

Phillips Community Newsletter

Phillips School ~ Annandale

May 2008

Special Interest Articles:

- Notes from the Behavior Program
- Talking with Children About World Events
- Classroom News
- Parent Advisory Group News
- Students of the Month
- Events Calendar

LUNCH PROGRAM UPDATE

The PHILLIPS Schools Lunch Program is off to a successful start. As of early April, 195 students are participating in the new lunch program (combined total of PHILLIPS-Laurel and PHILLIPS-Annandale students)

Students seem to love the food and PHILLIPS' experience with the pilot program has been that each week, more parents sign up their children for lunch than in the previous week.

Still, the program is facing significant challenges. At present, the costs of the program exceed revenues which come from a combination of parent payments, federal reimbursements, and staff donations.

The PHILLIPS staff has been a significant supporter of the program. So far, staff donations are projected to raise \$6,300 annually toward the cost of the program. And it's not surprising why. One teacher's experience highlights the value of the program.

"Yesterday one of my students was falling apart around 11. At that point, lunch was delivered and I told him to go ahead and eat since it seemed that he might just need food. He ate and within 20 minutes he was a different person. This is a student who has unfortunately only brought junk food to school in the past."

Because of the desire to continue the lunch program and to set it on a firm financial footing, it will be necessary to increase participation rates. In addition, PHILLIPS is looking for additional sources of funding

which may include a combination of staff donations and fundraising from the PHILLIPS donor community.



We hope that all of the PHILLIPS Community will continue to support this worthwhile initiative in whatever way possible!

FAMILY SERVICES CORNER

It is so hard to believe that this school year is already well into the 4th quarter, and it won't be long before the summer is here again. As always, we try to give out some ideas for how parents and guardians can "survive" the summer with the children. Some things that might help students remember what learning is like can be accomplished with ease during these weeks that school is not in session.

1. Go to the library. Don't worry too much about what the kids are reading; the really important thing is to keep them involved with books and showing an interest in being read to as well.
2. Go somewhere. An educational field trip doesn't have to be to a museum. A zoo would work as you can study science there too! The beach is another great place to talk about water and sea creatures.
3. Limit screen time. This means TV, video games, and the computer. Brainstorm with your kids for alternate activities and fun things to stay busy.
4. Change toys on a rotating basis. Put some away and bring them out in a few weeks. It will seem like you just went shopping!!
5. Learn something new together. Ask the kids what they would be interested in knowing more about and see what happens.

The **Phillips Community Newsletter** and the **PAG** wishes everyone a safe and happy summer. See you in the fall!

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NOTES FROM THE BEHAVIOR

DEPARTMENT

Barbara McCollett, Behavior Department Supervisor

"So, I've identified the problem, NOW WHAT?" This is the question that parents struggle with when deciding how to respond to the special needs of their child that has been identified with a disorder, disability, or deficit.

Of course, there is no easy answer to this question. The issues we are discussing here come with labels like Attention Deficit Disorder, Aspergher's, Autism, Speech/Language Deficit, and Specific Learning Disability. They imply deficits or delays in the skills that effect learning and social growth and can lead to frustration and behavioral difficulties. There are, however some very important concepts that will guide parents, teachers, and caregivers in their approach to helping a child reach his or her potential. These concepts are listed below in the form of suggested Do's and Don'ts.

Do's

I begin with the positives because the focus is on hope and unlimited possibilities:

Do: Learn about the problem. Talk to your child's Doctor. Read books. Join support groups. Ask for resource material from teachers, counselors. Become an expert in how the deficit or disability impacts your child and what to expect.

Do: Teach the lacking skills/compensatory skills that your child needs: Remember, part of the disability may be that your child has significant difficulty developing skills that come easily to others. Continue to practice through repetition, role-play, suggestion, role modeling, and offering social and learning opportunities. Try to make it fun!

Do: Understand and be patient: The skills that your child is struggling to learn are challenging for him/her. He is not just being stubborn or trying to make your life difficult. If he could do better, he would. When he can do better, he will. All children want to succeed.

Do: Maintain a high standard: Expect respect for self and others. Know that your child can continue to develop and build on his growing skills no matter what challenges he faces.

Do: Collaborate with school staff, doctors, and other care-givers: You have a wealth of knowledge regarding your child's likes, dislikes, motivators, deterrents, and more. Sharing this information can avoid having to "reinvent the wheel" with new teachers and others. And when your child's team is communicating and consistent in their approach, progress is likely to occur more rapidly.

Don'ts

There are important pitfalls to avoid when choosing how to supportively parent a child with challenges.

Don't: Feel sorry for your child: Pity leads to feelings of hopelessness and inability. There are many things that your child can do well. Focus on your child's strengths and give him or her opportunities to experience success in these areas.

