

Beaver Bulletin



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Sept 2009

Principal's Corner

We are in full swing for the month of September. I hope everyone had a relaxing Labor Day! Thank you for all the support you have offered us during the first few weeks of school. I enjoyed meeting and seeing many of our families at Curriculum Night and hope that you left with lots of new and useful information. I would like to remind you of a few important instructional items:

- Students in grades 1, 3 and 5 will be taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Cognitive Abilities Test during the month of October. The tentative dates for these tests are as follows: Iowa Test of Basic Skills window opens October 5-8 and 13-23, 2009 and Cognitive Abilities Test window opens October 21-30, 2009.
- In order to protect instructional time, we are requesting that you not go to the classroom during class time. You may stop by the office if something needs to be delivered or you may write a note and leave it in the teacher's mailbox. Additionally, teacher conferences may be scheduled by calling the office and leaving a message with a teacher through voice mail. Teachers are available for conferences on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Our first Parent Teacher Conference afternoon is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15 from 3:30-5:30. Feel free to schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Dr. Culbreath

Nine Ways to Help Your Child Succeed

Children are our future; they are our most precious gift and ours for only a short period of time. If you are a teacher, you have them for a year. If you are a Principal, you have them for six years. If you are a parent, you have them for eighteen years. (Sometimes longer when they grow up and come back home "for a while".) As we go through the school year and get caught up in all of the activities, procedures and problems, we sometimes lose sight of our focus-the children. So, as we travel down the school year road together, let's remember to have fun with "our" children, laugh with them, dry their tears, enjoy their enthusiasm, energy and spontaneity, and appreciate their uniqueness.

1. Talk with your child often.
2. Set high but realistic expectations.
3. Build your child's self-esteem and confidence.
4. Support learning at home.
5. Communicate with your child's school.
6. Encourage exploration and discovery.
7. Help your child to develop good relationships.
8. Teach your child about safety, how to avoid potential risks including Internet risks.
9. Teach children about volunteering and community service.



Co-Presidents' Message

What a whirlwind the first month of school has been? Everything from the flu to our first Spirit Night and everything in between. We've attended the largest Curriculum Night in Briarlake history, with 433 students, the cafeteria was full of happy parents making beaver noises. That has to be a first! We've worked together to begin creating our courtyard garden with the new hardscape raised plant bed, and continued beautifying our Janice Benator Memorial Garden with the help of many campus beautification volunteers! We've smiled pretty for our school pictures, rescheduled our class pictures (to October 16), and attended our first and best ever Spirit Night at Chick-Fil-A, both in the same day. We've sold tons of Sally Foster and hope to raise lots of money to serve our school and students. Wheew! We've been busy. We needed a laborious day off!

Our Ice Cream Social was "beaverlicious". Thank you to Lisa Moore and Heidi Carpenter for all their hard work coordinating this huge effort. We had a large turn-out, a lot of Briarlake t-shirts were worn, spirit was increased, lots of ice cream was eaten and fun was had by all. The name of our new school beaver mascot is.... (drum roll here) Bucky!! An endearing and enduring name. 21 students nominated Bucky as the new name and won a Bruster's sundae gift card. Thank you to Susan Gouinlock for coordinating this spirited effort. Our new Briarlake Beaver School song was introduced by Jack Moore, our in-school composer. The words are:

We are beavers, Briarlake Beavers

Beavers are we all

When we get in trouble,

We give the Beaver Call! (Beaver noises)

September 21 is International Peace Day. Our students will participate in a special "Flags of Peace" assembly and be a part of the Janice Benator Memorial Garden Dedication Ceremony. A perfect day to honor a beloved teacher.

Mark your calendars now for the FALL FESTIVAL—Briarlake's time honored tradition. October 3, bring your family and get ready to celebrate the change in seasons. Always a hit with our students and community. This is such a large event and attended by almost everyone, that it takes a huge effort by our parents. Volunteers are greatly needed. Thanks to Carolyn Hansen and Angela Pilcher for organizing this tradition again.

We are so blessed to have such wonderful volunteers, parents, teachers, and staff members. None of the above mentioned could or would be possible without each and every one of you. YOU make Briarlake GREAT!!

