



THE WILDCAT

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5

DECEMBER 2006/JANUARY 2007

MESSAGE FROM THE PTA CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear NMS Families,

The holiday season has arrived with a bustle of activity! It is amazing that half the school year is almost over. December has arrived, and so has the festive atmosphere that surrounds the winter months. However, winter break will be here soon so that we can enjoy the holiday season! It is a time we can try to slow down a bit, maybe cut back on some of the extracurricular activities and spend much needed time with family and friends. It is a time when we can mentally and physically recharge our batteries for the new sports seasons, schoolwork and other activities that will be starting soon. Enjoy this time with your children!

The holiday season gives us another chance to say thank you to our great PTA

chairs. Ask your children about Wildcat Days, and we are sure they will tell you what a great time it was for all! These three days could not have been possible without the hard work of Kim Dickinson and Jennifer Zielinski. We also want to thank their VPs, Joan Ginn and Nancy Fogerty, and the many volunteers who helped out.

Just a reminder, this issue of the newsletter will cover all PTA events and information for December and January. The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of February. Since there will not be another newsletter for 2 months, we also want to remind you to mark your calendars for the January 8th PTA meeting at 10:00 am in the portable behind the main office.

Recently, we had the pleasure of hosting a "Coffee with Principal Fraser" for informal conversation with our neighborhood. It was enjoyed by all and was a great way for the school and community to develop a stronger relationship. We encourage other communities to follow our lead and hold their own meetings within their communities over the next couple of months. For more information, please contact the front office.

Wishing you and your family a safe and happy holiday and New Year!

Norma Khayat

Lisa Romm

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Students and Parents,

Let me begin by thanking all of the volunteers for their efforts last month for sprucing up our campus. The grounds surrounding the school required attention, and thanks to the PTA, our business partners and a few dedicated volunteers, we can now see some marked improvements to the area.

At the end of last year, we were able to add landscaping to the front of the building, and we wanted to continue with that progress. This year, we have trimmed hedges, tended to the garden areas in our traffic circle, laid pine straw through our

gardens and at the base of trees, and planted a number of new items. A few weeks ago, Garden Artists volunteered their time and expertise to greatly enhance the area outside the art/music hall. We still have areas requiring effort, but we are working on a plan that will eventually hit all areas of concern and leave us with landscaping of which we can all be proud. By working together, we really can make a difference.

I would like to ask for your assistance with our carpool procedures. I understand that the carpool can become congested. However, the carpool procedures must be followed if we are to en-

sure student safety. As you arrive at NMS, please find a parking space and wait for your child. We have a designated crosswalk area in which we can stop the flow of traffic prior to students crossing the parking lot. Encouraging your child to cross at an area other than the designated crosswalk puts them in jeopardy, as drivers are not looking for students between cars while traffic is moving. The entire process runs most efficiently when we all cooperate to follow the procedures.

In addition to this, picking up your child in our traffic circle at the front of the

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PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

(continued from page 1)

building and parking along the curb or in the handicapped spaces is illegal and needs to be avoided. The fire marshal will not permit parking along the curb since it is an emergency vehicle lane. Please help us with these issues, and feel free to offer any suggestions that could help expedite our carpool process.

Finally, I would like to thank the PTA for helping us send a number of teachers to the National Middle School Association's Annual Conference in Nashville. The conference afforded the teachers the opportunity to attend sessions led by educational experts. There were hundreds of sessions from which to choose, with topics ranging from advisory programs to teaching strategies. The information collected will be redelivered to the staff so that all Northwestern teachers can benefit from the conference experience.



Mr. Bruce Fraser, Principal

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Georgia General Assembly will start its 2007 Legislative session on Monday, January 8, 2007. To stay current on all the activities at the Gold Dome this session, go to www.georgiapta.org. Scroll down and click on the red/blue CAPITOL WATCH button. You can also get information on the Georgia General Assembly website at <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>.

