

Westerly Creek Elementary School Newsletter

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Jill A. Corcoran, Principal



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Principal's News

Dear Westerly Creek Families:

It is hard to believe that we are already in our third trimester, yet if you have visited the school it is very evident. Our halls and walls display incredible student work. The students and teachers are so very actively engaged in their daily routine.

The kids have grown so much in their academics as well as in their social development. I was sitting in a classroom the other day and couldn't believe how independent the kids were. They knew what was expected and were so very proud to demonstrate their skills.

It is amazing to see the kids grow as learners and I would encourage you to come in and participate in the classroom if at all possible. You too will be amazed at the accomplishments our students have made this year and understand why I continue to boast every opportunity I have about the incredible teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff we have at WCE.

WCE Mile High Scholar

Mile High Scholar is the tradition of recognizing tremendous talent and scholarship of Denver Public Schools students in 1st through 12th grade. Students are recognized for their qualities of scholarship, leadership, character, or for having made some special contribution to the school community during the year. This year WCE honors Zachary Tsao and Destiny Baylon-Casillas as outstanding members of the school community.

Zach Tsao was selected to be the Mile High Scholar student for first grade because of the qualities he presents on a daily basis. Zach has the qualities to be a leader. Within just his first grade classroom he has many friends. He finds balance to make sure that he makes time for each of his friends. Zach is a great student as well. He tries very hard at everything that he does! He has shown a

lot of growth in both his reading and his writing skills throughout the school year. Zach is an excellent drawer and loves to make books filled with dinosaurs! Above anything else, Zach is a polite and very respectful student!

Destiny Baylon-Casillas has been chosen as our Mile High Scholar for 2nd grade. She continues to demonstrate her desire to learn everyday. She is dedicated to her work and shows a great deal of growth in her education. She has made huge strides in her reading and math and continues to grow as a learner.

Destiny also shows a great deal of compassion and respect to her peers and teachers. You can count on her to help cheer you up if you are feeling down, or to get someone to help you if you are hurt. She has a kind soul and shows her kindness to everyone who crosses her path. We are proud to have Destiny as the 2nd grade Mile High Scholar.

Congratulations Zach and Destiny for all of your exceptional qualities!!

WCE Mile Teacher

Mile High Teacher is the tradition of recognizing outstanding teachers in Denver Public Schools. This year Westerly Creek's Mile High Teacher is Valerie Woodard. Ms. Woodard was nominated and selected by her colleagues at Westerly Creek because she exemplifies excellence in teaching, stimulates intellectual curiosity and encourages all of her students to be the very best and above all she is a role model for her colleagues and students. Congratulations, Ms. Woodard and thanks for all that you do!

Build Out

Many parents and community members have inquired about future plans
Continued on page 4

ECE News

ECE is learning about community helpers. We will be having a variety of speakers coming in to teach us about their jobs.

In literacy we are focusing on writing and sounding out words.

In math we are creating graphs and learning how to read them.

Reminder, there is no school for ECE on April 16th or 17th. On April 16th we will have our final parent meeting on literacy development.

Heard in the Halls

A police officer came to talk to our class and one kid reminded us..... "You can't rob a bank!"

We were talking about what our parents do for a job and a child said, "I don't know what my dad does, but my mom makes money!"



Kindergarten News

Wow, we have been busy in Kindergarten! We really enjoyed taking a field trip to the Denver Puppet Theater, and learning about different animals when the Denver Zoo came to West-erly Creek. Some of us even got to pet a hissing cockroach!

We're looking forward to touring the Butterfly Pavilion this month and feeding baby animals at Anderson Farms in May.

We just wrapped up our Dr. Seuss Author Study and loved reading all of the

wonderful and silly stories. (For the record, most students actually liked eating green eggs and ham!)

We just started our non-fiction unit, and are enjoying learning real life facts about our individual interests. We are discovering that everyone is an "expert" in at least one subject.

In Math, we're learning all about coin names and values; During Junior Achievement we learned about saving and trading money - thank you to our JA volunteers!

First Grade News

The first graders had been working hard on their non-fiction animal reports, so when they learned that the zoo was coming to our school with a variety of animals, the children were so excited! Many of the animals the students studied about were part of the assembly, giving them a fabulous opportunity to learn even more.

The first grade musical was a success! All the songs had to do with self-esteem and character development, things the kids work on each day in class, on the playground, in the cafeteria, and at home. To see them put these actions into songs was very special. They really meant what they were singing--and they sang their hearts out!

Second Grade News

Our second graders are growing bean seeds in our "plastic glove greenhouses"

We also have a "Root Viewer" to see how onions, carrots and radishes grow. As scientists we will ask questions, share ideas, develop explanations, keep records and use tools in our plant study.

