cafeteria. Every day these vital staff members must help manage the cafeteria by handing out supplies, dismissing classes, and helping the students maintain cleanliness. With **Cafeteria Aides**, IAs are free to return to their classroom duties. The time commitment is only an hour every other week. In return, you can earn a smile or two from the children and heartfelt gratitude from the IA's. If you are interested, please contact HeeJung Wescoat at [wescoat@cox.net](mailto:wescoat@cox.net) or 703-273-2710.

In the area of PTA Enrichment, Nadia Zakir will be arranging seminars for parents on a variety of topics. In the past, speakers focusing on allergies, sibling rivalry, and even helpful study habits have answered questions and presented useful information to Waples Mill parents. These seminars are often presented in conjunction with PTA meetings. If you would like to help determine topics of interest and schedule speakers, please contact Nadia Zakir at [nadizakir@yahoo.com](mailto:nadizakir@yahoo.com) or 703-470-4809.

As always, if you are interested in an activity, but not quite sure if you want to commit, please contact me at [Brookstom87@aol.com](mailto:Brookstom87@aol.com) and I'll answer any questions so that you can make an informed decision. Additional volunteers are still needed for many programs. Check out the listing of programs

under the "PTA Points of Contact" button on the PTA Web site, [www.wmespta.org](http://www.wmespta.org). There is surely something for everyone.

In closing, these past few weeks have been busy ones, to say the least. Several people have spent hours of their time volunteering, beginning weeks before school opened. I would like to thank Leslie Campbell, Susie Callahan, Deidre Ray, Jeanne Marie Corrado, Karen Donohue, Elaine Tilton, HeeJung Wescoat, Susan Rigger, Shirl Sayadian, Cathy Jaquette, Suzanne Chanesman, Laura Mead, and Sue Weaver for not only the help, but the laughs! If I've forgotten to mention anyone, I apologize. It is a reflection upon me and the normal chaos of the first few weeks of school, not of their value.

~ Brooks Moran, PTA VP of Volunteers

### **Sally Foster Wrapping Paper and Gift Sale**

If your child has sold at least 10 Sally Foster items so far, please email Jeanne Marie Corrado at [kjwuest@cox.net](mailto:kjwuest@cox.net) We will deliver a cute little "Swing Into Sally Foster Monkey" to your child's classroom so they can take it home, and their name will appear on a little swinging monkey on the Sally Foster tree in the cafeteria. Good luck and thank you.

### **Dining for Dollars**

Don't miss Waples Mill ES PTA Fundraising Night at Baja Fresh at Fairfax Towne Center. Put down those pots and pans, forget about doing dishes for a night, and support our school. Bring your family and friends to Baja Fresh in Fairfax Towne Center between 4:00 – 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 29, and eat for a good cause. Free dessert for kids and take-out orders count too. 15% of all sales generated that evening will go to Waples Mill ES PTA! Hope to see you there.

### **Severe Allergy Reminder**

Please do not bring or send latex balloons into school this year. We have a student with a severe latex allergy. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Please Join the GRACE Art Team**

For the past 11 years, Waples Mill Elementary School has participated in the Art-in-the-Schools Program of the Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE). GRACE established this program in 1976 to supplement and support our children's exposure to the world of art. With the assistance of volunteers, art appreciation portfolios provided by GRACE are introduced to the class each month. Each portfolio focuses on a particular artist, style, or theme and has been carefully formulated to provide a cultural lesson in an art history context.

### **Why should you join the GRACE Art team?**

It's a fun way to get involved with your child's class, the children love GRACE Art, and you get to learn something too.

### **What do GRACE Art volunteers do?**

Four to six times a year volunteers present an artist or an art theme to their child's class using materials provided by GRACE, followed by a related project.

### **How much time does it take?**

One to three hours per month. You don't have to commit every month. If you are not comfortable giving a presentation, you can work as a team with another parent volunteer and be an assistant, as a second pair of hands is always helpful.

### **What are the qualifications needed?**

There are no qualifications necessary to be a GRACE volunteer. Training is provided as well as art posters, background information, project suggestions, and art materials. All that is needed is interest, enthusiasm, and a belief in the importance of art education for children.

### **Portfolio presentation meeting schedule:**

Tuesday, September 29\*, Leonardo Da Vinci (Italian Renaissance artist)  
Wednesday, November 4, Edgar Degas (French Artist)  
Tuesday, January 5, Martin Puryear & Louise Nevelson (wood assemblage)  
Tuesday, February 2, Rembrandt Van Rijn (Dutch artist)  
Tuesday, March 2, Introduction to Architecture  
Tuesday, April 6, Women Artists  
Tuesday, May 4, Wrap up meeting and choose artists for the 2010-2011 school year.

\*New volunteers please come at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September, 29 for an orientation.

We will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Little Theater for about 1 hour. Please consider volunteering to present a portfolio! Contact Liz Litany to volunteer at [liz@litvany.com](mailto:liz@litvany.com).

To submit items for *The Waples Mill Connection*, please e-mail items to Debora Flora at [daflora@cox.net](mailto:daflora@cox.net) before 12:00 p.m. on the deadline date shown in the *Dates to Remember* box. Hard copy items, along with a contact name and telephone number, may be placed in *The Connection* In-Box in the front office before 12:00 p.m. on the deadline date. Debora Flora can be reached by telephone at 703-539-8214.

Make sure you are registered to receive important announcements from Fairfax County Public Schools through the new Keep in Touch (KIT) notification system. For further information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/kit/>.