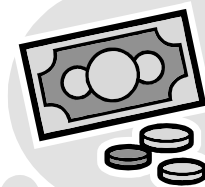


Fulton County Schools News

Please visit the Fulton County Schools website at <http://www.fultonschools.org/>. The Fulton County School System is conducting its annual Parent Perception Survey from November 1 through December 21 to learn what you think about your child's education in Fulton County. The answers you provide in this survey will be used for school improvement planning. This online survey should take you approximately five minutes to complete. If you have children at more than one school, please complete a separate survey for each one. Thank you for your feedback.

The Giving Tree

Northwestern Middle School's annual holiday fundraiser, the Giving Tree, will take place the week of **December 4-8**. This is an opportunity for students to make donations that will help to make the holidays brighter for some of their less fortunate classmates. Thanks to the extremely generous Northwestern student body and staff, between 50 and 60 families have received holiday gift cards each year for the past several years. While we live in a very affluent area, there are people who are in need, and who need our help to provide some very basic assistance for the holidays. Since there is no homeroom period this year when donations can be collected, all funds will be collected during daily math classes. The math class from each grade level with the highest total for the week will be rewarded with either a doughnut or pizza party, depending on when the class meets. So gather your spare change, give your child an opportunity to help some fellow students have a happy holiday, and support the Giving Tree! Please contact Holly Anderson, PTA Outreach Chair, at 770-663-4320, or Dan Yuhaschek in the Guidance Office with any questions. Any donation checks should be made **payable to NMS PTA**.



The Wildcat is the Parent Teacher Association's Newsletter for Northwestern Middle School. It is produced monthly by the Northwestern PTA. Issues are sent home with students and are available on-line at Northwestern's PTA Website: www.orgsites.com/ga/northwesternmspta. This newsletter is produced by Cassondra Hepburn for the PTA. If you have copy to submit, please send it via e-mail to nmswildcat@comcast.net. Northwestern Middle School's site is www2.fultonschools.org/school/northwestern.

REFLECTIONS

Thank you to all the amazing students who participated in the **2006-2007 Reflections Art Program!** The entries were wonderfully creative, exhibiting tremendous talent. Our top winners were passed onto the North Fulton Council for the next level of judging. Thirteen entries were submitted to the council on November 3rd. Winners from the council level will be passed on for judging at the state level. There will be a reception honoring all Reflections participants after the holidays, so watch for more details. Listed below are our top winners representing Northwestern Middle School.



Literature:

Morgan Burt
 Anthony Remensnyder
 Lacy Meinser (2)
 Erica O'Neal
 Haley Mapes

Visual Arts:

Diana Xu
 James Nugent

Photography:

Morgan Young
 Ellis Larson
 Rachel Isaac

Film Production:

Ashley West

Dance Choreography:

Lara Davis

Congratulations to our winners!

Box Tops for Education

This holiday season you can do two things to help earn money for the school's Outreach Program. First, when baking all those yummy goods, be sure to clip and save the Box Tops for Education coupons from the packages of participating products. Second, if you like to shop online, go to www.boxtops4education.com, where you have access to many popular stores for shopping. Our school gets credit for the Box Tops program when you shop this way also. Visit the website to see all the participating products and retailers as well as lots of other interesting news... and send in those Box Tops you've been saving today!

NMS SPIRIT WEAR

Show your Wildcat Spirit! There are many NMS Spirit Wear items still available for purchase, and they make great holiday gifts! Gray hoodie sweatshirts are \$20; gray T-shirts are \$10; girls navy & white T-shirts are \$12; and flannel pajama pants are \$20. If you are interested in purchasing Spirit Wear, you may inquire about items and availability by contacting **Tracy Heider** at 678-339-0950 or heid0004@comcast.net.



