

Hunters Horn

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President's Message

Can you believe that Spring is almost here? With the weather this past weekend it is hard to image but soon the flowers will be coming up, the trees turning green and another school year will have past.

I have learned a lot the past months as the PTA president—a lot about our school, our teachers, students and parents. When I started in this position in September one of my goals was to communicate to all those communities what the PTA was doing, why we're doing it and how they could help. My hope was to have all PTA members with a feeling of ownership—not just the five members of the executive board or the committee chairs.

At the PTA meeting in January fundraising was a hot topic of discussion. People expressed their opinions, talked about what could be done differently, and shared how other schools handle this issue. I also heard by email from people that could not attend the PTA meeting. The one thing I got out of all this input was that my communications were not reaching everyone. Many of the suggestions were actually for things the PTA already does, for example, questions were asked about what the PTA raises money for; however, with the Sally Foster fundraiser, the committee put on each envelope what the money would be used for, that information has also been included in past newsletter articles, on the website, at PTA meetings and in the budget that was passed in the fall. Understandably people want to know what they are raising money for and I wish I could figure out how to get that message across to everyone.

This issue has become increasingly important as over the past three years no money has been added to the generous surplus created by fundraising efforts from years past. Already we have had to cut money from this

year's budget and may have to go further. Beyond not adding to the surplus, we've actually spent a significant amount enhancing our children's educational opportunities at Hunters Woods. Some of our largest one time expenses were the purchase of a computer cart with lap tops for the school for \$21,000, we purchased the weather bug station for \$3,000 and risers for performances in the gymnasium for \$4,200. Annually we subsidize transportation cost for field trips by \$7,500, give \$3,400 for professional development of teachers and fund the production of a school play, the artist in residence program for 6th graders, printing of Snickerdoodle, 6th grade luncheon, Odyssey of the Mind, historical and musical performances, distance learning lab videoconference programs and many other activities that support the curriculum of arts and sciences at Hunters Woods. Now with the significant decrease in fundraising this year we are going to have to look closely at each and every program we fund and make the hard decisions of what to fund to and what to discontinue.

Out of bad things can come good – I hope this will bring the community together, bring more people into the dialogue surrounding fundraising efforts as we answer the questions – what do we want to raise money for, and, if we want to continue to support our school, how can we achieve our goals? In the next few months I will be providing each family and staff member with more information on the budget so that all of the communities who have a stake in quality education at Hunters Woods can get together and have an informed, productive discussion for the future of the PTA and its fundraising efforts at our school.

Maureen Becker

March Events

- 21** Spring Picture Day
Drop off Auction Items & Drink Boxes in Black Box Theater after 3 PM
- 22** View Auction Baskets during lunch shift & evening

Fourth Grade Dance Performance 7 PM
- 23** Movie Night:
Pizza at 6, Drop-off at 6:30, Showtime at 7 PM

Auction Opens 6:30, Adult Refreshments Served 7 PM
- 30** School In Session (Snow Day Makeup)

April Events

- 2-6** No School – Spring Break
- 16 – 20** Spring Book Fair

Colonial Day Support

Please help us thank the following local businesses for their generous donations to this year's Colonial Day!

- Bloom, Centerville Road, Herndon
- Costco, Price/Cascades Plaza, Sterling
- Giant Food, Franklin Farm Road, Herndon
- Popeye's Famous Chicken, Reston
- Safeway, Hunters Woods Plaza, Reston

The event was a wonderful culmination of the 4th grade team's teaching unit on the early Colonial Period. Students participated in numerous activities that were typical of Colonial times, as well as a buffet lunch.

Next time you are shopping at one of these local merchants, please express your appreciation for their working with us to build a meaningful educational experience for our students!

Silent Auction/Movie Night

Families are invited to attend this fun social and fundraising night at Hunters Woods. Parents mingle while shopping the Silent Auction and kids enjoy a pizza dinner and a movie with friends.

To help keep our operating costs down, please consider sending in some juice boxes, which can be delivered to the Black Box Theater on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon or evening.

