

The Wasatch Warrior PTSA Newsletter



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www.graniteschools.org/jr/wasatch

December/January 2008

From the Principal...

Dear Patrons,

I remember many years ago walking into Wasatch Junior High for the first time. It was summer time and the halls were vacant. Mrs. Mendenhall was in the office working as I walked in. Feeling a little awkward, I introduced myself as the new principal. She greeted me warmly and I knew that I would enjoy being at Wasatch right away.

As I walked through the halls I felt wonderful. I couldn't really describe my feelings but I knew that this building, this place was a special place. Over time I have mentioned my experience to several faculty members and patrons and they too have agreed that they had had similar feelings about Wasatch.

What was it I wondered? Once school began it became very apparent to me. The students at Wasatch are amazing. They were kind, helpful to one another, and if asked to do something by myself or other adults they were always willing to do so without disruption or frustration. Amazingly enough, this same attitude extended to faculty staff and parents. Wasatch truly had its own wonderful spirit created by years of academic excellence, cooperation between students, school officials, and parents.

After the fire the halls were cold and dark. There were no longer students to brighten the halls and fill the air with laughter. So much was destroyed and ruined. Honestly, it brought tears to my eyes because I, like you, truly love Wasatch Junior High-- its faculty, staff, students, and her patrons. The "Spirit" of Wasatch was gone.

One of my great concerns was that the "Spirit" of Wasatch would not be in the new building. I am happy to report that the new building has helped return a portion of the "Spirit" that I speak of.

However, I am also very concerned about many incidents that have happened this year that have been detrimental to the rebuilding of the "Spirit" of Wasatch. Recently, I came across a story that was quoted by Robert Fulghum about the damage that can be done by hurtful words and actions;

"In the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific some villagers practice a unique form of logging. If a tree is too large to be felled with an ax, the natives cut it down by yelling at it. (Can't lay my hands on the article, but I swear I read it.)

Woodsmen with special powers creep up on a tree just at dawn and suddenly scream at it at the top of their lungs. They continue this for thirty days. The tree dies and falls over. The theory is that the hollering kills the spirit of the tree. According to the villagers, it always works.

Ah, those poor naïve innocents. Such quaintly charming habits of the jungle. Screaming at trees, indeed. How primitive. Too bad they don't have the advantages of modern technology and the scientific mind.

Me? I yell at my wife. And yell at the telephone and the lawn mower. And yell at the TV and the newspaper and my children. I've even been known to shake my fist and yell at the sky at times.

Man next door yells at his car a lot. And this summer I heard him yell at a step ladder for most of an afternoon. We modern, urban, educated folks yell at traffic and umpires and bills and banks and machines. Machines and relatives get most of the yelling.

Don't know what good it does. Machines and things just sit there. Even kicking doesn't always help. As for people, well, the Solomon Islanders may have a point. Yelling at living things does tend to kill the spirit in them "Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words (**and actions**) will break our hearts"....

Words and actions do hurt others. As I mentioned earlier, there have been many incidents this year where students' words and actions have been hurtful to other students. These actions do not reflect the traditions and values of Wasatch Junior High. It is important that we reflect upon our practice up to this point and change our course. All students need to feel safe and supported in their efforts to learn and

grow at Wasatch. All of us need to treat each other with respect and dignity.

In this newsletter, I am including information about bullying. Please take the time to read and discuss with your son or daughter the ideas expressed in this article. Let us all work together to maintain and help grow stronger the "Spirit" of Wasatch.

Sincerely, D. Bingham

PTSA President's Message

It's hard to believe that we have already completed 3 months of the school year! I am so grateful for the numerous volunteers who have contributed so much to Wasatch.

On November 6th, the 7th and 8th grade students were screened for scoliosis and had their vision tested. Thanks go to Lori Brown, who along with the school nurse, headed this program and to the 20 parent volunteers who assisted them.

November was "Reflections" (the National PTA Arts competition) month. The theme this year was WOW! And that was my reaction to all of the terrific entries and to our Reflections chairman Liz Van Leeuwen. She did an amazing job coordinating entries, arranging for judging, presenting awards, and hosting an Open House for the participants and their guests. Wow! Liz, Thanks!!

As we culminate our exhaustive election season, I'd like to thank our Legislative Vice President, Jeanene Pope for her help in keeping us abreast of issues and for helping with the PTA sponsored "Meet the Candidates Night" at Skyline H.S. Thanks Jeanene!

Another invaluable member of our PTSA Board is our Treasurer, Lisa Andruess. It's so nice to have such a capable financial watch over our PTSA funds. Thank You Lisa!