Sarah and Laurie

Fall in for the Fall Festival

Football is here and the air is crisp which means that the annual Briarlake Fall Festival is just around the corner! The Fall Festival is a very special event for Briarlake families, friends, and the community. It is a fun filled day packed with activities, games, inflatables, a craft show, a haunted house, kids crafts, delicious food, and more! Your child's class is most likely already working on a beautiful piece of art to display at the classroom craft auction, so get ready to bid! With all of these great activities, you can imagine that it takes quite a village to produce such a huge event.

That is why WE NEED YOU!

The festival cannot be the huge success it is and represent the school and our families so well without parent volunteers to help. We need ticket takers (for games, inflatables, etc), crafty crafters (to help with kids crafts), concessionaire's, tractor drivers (yup, that's right!), haunted house inhabitants, etc. You are guaranteed a fun time and the pleasure of seeing a lot of joy and smiles on kids faces (grown ups, too!) The shifts still allow plenty of free time before or after to participate in activities, grab a bite, shop, etc. - and we have plenty of slots available, so don't hesitate. . .

Excited to be a part of it?! Of course you are! Sign up to volunteer on the Fall Festival volunteer poster in the main hall just down from the office, or contact Vanessa Erens at verens@comcast.net.

We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Carolyn Hansen and Angela Pilcher,

Festival Co-chairs

Have you heard?

Did your child come home last week telling you they went to "Discovery" ? Well, they are correct! This year, every Briarlake student is getting an opportunity to have an enriching experience provided by our two fabulous Discovery teachers, Ms. McMillan and Mrs. Fields! Our Briarlake teachers now have job embedded professional development every 4.5 weeks to coincide with the new progress reporting schedule. This valuable time during the school day allows them to get together as professional teams to learn new instructional and assessment strategies, discuss student progress, analyze student work and benchmark assessments and then plan appropriate instruction based on student needs. During this time, your children are rotating through extended 50 minute periods of art or music, P.E. and enrichment!

We cannot thank the Discovery teachers enough for their participation, but much appreciation also goes out to Mr. Cocks, Mrs. Kramer and Ms. Goodwin for their support. We could not make this work at all without them! This extended time allows them to give your children experiences that just can't be completed in the usual 35



minute specials period. For example, the Kindergarten students were able to work with clay in art and Ms. Goodwin has gotten a head start on the holiday program!

Please make sure you thank these special area teachers for their willing participation and their support when you see them!

From the Briarlake School Master Gardeners

The Fernbank Science Center Fall Plant Sale is Saturday, September 19, 2009, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at 156 Heaton Park Dr., Atlanta, GA 30307. They will have a wide variety of native perennials, trees and shrubs. The Fernbank Science Center horticulture staff will be on hand to answer landscape and gardening questions. For more information and the list of plants available, please visit <http://www.fernbank.edu/plantsale.htm>



Our personal thanks to the many volunteers who helped to fill our new raised landscape bed outside the cafeteria. What a super job you did! The plants will arrive in the next few weeks and thanks to each of you, the bed is ready.

"Toad-Ally Awesome" Sally Foster News



Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Sally Foster sale! Thank you also to those families who were not able to participate in Sally Foster, but made a donation anyway!

Money we raise is going to support important school programs and our playground fund. Thank you for making a difference in your child's school!

We will be announcing class party winner, top 2 sellers, and Fur Bus riders shortly.

The fabulous "Fur Bus" will be taking students who sold \$150+ for a ride on Wednesday, Sep. 30 (in the morning). Look for notification in your child's backpack next week.

Sally Foster orders will go home with your child on Tuesday, Oct. 13 (after the long weekend). Prizes that your child earned from the Sally Foster prize brochure will be included in their order.

If you have a particularly large order, please make arrangements to help your child get their order home. If your order includes chocolate, remember not to leave it in your car!

We thank you all very much for your generosity and support!

Irenea Seufert and
Michele Lindner
Sally Foster Chairpersons

Green Team News

The green team is so excited about the new year and all the activities we plan to begin and revisit. We just had our first big meeting and are looking forward to the Fall Festival as we recreate our famous Marble Run! We'll also be selling those fabulous and fashionable shopping bags and non-toxic cleaning products. Look for us there as we continue to promote good habits for a healthy environment.



