



Welcome to the Woodland Park School District e-Newsletter, which will be sent out weekly when school is in session. This will serve as a glimpse of some of the wonderful things going on in our schools and with our students, as well as a point of reference for upcoming events.

Your Partner in Education,
Michele R. Pillari, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Important dates to note

Monday, Feb. 25 - Early Dismissal Day - Memorial and Beatrice Gilmore dismiss at 12:48 p.m. and Charles Olbon will dismiss at 1:28 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 25 - Kindergarten 2019-2020 school year registration at Charles Olbon from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 2 to 6 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 25 - BG Parent/Teacher Conferences, 2 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

Number of fundraisers help middle school student battling brain cancer

The community has rallied around Josephine Palman, a 13-year-old in eighth grade at Memorial School who was diagnosed last February with DIPG, a rare and lethal childhood brain cancer.

Holy Cross Church hosted "Valentine for Josephine" on Feb. 15 to raise funds. The sold out event was attended by Josephine and her family, local dignitaries, Principal Charles Silverstein and a table of Memorial School staff, as well and many family, friends and people from the community.

The over 100 attendees enjoyed dinner and live entertainment. Josephine was showered with lots of love and gifts.

The event raised enough funds to pay for Josephine's treatments at the DIPG Clinic in Mexico in March.

Local schools have all worked to raise funds as well. Charles Olbon's Home & School Association is running a "No One Fights Alone" bracelet sale that has raised over \$350 so far. Beatrice Gilmore's Home & School Association provided all students with a Valentine's picture and donations only were solicited.

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Library's Dream Mats project becomes a true community effort

The Alfred H. Baumann Free Public Library, in partnership with Mayor Kazmark, Passaic County Senior Services, Passaic Valley High School (PVHS) and the Woodland Park School District, is wrapping up its Dream Mats community service project, aimed at providing those experiencing homelessness with portable sleeping mats to help protect them from the elements and serve as a cushion on hard surfaces. Dream Mats are made by crocheting “plarn” - yarn made from recyclable plastic bags.

The Library hosted a day of service on Feb. 14 where nearly 70 people of all ages stopped by during the course of the day to work on the project. Prior to this, students at district schools pitched in by collecting, sorting, flattening and cutting the bags in their art classes. Memorial Middle School and PVHS students also worked to loop strips together. At PVHS, there were 76 participants, which included 61 students, staff members and parents that worked on looping and crocheting the strips. On the event on Feb. 14, participants created and completed four mats and another 10 are near completion.

“What I thought that was really awesome about this project is that it truly was intergenerational,” Library Director Linda Hoffman said, noting the number of kids learning to crochet from adults of all ages. “Overall, it was a huge success, and it also brought awareness to the plight of homelessness.”

Going forth, the Library hopes that individuals and groups will continue to create Dream Mats on their own. Any completed mats can be brought to the Library, which will get them to the County’s Human Services department. The Library has mat creation instructions on its website at www.abwplibrary.org.



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BG families contributed \$815.25 towards the effort. At Memorial School, a pajama day was organized by the Health Club and Student Council on Feb. 14 which raised \$1,132.

“I can’t possibly thank the community enough for this support,” said Josephine’s mother Patricia. “It has been an extremely trying 12 months but this is something we will never forget.”

DIPG affects about 250 children annually and there is no cure. Tumors can’t be removed as cancer cells are intermixed with normal cells in the brainstem that are crucial for functions like breathing. The family had been traveling to New York City for medical treatments and therapies. They are now traveling monthly to Monterrey, Mexico, for a chemotherapy treatment not available in the U.S. and not covered by insurance.

A GoFund me page has been set up to help raise funds to alleviate medical expenses. The page is located at gofundme.com/josephine-the-tumor-warrior. Updates are also available at facebook.com/battlebraincancer.

BG student Vanessa Hackett named U8 Female Athlete of the Year

Vanessa Hackett, a third grader at Beatrice Gilmore School received the highest honor for a youth track and field athlete in New Jersey by being named U8 Female Athlete of the Year in the throws by USA Track & Field - New Jersey.

USA Track & Field New Jersey selects one athlete in the state per age group for this honor. It was also announced that Vanessa is now an All-American athlete in the javelin.

Vanessa started throwing the javelin this past spring in her first season on the Saddle Brook Youth Track Club, which is a part of the NJ Striders Track Club. She quickly picked up the event and immediately started winning medals. She then went to the NJ State Junior Olympics where she placed third and qualified for the National Region 2 Junior Olympic Championships.

At the Region 2 JO Championships Vanessa not only won the Region 2 javelin championship but set a new Junior Olympic meet record with a throw of 52-7 which ranked her seventh in the country.

She qualified for the USATF National Junior Olympic Championships in Greensboro, N.C. Vanessa finished 10th at the National Championships while her twin sister Tori, who made it to Nationals in the shot put, finished 17th in the country.

Vanessa is currently playing basketball, indoor soccer and running indoor track. Vanessa and her twin Tori have both already qualified for the USATF National Indoor Track and Field Championships in March and are looking forward to the chance of making it back to the US National Junior Olympic Championships this summer in Sacramento, Calif.



Celebrating Scouting

On Feb. 8, Webelos (4th graders) and a Bear (3rd grade) from Beatrice Gilmore School wore their uniforms in recognition of National Boy Scout Day. The boys shared information about the Boy Scouts with the school over the PA during morning announcements. Additionally, they were available to answer questions for their peers during lunch and recess.



One Hundred Days Smarter



Charles Olbon School's kindergarten students marked the 100th day of school, which was on Feb. 14, by showing off their 100th day homemade t-shirts in a fashion show to their peers. The shirts each had 100 items on them - whether attached, or drawn on. Their creativity was on full display!

District schools kick off Kindness Challenge

All three district schools are on a 15 day mission to become the kindest school in America. They will be competing against 7,000 other schools in their efforts to become "Kindness Ninjas" in the Think Kindness challenge.

As part of this week's observance of Random Acts of Kindness Week, all three district schools hosted an assembly from the Nevada-based non-profit Think Kindness with Miss Kelley, who talked to the kids about the program.

During the assembly, Kelley talked about the powerful impact kindness can have on others. She talked about her challenges being in a military family and moving many times during her school years. In fourth grade, the actions of others at one school made all the difference for her and changed her life.

"You have the power to change someone's hour, their day, or even their life," she told the students.

Miss Kelley issued two challenges to the students at all three schools to complete during the 15-day mission.

The first is the 15 Day Kindness Challenge. Each school has been challenged to carry-out at least 5,000 acts of kindness - in school, at home and throughout the community. Students received a kindness journal to record their efforts.

Secondly, to help Think Kindness' efforts to assist children in need across the globe in areas where shoes are a luxury, all three schools are collecting gently used sneakers over the next two weeks. Only sneakers are being collected, and they must be laced or attached together so pairs do not get lost in transition.

Parents are encouraged to help their children by engaging them in conversations about the subject of kindness. Ask them about what they've done, acknowledge what they do, and encourage the simple life skill of kindness.

