



Liberty Park PTA Newsletter

January 2009

Volume 10 Issue 6

Vestavia Hills Elementary at Liberty Park

Principal's and President's Pen

Dear Parents,

It is a pleasure to announce that VHELP has three new National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT)! They are Kathryn Knorr, Melanie Carlisle, and Nancy English. WOW! Congratulations to each of them! The NBCT process is a year-long process that requires hundreds of hours and costs \$2,500. It can take teachers up to three years to qualify and requires tests, video recordings of lessons and examples of student work. We are so proud of them!! Kudos also go to our counselor, Dianne Thompson-McDonald. Recently she earned another RAVE award from the state school counseling association. This is the highest award a school counseling program can receive from the association!

Have you heard that BodyTrek is finally coming to VHELP! We have been on the waiting list for years! Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Children's Health Systems sponsor it. Every student Kindergarten through 5th grade will spend fifty minutes doing many hands-on activities inside the BodyTrek vehicle. The exhibit subject areas are:

- Growth, Development, Safety and Nutrition
- Senses and Germs
- Hearts and Lungs
- Nervous System and Brain

MANY volunteers are needed to make this a positive learning experience for our children! Please try to give one day or part of one day for this incredible endeavor. The exhibit will be here for about three weeks.

Remember that everything remaining in Lost and Found on December 20th will be donated to charity. If an item has a child's name on it then it will be given to the classroom teacher. Please check it if you are missing jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, etc.

Also, please remember that the office should never be called about carpool changes for play dates. It is happening a couple of times a week! Please make those decisions at home before leaving for school. Our office staff and teachers are so busy that we cannot guarantee that the message will be delivered or read.

Thank you so much to the Holiday Village organizers, Kim Conn, Kelli Eshleman and Ginger Grinkmeyer, as well as to the parent volunteers that helped to make this day a big success. The kids really enjoyed the new items this year and the day ran so smoothly!

Thank you to all of you that contributed during Registration to the Benevolence Fund for our custodial and lunchroom staff. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by all of them!

The next PTA Board meeting is on Tuesday, January 13th at 9:00 in the school cafeteria. All parents are welcome to attend!

<u>January Dates</u>	
5	Teacher Work Day No Students
6	Students Return
13	PTA Board Meeting 9:00am, in the cafeteria Open to everyone
13-30	BodyTrek Tuesday-Friday For 3 weeks
19	Martin Luther King Day No School
22	Delayed Start Day School begins at 8:45am

Helen Holley
Principal

Susan Conboy
PTA President

Quote of the month by Rosalyn Spivey

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted"

Aesop



MUSIC NOTES by Sharon August

Music students at VHELP will be singing “I Have a Dream” and listening to the recorded speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in celebration of his birthday. We will also learn American Sign Language to the song “Sing About Martin”. Younger students will be practicing solfege to “The Snowman” and practicing up and down melodic movement.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Happy 2009! All classes have completed their units on “study skills” and are now gearing up for sessions on “test taking skills”. Please encourage your child to share information with you and discuss the importance of good time management and organizational skills.

New student groups continue to meet throughout the school year. Check out the pictures and info outside the guidance office.

Our second round of DIBELS testing will be January 6-20. This test is administered to every child Kindergarten – Third Grade three times during the school year. Your child’s teacher will contact you with the results.

All second grade students will participate in the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) on Wednesday, January 21st. This tests helps teachers and administrators plan appropriate strategies to enable children to work toward their highest potential. Parent letters will be sent home prior to testing with more information.

All fifth grade students will be participating in the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing on February 24th. Please make sure your child is at school on time and does not check out before 10:00 that day.

Join all of us as we focus on our first Liberty Park Promise: “Show respect ... be thankful for all things”.

If I can be of any assistance to you please give me a call at 402-5408. Have a terrific second semester.