Mark your calendars for October 7th, National Walk to School Day. Please join us in cutting down on air pollution, saving gas, and getting healthy on that day by putting on your walking shoes. Coach Cocks, the Green Team and the Healthy Habits Team will be there to greet you in the morning as you start the day off right.

Please start saving and collecting your electronics. We will have another drive thru collection during morning carpool, on October 16th when we also collect Sally Foster boxes for recycling. Please visit the following website for a list of accepted items. www.decatarga.com/cgs_citysvcs_sfm_electronics.aspx

A new project our team is taking on this year is to recycle juice pouches. Capri-Sun, Kool-Aid, and Honest Kids are the brands we are collecting. Please remove the straws and empty pouch of liquids. A plastic bin is placed near the front entrance for collection. Our school will receive \$100 for every 5000 collected. The pouches will then be made into really cool items, such as pencil cases, lunch boxes, totes, etc. What a great way to recycle and reuse!

While we are on a recycling roll.... Cells phones are also being collected. These phones will go to a very worthy cause. The gorillas at the Atlanta Zoo will benefit from your used cell phones. This is just another way Briarlake reaches out to the community AND helps the planet at the same time. Please show your support for Briarlake's Go Green Initiative by participating in these fun and Earth-friendly activities.

Scarecrows in the Garden



Returning to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens for the eighth spooktacular year, Scarecrows in the Garden is bigger than ever with more than 100 handcrafted masterpieces from across the metro Atlanta area. That includes our very own Briarlake scarecrow. That's right! During the month of October, "Miss Heli Ann Thus" will be representing Briarlake's Jr. Garden Club in this exciting competition. Just in case you didn't know . . . Helianthus is the Latin name for the common Sunflower. The Jr. Garden Club has been busy decorating Miss Heli Ann Thus with . . . but, of course! Bottle caps! She's absolutely divine in her blue skirt, rhinestone earrings, and yellow garden clogs. All scarecrows are judged from two categories: Professional and

Non-professional. Yes, you guessed it! We're in the non-professional category.

Throughout October, weekends at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens are full of interactive games and fun craft activities for children and families. Families are encouraged to meet in the Children's Garden for fall-themed crafts and games, every October weekend, 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. While you're at the gardens, go check out Briarlake's very own scarecrow, "Miss Heli Ann Thus"!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

National Walk to School Day

Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Let's see how short we can make the carpool line. Walk, bike, or roll to school and join in this nationwide event!

Campus Work Day

Saturday, September 19th 9am - noon

Many hands make light work. No special skills are required, just an interest in making Briarlake a great learning environment inside and out. Bring gloves, gardening tools, wheelbarrows, and kids and help us spruce up the grounds, gardens and seating areas. Thanks for lending a hand!



Spotlight

Each month we highlight an individual or group of outstanding educators or staff at Briarlake Elementary School. Those selected have exhibited a passion for learning and embrace education as a life-long pursuit. They care about their students, parents and communities. This month, we'd like to spotlight 5 outstanding individuals:

Please show your appreciation and thank them for their hard work and dedication to your children and our community. -

These ladies are true examples of inspiring minds, open hearts and loving souls. *Here's a peek into their worlds:*

Dana Gavrielides



Favorite movie and snack to eat while watching it -
The Bodyguard- Reese's Pieces

Favorite snack I love apples with peanut butter!

Most memorable vacation spot Cyprus

Favorite Restaurant in Atlanta/Decatur
Los Hermanos- (Tucker)

Best subject when you were in school
Reading/Spelling

If you could travel anywhere in the world (and take the entire student body) where would you go?

I would return to Cyprus to share the experiences of beautiful water, incredible ancient ruins, and the delicious food!

Gavrielides (cont from pg 6)

If you were stuck on an island what three things would you make sure you had with you?

My children, Coca-Cola Classic, and hair color!

What one thing, talent, or experience would you like to share with us that we would be shocked(or humored) to know?

The last time I dyed my hair it accidentally came out totally gray!

What do you like best about Briarlake Elementary School?

I love being in the front office helping children and parents!

