

WESTBROOK PTA PATTER

WESTBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS CATHY STOCKER & KAREN THORNTON

“Get it done and have fun!” That’s our motto and we’re sticking to it! We’ve had a terrific first month in office getting to know parents and volunteers we used to only pass on the street or whose names we’d only seen on the list serve. Participating in and volunteering for PTA events is a fun way to connect with your neighbors and support your kids! We look forward to getting to know many of you better over the course of the year and urge you to come out for the class socials our fabulous room parents are organizing, as well as PTA meetings and parenting seminars, not to mention your kids’ artists in residence performances!



As for getting things done, we’re already off to a great start! Back To School Night was a blast – our incredible teachers inspired us and you really wowed us by getting us *this* close to our goal of 75% participation and \$39,500 toward our operating budget. Those dollars will go directly to pay for six grades worth of Artists in Residence, cultural and science assemblies, and musicals directed by Ms. McNiell. All those things that make Westbrook the amazing community it is!

Around the corner is the exciting expansion project – indeed, Westbrook is getting bigger and better! We encourage you to attend the community meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, October 26th at 7pm** where the construction team will share the details of the phasing plan for how the project will unfold. We have a dedicated team of PTA volunteers committed to ensuring you have all the information you need about safety issues, recess, and construction progress. If you have questions about the expansion project, please visit the PTA website for background materials and FAQs (<http://westbrookexpansion.wordpress.com>) or contact us. Once again, we’re so honored and excited to serve as your co-presidents this year. Thanks so much for your support!

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WESTBROOK BOOK FAIR

November 9th—11th

The annual Westbrook Book Fair will be held this year at Westbrook in the Media Center on November 9th-11th from 8AM to 8PM. This year’s theme is "To the Book Fair and Beyond: Reading is out of this World!". The Book Fair is an annual Westbrook event that is an important way

we raise funds for the PTA, provide books and supplies for the Westbrook Media Center, and encourage our children to explore the world of reading. Please stop by and purchase books for your child, teacher or yourself!!!! We are also always looking for

PARENT VOLUNTEERS to assist during Book Fair. The Book Fair cannot be successful without the help of Westbrook parents! Contact Karen Kalat at allenkilat@msn.com or DavidaKales at davida.kales@comcast.net to schedule a time to volunteer.

AQUA EAGLES GO GREEN AT CLAGGET FARMS

By Annabelle Kim, Fifth Grade

The Aqua Eagles had a blast at Clagget Farms on September 12, 2011!! Clagget Farms is a place where you can “go green” and learn about the Chesapeake Bay and our environment while having a ton of fun.

We first played a game that is sort of like the ones you sometimes play at recess during Earth Day. The object of the game is to tag all of the pollutants as fast as possible before they reach the Bay.

This is how you play:

1.)there is a bay saver and he/she has to try to tag the sediment, toxins and poisons, or manure (the three largest pollutants in our Bay.);

2.)if the pollutants are tagged, they become trees (buffers.);

3.)the trees slow the bad stuff down because of their roots, so if you were a tree, you had to try to tag the sediment, toxins and manure.

After that warm-up, we walked a ways to boxes that were halfway underground. Our fantastic educators from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Melissa and Phillip, heaved off the lid to the first mysterious box. The lid was dropped to the ground and to our surprise, there were many citizens of nature living in it. There were troops of ants, families of crickets, big and small, spiders of all ages, and **BLACK WIDOW SPI- DERS!!!!** It was so cool! At first I couldn't believe my eyes, but there they were, hourglass and all. In each box there was a big plastic jug that had collected water from strips of land that had either crops, grass, trees, dirt, or concrete. When it rained, all the water flowed down into those jugs and along the way, it picked up whatever there was that was in its path. For jug one, there was a concrete driveway with some leaves and dirt. In that jug was some extremely dirty water that had dirt and leaves at the bottom. For jug two, there was some grass in the path, but that's all. In that jug there was some neon green/yellow water in it. For jug three, there was some grass and corn. There was less water in that jug than the other ones, but there was still that same muddy color to it like the first one. For the last jug, there were baby trees and a little grass. In that jug there was about a centimeter of water in it and the water was fairly clean. You might be a little confused, so I'll tell you what we learned:

- Concrete doesn't soak up or hold down any water or dirt, so all of it washed down into the jug.
- On the grass experiment, they put fertilizer into their mini lawn, so it all washed into that jug.
- The crops collected less water than the concrete, but it also soaked up more dirt.