Don't: Expect your child to do things that he cannot do/has not learned: Once you have done your research, you will identify areas in which your child may have

The **Phillips Community Newsletter** is sponsored by the Parent Advisory Group (PAG) which welcomes submissions from everyone in the PHILLIPS Community (staff, students, parents, etc.) Please give your submissions to either Randi Bane or email them to the editor at pfekete@nova.umuc.edu. The newsletter is also available on the PHILLIPS web site at: <http://www.phillipsprograms.org/schools.htm>

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difficulty. You set yourself and your child up for disappointment when you demand that a child do that which he has not yet mastered.

Don't: Justify negative behavior: Although disabilities and deficits can lead to frustration, it is not helpful to a child to use his disability as an excuse for disrespect to others or negative behavior.

Don't: Belittle or blame your child for his deficits: Your child did not choose the challenges that he/she faces when living with a disability. Focus on the positives, model and suggest appropriate alternatives, and emphasize strengths. This will go a long way toward developing your child's self-esteem.

Don't: Give up hope: Every child has abilities and strengths. Every child is capable of overcoming difficulties and achieving success. You may become discouraged at times...look to those around you for support. Recognize the progress your child has made and know that he or she is capable of rising to many more challenges both big and small.

When considering ways to give support to your child with special needs, there is no "easy button". There are some practical guidelines, however, that can be helpful in choosing how to handle difficulties. And remember you are not alone...reach out to those around you, working together with loved ones, teachers, and others who care, toward the possibilities in your child's future.

TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT WORLD EVENTS

Today, children are being exposed to many startling images on TV and hearing detailed stories on the radio about war and other world events that may disturb them. How can we help our children deal with these issues? Before talking to children about these events, parents should take time to

think about the issue themselves and consider what it means to their family. Each family is unique, with its own special history and past experiences of loss, trauma and war. Talk with children in language they can understand. Because world events change every day, children may have questions on more than one occasion. Issues may need to be discussed more than one time. New events may need clarification for children. Parents should remain flexible and open to new questions and clarifications.

Starting the Conversation

- Be open, available and positive-creating an environment that supports communication among all members of the family. Use family times (such as mealtimes) to talk about what is happening in the world. Or time between dinner and bedtime is another opportunity. Follow the conversation with a favorite story or music to end the day with established routines that ease them into sleep.
- Listening to children helps ease their worries and ends any misunderstandings they may have.

Tips for Talking with Children About the News

- Determine if your child is old enough to watch and understand the news
- Limit TV watching during prime news times (5pm, 6pm and 10pm)
- Watch the news and read the newspaper with your child
- Encourage open communication between yourself and your child
- Ask the child to share his/her feelings about the news
- Talk to your child about the news and the images being shown

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- Respect your child's fears and thoughts
- Research the news and facts with your child
- Find kid-friendly news sources for your child
- Discuss with your child's teachers what is being discussed at school

Other Tips for Parents

- Keep to your everyday routines and don't change family rules
- Help younger children make sense of what they hear from older children and siblings
- During stressful times, give children more attention and patience.-realize that changes in how they behave may be signs that young children are concerned
- Be aware of what is being said during adult conversations about current events, particularly if children are present

PARENT ADVISORY GROUP NEWS

Staff Appreciation Day was held on May 8 and was a wonderful success with lots of excellent food. The Parent Advisory Group would like to thank all those who provided support for this special day. Thanks also to the volunteers who were able to provide a breakfast break for our transportation staff and, in the afternoon, for PHILLIPS' teachers and staff.



SUMMER PLANNING

Once again, summer is coming, and we want to be sure parents are making plans. The jurisdictions do offer a variety of classes and special social activities for children, teens, and young adults. Check out their websites and make some calls. If

you need additional help, please call your family specialist at PHILLIPS.

Arlington Co. Parks & Rec
703 228-4740
Alexandria City Parks & Rec
703 519-3353
Fairfax Co. Therapeutic Rec.
703 324-5532
Prince William Co.
703 792-7060
Loudoun Co.
703 777-0438
P. G. Co. (MD) Dept. of Parks & Rec
301 454-1480
Montgomery Co. Dept. of Rec.
301 468-4540
YNCA of National Capital Area
703 560-1111
Eddie's Club
703 551-0652

ARTS IN EDUCATION AT PHILLIPS

The gym was hopping recently when the *Footworks Progressive Dance Ensemble* presented *Keeping the Beat: Contemporary American Traditional Dance*.



