



THE WILDCAT

Northwestern
PTA
everychild. onevoice.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PTA CO-PRESIDENTS



Happy Holidays! It is the holiday season again and things are merry and bright here at NMS.

This issue of the newsletter covers all PTA events and information for both December and January. The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of February.

At the end of October the students were treated to two weeks of "PastWords", which is a celebration of classic literature. A special thank you to Karen

Mueller for putting together this event. The book fair was held at the end of October and it was very successful. Thanks to Kim Horne for working on this event with all of the NMS media center staff, especially Olivia Grizzle.

Reflections entries were due on November 11th - we can hardly wait to see all of the entries and learn of the winners! The PTA directories were distributed on November 11th and a huge thank you to Rhonda Mason, Denise Cartledge and Mary Haney for making that happen. Finally, we enjoyed three wonderful "Wildcat Days". Donna Kizer did an amazing job with those and we thank her.

The Giving Tree collection will be the

week of December 5-9. Look for more information on that in this newsletter.

Several activities are on the PTA calendar for December and January. Please read this newsletter to get the latest information.

As always, we are open to any suggestions, questions, or concerns you may have. Please feel free to contact us at any time! Happy Holidays and enjoy the time off with your families!

Bonnie Kitay
770-619-9125

Lisa Stammer
770-740-8577

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Students and Parents,

This year, as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and the Georgia Department of Education recognized public schools across Georgia for increasing and promoting excellence in student achievement. These awards combine criteria for making Adequate Yearly Progress with criteria for identifying schools in each of two categories: 1) greatest gain in meeting and exceeding standards 2) highest percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards.

There are four levels of award for each of the two categories: platinum, gold, silver and bronze. Within the state of Georgia, there were 317 schools recognized with only 5 schools receiving awards in both categories. I am excited to announce that Northwestern was one of these five schools, receiving the platinum award in the area of greatest gain and a silver award in the category of highest percentage of students meeting or

exceeding standards. Northwestern was also only one of two middle schools in the state to receive awards in both categories and was one of two schools in Fulton County with that honor.

Northwestern received a banner and certificate for each of the awards, with both banners currently being displayed in the cafeteria. For more information about Georgia's accountability system and the awards criteria, visit <http://www.gaosa.org/ssas.html>. This is truly a great honor and an accomplishment for which we should all feel a great deal of pride. Thanks to everyone involved in helping Northwestern reach this goal.

Mr. Bruce R. Fraser, Principal



A NMS HOLIDAY TRADITION—THE GIVING TREE



It has been an extraordinary year in our part of the country.

Major hurricanes, especially Katrina, devastated the Gulf coast, and forced residents to relocate. For many of these people, Atlanta has become home. More people than ever are

seeking assistance from our local relief agencies. Most all of us have stepped up to do what we can to help, by donating clothing, supplies, and money to these groups.

Now that the holidays are approaching, it's once again time to think about some families in our own backyard who can use our help. Each year, the **Giving Tree** collects funds from NMS students during homeroom for one week. Money donated to this fund goes toward making the holidays brighter for some of our in-need families. **In order to assist approxi-**

mately 60 families, we need to raise at least \$3,000.

Our NMS staff, students and their families have been extremely generous whenever there have been needs to meet in the past, and we're sure that this year will be no exception.

Ambassadors will be collecting money the week of December 5-9. There will be a competition for each grade level, and the homerooms with the highest totals will be given a doughnut party. Also, the Student Council will be sponsoring a **Hat Day on Friday, December 2** to kick off our Giving Tree fundraising. No donation is too small, and every penny counts! If you have questions or need more information, please call **Holly Anderson, PTA Outreach Chair**, at 770-663-4320, or **Dan Yuhascsek, NMS Guidance Office**, at 770-753-3036.

PAST WORDS

PastWords, our NMS two-week literary celebration, offered a wide variety of classical literature and poetry during presentations in October. During the first week, interim principal Mr. Barchi started off the celebration by reading Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, 7th grade Language Arts teacher Mr. Ott read from

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, and Junior Beta's Kyle Cregge and Corinne Artis read from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. Sixth grade Language Arts teacher Ms. Biesidecki shared Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" and PTA Co-President Lisa Stammer read T.S.Eliot's humorous "The Naming of Cats".

The second week was started off with a reading of Maya Angelou's "Human Family" by Assistant Principal Ms. Smith. Orchestra teacher Ms. Ellington read "Self Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson and sixth grade reading teacher Ms. Thomas shared a reading of "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes. Eighth grade reading and language arts teacher Ms. Scott did a performance from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart". Principal Mr. Fraser read from Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea", then the closed the celebration by drawing the names of the twenty winners of classic books.

A big thank you goes out to this year's readers for bringing these great works and their lessons and adventures to our NMS students!



BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

While baking and cooking this holiday season, keep in mind that the average household with kids purchases more than 100 Box Tops products each year, and 100 Box Tops equals \$10 in earnings for our school to help people in need through our Outreach Programs. Please clip and send in your family's Box Tops all year long. Questions? Log on to www.boxtops4education.com or contact Leigh Ann Maloney at 770-664-1132 or lam@mjmfilmandvideo.com.