- The trees acted like buffers, so very little water came through.
- Also, that is why the water is so clean; the dirt didn't go through either.

Next we went over to a garden that they were using to show best management practices (BMPs). That means that they are showing everybody what you are supposed to do in an eco-friendly garden. They don't use pesticides or any other pollutants. They plant lots of trees to have cleaner water. At the garden, we split up into two groups and started gardening. One group picked up grass clippings to compost and the other group pulled dead tomato plants and stakes to make room for new plants. After our hard work, the Aqua Eagles had a chance to taste the garden tomatoes and basil.

After lunch in an old tobacco barn, we did a bit of composting. We threw compostable items from our lunches, such as orange peels and apple cores, into the heap. Then we each took turns using a pitch fork turning over the new soil.

Our next adventure was a bumpy hayride around the farm. We made several stops, and our first one was to a field of cows. There was one bull and cows and their calves. We learned how every-other day the farmers move the cows to different fields of grass so the cows can always have fresh food. These cows will become very healthy beef for people to eat.

Right after that, we journeyed on to an asparagus field filled with chickens! As we drew near, all the roosters started crowing at us. We were allowed to climb in the pen and collect eggs. Melissa said that sometimes the chickens lay eggs in the asparagus field, so we went on an expedition to find them. Overall, it proved very successful because we collected over a dozen eggs. The chickens were in the asparagus field because their poop fertilizes the asparagus plants.

For our final activity, we split up into groups and took turns using swoop nets to catch bugs in the tall grasses. We caught several different insects, studied them, and at the end, let them go.

As our send-off, we earned bandanas from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation after we shared something we learned that day.

Stay tuned for more Aqua Eagles adventures!

**Westbrook PTA & National Alliance
on Mental Illness (NAMI) present**

Parents and Teachers as Allies, Recognizing Early on-set Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents

Julie Reiley, Special Needs

On September 20th, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) presented *Parents and Teachers as Allies, Recognizing Early on-set Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents*. NAMI presented the signs of mental illness in children (below), as well as Susan's story. Susan is the mother of a now young woman with mental illness, who shared her story, from the early signs of her daughter's illness, to diagnosis, treatments, and her daughter's current place today, living independently.

NAMI's presentation was full of valuable information for all parents, especially when one considers the following fact: In 2001, the Surgeon General reported that 12% of children in the United States live with a diagnosable mental illness. This statistic makes it vital that all parents are aware of the early warning signs of mental illness in children and adolescents, regardless of family history. *NAMI folders with a brochure providing the early signs of mental illness, as well as other information, are located on the parent resource shelf outside the media center;* more information about NAMI can be found at www.nami.org

Many parents unfamiliar with mental health issues in children may assume that a key symptom of any mental illness is (a sudden) inability to perform academically. However, while this *can* be a symptom, it is *not always* the case. In fact, parents are often misled by the fact that their child is performing well academically, and so fail to appreciate the significance of the warning signs. In addition, teachers may be unaware of these signs, or that there is a problem, because it is not unusual for children to hold it together at school.

NAMI, a national organization with chapters in the DC metropolitan area, is dedicated to the education, support and advocacy of people with mental illnesses. NAMI operates a HELP line: 1-800-950-NAMI and offers, among many services, a free support group for parents of children and adolescents living with mental illness in Montgomery County. It meets the first Sunday of the month (September - June), 3:00-4:30 p.m. at its offices at 11718 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852 (301-949-5852).

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM
KICKING INTO GEAR**

By Karen Baratz & Jacquie Moen

The 2011-2012 Artist in Residency Program is kicking into gear and we've got some amazing artists, spanning a wide array of genres, lined up to provide a creative and enriching experience for our children.

Many thanks to everyone who made contributions to the PTA, which helps fund the Arts Integration program to make these residencies possible. We could not do this without your support.

Kudos also to Westbrook parent, Joan Christie, who founded the artist-in-residency program and has overseen its expansion in recent years so that EVERY grade at Westbrook may now participate. Joan also helped write various grants to secure additional funding for this program (the PTA budget does not fully cover the cost) and she helped research and secure the artists for this year's residencies. Thank you, Joan!