Dianne Thompson-McDonald
Counselor

Table Talks suggestions: As we focus on our third point of the Liberty Park Promise, “Show respect ... be thankful for all things”, help your children make the connection of showing respect and thankfulness. Give them examples -- taking care of the needs of pets shows that we are grateful for them, putting away toys, cleaning our room, helping clear the table, etc.

Parent Technology Workshop:

Session Date: Jan. 13, 2008	Digital Photos: Organize those holiday memories! Learn to edit your family’s photos and use technology to create books, gifts and family albums.	RSVP by: Jan. 9
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Don’t forget to RSVP to Angela Hollis or Wendy Story if you would like to save a seat.
The session is one hour, beginning at 4:30.
hollisal@vestavia.k12.al.us

Thank You for Supporting Holiday Village 2008!

It's hard to know where to begin in order to thank the multitude of people who helped make Holiday Village a success this year. First of all, we appreciate the **students** so much for their participation. Parents, you would have been so proud of your children! They were polite, patient, and cheerful, and seemed very excited about their purchases. We hope you enjoy the gifts they hand-selected for you.

We could not have been prepared for the event if it had not been for the people who lent their time and energy to help us, so a great big thank you goes to:

***Parent volunteers**, who helped wrap gifts, assist student shoppers, set up for, and clean up after the sale.

***Teachers, custodians, administrators, and the entire faculty**, for your flexibility and assistance.

***Greg Cleary**, for help setting up and taking down tables.

We would also like to thank the groups who were kind enough to make donations for the day of the sale. **Whole Foods** donated the shopping bags that made getting the gifts home with your children easier, **Higher Ground Coffee** in Leeds donated the coffee and brewer to keep sale volunteers perky and warm, and **Dr. Paul Stephen at the Norwood Clinic** donated the yummy Krispy Kreme doughnuts. Thank you all for your generosity!

Finally, we would like to extend a huge thank you to **Alicia and Brady at Two Hands World Shop** in Lawrence, Kansas, for supplying our sale with the beautiful, hand-made, Fair Trade products. If you would like to learn more about Fair Trade or see more of what they have to offer, please visit www.twohandsworldshop.com.

Thank you, and Happy Holidays!
Kim Conn, Kelli Eshleman, and Ginger Grinkmeyer



Parent Watch

Thank you Parent Watch Volunteers 2008!!! Thanks to you, all of our children are being helped across those busy intersections every day after school!

Parent Watch Volunteers 2008

Jennifer Gray	Shannon Cabraja	Kristy Puckett	Tracie Dugas
Nancy Pietrantonio	Anna Kendrick	Dawn Wagstaff	Jenna Rasmussen
Leanne Harper	Kelly Greiner	Lynda Turner	Katie Baker
Sheila Walker	Stephanie Knight	Leslie Keith	Jan Goodreau
Lynn Patterson			

If you cannot be a Parent Watch Volunteer, please remember to drive safely and slowly and be aware of the children walking and riding bikes and skateboards. Also, please tell your children about all of the safety tips regarding crossing streets and staying on the sidewalks when walking to and from school.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Angel Rohner
915-7761
298-7751

The Reading Chair

*By Nancy English
VHELP Reading Coach*



School is in full swing and no doubt your child has been assigned a research project of some type or another. Perhaps it isn't a project, but every time he/she takes that non-fiction AR quiz your child is disappointed with the score. Maybe up to this point you have always considered your child a good reader, so you are puzzled that he/she is reluctant, frustrated, or unsure how to proceed. A child may be able to fly through a chapter book, but reading for information is a big leap for many kids.