Environmental Education: Tip of the Month

- **Consider using energy-saving LED (Light Emitting Diode) holiday lights** and strands that use about 99 percent less energy than larger, traditional holiday bulbs – and last up to 100,000 hours.
- **Operate lights for no more than six evening hours a day to keep energy use and costs under control.** Timers are a simple way to do this. If you leave your lights on 24 hours per day, you will spend four times the money and create four times the pollution.
- **Outdoor "icicle" lights have more bulbs per linear foot** than regular light strands, because they run both horizontally and vertically. This means they use more energy – so make your choices accordingly.

We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

WILDCAT NEWS

Stay up to date on Northwestern's News...

Please visit the Northwestern Middle School website at www2.fultonschools.org/school/northwestern/ to stay up to date on current events at the school and to read the "Wildcat Weekly", a school newsletter that comes out every Monday. The Wildcat Weekly does not come home with students—it is available online, or you can get a copy by visiting the school.

Desperately Seeking...

a PTA Chair for the 8th Grade Career Day! If we don't get a volunteer, we may have to cancel this activity, so *please* consider helping out with this important event. For more information, contact Joan Ginn at joanginn@comcast.net or 770-751-0664.

PARENT PERCEPTION SURVEY

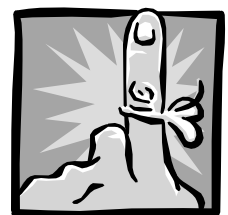
Your opinions are important to us!

The Fulton County School System is conducting its annual **Parent Perception Survey from November 1st through December 21st**. Please help us make our school better by taking a few minutes to complete this survey. The survey will be available online at www.fultonschools.org.

If you prefer to fill out a paper survey, or would like a survey in Spanish or Portuguese, copies will be available in the front office. Your answers will be shared with our teachers and principal for school improvement planning. (Your identity, and that of your child, will remain confidential.) If you have questions about the survey, please call the Assessment and Evaluation Office at 404-763-5600 ext.154.

IMPORTANT NORTHWESTERN DATES

December 8, 2006	Staff Holiday Lunch
December 12, 2006	Katie Reeves Community Meeting (9:30 a.m.—Creek View ES)
December 12, 2006	PTA Board Holiday Brunch
December 21, 2006	Music Showcase—Northwestern Middle School Chorus (8:15 a.m.)
Dec. 22 – Jan. 5	Winter Holidays—No School
January 5, 2007	Teacher Work Day—No School
January 8, 2007	School Resumes
January 9, 2007	PTA Board Meeting (10:00 a.m.)
January 15, 2007	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday—No School
January 16, 2007	Katie Reeves Community Meeting (9:30 a.m.—Summit Hill ES)
January 17, 2007	Georgia Writing Test (8th Grade)
January 18, 2007	Music Showcase TBA (8:15 a.m.)
January 24, 2007	Early Release Day (12:30 p.m.)
February 13, 2007	General PTA & Board Meeting (10:00 a.m.)
February 14, 2007	Music Showcase—Milton Steel Drum Band (8:15 a.m.)
February 19, 2007	President's Day Holiday—No School
February 26–March 2	Winter Gallery



TAG TALK

The **Northwestern Academic Bowl Team** competed in the Fulton County Tournament on Wednesday November 8th. The highlight of the day was the win over Sandy Springs Middle School. The team also had a victory over McNair Middle School. Participants were Connor Bourff, Will Farr, Lauren Jones, Veronica Jones, Ryan Knights, Dax Selton and Chloe Super. The NMS Academic Bowl Advisor is Mrs. Major. Congratulations on a job well done!

Also, the **7th Grade TAG Lan-**

guage Arts students have been writing poetry and getting ready for their "Coffee House" poetry readings in December. Enjoy two examples from October:

My Palace

by Logan Dickinson

My room
My royal palace
My Barbie Dream House
The capital of my little world

My gossip girl
Music player, library
All in one box
To open as I please.

