

WILDCAT EXPRESS

February, 2010

WESTLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL
wms.mtplcsd.org

Jerome S. Schulman, Principal

Guidance

COURSE SELECTIONS FOR OUR STUDENTS

- Course Selection Forms for the 2010-2011 school year should be returned promptly .

6TH GRADE CELEBRATES CHINESE NEW YEAR

- 6TH grade students are preparing to celebrate Chinese New Year—the year of the Tiger. This year the holiday falls in February, so we will celebrate the New Year on February 23rd and 26th, during period 9. Students are learning the ribbon dance, are making lanterns and masks, and are doing a small research project. The celebration will culminate with a feast of egg rolls, fortune cookies, noodles and dips. We may even be visited by a dragon!

6TH GRADERS LEARN ABOUT DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

- During the month of January, the 6th grade guidance classes learned about the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They watched a film and did a small research project in the library. Discussions were centered on unfair laws and how they can be changed peacefully.

7TH GRADE CAREER FAIR

- Letters have been sent inviting presenters to our annual 7th grade Career Fair, which will be held on March 16, 2010. Walt Fowler from Channel 12 News will be our keynote speaker, as well as one of our presenters. Stay tuned as work on this project develops!

8TH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL VISITATION DAY

- The entire 8th grade will spend the day at Westlake High School on February 4, 2010. A panel of high school students will address topics including the academic rigors of high school, the co-curricular and athletic opportunities offered to them, and address any other concerns that may help alleviate their transition to Westlake High School. The 8th graders will attend two high school classes, as well, and will be served a lunch in the high school cafeteria. At this time, students will fill out a PALS Survey, which will enable them to be appropriately matched with a high school PALS Mentor.
- Please note that parents/guardians of the 8th graders will be receiving an invitation to join their child at their high school scheduling appointment during the week of March 8, 2010.

ELA

- Sixth grade students are currently writing a research paper with the support of their classroom teachers and Mrs. Knopp, our school librarian.
- Grammar continues to be addressed throughout the year. Although introduced initially in isolation, all parts of speech are assessed authentically.
- Direct instruction for the ELA assessment scheduled for the third week in April has begun. Children are working in a book called Buckle Down NY.
- Independent reading needs to take place at home. Students are expected to read for twenty-five minutes for five nights a week. This will assist the children in meeting the NYS requirement of twenty five books read per year as well as become stronger readers and better writers.
- Session C of Cinemania begins on April 6. Applications are available at the front desk. 7th and 8th grade students are eligible to participate in this unique after-school experience. Cinemania meets once a week for ten weeks, from 3:30 - 6.00 p.m., at the Jacob Burns film Center's Media Arts Lab. Round trip transportation is provided from Westlake Middle School. Any questions, see Ms. Matthews. Come learn about the language of film and cinematography!

Mathematics

- The AMC, American Mathematics Competition, results are in! All of Mrs. Catucci's students in the Integrated Algebra class participated in the contest. The contest was November 17, 2009. The first place winner was Garo Bedonian with a score of 15. Tied for second place with a score of 14 points were Andrew Chellis, Joshin George, and Sean Siry. Third place with a score of 13 was Emily Pisano.
- The AMC 8 contest consists of 25 multiple choice questions. The exam in middle school mathematics is designed to promote the development and enhancement of problem solving skills. The exam provides an opportunity to apply the concepts taught at the middle school level to problems which not only range from easy to difficult but also cover a wide range of applications. Many problems are designed to challenge students and to offer problem solving experiences beyond those provided in most junior high school mathematics classes. AMC 8 exam also promotes excitement, enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards mathematics and stimulates interest in continuing the study of mathematics beyond the minimum required for high school graduation.
- The math department also welcomes back Mr. Santo Ciccone who is filling in for Mrs. Nazaruk's classes while she is out on maternity. Mr. Ciccone taught math at the middle school for over twenty five years.
- The middle school math assessments are no longer in March, they are now in May.

Music

- There are a number of students attending NYSSMA Festival on April 16/17 at Byram Hills HS. We'll keep you posted with the names of the students attending.
- Save the date for our First Annual Westlake Band Night on March 16th, 7 PM. This night will include performances from the Middle School Jazz Band, Middle School 7th/8th Grade Band, as well as the High School Wind Ensemble & Jazz Band and combination of 8th Grade/HS students performing together!

Art

- This quarter in art, the 6th grader's culminated their artistic experience by creating wonderful, innovative figurative sculptures based upon the whimsical work of Picasso—watch the display cases to see them! 7th graders struggled with the complexities of portraiture and the human face—they did some amazing cray-pas renderings of themselves. 8th grader's studied paintings from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and wrote narratives that they illustrated and painted on canvas. Creativity is just around every corner within the minds of our middle school boys and girls.

World Language

- The Spanish and Italian language students enriched their knowledge with a cultural overview of the legends of the Christmas seasons with the folk story of "La Befana" of Italy, the tradition of the poinsettia plant of Mexico and listening to the telling of "The Grinch" (El Gruñón) in Spanish.
- The Exploring Spanish 7 students created calendars for the unit on the days of the week, the months of the year and the weather and seasons.
- The Exploring Spanish 8 class crated pictographs using Spanish vocabulary and completed the "Yo soy..." project about themselves.
- 8th grade Proficiency classes made catalogue brochures for the shopping and clothing unit.
- The bulletin boards for the Italian and Spanish classes are always beautifully and meticulously decorated with our LOTE student samples. Stop and take a look at how our language students continue to integrate class lessons into innovative and authentic projects putting their language learning into real world products!
- The Spanish 7 classes designed their "Ideal house" projects
- The Italian 8 classes are working on expressing their New Year resolutions and learning about occupations while the Italian 7 classes are creating family trees.

Science

- The sixth grade will be attending the "2010 Monster Storms Program" held at BOCES on March 9. We have attended this program in the past and have found that it is a great review of our Weather Curriculum. This day will provide hands on exhibits as well as live interaction with NASA. Jim Witt will be there as well to lecture on how to predict the weather in the future. This is a fun, free day for all!
- The sixth grade has just completed their Chemistry Unit. The students learned many new facts, but nothing could compare to the day we BLEW UP Sodium! Sodium reacts very violently with water. Mr. Pesick was nice enough to take the students outside to show how a soft metal, sodium, found in table salt, can explode when placed in a small amount of water. Chemical reactions are always a big hit with the students!

Social Studies

- In January, the 7th grade Social Studies classes explored the five main principles of the Constitution. The students created illustrated children's books as well as videos to demonstrate what they had learned about the principles. The projects were all wonderfully well done.
- The eighth grade class will have an opportunity in February to try their luck with the unpredictable world of stock trading. Students will choose a company to follow and track their gains or losses for a week. In addition they will have to research the history of their chosen stock and the current state of our market, particularly the DOW JONES. Eighth grade teachers anticipate that students will take away a deeper understanding of how the stock exchange works, and the factors that contribute to its success and/or failure.