There is a plant expert scheduled to speak to our classes and a field trip planned.

For the end of our How-To unit, the 2nd graders at Westerly Creek visited a local favorite, Anthony's Pizza.

During the unit the students learned and practiced procedural writing. We thought it would be a great idea to visit Anthony's to see how they make their delicious pizza.

We had gorgeous weather as we walked down 28th Avenue. We even stopped at the big Eye on the Horizon sculpture for a photo.

The students had an amazing time. They were all smiles... especially when the pizza came!

Thanks so much to Anthony's for making this a top field trip for the 2nd grade!



Principal's News cont'd

for accommodating all of our students in the next few years. Please know that DPS is aware that WCE and William Roberts will be at full capacity next year and have begun hosting the conversation on how to meet the needs of Stapleton. The district has put together a team of top officials to understand our current situation, brainstorm all possible scenarios and determine how to best move forward. As more information becomes available it will be shared.

Destination ImagiNation

Destination ImagiNation is an international Creative Problem Solving program for students in kindergarten through college that teaches problem solving, teamwork and life skills. Teams of 2-7 students are formed to solve one of six challenges that are published and released annually. This year WCE had three teams represent the school in the Denver Regional tournament on Saturday March 15, 2009. WCE salutes all the kids that participated and thanks the parents that volunteered countless hours as team managers. (see list and photo below)

The next two months will come and go before we know it. I encourage you to embrace this time with your student or students and find out how you can support them in the home environment. The third trimester is just as important as the first and you are an integral part of the educational process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or wonderings. I can be reached by email jill_corcoran@dpsk12.org; by phone 303.322.5877; or just stop in

Warm Regards,

Ms. Corcoran



Destination Imagination Team Magic

Managers - Emily Kosakowski and Jen Seward
Evan Kosakowski Jack Seward Aodhan Roche
Tommy Cummings Chloe Farr Rebecca Nagel
Katie Cummings Ella Young Cara Williams

Manager - Kelly Nguyen
Aidan Nguyen Keyla Castaneda-Flores
Tobin Hoops Zac Stahlhut Spencer Gordon

Managers - Heather Mock and Johanna Staple
Oliver Mock Max Ramirez Hogan Hickman
Taylor Howard Brayden Ernst Zoe Stahlhut
Asha Mahamad

Manager - Lyn Kathlene
Mahlon Wallick Madeline Nguyen Jonah Landeck
Madeline Swietlik Audrey Willius Caroline Spaeth
Acadia Ferrero-Lampron

From Ms. Capps...

Character Education continues to move forward with the implementation of *Rachel's Challenge*. All Westerly Creek Kindergarten, first and second grade students participated in the kick off assembly, signing the Rachel's Challenge pledge and participating in character education classes.

So far they have learned a little more about Rachel and why she thought kindness was so important. Our first official lesson discussed honesty and influencing others to make good decisions. The kids thoroughly enjoyed creating verbal links of kindness and verbal links of crankiness. You really can pass on both to others!

If you haven't seen our kindness links please stop for a moment and admire all of the wonderful acts of kindness going on at WCE!

As always, if you or your family finds yourself in need of assistance, a friendly ear, or support in any way please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here Tuesdays and Fridays and my new Westerly Creek phone # is 720-424-3202.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ Westerly Creek R.E.D - Reaching Educational Dreams Auction April 18
- ◆ Literacy Night April 21
- ◆ Baby and Kid Stuff Sale April 25
- ◆ Seussical, Jr. Kindergarten Program May 6
- ◆ Spring Spruce Up May 16th

PTA News

Springing Forward

Days are getting longer and a little warmer- what a pleasant change! As we enter the third semester there is a lot going on! Including a new PTA board that has just been nominated; following you will find a little more information about each of the new members.

Karla Rehring Our trusted Vice President is ready to move into the position of President. She has been instrumental in all of the work that we have accomplished in the last two years. I am confident that she is ready and able to take Westerly Creek to the next level. Thank you Karla for all that you have done in the last two years and for the willingness to lead us in the next year.

Nicole Landeck Nicole and her family recently moved to Stapleton from Virginia, via New Orleans. They narrowly escaped Hurricane Katrina, and then transferred to Virginia, they are now ready to establish roots right here in Stapleton. I admire Nicole for stepping forward and taking on the role of Vice President for our next year. She will offer us a fresh perspective and a fabulous energy that we will all benefit from.

Jennifer Seward Jennifer has agreed to be the Secretary for next year. Jennifer and her husband Chet have been avid supporters of WCE. Jennifer has served in many editorial positions, so we feel we have found the right person for the job. Thank you, Jennifer, for serving once again the WCE community.

