

February 2, 2012

St. Johns County Schools

Volume 1, Issue 20

Important Dates

<i>Tips for Kids' Sake at Aqua Grill</i>	Feb. 7
<i>SAC Meeting</i>	Feb. 9
<i>Green Team Bag Sale 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 hope that you are keeping warm during this very chilly week. It is a week of jackets and chilly nights, turning the heat on, and enjoying a great book. I had to include my favorite pastime as we continue to devour reading at Ocean Palms. It is so exciting to see our children loving books. They are sharing their favorite authors, changing up genres, and making book recommendations to each other all day long. I could not be happier to see the enthusiasm that surrounds this essential life skill and exciting adventure. Please continue to promote reading and discuss books at home as well. Our culture of literacy will lead to academic success and will open up new and exciting worlds for our children!

Speaking of academics, many of you have asked why you may not be seeing as much paperwork coming home, such as graded worksheets, etc. This is a wonderful question as we move into a new era of Common Core Standards and educational best practices. Your children are doing more and more of what the highest performing nations in the world are doing. These activities include students keeping and analyzing their own qualitative and quantitative data, writing in journals in areas such as math, reading, and science, and enjoying the readers and writers workshop model. This allows our children to truly engage in reading on their own level, locating authentic examples of the standards in their reading and writing, and then coming together to share their experiences. The diminishing of worksheets does not mean that rigor is not in place, in fact this is just the opposite. Our children are engaged in indepth learning, on their instructional level. This allows them to grow and spring board from where they are, not from where a textbook tells them they should be. We do indeed use our textbooks, but we use them as effective tools to meet grade level standards. When a great piece of literature will help our children meet a standard more effectively, we will surely use that literature so that they can make even more personal connections. Data Notebooks and journals are typically kept in the classroom, and we will be promoting a number of ways for you to come in and view some of these artifacts. We will be facilitating Authors Teas as well as Data and Doughnut sessions in the Spring, and you will be amazed at the hard work. You will still receive graded work that comes home, but not as much, since much is done in the classroom. Even our writing has becomes author's work and is kept and worked on for a number of weeks, sometimes the entire quarter, so that our young authors can revise, edit, and polish their pieces, just like real authors today. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher as we prepare to compete in this global society. We are excited about the amazing things that our children can do, and believe me, they are extremely joyful in the process!!

A few reminders as we move into February. Please make sure that you have your child check lost and found for their missing jackets, hats, etc. We have many articles of clothing that will be sent to a charity if not claimed. Also, please help us in reminding your children that Ocean Palms is a Gum Free Zone. Our students are doing so well with this change and although it is a small change, it is so important to keep our beautiful grounds and our school clean and free of gum. Thank you all for your support. We are still working on encouraging walking in the hallways at all times, and I have to commend our children for their outstanding manners during our school assemblies. They have simply been amazing!

Finally I would like to thank Kathryn Reinheimer and her team for facilitating this first round of after-school enrichment activities. She has done an outstanding job and we are all excited to begin offering creative activities throughout the week. Ms. Reinheimer is a quiet, unsung hero who has pulled off this project with a calm, cool demeanor, and an accommodating spirit, and we truly appreciate her.

Have a wonderful week and stay warm!

With Appreciation,

Readers are Leaders



Betsy Wierda, Learning Leader

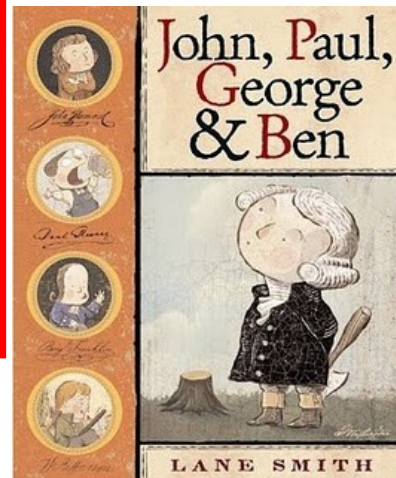
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN 2012-2013 KICK OFF EVENT

Saturday, February 4, 2012, at St. Johns River State College

Criminal Justice Recreation Area (Building J) from 10 am to 1 pm

Florida-residing parents with children born between 9/2/07 and 9/1/08 are eligible to attend a high-quality Pre-K learning program at no expense.