Parents are needed to help chaperone the Movie Night, please e-mail Auction@HuntersWoodsPTA.org if you can help, or have a teen who would like to help (and earn service hours.)

Refreshments for the adults attending the auction are requested, please send in an Auction Help form from today's folder, or e-mail Auction@HuntersWoodsPTA.org if you can send in an appetizer, snack, salad or dessert.

The PTA After-school Program Needs You!

Did you know that HWES has one of the most robust after-school programs of any school in Fairfax? We hear admiring comments from other schools and County administrators all the time about the fun and educational things our children are enjoying!

To keep the after-school program going at its current level, though, we need parents who are willing to handle the administrative details of each class (communicate with class instructors, manage registration forms, etc.).

Generally, there is only one coordinator for every couple of classes, so the workload is manageable. Children of parents on the committee get priority enrollment in all classes offered on the PTA flyer for eight-session classes.

Most of the work is done at your desk, so it's a task that will fit most parent schedules. The PTA After-school Committee doesn't meet very often as clear step-by-step guidance is provided to each Coordinator. Who needs more meetings?

You'll make a big contribution to HWES and the PTA – Our after-school programs are part of what makes HWES such a wonderful school! If you're interested, contact Mary Malzahn at afterschool@HuntersWoodsPTA.org for more information!

Odyssey of the Mind

HWES had another tour de force at the March 3 Odyssey of the Mind (OM) Competition. Two primary grade teams and nine competitive participated. Three of the competitive teams placed.

A proud team of Stephen Banghart, Gabriela Driscoll, Dana Horton-Geer, Ria Bhatia, Sadie Belt, Michael

Yuan, and Keeley McLaughlin took third place in Division II for Around the World in 8 Minutes. Veteran OM coaches responsible were Becky Banghart, Eugenia Sirgo-Driscoll and Mike Horton.

A HWES team for Around the World in 8 Minutes also took 3rd place in Division I. The Chocolate Carpet Team coached by Mia Merin and Soundara Kuppaswami consisted of Lizzy Merin, Priya Seetharaman, Hannah Becker, Grace Erard, Theo Richardson, and Olivia Wolfe.

HWES Division I team in the Tag 'Em problem also won third place. The team was coached by Laura Gao and Carine Newberry and consisted of Jeffery Xia, Grant Newberry, Kira Lee, Parv Ahuja, Sonia Jindal, and Jason Wei.

The Around the World in 8 Minutes problem was selected by fifty six teams at the competition. HWES sponsored four other teams doing that problem. Coaches Elaine Keith and Julia Sullivan led a Division II team of David Keith, Andrew Kropp-Sullivan, Kiffa Conroy, and former HWES students Patrick Cantwell and Richard Kropp-Sullivan. Michelle Krisanda coached a Division II team of Emily Krisanda, and Micaela and Shelby Sturm.

A Division I team coached by Jyoti Bhatia and Becky Banghart consisted of Veda Bhatia, Jeffrey Banghart, Shirley Wang, Anjali Khanna, and Gil Osofsky

Salim Ali and Krishna Chaganti also coached a Division I team consisting of Jawhar Ali, Abhijth Reddy Chaganti, Sarah Winkelstein, Michelle Stacy, Lekha Narayana, Vivek Vadlamudi, and Mahathi Tadikonda

HWES competed in two other OM Problems. Coach, Pam Burke and teammates, Brian Boehm, Paul Burke, Peter Ott, Sebastian Waldschmidt, and Gary Yeh, had a great time working on their Tag 'Em Division II team.

Coach Malathi Seppakkin led Kumar Tharayaraman, Neerij and Nidhi Gandhi, Sehntil Kannan and Michael Zhang on a Division II team and presented their solution to the I'm Only Thinking of You problem.

Both primary teams did a great job. Coach Karen Cantwell guided seven second graders on their Time Capsule skit. Teammates were Emma Cantwell, Michelle Whitlock, Patrick Kropp-Sullivan, Lauren Weis, Emily Landeryou, Abby Thomas, and Max Van Haaren.