Jeff Merman Jeff will be serving next year as our Treasurer. Jeff has been a very dedicated parent of WCE for the last four years. He is a steady and welcome presence. It's always great to see a full time working parent join the board. Thank you Jeff!

Beyond that- lots of stuff coming up over the next month...

Auction- April 18th Please read the Auction article on page 6 of the newsletter. A big thanks to the auction and communications committees - you guys are amazing!

Baby Stuff Sale- April 25th. Contact Jennifer Seward for more information.

Literacy Night- April 21st- More information will follow, please contact Ann Margaret Williams with questions or to volunteer!

Happy spring and thanks for your involvement!

Tina Turner
President, Westerly Creek PTA



Want to spend one more day by the pool this summer? Avoid the back-to-school shopping rush and stop running from store to store *and* support the Westerly Creek PTA!

Take the stress out of school supply shopping by ordering a supply kit! Order your EduKit school supply kit soon. Look for order forms coming home this May.



Community Clean-up and Family Ice Cream Social

Be on the lookout for a new date for a fun filled afternoon of quality family time hosted by the Westerly Creek PTA.

We've planned a unique scavenger hunt and community clean-up activity that includes plenty of fresh air and exercise, followed by a yummy ice cream treat. Watch for more information to come from your child's classroom about this family oriented activity. We hope to see you there!

We're Committed to Education!

Bargain Shoppers: Help WCE, while Shopping for Big Discounts on April 18th

Who Should Attend?

Bargain shoppers beware! The Westerly Creek R.E.D. Auction is coming soon and together we will be Reaching Educational Dreams. Guests will be happy to know that winning bids at WCE auctions have historically been about 60% of retail value! So bring your girlfriends to shop for amazing deals or plan that much needed date night with your spouse. Remember to leave the kids at home with a relative or team up with a friend to hire a babysitter, because this evening is just for adults. Best of all, 100% of the proceeds go to something close to your heart -- the education of your own children!

Ooohh Sounds fun! I need event details.

R.E.D. Auction
 Saturday, April 18th
 5-9 pm
 City Hall at 1144 Broadway
 Ticket Price: \$15/person advance ticket price (purchase before 4/15)
 Price includes admission, bid card, food, beverage/alcohol.

How Do I Buy Tickets?

Ticket prices are a terrific value at \$15 per person, including food and drink/alcohol. Buy them in person from Bea at the WCE front desk or go to www.WCEauction.com to purchase online. Once paid, your name will be added to the master guest list at the door.

Physical tickets may also be printed, but are not required for entry. Every ticket you purchase for yourself, family or friends will be attributed to your child's or children's' classrooms to help their class win the ticket sales contest.

What Items Can I Buy?

We've made sure there's something for every budget, from casual dining at Chipotle, Perk Hill, Adagio Bakery and La Cueva to park passes for the Botanic Gardens, Denver Zoo, Butterfly Pavilion, and the Children's Museum.

For those who want a special treat, we've secured spa packages, Nuggets tickets and fine dining options.

Don't worry, we haven't forgotten you practical shoppers. If it's time to give your yard a little finesse, you can bid on one of our home landscaping packages or finally get that memorable childhood portrait done by choosing a professional photography package.

No auction is complete without a few big ticket items. If you're ready for a truly memorable experience, bid on the Hot Air Balloon Ride for Two or take a romantic vacation to the wine country with our Sonoma Valley package. Soon you will be able to check out the amazing breadth of auction items at www.WCEauction.com so stay tuned for more items from the R.E.D. Auction catalog.

I can't make it, but still want to help WCE.

Visit www.WCEauction.com to directly give a tax-deductible donation to the school.

Why Do We Need an Auction?

DPS funding is intended to cover the basic necessities of a child's education. That often excludes important elements such as paraprofessionals, special programs, library books and an art program. (Paraprofessionals are educators who support our teachers in the classroom to improve student-to-teacher ratios.)

Research tells us that lower student-to-teacher ratios are critical in the earlier stages of learning. That's why WCE is committed to having a paraprofessional in every child's classroom. Without our PTA's fundraising efforts, that simply would not be possible.

