



Christie Storms for The Westfield Leader and The Times

DID YOU EVER KNOW...Wearing medallions they created, 14 Franklin Elementary School students and a teacher shared about their heroes during an assembly for Hero Day. Pictured are: Back Row: Caitlin Lawrie, Tiffani Gregory, teacher Donna Stein, Bryan Lessner, Jack Redmond, Alexa Derman and Jack Simcox. Front Row: Kyle McIntyre, Morgan Vuolo, Samantha Moore (representing Andrew Baker, who could not be present), Samantha Greenaway, Matthew Jenkins, Eric Storms and Cassie Teschner.

Outstanding Teacher Award Nominations Due

WESTFIELD—The Optimist Club of Westfield announced that the deadline for receipt of nominations for the ninth annual Intermediate School Outstanding Teacher Award is Friday, April 21.

Two intermediate schoolteachers – one from Edison and one from Roosevelt Intermediate Schools – will be chosen to receive the award on Wednesday, May 10 at an Optimist dinner and will be honored at a board of education meeting on Tuesday, May 16.

Nominations should specify ways in which the teacher has demonstrated outstanding teaching, interest in children and continued pursuit of professional growth. The nominee must be a full-time teacher in the Westfield public schools in grades six to eight

for a minimum of five years. Students, parents and staff are encouraged to submit nomination letters to: Outstanding Teacher Award Committee of the Optimist Club of Westfield, Howard Trickey, 803 Dorian Road, Westfield.

According to Dr. William Foley, superintendent of schools, "The Outstanding Teacher Award gives deserving credit to our intermediate school teachers who are dedicated to providing an educationally stimulating and supporting environment during the critical stage of adolescence."

Last year, Kathleen Zippler, Spanish teacher at Edison, and Elizabeth Scheuerer, who teaches mathematics at Roosevelt, were honored with the award.

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Education Matters

The Impact Of Education

By Michael Chodroff
Tamaques Elementary School Teacher

"I feel ... an ardent desire to see knowledge so disseminated through the mass of mankind that it may, at length, reach even the extremes of society: beggars and kings."

~Thomas Jefferson

Perhaps some of the students that attend the namesake elementary school in our district are too young to define some of our third president's words, but that's all right. Knowledge happens each time they sit down in an art room and use their imaginations. In the comforts of a stimulating, safe and well-equipped environment, they create, and there always seems to be something beautiful about each child's creation. Even beggars and kings need to be reminded about where to find beauty and knowledge.

"We should not only use the brains we have, but all that we can borrow."

~Woodrow Wilson

Inside the classrooms on Linden Avenue, students absorb this simple, yet powerful, concept each time they engage in a literature circle discussion. They learn how to ask each other well-constructed questions and how to conduct meaningful and polite discussions. The students have ultimately benefited from the teacher workshops and trainings, the assortment of literature and the fostering environment that was created to stimulate learning. Asking and listening are essential skills, and the students practice them while discussing stories of beggars and kings.

"Genius without education is like silver in the mine."

~Benjamin Franklin

In the middle schools and in the high school, students with solid foundations continue to explore the unfolding opportunities that their environment provides to them. Their skills, their strengths, and even their weaknesses, are mined and polished with proper and extensive guidance. Each time they conduct an experiment, perform on stage, create a multi-media presentation or participate in a sport or extracurricular activity, the students are able to search for the genius inside of them. There is a mineable genius inside of everyone, especially beggars and kings.

Just to be upfront, I am an employee in the Westfield school system. I was fortunate to grow up in a town that, like this one, valued the importance of public education. Documenting the countless opportunities I was exposed to during my K-12 years would take quite some time. Like many of my classmates, peers and close friends, I went on to college

and had dreams of pursuing a prestigious field and making bucketfuls of money. The last bucket of money I had was recently dumped in the change machine at my bank. But I'm okay with that.

