

May 2005

Especially for Parents

- The Office of Special Education and the Parent Resource Center (PRC) are sponsoring ***Supporting Your Child's Reading Development: A Seminar for Parents (Part II)***, on Wednesday, May 18, 2005, at the Belle Willard Administrative Center. This is a follow-up to a session that was presented on January 12, 2005, which was well attended and well received. Presenters will continue the discussion about the basics of early reading instruction (pre-K through grade 3) focusing on phonics, as well as comprehension. Parents will be provided information on practices to support their child's reading progress and information on the techniques and strategies teachers utilize to assist students demonstrating difficulties in these areas of reading. Parents may attend a morning session from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., or an evening session from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Parents should register in advance by calling the PRC at 703-204-3941. For more information, go to www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/prc/workshops.htm.
- Hearing loss and deafness present challenges in communication to almost 400,000 residents in the District of Columbia, Maryland and the Northern Virginia areas. These challenges affect not just each individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, but everyone in that individual's life. ***Celebrate Communication 2005*** will be held at George Mason University's Center for the Arts on Saturday, May 14, 2005, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Information from more than 50 exhibitors, on topics such as hearing aids, assistive technologies, sign language, local support groups, and hearing dogs will be provided. Co-sponsored by the Northern Virginia Resource Center (NVRC) and the Kellar Institute for Human Disabilities, this free event will also feature demonstrations, presentations, and activities for children. For continuous updates, visit the NVRC website at www.nvrc.org, call 703-352-9055 (V), 9056 (TTY), or contact info@nvrc.org.
- The speech/language clinicians invite you to visit your child's school and join them in celebrating ***National Better Hearing and Speech Month*** during the month of May. This year's theme, ***Communication for Life***, recognizes the importance of the development and use of speech and language skills throughout one's lifetime. Nearly 11,000 students in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) receive speech and language services through the Department of Special Services.
- The Parent Corner of the spring 2005 Tech Talk issue published by Integrated Technology Services (ITS) has an interesting article written by Mrs. Elaine Ticatch sharing how her son has benefited from the use of many types of assistive technology. The Tech Talk newsletters can be viewed at: <http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DSSSE/its/techtalk/techtalk.htm>.

- The Camelot Hearing Association (CHA) will host an Alumni Party for all current and former students and families who have ever attended Camelot Center. The event will be held at P. J. Skidoo's Restaurant in Fairfax on Sunday, May 15, 2005, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Brunch will be served from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. and a light buffet will be available from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. There is no charge for this event, but donations to CHA will be accepted. Please call Camelot Center at (703) 645-7100 for further information.

Especially for Staff

- The first New Paraprofessional Orientation is being planned for fall 2005. Paraprofessionals new to FCPS and assigned to special education programs will return a day early to learn about the school system and resources available to help them as they support our students throughout the county.
- George Mason University and FCPS will collaborate to offer an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Certificate program beginning this fall. This program will meet the coursework requirements for those interested in pursuing board certification in behavior analysis. An informational session will be held on May 16, 2005, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Haramis Hall at the Belle Willard Administrative Center.
- The Office of Special Education (OSE) offered the course, *Recognizing and Teaching Students with Asperger's Syndrome*, for general and special education staff members working with students with high functioning autism, or Asperger's Syndrome, on April 30, 2005. This course will be offered again on May 14, 2005. This course includes a speaker, an adult with Asperger's Syndrome, and a parent panel.
- The Elementary Life Skills Curriculum will be distributed this month to all elementary schools where there are students receiving autism, mental retardation, severe disabilities, and non-categorical services.
- The special education secondary team recently provided an overview of the "new" Basic Skills model to the pyramid resource specialists and the parent ombudsmen. This model is optional for middle schools to implement during the 2005-06 school year. The "new" model focuses primarily on providing support for Virginia's English and mathematics standards of learning (SOLs).
- A member of the special education secondary team presented to the high school directors of student services a review of the WorkKeys assessments and updated registration procedures. The WorkKeys are considered substitute tests approved by the Virginia Department of Education. The WorkKeys includes a substitute test for the end of course (EOC) English writing, a substitute test for the eighth grade English reading test, and a substitute test for the eighth grade mathematics test. The administration of these tests is being managed jointly by OSE and Instructional Services.
- Dr. Karen Erickson presented a two-day workshop on Literacy and Augmentative and Alternative Communication on April 25 and 26, 2005. The audience consisted of over 120 individuals, including parents, special education teachers, administrators and Integrated Technology specialists. Dr. Erickson presented practical information that could be implemented in both the general education and special education classrooms.

