



Important Dates

<i>Tips for Kids' Sake at Aqua Grill</i>	Feb. 7
<i>SAC Meeting</i>	Feb. 9
<i>PTO Meeting</i>	Feb. 13
<i>Valentine's Day</i>	Feb. 14
<i>Presidents' Day No School</i>	Feb. 20

St. Johns County Schools

*Wierda's Weekly Words*

Dear Parents and Friends of Ocean Palms,

I would like to thank all of the parents who attended our very first Coffee House Chat this week. It was a wonderful meeting, and I believe that I learned more than anyone in the room.

Ms. Simpson and Ms. Susice provided some wonderful information on the Common Core Standards and text complexity. We also discussed FCAT changes and our amazing parents asked some outstanding questions about some exciting changes in our teaching methods in order to ensure that our children are ready for future academic success and beyond. I am including a brief video link facilitated by renowned educator Linda Darling Hammond who talks for about nine minutes and summarizes some of the key points that we discussed. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQNUqVYJofE>) I will also be sharing these strategies with you in each and every newsletter and in an upcoming book talk blog forum as we move forward. I thank all again who attended, and who are inspiring me to communicate consistently and effectively as our children move forward and become prepared to make a difference in our world.

My first piece of information that was covered in our Coffee Chat included the Common Core Standards. We, as a Nation, are headed into adopting National Standards and our kindergarten teachers and students have already embraced the transition from the Sunshine State Standards. The standards themselves are not completely different, only deeper and not as broad. Our students will learn all things in grades K-12, but not necessarily over and over again each year in school. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English, language arts, and mathematics were fully implemented in kindergarten this year and will be implemented in first grade in 2012-2013. The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has developed *The Parents' Guide to Student Success* in response to the transition to the CCSS. There is a guide for each grade level, K-8, and for high school. You can find the guides at <http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>. For more information about the CCSS, please visit [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

We also discussed numerous classroom procedures. These procedures will be highlighted weekly through this newsletter and via Ms. Susice, our Literacy Coach, as she promotes some exciting new strategies that will get our children thinking and learning deeply. These are exciting times for our children in education, and we are embracing new methods at Ocean Palms while always keeping what works for our children. Thankfully our expert teachers are researching, reading, and providing the very best in instruction each day. They are simply amazing!

As you know, leadership is not always easy. As we continue to emphasize leadership at Ocean Palms, note that I, as your leader, am continually growing and learning from you. Today we attempted a new dismissal plan for our bus riders. Our intent was to give our children a more structured way to exit and to provide more school based organization in this area. Let me admit that this idea was not a big success. The children were wonderful and patient as we walked through the drill and yet we, as adults realized that this change was not of benefit to the entire system. I am thankful for those who bring creative ideas to the table and note that we will not be changing our current system of dismissal this school year. I had much feedback, and I thank all who were bravely candid with me through this process.

The learning continues as we continue our journey together. Our children are thriving, our teachers are fabulous, and we all continue learning and growing. The key for all of this success has to be honest, transparent communication and mutual trust built over time. I look forward to continuing this exciting journey with you and your beautiful children!

With Appreciation,

Betsy Wierda  
Learning Leader

Readers are Leaders



### January Spirit Wear Special!

Show your Otter Pride! Buy an Ocean Palms hoodie sweatshirt or a t-shirt and get a water bottle free!!! We have a limited supply of hoodies and women's t-shirts, so get one before they're gone!

Order forms available in the front office or by e-mail: [abdykstra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:abdykstra@sbcglobal.net)

### JANUARY 26TH OTTERS OF THE WEEK



Brandon Beattie, Kindergarten

Abbie Reynolds, 5th Grade

### Relay for Life

Relay for Life will be held on April 21-22 at Ponte Vedra High. The Ocean Palms PTO would like to sponsor a team. We are looking for a volunteer to be the Team Captain. If you are interested, please contact Katie Reasoner at [koreasoner@yahoo.com](mailto:koreasoner@yahoo.com). The PTO will cover the \$150.00 entry fee for the event.

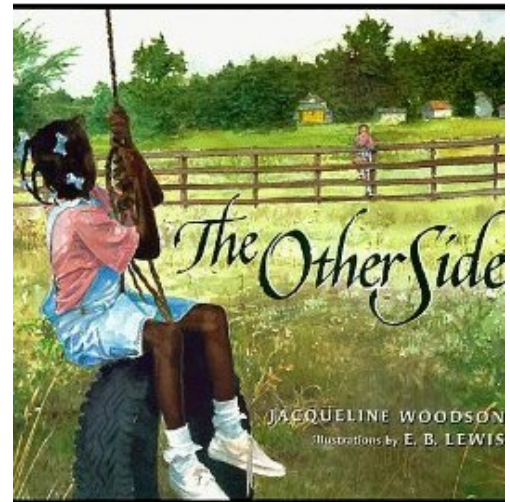


### Quote of the Week

“Zeal without knowledge is fire without light”.