I'm not quite sure when it happened, but somewhere over the last 10 years, that whole "older and wiser" thing began to kick in. Each career path that I chose was a direct benefit of the learning tools and the experiences I was provided with in my most formative years. I didn't really see it then, but now I understand more about the team that raised me – a superintendent, a board of education, administrative professionals, custodial staffs, nurses, librarians, principals, classroom aides, guidance counselors, certified educators and, of course, taxpayers.

Money was, is and always will be a concern, but I really believe that our obligation as local and global citizens is to support education. Knowledge and experience are the fundamentals of fostering a child who will be prepared to make a difference. Though we may not see the impact today, nor perhaps tomorrow morning, Theodore Roosevelt put it best when he wisely stated that, "Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual."

You can only make that difference by voting on April 18. Regardless of our affiliation with the school system, as a community, we all have a vested interest in the future. On April 18, though I have no children, nor do I know any teachers where I live, I will be at my district's polling place, casting my vote. I hope you join me in making a difference.

"Only I can decide what difference can be made in the education of a child. The very child that I hope, one day, will be adequately, compassionately and knowledgeably prepared to interact with both beggars and kings."

Franklin Spirit Day Celebrates Heroes

WESTFIELD—Franklin Elementary School's Student Council recently planned and held a School Spirit Day to celebrate heroes. On March 17, each student and teacher created and wore a paper medallion stating who their heroes were and why.

Fourteen students and a teacher were chosen to share about their heroes during a special school-wide assembly. Heroes included parents, teachers, sports stars, and a firefighter who lost his life at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.



AGRICULTURE SHOCK...Students who attended the 2005 South Carolina Commissioners School for Agriculture (SCCSA) summer program reunited in Columbia on March 20th to celebrate National Ag Day. The SCCSA is a weeklong cooperative summer program held in Clemson during which students are instructed about the scientific world of agriculture and the career possibilities within agriculture and natural resources. Chris Engel of Westfield High School, left, poses with and SCCSA Commissioner Hugh Weathers.

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Homework, College Prep. Causing Sleep Deprivation

By ELENA TINFOW
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

It is a common sight in many classrooms: Students slouch in chairs or hunch over their desks. Their pens are down and their eyes are cast towards the floor or closed. Perhaps they stare at the clock, or keep their eyes closed except for when they hopefully glance at the clock. The teacher will attempt, in vain, to hold the students' attention.

Why is this scene such a common occurrence? The answer, simply put, is that the students are dozing due to a lack of sleep. According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, adolescents require about nine-and-a-half hours of sleep per night. However, this is hardly ever accomplished. Teenagers have so much going on that we do not put sleep as one of our top priorities.

Every day, teenagers must complete hours upon hours of homework. At many schools, including mine, about three hours of homework is considered a reasonable expectation. This is only written homework, however. This does not count long-term assignments such as projects and papers, quizzes or tests. Including long-term projects then, that comes to about four hours. Though this may not happen every night, this is something that happens often, especially at the end of the marking period.

Also, with so much homework, students are expected, especially for getting into college, to have some sort of life outside of school. This could include clubs and sports. Sports take about two hours a day on weekdays if it is a practice. However, if there is a game or a meet this could take over that amount of time. In addition, clubs meet after school. Most teenagers need some extra time for going out with friends, having fun, and relaxing. And with hours and hours of homework, students can hardly hope to sleep nine hours a night and have time for fun.

Even though a lack of sleep in teenagers is a very usual happening, this does not make it any less serious. Classic signs of sleep deprivation include: difficulty waking in the morning, falling asleep, oversleeping and memory or concentration problems. In teenagers, sleep deprivation can cause bad grades, depression, or severe moodiness. Teenagers also have a high risk of falling asleep while driving and causing an accident.

Perhaps if teenagers did receive the recommended nine hours minimum of sleep, there would be better performance in school and not so many students falling asleep during class.

Elena Tinfow, from Westfield, attends the Union County Magnet School.

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