We love our school secretaries and office staff! They do such a great job keeping track of 850 students (not to mention- administration, faculty, staff & parents!) I have trouble with just 5! Next time you're in the office, let them know how great they are.

One of the benefits of PTA membership is access to the PTA website and the vast array of articles and information there. Please take time to log in to www.PTA.org and take advantage of the great things there.

I hope you all have a great holiday season!
Susan Kaelin - PTSA President

School Choice Early Enrollment

The months of December, January, and February have been legislated for parents to exercise their school-choice option for the Early Enrollment Period Transfer for the forthcoming school year (2009-2010). If you wish your student(s) to attend a school other than the school in your home boundary, you are required to complete a Granite School District "USOE Standard Open Enrollment Application," and submit it to the school of your choice between the time period beginning Monday, December 1, 2008, and ending on Friday, February 20, 2009. This is the best time to request a transfer to a non-resident school for the forthcoming school year. The forms are available in the requested school's office from December 1 through the 3rd Friday in February.

Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis and will be stamped with the date and time received. Each application is individually screened and considered based on available space in the requested grade, class or program. The requested school has until Monday, March 16, 2009 or within six weeks after receipt of the application (whichever is later) to notify the parent/family of acceptance.

If your student(s) are accepted on the USOE Standard Early Open Enrollment Application, it is not required that you reapply the following school year-as long as space is available, and the student(s) remain in this school. As in the past, when a student moves from elementary school to junior high, or from junior high to high school, there is no automatic feeder system—students on permits in the 6th and 9th grades, who wish to attend a school outside of their home school boundary, must reapply on the USOE Standard Open Enrollment Application (during the Early Enrollment Transfer Period) to request the preferred school.

A request from the hospitality committee...

If you received any gifts for the holidays that you don't mind re-gifting, you may donate them to the PTA. We will use these as "Door Prizes" for the teacher luncheons as well as for teacher appreciation week. Please send or bring in any new items you would like to donate to the main office. We will be placing items into gift baskets, so anything could be useful. Thank you for your consideration of re-gifting...

Jackie Arbanas

Hospitality Committee

Interested in serving on the PTA Board next year? Or in helping find others who are willing to do so? Please contact Susan Kaelin for more info: susankaelin@netzero.com

Counseling Center News

We have met with the 8th grade students in the computer lab to do the Choices Explorer program. Choices Explorer is part of the Utah Mentor site. Students can access the program from any computer. There is an abundance of information on thousands of careers-including interviews, outlook, salary, and education or training required. There is also information about colleges-including scholarship and application information. We encourage you to look at this program with your son or daughter. Go to www.utahmentor.org. Click on *Choices*. Sign in by entering the portfolio name and password. We asked the students to use their own name for the portfolio name and their student number for the password. In January, we will meet with the 9th grade students to do Choices Planner on this site.

In December, we will begin meeting with the 9th grade students to help them choose a job for Reality Town. Reality Town is scheduled for the morning of January 28. We need a lot of volunteers for this activity. Please call Susan Bagley at 272-7228 if you can help.

Thanks! Mrs. Bechthold and Mrs. Taylor

SBO News

The S.B.O.s are currently working on fleece blankets for the children at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. Each officer is making four blankets. We will be going to Woodrow Wilson Elementary on December 9th, along with the Cheerleaders and the Wasatch Leadership Team, who also have made blankets.

The S.B.O.s also encouraged all students to write letters to soldiers who will be serving in Iraq and Afghanistan who will be deployed around the holiday season. We owe a huge "thank you" to all of the English teachers for taking time out of their classes to make this possible. The "Letters to Soldiers" project was a big success.

There will be a Christmas dance held on Thursday, December 18th. Our last dance was a great experience, so we encourage all students to come to this fun-filled holiday event.

Thank you, Brady Nelson

There is interest at WJH in Future Problem Solving and Debate programs, but volunteer leadership is needed to get them started. If you're interested in helping, please contact Susan Kaelin, susankaelin@netzero.com

Geography Bee

Soon our history department will be holding its National Geographic Bee which is open to our students in grades seven and eight who are not over the age of 15 at the time of the national finals. With a first-place prize of a \$25,000.00 college scholarship, plus other prizes, the Bee is designed to encourage the teaching and study of geography. Students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and Department of Defense Dependents Schools are participating in the 2009 National Geographic Bee. Classroom competitions will be conducted December 8th - 12th. The classroom winners will compete in a run-off round during fifth and into sixth period (12:20 P.M. – 1:50 P.M.), if necessary, in our Media Center/Library on Thursday, January 8th, when parents are invited to join us. At this time, Wasatch's all-school winner will be determined and will then take a Qualifying Test. As many as a hundred of the highest-scoring students will be invited to represent their school at the state level which will be held April 3, 2009. One state winner will be chosen to compete on May 20th at the national level in Washington, D.C. If you have questions, contact Mrs. Kerby, Room #204. The Bee website is www.nationalgeographic.com/geographicbee.