Thomas Fuller, MD

### BOOK OF THE MONTH JANUARY 2012



Clover's mom says it isn't safe to cross the fence that segregates their African-American side of town from the white side where Anna lives. But the two girls strike up a friendship, and get around the grown-ups' rules by sitting on top of the fence together.

### ST. AUGUSTINE LITTLE LEAGUE CHALLENGER LEAGUE

St. Augustine Little League  
Complex  
Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.



Challenger League is for special needs children throughout St. Johns County. Registration is FREE! All prospective players have to do is fill out the player application and medical sheet. Sign ups can also be completed online. For more information, visit [www.mysall.org](http://www.mysall.org) or e-mail Dillion Hansen, St. Augustine Little League Board Member, [hansend@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:hansend@stjohns.k12.fl.us).



# Norwich News



**Melisa Norwich  
Learning Leader**

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Opportunities!!**

There are many opportunities for our future Landrum Middle School students! Mark your calendars!

**May 1, 2012** – The Landrum Principal and Guidance Counselor visit Ocean Palms to talk to our students

**May 10, 2012** – 5<sup>th</sup> grade Field Trip to Landrum

**May 22, 2012** - Ocean Palms Parent Night at Landrum

**May 29, 2012** – Ocean Palms Coffee with Mrs. Harrison (Principal of Landrum Middle School) at Ocean Palms – 8:45 a.m.

**Zone Waivers for School Year 2012/2013**

If your child is currently

attending Ocean Palms on an approved zone waiver, of if you have moved, you **MUST** complete a new waiver to remain at Ocean Palms for the upcoming school year.

**The 2012-13 Zone Waiver Application Process opened on January 9, 2012 and closes on March 30, 2012.**

**Melisa Norwich  
Learning Leader**



## ***In Memory of Maritza Rivera***

Pictured with the newly-planted magnolia tree are Maritza’s husband, Edwin Rivera, and her brother, Gio Morales.

### **The Green Team Tips of the Week**

Did you know that January 20<sup>th</sup> was Arbor Day in Florida? Arbor Day is a holiday in which individuals and groups are encouraged to plant and care for trees. A single tree produces approximately 260 pounds of oxygen a year. A mature tree can supply enough oxygen annually to support two people.

In honor of Arbor Day, the Green Team of OPE planted a magnolia tree, in the front of the school, in memory of Maritza Rivera, the sister of Gio Morales, our Maintenance Manager.

**Brought to you by the Green Team of OPE**

## Developmental Volleyball Information

**When:** Sundays, Jan. 22- April 22, from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**Ages:** 2nd-5th grade girls

**Where:** Ponte Vedra High School Gymnasium



Beaches Volleyball Academy is a premier instructional volleyball club with Nationally competitive teams ages 10-18. Our developmental program is designed to be the first step in teaching young girls skills specific to volleyball that will enable them to progress in the sport as a team player. We have the most experienced staff in teaching and training young players and look forward to working with your daughter.

For information, call Club Director Valorie Baker @ 543-9466 or come to the PVHS Gym on Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

## TIPS FOR KIDS!

Allow Betsy Wierda, Melisa Norwich, Jenny Boone, Deb Higbea,  
Kim Susice, and Sandi Watson  
to serve YOU at Aqua Grill on

Tuesday, February 7, 2012, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### AQUA GRILL

will be donating all their tips to

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Johns County.**

Reservations Requested. Please call Aqua Grill at 285-3017.



## HEALTHY KIDS INITIATIVE PRESENTS

### The Nutritious Family: A Parent Seminar

“Healthy Eating Principles and Healthy Meal Ideas”

Learn practical and do-able solutions for improving your family’s meals!

**Monday, January 30th, at 11:00 a.m.**

Located at the Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church

NOTE: All topics will be completed in the 1/30 seminar

RSVP to [cherylolson201@me.com](mailto:cherylolson201@me.com)



## JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

Just a reminder that our Ocean Palms 3rd-5th graders will be raising money for the American Heart Association by participating in Jump Rope for Heart. The jump rope event will take place during Physical Education classes Jan. 31 - Feb. 7 for all students.

The class who raises the most money will celebrate with a Subway party.

Thank you for your generosity,



Moira Catches,  
Physical Ed.