CALLING ALL DIVAS & DANCERS



Georgia PTA sponsors an annual **PERFORMING ARTS COMPETITION** to recognize talented young performers in the category areas of **Dance or Theatre**. All interested students at Northwestern Middle School are encouraged to participate. A student may submit more than one entry, as well as compete in both categories. A separate application and maximum 5-minute VHS videotape placed in a 10" X 13" envelope is required for each entry.

Guidelines and entry forms are available at the school entrance in front of the office. There are very strict guidelines for this competition. We are collecting entries in the front office, just look for the special PTA box. **Deadline for all entries is January 16th.**

For more information, contact **Marie Hudson** at 770/410-0201 or mariek@bellsouth.net



LEGISLATIVE NEWS



The halls of old Milton High will again be filled with students, perhaps as early as next fall. In October, the Board of Education directed the school system to move forward with plans to convert the former high school into a community education center.

A cornerstone of the center would be "Connected Academy," a unique theme school for approximately 300-400 Fulton County juniors and seniors who benefit from a rigorous, project-based curriculum that incorporates both virtual learning and community outreach opportunities. In addition, the Milton Center will offer youth leadership, early college and community education opportunities, along with professional development for Fulton County School System staff. A similar center also is planned for south Fulton.

The school system's web site, www.fultonschools.org, provides an outline of the Connected Academy and the vision for the Milton Center. System administrators plan to present further details, including enrollment criteria, to the Board in January. The web site also includes a brief power point presentation and tentative timelines.



CALLING ALL NORTHWESTERN PERFORMERS:

LEARN TO ACT FOR STAGE & FILM

Perform in the Northwestern Spring Cabaret Show

The Northwestern Drama Club presents professional theatre and film training with the award-winning Metropolitan Theatre Conservatory. The Spring Semester culminates in a Cabaret Show of Broadway Songs, Shakespearean Stage Fights, Comedy Sketches from TV, Academy Award winning Movie Scenes and more!

Our teachers are professional actors, casting directors, & producers who work in Film, T.V., Commercials and Theatre, in addition to holding degrees in Theatre & Film. Northwestern is the only middle school to be chosen by the Metropolitan Theatre Conservatory's "in residence after-school training" program for the 2005-2006 academic year. **The Club Meets Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. beginning February 2nd, 2006.** Pre-registration is required. Cost: \$295 per semester.

For Information & to register: 770.394.1461 or
www.metropolitanconservatory.com

REFLECTIONS

Thanks to all of the students who participated in this year's Reflections Contest. We had 174 entries, almost double the number of entries from last year! Special thanks to the Reflections Judges this year: Alvand Williams, Literature; Joanne Reilley, Music; and Terri Gasway, Visual Arts and Photography. This year's Reflections winners will be announced in December.

CICI'S PIZZA NIGHT

Thursday, December 8th



The Renaissance Committee is organizing a new event for Northwestern students and their families: CiCI's Pizza night! Our school will receive 10% of all NWMS sales that evening. We want to encourage families to eat pizza before the chorus concert that night. Look for the flyer with more details!

GOT MUSICAL TALENT?



Apply for Georgia PTA's
Ann Weeks Music Award!

Instrumental, vocal and piano categories are accepted. All interested students at Northwestern Middle School are encouraged to participate. State level winners of the **Ann Weeks Music Award** will receive a cash prize!!!

Guidelines and entry forms are available at the school entrance in front of the office. There are very strict guidelines for this competition. You must provide a short performance on cassette tape or CD that showcases your musical ability. This performance must include a music scale and a musical selection not to exceed 3 minutes. You must also enclose a "**letter of recommendation**" from a music instructor or teacher for your entry to be accepted. Entries must be placed in a manila folder, and 10"X 13" envelope. We are collecting entries for this competition in the front office, just look for the special PTA box. **Deadline for all entries is January 16th.** For more information, contact Marie Hudson at 770/410-0201 or mariek@bellsouth.net

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!

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IMPORTANT NORTHWESTERN DATES

December 1, 2005	Music Showcase (8:15 a.m.)—Northwestern Jazz Band
December 2, 2005	Katie Reeves' Community Meeting—Creekview ES (9:30 a.m.)
December 5-9, 2005	Giving Tree Collections
December 6, 2005	PTA Holiday Get Together
December 22, 2005	Music Showcase (8:15 a.m.)—Northwestern Chorus
Dec. 23-Jan. 8, 2006	Winter Holidays—No school
January 9, 2006	Katie Reeves' Community Meeting—Alpharetta ES (9:30 a.m.)
January 10, 2006	PTA Board Meeting
January 16, 2006	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday—No school
January 26, 2006	Music Showcase (8:15 a.m.)—Milton Jazz Band
January 26, 2006	Renaissance Assembly
February 2, 2006	Katie Reeves' Community Meeting—Lake Windward ES (9:30 a.m.)
February 14, 2006	General PTA Meeting/Board Meeting (10:30 a.m.)
February 17-20, 2006	Student/President's Day Holiday—No School
February 23, 2006	Music Showcase (8:15 a.m.)