PHILLIPS greatly appreciates the continued support of the Washington Performing Arts Society, sponsor of this event, enjoyed thoroughly by staff & students. For more information on the performance, please visit:

<http://www.footworks.org/aie.html>

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Guitars Not Guns Update

By Marie Withrow, Admin/Tech Supervisor



Last issue we announced an exciting new program at PHILLIPS. Thanks to the hard work of Julie Burton and instructors Skip & Dan, the following three PHILLIPS students have already earned their guitars by mastering the basics during this first course: Michael E., Malik P., and Mary C. Three other students, while not passing yet, will continue during the next session in hopes of earning their guitar!

Joining the next round are Danielle W., Robert M., Vincent M. and Caleb L. The students are working hard to learn how to play the guitar and those who pass the skills test will take them home to keep!

CAREER EDUCATION VOLUNTEER WORK

By Karen Steshko, Career Education Coordinator

One of the Career Education Department's goals is to find opportunities for our students to assist others through volunteer work. Such work gives students a chance to give back to others and to develop social behaviors in an actual work setting.

One of the agencies we have worked with for several years is the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in Alexandria, Virginia. Two of their largest projects are the Pennies for Patients and Light the Night activities. The Pennies for Patients program is a major fund raising project for the Society involving students from 150+ schools in the DC metro area who agree to collect pennies. PHILLIPS students have participated for several years by preparing the materials that are shipped to the area schools collecting pennies. This activity has given our students opportunities to develop office skills (collating and preparing packets), and to prepare boxes

for shipping via UPS. Students have learned to weigh the boxes and record weights so that the shipping labels can be ordered.

In addition to the Pennies for Patients project, students at PHILLIPS have also assisted with the Light the Night activity. PHILLIPS Programs has prepared the flashlights that are used to light the balloons. The tasks involve inserting batteries into the flashlight unit, testing the light, and then re-packaging the flashlight into its plastic bag. This also gives the students chances to problem solve when a flashlight unit does not operate correctly.

This year, we also have two Education for Employment (EFE) groups that go to the Leukemia Society's office and assist with office work. The Leukemia Society has also mentored several of our students who have worked there as interns assisting with office and mailing activities.

We are very appreciative of the support the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society has given our students and grateful for this opportunity for our students to "give back" to the community.

PHILLIPS GALA

The PAG once again donated a basket to the PHILLIPS Gala Silent Auction which was held on May 10. Thank you to all who donated items for the basket. The "Serenity" basket looked beautiful. PHILLIPS-Annandale Parents and Students were well represented! Our special thanks to Patti Miller for spearheading this effort again this year!

PAG YAHOO GROUP

The PHILLIPS Community can stay in touch with each other via a Yahoo Group called **PhillipsPAG**. Everyone in the PHILLIPS Community is invited to join the group

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which will be utilized to supplement the distribution of information related to

JOIN THE PAG YAHOO GROUP

Group name: PHILLIPSPAG

Group home page:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PHILLIPSPAG>

Group email address:
PHILLIPSPAG@yahoo.com

PHILLIPS. It can also be used to post messages, ask questions, share files and photos, create group polls, and more. Anyone can access the group by using the links below or from the Yahoo! Groups "My Groups" page.

For further information, please contact Paul

Fekete at pfekete@nova.umuc.edu

CLASSROOM NEWS



Top Picks By 106

Room 106 has had a full year this year! We have learned about so many different things and have had a great time getting to know each other and working with each other. With everything that we have done, it seems like time has flown by! Here is a little about what we have done during the past three quarters:

In English, we studied Tall Tales, Fables, Myths and Legends in the beginning of the year. After we were done with our trip into the world of fantasy, we dove into the short stories of Tashio Mori and Langston Hughes. Later in the year, we explored the world of non-fiction by reading the autobiographical works by Helen Keller and Maya Angelou. Finally, we enjoyed doing an in-depth study of "Raisin in the Sun" by both reading and

performing the play.

In government, we also went in-depth, studying the 3 branches of the American Government. Once we familiarized ourselves with the functions of each branch, we took a trip to Capitol Hill to see Congress at work.

A third, but certainly not final, area in which we focused our studies was health and wellness skills. We learned about first aid, practiced navigating and accessing medical services, and studied the safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medication.

Finally, we are pleased to share that most of the students in room 106 have earned the end of the year trip to 6 Flags. We have had a wonderful year, and are proud to share our successes!

Room 108

During the month of February, Room 108 studied the Civil Rights Movement and how it impacts our lives today. Lessons ranged from studying the landmark cases of Brown vs. Board of Education, Civil Rights Leaders, and we even held an in-class mock Jim Crow Law demonstration. During our Jim Crow mock lessons, the students of

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Published by the Annandale Parents Advisory Group (PAG)

Paul Fekete, <i>PAG Chairman and Newsletter editor</i>	(202)686-1759	pfekete@nova.umuc.edu
Sheila Cherubin	(703)764-3172	sheilacherubin@aol.com
Carol Grigsby	(202)686-1759	cagrigsby@verizon.net
Daniel Mattingly		millerpatr@saic.com
Patricia Miller		trudy.bell@phillipsprograms.org
Trudy Bell	(703)941-8810	randi.bane@phillipsprograms.org
Randi Bane	(703)941-8810	

The PHILLIPS Parent Advisory Group (PAG) consists of parents and school staff who are interested in providing parent leadership to support the school by advising on problems and concerns, sharing ideas and coordinating activities that are beneficial to both parents and children.