Dr. Culbreath



Favorite movie and snack to eat while watching it -
The Sound of Music and Popcorn

Favorite snack Popcorn

Most memorable vacation spot Hawaii

Favorite Restaurant in Atlanta/Decatur
Doc Chey's Noodle House

Best subject when you were in school Reading

If you could travel anywhere in the world (and take the entire student body) where would you go?
Africa-so students can appreciate the differences in

people and see that when you learn about others you discover that individuals are more similar to one another than different.

If you were stuck on an island what three things would you make sure you had with you? I would be sure to have my husband, son and chocolate; my three favorite things!

What one thing, talent, or experience would you like to share with us that we would be shocked(or humored) to know? I spent 6 months in England doing my student teaching and worked with students in a primary school.

What do you like best about Briarlake Elementary School? The adoring students and awesome faculty

Mrs. Jenks



Favorite movie and snack to eat while watching it -
Imitation of Life and Ice Cream

Favorite snack M & M's

Most memorable vacation spot Paris
Favorite Restaurant in Atlanta/Decatur
Maddio's Pizza

Best subject when you were in school
Reading/Writing and Spelling

Jenks (cont from pg 7)

If you could travel anywhere in the world (and take the entire student body) where would you go?

Italy

If you were stuck on an island what three things would you make sure you had with you? A good book, my dogs and a computer

What one thing, talent, or experience would you like to share with us that we would be shocked(or humored) to know? That my friends think I'm really funny

What do you like best about Briarlake Elementary School? The small size makes it easy to get to know students and their families.

Lynn Hale (honest - this is the pic sent in)



Favorite movie and snack to eat while watching it -

Practical Magic and PB and J

Favorite snack PB and J

Most memorable vacation spot Tybee Island

Favorite Restaurant in Atlanta/Decatur

Maddy's Ribs

Best subject when you were in school Cheer-leading

If you could travel anywhere in the world (and take the entire student body) where would you go?

Nova Scotia

If you were stuck on an island what three things would you make sure you had with you? Books, reading glasses and sunscreen

What one thing, talent, or experience would you like to share with us that we would be shocked(or humored) to know? My family enjoys my cooking so much they think I should open a restaurant

What do you like best about Briarlake Elementary School? The KIDS

Mrs. Norris-Brown (photo not available)

Favorite movie and snack to eat while watching it -

Malcolm X and popcorn and M & M's

Favorite snack Trail Mix

Most memorable vacation spot Puerto Vallarta

Favorite Restaurant in Atlanta/Decatur

Chops

Best subject when you were in school Social Studies

If you could travel anywhere in the world (and take the entire student body) where would you go?

Africa

If you were stuck on an island what three things would you make sure you had with you? Laptop, snacks and bottled water

What do you like best about Briarlake Elementary School? Briarlake PTA is the best!

**DeKalb
County School System
Mission and Vision**

MISSION

The Mission of the DeKalb County School System is to form a collaborative effort between home and school that maximizes students' social and academic potential, preparing them to compete in a global society.

VISION

“Premier DeKalb Schools - Setting the Standard for Excellence through Unity and Purpose”

Briarlake Elementary:

A Georgia School of Excellence



Briarlake Elementary School

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**Briarlake Elementary School
Values, Vision and Mission**

VALUES

We value a multi-disciplinary learning experience that promotes student achievement in a challenging, stimulating environment.

We believe in sustaining continuous progress in the core curriculum while providing enrichment and acceleration so that all students reach their full academic potential. We believe our knowledgeable and caring staff holds high expectations for all students and provides a risk-free environment to facilitate the development of good citizenship and character in each student.

VISION

We envision a change in the status quo as we create a culture of new expectations. We expect our stakeholders to work collaboratively to raise standards and increase achievement in the academic program for all students at Briarlake Elementary.

MISSION

We accept the charge to form a collaborative effort between home and school that maximizes students' social and academic potential, preparing them to contribute to the common good of the community and to compete successfully in a global society.

Mark Your Calendars

Sept 19 - Campus Work Day

Sept 30 - Fur Bus

Oct 7 - National Walk to School Dy

Oct 13 - Sally Foster orders go home

Oct 16 - Class picture and picture re-take day