A brave Jeri Thomas coached a team of all kindergartners and first graders consisting of Bradley Thomas, Lauren Wallach, Brendan With, Erica Griffith, Champa Narayana, and Abby and Taylor Panneck.

Thank you to Mr. Garrison and parents, Rosemarie Whitlock and Grace Chang, for giving up an entire Saturday to volunteer as judges for the competition. All the OM teams offer a very special thank you to the PTA and HWES administration for supporting this exciting effort.

The skits were all awesome and the kids had a great time. Congratulations to all - they are all winners!

National Recognition for HW WordMasters

Two HWES students recently won highest honors in the Winter National Word Masters Challenge. Congratulations to Kiffa Conroy (6th grade) and Ziyi Xiao (3rd grade) who achieved perfect scores. Other students who achieved Outstanding were 3rd graders Kyle Enriquez, Katie Shen, and Jason Wei, and 6th graders David Keith and Hillary Liu.

Book Fair

The Spring Book Fair will be at Hunters Woods the week of April 16 – 20, with evening hours on April 18 & 19, during the Grade 4 Performance and Primary Science Night. Volunteers are needed for day and evening shifts, please send an e-mail to BookFair@HuntersWoodsPTA.org if you can help. Look for information in upcoming Tuesday folders.

Volunteer Opportunity

April 23 through 27 is Office staff and Clinic aid appreciation week. We want to make sure we show our appreciation to these committed and caring individuals. We are looking for a volunteer to coordinate the PTA's efforts in that week – if you are interested please email Maureen Becker at president@HuntersWoodsPTA.org or call 703-391-0164.

Calendar Change - 5th Grade

The 5th grade Curriculum Night has been changed from March 21st to April 24th. The event is for the sharing of student work, with the emphasis on science games, hands on activities and other products as they prepare for the upcoming science SOLs in early May.

Jump Rope For Heart

Hunters Woods PE classes just completed a jump rope unit. As a culminating activity students in grades 4-6 may participate in Jump Rope for Heart, an American Heart Association program, on March 26 – 28th during their PE classes. Student participation is on a voluntary basis. In addition to Jump Rope for Heart, students may collect donations that will go to the American Heart Association. (They should have received the pledge info in their Tuesday Folders) We ask that students not go door to door to get donations. Any student raising at least \$150 is entered into a regional drawing to win a trip for 4 to Walt Disney in Florida. Pledge envelopes and money are due by March 29th, 2007

Arts Integration Celebration

Thanks to everyone whose assistance, attendance and participation made the Arts Integration Celebration a success.

Lisa Groves, AIC Chair

Garden News & Workday

Our hearty thanks go to Reston Association Naturalist Doug Guey-Lee and about 40 cub scouts and parents from Pack 1971 for the sprucing up around campus they did on Saturday, March 10th.

RA donated a truckload of wood chips so that the scouts could spread those out in the front forest strip to re-establish a nice path there, from Colt's Neck to the front parking lot. Lots of spring bulbs are starting to emerge, so be sure to stay on the paths and sidewalks so they're not crushed and can bloom.

The scouts bagged leaves from the corner of the parking lot (and those will be composted by RA). Then, they made a grand tour of the trails around the perimeter of the playing field and collected two wheelbarrows full of trash and recyclables. They also found quite a few lost footballs, hats, and a birdhouse!

Finally, they moved nearly 150 excess oak planting stakes from the back of the school to Mr. Guey-Lee's truck to be hauled away for re-use in RA plantings and signage.

This was a fine conservation/service project with benefits for both our school and our community, RA.

Would you like to have a chance to help our gardens? Come to our workday, Saturday, April 21 (appropriately the weekend nearest Earth Day), with projects large and small for adults. Opportunities for kids' outdoor work are frequent this spring during school hours--so please give the kids a rest this time. Details on timing, equipment needs, and a rain date will be in April newsletters and Keep-in-Touch messages.

Catherine Linberg, Outdoor Beautification Chair
Grounds@HuntersWoodPTA.org