My room
my pretty pink palace
My scrapbook
My book keeper

My bookmobile
Filled with books once
Touched or just found
With the pretty princesses close by

My room
My shoulder to cry on
My stress reliever
My homework helper

My stuffed animals
Silently staring at me
With goofy grins
As wide as a rolling river.

My room with
My marshmallow bed
Calling my name
To enter the warm
Mound of soft feathers
Good night, my room, good night

My Field

By Daniel Smith

My Field
My escape from my problems
My therapy from the real world
My way to express myself

My collision course
The place of chaos
It's all tough love
Because we're all brothers

My site of destruction
My place to attack
The place of much scolding
The one where you can find me

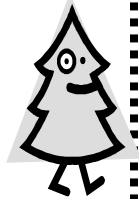
My only place of comfort
The place where I
Can forget the world
The place of many hills
The place of many stadiums

My field
My collision course
My site of destruction
My only place of comfort
My field with my brothers

PTA/Student Enrichment Fund

It's not too late to join PTA and to contribute to the Student Enrichment Fund. The forms are in the Front Office and can be sent in with your child. Thank you for all the support for Northwestern Middle School PTA.

**Get your Tree at
Hunters Christmas
Tree Farm and sup-
port your PTA!**



The Hunters are once again offering a donation to our school if you purchase a tree at their farm. This year, they have Leyland Cypress trees in the field and fresh-cut Fraser Firs that are delivered weekly from North Carolina. White Pine Garland, Fresh Fir wreaths and honey are also available. As always, there will be complementary hot chocolate and cookies.

When you go, please bring a toy or food to donate to the **North Fulton Communities Charities Holiday Assistance Program**. You must **sign in** on the Northwestern Middle School PTA sheet placed near the registers for our school to get credit.

Hunters Christmas Tree Farm is open M-F, 3pm until dusk, and Saturdays at 9 am until dusk. They are closed on Sundays. For directions or more information, call 770-475-0713 or visit their website at

www.hunterschristmastreefarm.com

WHO IS THE PARENT?

Keeping the Adult Perspective

As young adolescents demonstrate moments of adult thinking and behavior, parents must remember that their children are still children and need, more than ever, for the adults in their lives to provide guidance and set limits that help them continue to develop in healthy ways. They need parents to be parents, not friends. We suggest several guidelines:

- Although it may be tempting to talk with your child about more complex issues and sensitive subject matter such as political concerns, complicated relationships, or financial problems, it is important to wait for their questions. Don't share too much information with children who are only ready to process the answers to the questions they ask. Questions like "Why are you mad at Dad?" most likely need only be answered with an explanation of the immediate incident, not a long account of previous problems leading to this moment.
- Although your child has the ability to understand abstract concepts at times, remember, developmentally he is still a concrete thinker. So, be sure to support abstract ideas with concrete descriptions that relate to your child's everyday experience. Giving up a month's allowance or going without a favorite food for a month may be better ways to help young adolescents begin to understand poverty and hunger than engaging them in long philosophical discussions.
- Remember, it is OK for your child to be angry at you. Setting limits or saying "no" is often an unpopular thing to do. It is reasonable for your young adolescent to be unhappy that you won't buy her the latest brand-name jeans that "everyone else in school has," but don't let her make you think you are making her unpopular. You are really helping her learn discipline and the difference between "need" and "want"—a very important lesson for young adolescents.
- Help your young adolescent avoid the tendency of her age group to generalize a peer's behavior to all members of a particular group. Avoid fostering stereotypes by encouraging your child to look at individual situations and causes of behavior rather than agreeing with his global judgments. Ask, "What do you think has happened in Joe's life to make him brag about how well he plays soccer?" rather than accepting that "All the kids from Merriweather Middle School seem to have a bad attitude." Your job is to encourage the broader view, not to just agree with your young adolescents as a way to bond with them.

Most importantly, early adolescence is a time when children need the guidance and wisdom of parents to help them put values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, and justice solidly in place. This is not a time to be concerned about being popular with your child. They will love you for the limits—in a few years!