Class Officers for 2008-2009

9th Grade:

President – Natalie Bennion
Vice President - Rylie Jager
Secretary – Gina Allyn

8th Grade:

President - Madison Hayes
Vice President - Alyssa Wilson
Secretary - Emilee Bogden

7th Grade:

President - Spencer Ward
Vice President - Ashton Thorpe

From the Foreign Language Department...

The Wasatch Foreign Language Department recently attended a district sponsored CONE meeting at Skyline to discuss state and national standards for foreign language instruction. The Skyline language department complimented our language teachers both verbally and by mail applauding the excellent preparation of WJH students who have continued their foreign language studies at Skyline.

Reality Town is coming...

Reality Town for 9th graders is January 28, 2009. The hectic holidays will be over, and this is a great opportunity for parents to spend a morning with students while the students learn the "realities of life". We need a number of volunteers from approx. 8-11 am to help students with this fun activity. If you have already indicated a desire to participate, we'll contact you in January. If you have not signed up, but would like to help in any way, we welcome your participation. Please contact Susan Bagley at 272-7228 or email srkb@comcast.net. Although this event is for the 9th graders, parents of any student are welcome to participate.

News from Wasatch Theatre

Auditions for this year's musical production of Peter Pan will be held Mon. Dec. 1 and Tues. Dec. 2 from 3:30 – 6:30. Callbacks for speaking roles and featured dancers will be posted Wed. Dec. 3rd and held Thurs. Dec. 4th from 3:00 – 7:00.

The cast list will be posted by Mrs. Dodge's door, Room 110, on Mon. Dec. 8th after school. Everyone who auditioned should check the list.

There will be a parent and cast meeting Dec. 11th where rehearsal and other important information will be given. It is also a great opportunity for me to answer questions and for parents to meet our production staff. Rehearsals will begin right after winter break, so please check your rehearsal schedules carefully. Also, we will need contracts for participation, a musical fee of \$25, and parent volunteer information forms by Dec. 19th (before the break). The fee needs to be paid to the office. Please make sure your student's name is on your check. The dates of the play are March 18, 19, and 20. This is an exciting and wonderful play and your kids are going to do a wonderful job. We all look forward to working with them. Thank you Wasatch community for all of your incredible support of this program!

Mrs. Dodge

Volunteer Hours

Wasatch Jr. High PTSA wants to keep track of all the hours volunteer contribute to our school. Please send in volunteer hours with your name and service rendered to marthaeight@yahoo.com or record the hours on the "Wasatch Jr. High Volunteer Hours" sheet in the office.

Wasatch Junior High School Community Council Elections

"School Community Councils are elected parent/guardian and employee representatives who work together with the Principal to increase student achievement. By law, the Council is responsible to review school data and develop plans for school improvement. Councils also allocate the LAND Trust funds to assist the school in reaching achievement goals. Please see the Granite District web page for more information regarding the roles and responsibilities of Community Councils (www.graniteschools.org)

Parents elect parent representatives and employees elect employees for two-year terms. To be eligible, a parent must have a student enrolled in the school for at least one of the years and may not be employed by the school for more than an average of six hours per week per month."

If you are interested in serving on the Wasatch Junior High Community Council please review and complete the necessary forms and return to the main office prior to February 3, 2008. We will have three council seats available for next year. The Wasatch Junior High Community Council meets at 6:45 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month.

Wasatch JH Citizenship Policy

Please review your student's report card after receiving it. Pay attention to not only the academic but citizenship grades as well. Typically, parents and students look only at academic grades.

Please review the policy as stated in the **Wasatch Student Planner and Handbook:**
"Parents and/or guardians shall have five (5) calendar days from the date of the last absence to excuse their son or daughter's absence(s) from school."

Eligibility for SBO's, Cheerleaders, Class Officers, and athletic teams are based on both athletic and citizenship grades. Please understand that after five (5) calendar days, an absence will not be excused. Additionally, absences may only be excused by a written note which should include the student's full name and student ID number. The note should be turned in to the Counseling Center **before** the tardy bell (7:45 AM).

The Power in You

A tremendous resource, this organization has a great website with all kinds of info to help kids sort out problems they face in today's world. Check it out at <http://powerinyou.org/>