Westerly Creek Coin Club Meets

By Andrew Hageman
(WCE 2nd Grade Student)



The first Westerly Creek coin Club was in December. We meet the second Thursday of each month. In the December meeting I had a good start of 11 kids. In the January meeting there were 25 kids. Theo Gould from the Denver Coin Club discussed coins and donated some coins and supplies. In the February meeting we talked about the new Lincoln cent. Zac brought a 1964 quarter and we looked it up in a coin book that the Denver Coin Club donated. Alison and Ben brought their quarter collections. We gave Zac a special holder for his coin. In the March Coin Club meeting we discussed the new Sacagawea coin. Tommy, Alison, Lily, Harper and Emma Ann all brought coins. Lily brought a coin from Ireland. We looked it up in a book. The rest brought either a half or whole dollar except Tommy and Alison. Tommy brought a coin from the Netherlands. Alison brought coins from Costa Rica. Everyone who came to the March meeting received the new Sacagawea dollar. The next coin club meeting is April 9th, 2009. Everyone who comes will get a coin. Everyone is welcome. Please bring and international coin to discuss.

Westerly Creek Cookbook

The first ever Westerly Creek Cookbook is in the works and we need your help. April 1st through April 20th we will begin collecting recipes and would love if each Westerly Creek family could contribute at least one recipe for the cookbook. The categories are: Appetizers, Bread, Rolls & Pastries, Side Dish & Vegetables, Soups & Salad, Pasta, Main Dishes, Desserts.

Kids in the Kitchen

Kids in the Kitchen is a special section that we hope can be lots of fun and will help get our students involved in the project. We would like parents to take a minute and ask their children which favorite recipe to include in the cookbook, ask them to tell you how they think it is made (i.e. ingredients, cooking instructions, etc.) and write down exactly what they say. Please include any additional comments or suggestions from the kids - direct quotes are great.

Each recipe submitted must include the contributor's name and contact information in case we have questions. Recipe collection forms and instructions will be available in the school lobby as well as on the PTA website. Additional information will be sent home to each student.

The Westerly Creek Cookbook will be printed over the summer and available for sale in August. If you would like to help on the Cookbook Committee, please contact Katie Dell at catherinebdell@yahoo.com or (720) 570-8117.



Field Day Help Needed

Field Day is a hop skip and jump away so I wanted to give everyone a heads up on what's happening. It is scheduled for May 15th which is a late start day and all afternoon will be dedicated to Field Day. I need two volunteers from each class to help out the day of the event. I have put sign up sheets for volunteers right outside each classroom, so hopefully we can get those spots filled soon.

When we have all volunteers I would like to sit down with them and let them know in more detail where they will be and what they will be doing. As the date approaches I will send something else out with exact times, events and other fun stuff. If you have any questions please email me at kathleen_brown@dpsk12.org or call me at 720.424.3195

Miss Katie

GT News from Ms. McCollum

We have started a new thematic unit on the Rain Forest! Second graders are studying plants with Ms. Barrows, so we are extending that by learning about the plants of the rain forests.

First graders are focusing on the animals of the rain forests and Kindergarteners are learning about the people and products of the rain forests.

We are also continuing our work with Junior Great Books. Students are learning that there are many ways to interpret literature and are engaging in exciting conversations about their responses to the stories we read. I have been very impressed with the students' respectful dialogue as well as their willingness to consider ideas other than their own.



Spring Spruce-Up

Join the PTA on Saturday, May 16 from 9:00am - 12:00 noon for the 2nd annual Westerly Creek Spring Spruce-Up. Last year we started bringing the three flower beds on the playground back to life with beautiful perennials planted by the 1st Grade and Kindergarten classes in celebration of Earth Day.

This fall an amazing group of parents planted 500 spring bulbs, which are starting to bloom and add much needed color and beauty to the playground. Now we just need to keep the momentum going and plant even more flowers to make our school a great place for our kids to learn and play.

On May 16 we will be cleaning up flower beds, planting more perennials as well as doing some general sprucing-up. Snacks and drinks will be provided. So, bring the whole family and help beautify the outside of our school.



*First Graders
Celebrate
You and Me*

Notes from Mrs. Hill



We have been keeping warm this winter with strong beats and lively melodies. Have your children ever done any of our Vocal Exercises with you? We can make our voices go up and down like a slide or a roller coaster or a set of stairs. It is a great way for us to learn how to use our head voices.

You Are My Sunshine was one of the first Valentine songs we did. My favorite, however, is always *Viva Valentine*. The ECE students learned a new one, *I Wanna Be a Friend*. Our shape drums don't include a heart shape, but we still loved to play them.

Our Rachel's Challenge program provided us with an original song, *Love and Kindness* to the tune of *Are You Sleeping*. The kindergarten children are continuing to sing it!

Of course the BIG news is the First Grade show on Wednesday, March 18. *Celebrate You and Me* is all about self-esteem and taking care of ourselves. Then COMING SOON is the kindergarten production - a mini version of the Broadway Musical - *Seussical, Jr.*, on May 6.

So we're singing into Spring! Come and join us anytime!

Judy Hill