- The Virginia Occupational Therapy Association and the FCPS Physical/Occupational (PT/OT) Therapy program co-hosted over 80 therapists in a full day of sharing and learning together on April 2, 2005, at Lorton Station Elementary School. A very popular session was a *Make and Take* provided by FCPS OT, Stephanie Kraus. Kathy Reni, FCPS ITS teacher, and three students from the Thomas Jefferson Assistive Technology Club demonstrated their ongoing work in applying technology to preschool literacy. The central focus of this annual symposium was on therapists being good consultants for their IEP teams.

Other

- FCPS, in collaboration with the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD), sponsored a forum, *Celebrating Special Education: Linking Students, Families, and Schools*, on Saturday, April 30, 2005, at Marshall High School. A wide array of over 50 workshops and 16 information tables were offered to provide an opportunity for over 200 parents to explore and learn more about the resources and services available to them through the schools and within the community. Parent focus groups were also held throughout the morning, offering an avenue for the sharing of ideas and feedback on discipline and inclusive practices.
- Thirteen employers will receive the Outstanding Employer Award from the Career and Transition Business Advisory Council. Those receiving awards include:
 - *Bush Hill ES Library* nominated by Virginia Hills Office Technology and Procedures (OTP)
 - *Capital Hospice* nominated by Holmes OTP
 - *Falcons Landing Retirement Community* nominated by Herndon HS Work Awareness and Transition (WAT)
 - *Fort Belvoir Commissary* nominated by Mt. Vernon HS WAT
 - *Hancock Fabric* nominated by Madison HS WAT
 - *Mosby Woods ES Library* nominated by Oakton HS WAT.
 - *Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport* nominated by Pulley Center
 - *Safeway at Courthouse Plaza* nominated by Robinson HS WAT
 - *Sodexo Food Services* nominated by Chantilly HS WAT
 - *Sunrise Assisted Living at Reston Town Center* nominated by Davis Center
 - *Sunrise Assisted Living National Office* nominated by Dunn Loring OTP
 - *The Senior Center at Green Acres School* nominated by Eleven Oaks OTP
 - *Two-day Furniture* nominated by Westfield HS WAT

Each employer will be presented with a plaque at employer appreciation events in May and June.

- On April 27, 2005, 371 students and parents attended the annual orientation designed specifically for students with disabilities who are interested in attending the Northern Virginia Communication College (NVCC) at the Annandale campus. Every year Career and Transition Services staff work collaboratively with NVCC staff to design these special programs at each of the five NVCC campuses that orient students to the offerings at each campus location and to the disability services and supports available. Nearly 600 attended the five events this spring.
- Congratulations to two West Springfield High School students who were accepted to this summer's *Youth Leadership Forum* at Christopher Newport University in Newport News,

Virginia. This annual conference is sponsored by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

- Members of the special education secondary team presented a workshop for teachers and parents on Saturday, April 9, 2005, at *Destination Diversity*, sponsored by the Northern Virginia Council for Gifted Education. The workshop featured the use of sophisticated graphic organizers containing cognitive prompts to encourage higher order thinking skills.
- Kathy Rini and Cheryl Temple from ITS will be presenting a *Spotlight On Learning* at the School Board meeting on Thursday, May 26, 2005, featuring the Assistive Technology Club at Jefferson H.S. This club develops activities, under the direction of ITS staff members, which are used by students in various preschool special education programs. Lenor Cummings, a preschool teacher from North Springfield Elementary, and two students from Thomas Jefferson High School will join them.
- The American Legion Springfield Post 176 honored Dr. Sharon Saferstein, speech/language clinician at Camelot Elementary School, on April 16, 2005, at a lovely dinner reception with 200 people. She was honored along with police officers, fire fighters, military personnel, and community leaders who were recognized as true American heroes for their contributions to the community. Sharon's commented, "This recognition for Camelot is great...when one succeeds, we all succeed."