To ascertain the list of documentation to bring to the event, or for more information, visit <http://www.ecs4kids.org/vpk> or call 800-238-3463.



**BOOK OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY 2012**

FEBRUARY 2nd OTTERS OF THE WEEK



**ELENA BREZA, Kindergarten
AIDAN McDONALD, 3rd Grade**

Congratulations Emily Reeves!

For placing 2nd in the Elementary Division of the Friends of the Library Writing Contest for her essay, "A World Without Libraries".

INSTRUCTIONAL INSPIRATIONS

Kim Susice, Learning Leader

How can parents help their children find books that are not "too hard" and not "too easy", but instead are "just right"? Here are a few strategies: The most popular strategy is called "The Five Finger Rule". Once your child finds a book that interests them, have them turn to the first full page and begin reading. Each time a word is missed hold up a finger. If you reach 5 words by the end of the page, you should choose an easier book. While the above strategy is quick and easy, there are other things to consider. At the early stages of choosing just right books, consider the following items:

- Size of the print: Is it too little? Too big? Just right?
- The words and lines on the page: Are there too many? Too few? Just the right amount?
- The pictures: Do they seem like they will help me read the words?
- Repetition: Is a predictable text what I need?

As your child develops as a reader, the topic of "just-right" books will become more complex, and your child's understanding of what a just-right book is will gain depth. They can begin to pay attention to:

- Content: What's my schema for this? What do I know about this story or topic?
- Schema: What do I know about myself as a reader and the books in the classroom and at home to help me make a good choice.
- Motivation: How hard am I willing to work to learn to read this book?
- Variety: Have I selected more than one type of text and the level of difficulty?

Love Thy Planet Day—February 14th!



In honor of Valentine's Day, the Green Team at Ocean Palms proudly presents "Love Thy Planet Day 2.14" with a focus on helping reduce our community's plastic bag consumption. Simply spend \$2 dollars and make 1 big difference with the purchase of 4 reusable bags. Project 214 (the date for Valentine's Day).

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, the United States consumes 30 billion plastic bags and 10 billion paper grocery bags each year. That translates to about 14 million trees and 12 million barrels of oil. Both paper and plastic bags can be recycled, but only 10-15% of paper bags and 1-3% of plastic bags are being recycled annually.

Our goal is to sell at least 400 reusable bags to families at Ocean Palms! (At \$2 total for all 4 bags, that makes them only 50¢ each!!!). The reusable bags come in three styles: green paisley, Valentine's Day version, and a Breast Cancer Awareness version. You are welcome to purchase more than 4 (while supplies last).

Publix has supported the event by donating a gift card to help us pay for a portion of the cost of the reusable bags. We appreciate their support! **Bags will be on sale after school on February 13th in the car line, at the flag pole, and in front of the school.** We will also be selling bags briefly on February 14th from 8:30-9:00 in the school entryway. If you will be purchasing the bags through car line, **please have your \$2 handy or a check already made out to OPE PTO** so we can keep the line moving and safety a priority!

Thank you for supporting the Green Team and making a difference! In one year, you could prevent 500 bags from becoming waste.

Norwich News



Tardies

Mondays seem to be really tough for our Ocean Palms Family. We have seen a large increase of tardies on Mondays. Having your child consistently arrive at school on time is very important. It helps your child be prepared to begin the day working at the same pace as the rest of the class, rather than trying to catch up; it gives your child an opportunity to receive an overview of what to expect as the day progresses; it shows that education is important, and

he/she does not miss important instructional material and teacher-directed discussions that cannot be made up.

Anytime your child is not able to be in the classroom, we are certainly happy to send home the seatwork that is missed. However, it is difficult for other work such as discussions, teacher-guided lessons, and student/teacher interactions to be recreated. This is why we all want your child to be at school whenever possible. Please let us know if

there is anything that we can do to be of assistance. Thank you.

Early Checkout

We all know that it is sometimes difficult to schedule all of those family doctor and dentist appointments. If your child has a doctor/dentist appointment that involves you checking your child out of school early, please do so before 2:15 (1:15 on Wednesdays). Thank you for your help.