Here's what we have lined up for each grade including parent lead coordinators:

- 2nd grade (October 2011) -Carolyn Koerber/
Puppeteer, Storyteller (Parent lead - Liz Jones)
- 4th grade (November 2011) - Gayle Danley/Slam Poet
(Parent lead - Katy Scott)
- 5th Grade (January 2012) -Sure Trainor/Performing
Songwriter (Parent lead- Jamie Brown)
- 1st Grade (March 2012) - Maria Barbosa/Book Artist
(Parent lead: Brenda Vazquez)
- 3rd Grade (April 2012) Alden Phelps/Songwriter, Mu
sician (Parent lead- Amy Kim)
- Kindergarten (May 2012) - Mark Jaster/
Mime (Parent lead - Chris Dixon)

Stay tuned for more details from our respective grade leads on how you can volunteer.

To give you a better sense of a residency, 2nd Grade will kick things off in October with a Puppetry residency. Puppeteer and storyteller, Carolyn Koerber will work with 2nd grade students to create their own puppets (using simple materials found at home.) The students will then create an original story, modeled on folktales, and bring it to life with their hand-made puppet and props. The residency will emphasize skills such as collaboration, problem-solving and story sequencing, among others. The residency will culminate in a sharing day on Thursday, October 20 at 1:30 PM in the All Purpose Room which parents are invited to attend

Thank you again for your support. These residencies will supplement Westbrook's curriculum in providing meaningful exposure to the arts.

Best regards,

Karen Baratz (Amanda- 5th, Vincent/ Henry- 2nd, Lawrence)
Jacquie Moen (Nick- 5th, Vincent / William-3rd, Bergen)
Artist-in-Residency co-chairs





**WESTBROOK
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL**

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**A COMMUNITY
OF CARING**

FIND US ON THE INTERNET AT:
montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/westbrookes/



We're still collecting Box Tops so don't forget to keep clipping! Box Tops can be found on regularly used products such as General Mills cereals, Kleenex tissues, Ziploc baggies, Yoplait yogurt, and Hefty trash bags. Simply clip the Box Tops, put them in an envelope or plastic baggie, and either send them to school in your child's backpack or leave them in the Box Tops collection box on the drop-off table.

FIFTH GRADE TRAVELS TO WILLIAMSBURG

By Maddie Brown, Fifth Grade

On September 23, 2011 the fifth graders went to Williamsburg, Virginia for an all-day history packed trip. We left at 6:45 am. It was a long three-hour bus ride. By the time we got there it was almost 10:00 am!

The first thing we did was go on a guided tour through the Capitol. The first room we saw was the meeting place of the House of Burgesses. It was a big room with four windows, an enormous chair, and a smaller table with chairs. We were told that the enormous chair was where the leader would sit during a meeting. We also learned that the more important a person was, the bigger their chair.

After they told us those things they choose some people to read some speeches that people had said long ago. When that was all done, everyone went upstairs to the next room. It was the Governor's Council. In this room there was no big chair. They were all the same size. The guides explained to us that it meant everyone was equal.

The last room was the courtroom. The fifth graders acted out a court scene. Then we went to the jail. We learned that the cell we were sitting in had housed pirates!! We also learned about the crimes that could get you sent to jail. Next, we went to a house where we learned Colonial dances and tried on costumes for the rich, middle class, and poor families.

When we were finished with that we split up into our smaller groups and walked around exploring all the shops. Then it was time for lunch. As soon as we walked in to eat, it started to POUR outside!!! We had salad, chicken nuggets, macaroni, and ice cream. After that delicious meal, we set off in our smaller groups and explored more shops, like the wig shop, the printer, the post office, and various gift shops. Finally it was time to go. We ran to the bus, (it was pouring!) hopped on and headed back to Westbrook. It was a great trip!!

SPIRIT WEAR

at the Book Fair!!!

Watch out for this year's Westbrook Spirit wear at the Book Fair! We will have a table right outside the Book Fair where you can try on samples and order immediately!!

This fall we are carrying t-shirts, both long and short sleeve, flannel pants, and debuting hats!!! Delivery promised by holiday time. We also will have car magnets to show your Westbrook pride.

REMEMBER LEDO'S PIZZA NIGHTS
NOVEMBER - 11/9 AND 11/10
SHOP AT THE BOOK FAIR AND THEN TREAT
YOURSELF TO A DELICIOUS PIZZA FOR
DINNER WITHOUT THE DISHES!!