For some students this is a new skill. Your child must now learn to read for a purpose -- to analyze the material and gather evidence to support a paper, project, or recall information for a test. When the frustration reaches a fevered pitch you may be tempted to find the information, write the paper, or complete the project yourself. But that won't help your child in the long run. Instead, here are some ways you can help:

1. Check the reading level of the informational materials. Sometimes the vocabulary is too difficult or unfamiliar for a child to construct an image, much less begin to analyze or organize the information. If it is too difficult:
 - You can read the chapter yourself and talk about it until your child is more familiar with the topic. Pick out key concepts and vocabulary and have a conversation about them. Try to find an angle of interest for your child.
 - You could also introduce some easier books on the same topic. This makes the research more rewarding and your child will feel success. The pictures and graphics of the easier book will help establish a knowledge base which will make the more difficult text easier to understand.
2. Show your child the tricks to reading textbooks and non-fiction books. Help him/her use the table of contents, recognize key words in boldface type, recognize titles summarizing the main idea, and subtitles tracking the main points in the argument. Discuss why certain illustrations, maps, or graphs were chosen by the author.
3. Before reading, have your child predict what the book will be about. Discuss the topic to get an idea of what kind of knowledge base, if any, your child has about the topic. Encourage your child to ask questions, create mental images, and make connections to known concepts and experiences while reading. Show him/her how to organize information when taking notes during and after reading.
4. Be a role model. Purposefully make him/her aware that you are constantly reading to gain information, too. Involve your child in the processes you do unconsciously all the time. In fact, if you think about it, you may be surprised to find that most of your daily reading is to gain information, not the relaxing past time we generally associate with reading. T.V. Guides, cookbooks, maps, menus, technical reports, schedules, charts, manuals, news magazines, newspapers, and phonebooks are important tools that we use every day. We want our children to feel confident reading informational, textual, and functional materials now and later in life.
5. Finally, be patient and empathetic. Let your child know how you have struggled when learning a new skill. When your child can tell you about what he/she has read, you know progress has been made.

You can contact me via e-mail englishnf@vestavia.k12.al.us.

“Show Respect ... Be Thankful for All Things”.

The Liberty Park Promise of the month

Art Corner by Sherri Arias, Art Teacher

Wow! What can I say about our wonderful talented students other than “WOW! We had 34 holiday cards selected for publishing in the “Over the Mountain Journal”. I am so proud of their efforts. The students used ideas that were creative and they did these creations in only one class time. We sent about 500 cards and if you think about how many come from other schools, then the number must be over 1000. To have a card selected is a wonderful pat on the back.

LOST AND FOUND

A few lost items are occasionally found at Vestavia Hills Elementary-West that belong to VHELP students. If your child participates in after school activities at VHEW, you might be interested in the following information. Several items have been found in the VHEW gym that have been posted to their Lost and Found web page and have not been claimed. The items include two North Face jackets that are blue and grey. If you think your child might have lost an item, you can check out the items at www.vestavia.k12.al.us. Click on the parent page, then on “Lost and Found.” VHEW would like to return these items to their owners.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

To place an article in the newsletter
please contact: Donna Christian
Schristianfamily@aol.com

Deadlines for submissions are the
20th of each month

The Gala 2009

Supporting VHELP/LPMS

Saturday February 21, 2009

Vestavia Country Club

Great items to bid on: Golf cart, NY Yankee tickets, Wine Dinner for 10 and Baby Grand Piano

Look for your invitation in early January!

Sponsorship ads due by January 15th

For more information contact:

Tracie Dugas (traciedugas@yahoo.com) 999-6296 or Buffie Hymer (ehymer@yahoo.com) 410-5981, Gala Co-Chairs

Kristy Puckett (bandkpuckett@bellsouth.net) 967-5802, Corporate Sponsorship

Joanna Duckett (joannaduckett@bellsouth.net) or Nancy Pietrantonio (nancykitchen@yahoo.com),

Silent Auction Donation

Kelli Hawsey (frostyhawsey@aol.com) or Susan Vawter (jsvawter@bellsouth.net), Live Auction Donations

Kelly Greiner (kellygreiner@bellsouth.net), Brick Purchase

BodyTrek

Volunteers Needed!!!