Melisa Norwich
Learning Leader

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION DATES

The St. Johns County School District will hold pre-registration for children entering Kindergarten and students new to St. Johns County and/or public schools from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, February 22nd, Tuesday, March 20th, and Thursday, April 12th. An attendance zone locator is available on the school district website at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us> under Featured Links.

To be eligible for public Kindergarten in St. Johns County, children must be 5 years old on or before September 1st and must reside in St. Johns County. To register for first grade, children must be 6 years old on or before September 1st and have documentation of successful completion of kindergarten. Proof of age (certified copy of birth certificate) must be provided.

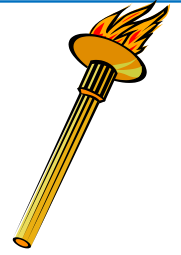
Parents must register children at the school where they are zoned for the 2012-2013 school year. Two proofs of residency must be provided, such as a current mortgage statement, lease or rent agreement; and one other form of residency documentation, such as a current electric bill.

Florida law requires any student entering a Florida school for the first time to show proof of required immunizations documented on the HRS Form 680. Proof of a physical examination that has been obtained within one year prior to enrollment in school is also required. Physical examinations can be performed by either a private physician or by the County health department.

Students can be registered during the spring and summer for the 2012-2013 school year, however parents are encouraged to register during the three above-designated dates above so that schools can adequately prepare for the new school year. Additional information regarding registration and school attendance zones may be obtained from the Student Services Office at 547-7598.

If you have any questions regarding Ocean Palms' Kindergarten registration or our Kindergarten Orientation dates, please call our Registrar, Kerry Fodor, at 547-3767.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN



Friday, April 6th, at 4:00 p.m. • SJSC Office to Fort Castillo

The Law Enforcement Torch Run brings awareness and funding to Special Olympics. The funding goes to the athletes for training at competitions. This is a FUN RUN! We stay together! Ripley's Sightseeing train will follow the runners. The route is U.S. 1 to San Marco Boulevard. You can also support Special Olympics by purchasing a Shirt for the run is \$12.00. All sizes available! Bring water, but we will also have coolers. The Train will be there for walkers that need assistance. If you are interested in running, please contact Deputy Rafael Fuentes at the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office at 904-669-1106.

REMINDER—TIPS FOR KIDS!

Benefitting Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Aqua Grill, Ponte Vedra Beach • Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2012, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Betsy Wierda, Melisa Norwich, Jenny Boone, Deb Higbea, Kim Susice & Sandi Watson will serve you and donate all their tips to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of St. Johns County

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

RISING STARS BASEBALL



A Division of Ponte Vedra Athletic Association



Cornerstone Field

The Rising Stars Baseball Division of Ponte Vedra Athletic Association is created to give girls and boys ages 8–15 from the Jacksonville area who are unable to "SHINE" in the traditional Little League an outlet to have fun with baseball while building self confidence, teamwork skills, and lasting memories and friendships. By creating ability-specific levels with a high coach-to-child ratio, Rising Stars Baseball is able to support a range of abilities, from mild coordination concerns to moderate gross motor planning challenges. For children that have been apprehensive about baseball, or did not feel they were skilled or coordinated enough, Rising Stars Baseball is also a great way to start playing the game.

After two instructional practices the children will be playing baseball in a "sandlot" format, and each level will be split into two teams from children attending that week. Players will rotate positions by inning, and the length of the game will be determined by time. Siblings and friends are also encouraged to play. Players/Families can choose to participate in as many weeks that work for them. To accommodate families' busy schedules, there will only be one practice or game per week, limited to 90 minutes. After the initial two practices, six games will be played throughout the spring. We give service hours for student helper/buddies and love any help from adult volunteers with the special needs kids as there are only two official coaches for 30-50 kids.

The cost to participate is **free** as a result of the generosity of our sponsors: Microsoft, HEAL (<http://www.healautismnow.org>), UBS, and the Greenwood School (<http://www.gsjax.org>), as well as numerous individual supporters. All sessions will be held at Cornerstone Park, located at the southern end of Ponte Vedra just off A1A. Practices will begin in January and games in February. The season will conclude on March 19th.

Please go to the Rising Stars' website to register or obtain more information

www.risingstarsbaseball.org

Questions? Contact Coach Bob at 904-859-9606 or Coach Jon at 904-234-3892