The PAG meets once a month with meetings held in the staff lounge from 7:00-8:00pm. Please come and become a part of this group! If you are unable to attend, but have some questions, ideas, or concerns, please give us a call or send us an email.

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Room 108 walked into a classroom set up with concrete examples of Jim Crow Law boundaries. After the lesson, students engaged in class discussions sharing their personal experiences of the separate but equal law. Each student was required to select a person of interest who lived during the Civil Rights Movement, to complete a Bibliography Report and present their findings to the class. Lastly, we went on a field trip to the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum located in Baltimore, MD for enrichment.

During the month of March, the students in Room 108 held Writing Workshops, learning about resume development and job application completion. Each student was provided a sample resume to view and a blank resume template to begin building their current resume. We have gone on several different Job Skill field trips throughout this school year, ranging from the VEC (Virginia Employment Commission), George Mason Regional Library, Sun Pacific Clothing and Apparel Store, etc... to an Apprenticeship and Training Seminar. The students in Room 108 have met, in person, with various store managers to gather information of job applications' requirements and expectations. The students of Room 108 continue to enjoy these enriching experiences.

STUDENT CONTRIBUTION

CAN I CHANGE?
BY: DAWAN T.

CAN I CHANGE THE THINGS I DO?
CAN I CHANGE THE THINGS I BEEN
THROUGH?

I KNOW ITS NOT YOUR FAULT BUT I BLAME
IT ON YOU BECAUSE I WANT PEOPLE TO
FEEL WHAT I HAVE BEEN THROUGH

YOU DON'T KNOW ME LIKE YOU SAID YOU
KNOW ME BECAUSE IF YOU DID YOU WOULD
CHANGE THE WAY YOU REACT TO ME

I DO THINGS THAT I SHOULD NOT DO
THAT'S WHY I PUT THE BLAME ON YOU BUT
I KNOW ITS NOT YOUR FAULT AND I AM
SORRY FOR THAT

BECAUSE THE WAY I TALK TO YOU MAKES
ME FEEL BAD INSIDE
THAT'S WHY I DO THINGS THAT OTHER
PEOPLE DON'T DO
AND I GET IN MORE TROUBLE THAN OTHER
KIDS DO
AND I'M SORRY FOR THE WAY I ACT

AND I WILL NEVER ACT LIKE THAT SO I AM
GOING TO CHANGE
AND I WILL KEEP IT LIKE THAT



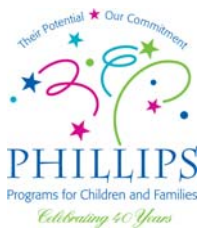
STUDENTS OF THE MONTH (MARCH)

Please congratulate the following March Students of the Month.

- 101 Mark B.
- 102 Alex M.
- 103 Erik A.
- 104 Anthony I.
- 105 Travis B.
- 106 Kenny C.
- 107 Howie
- 108 Damany S.
- 110 Felicia T.
- 111 Michael E.
- 113 Charlie K.
- 114 Peter B.
- 201 Brandon H.
- 202 Davon G.
- 204 Tyler D.
- 205 Sean B.
- 207 Michael H.
- 208 Malik P.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 10	Phillips Gala
May 12-16	Spirit Week
May 16	Talent Show (1:00-2:45) Gym
May 19-23	Anti-Bullying Week
May 23	Student of the Month Lunch (12:00-12:45)
May 26	Holiday - Memorial Day - School Closed
June 3	Literacy Fair
June 4	Senior Lunch
June 5	Staff work day—no students
June 6	Career Ed Awards (10:00-11:45) Gym
June 6	Sports Awards (1:30-2:30) Gym
June 10-12	Art Show (TBA) Multipurpose Room
June 10	Upper School Awards (TBA) Gym
June 10	Lower School Awards (TBA) Gym
June 11	Graduation practice (10:00) Gym
June 11	Lower School Six Flags Trip
June 12	Graduation (11:00-1:00) Gym
June 13	Yearbook signing parties (9:30- 2:00) Multipurpose Room
June 17	End of Year Picnic (11:30 -2:30)
June 18	Upper School Six Flags Trip
June 19 th	Last Day of School - Early Dismissal at 1:04pm



The Phillips School~Annandale
 7010 Braddock Road
 Annandale, VA 22003