Get ready for a new and exciting event coming to VHELP in January! BodyTrek is a collaboration between Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama and Children's Health System. It consists of a mobile, free-standing unit which contains interactive exhibits that will make learning about good health and healthy choices interesting and fun for our children. BodyTrek will be at VHELP from January 13th through the 30th, and **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

The PTA will be responsible for providing 7 volunteers twice a day for 12 days (Tuesday through Friday, during these 3 weeks). BodyTrek cannot take place without sufficient volunteers and 168 volunteers are needed. Currently, only 35 slots have been filled. Please sign-up today so that this unique opportunity becomes a reality for our children!!! We will be using *The Groupery* to coordinate the volunteer schedule for BodyTrek. If you have not yet signed up for access to *The Groupery*, go to <http://thegroupery.com/registration/vhelppta> or click on the Groupery link on the VHELP web site and register yourself and your VHELP family members as New Member and New Family. You can also volunteer by contacting Anne Siple at 977-2177 or asiple2177@charter.net. Room parents will be contacted in January for assistance in finding volunteers.

Parents, thank you in advance for all that you do to make our school so special. It is the time and effort that you devote to enrichment programs like this that makes all the difference.

Vestavia Hills Public Library Liberty Park Outreach News

The VHPL Liberty Park Outreach will reopen on January 14th. Outreach hours are 10:00 a.m.-noon on Wednesdays. The outreach is located in the meeting room at the Liberty Park Sports Complex. For information about this outreach or storytimes, contact Carolyn Key, the VHPL outreach liaison, at 978-0155 or ckey@bham.lib.al.us.

Tot Time Story Hour 10-11 a.m.

January 14 Mrs. Eve
January 21 Mrs. Sarah
January 28 Mrs. Eve

Adult Programming

Liberty Park Adult Book Club -- January 20th, from 10-11:30 a.m.

Join us for our discussion of the first title from the "Love & Forgiveness" series, Jane Austen's *Sense & Sensibility*. On February 17th we will continue the series with Nicole Krass's *The History of Love*. For information about the book club check out our web site at www.rockinlibertypark.org or contact the Adult Services Librarian Leslie West at 978-3683 or lwest@bham.lib.al.us.

Cut & Chat

Join us for a Cut & Chat party at the home of Cora Passman. We will be prepping the crafts that our children make at storytime. Come enjoy an evening of food, wine, and chatter and support this outreach too!

January 20th
6:30-8:00 p.m.
7404 Kings Mountain Court
RSVP by January 18 at rock@rockinlibertypark.org

Vestavia Hills City Schools Foundation's Dinner Dance & Diamonds set for April 24, 2009

The third annual Dinner Dance & Diamonds event will be Friday, April 24, 2009, to support the Vestavia Hills City Schools Foundation. "Diamonds" will feature all of your favorites – jewelry for auction from Paul's Diamond Center, great food, and friends. The raffle item is a gorgeous one-carat diamond channel set bangle bracelet in white gold. Brown pearls are in fashion this year as well diamond and sapphire, ruby and emerald stackable rings. Paul Petro will also have some of his signature semi-precious stone and diamond rings, earrings and necklaces.

Please consider becoming an event sponsor. This is a terrific way to promote your business since your gift includes tickets and recognition in printed materials and event signage. For more information, including pictures of the 2008 party or sponsorship forms, visit our website at www.vestaviafoundation.org.



System-Wide Partners in Education (PIE) 2008
Through their Gifts to the
Vestavia Hills City Schools Foundation
(As of January 1, 2008 – December 12, 2008)

Charles & Kelly Bottcher
Michelle & Vic Adamo
Tricia & Dwayne Albritton
Steve & Shannon Ammons
Brookwood Medical Center
Noelle & John Cadden
Commissioner Jim Carns
The Daniel Foundation of Alabama
Joe Lee Griffin Foundation
Susan & Pete Klyce
Lucy's on Thirty-One
Robert R. Meyer Foundation
Pinnacle Bank
Regions Bank
Royal Cup, Inc.
John & Leigh Ann Smyth
Ashley & Mike Stockard
Ashley & Robert Thompson
Lindy & David Walker
Jenny & Mark Yanosky
Madelyn York & Tim York