



# West Elementary Newsletter September, 2013

*Greetings from West!*

Fall is in the air and it is certainly a welcome sight after the hot temperatures we had a few weeks ago. Because of that, it has taken a little longer to get settled in to a routine. We are now in routines and excited for a fantastic year of learning!

**Anti-Bullying Contract** - Reducing the amount of bullying that occurs in our district and building is of prime importance to everyone. West had a major focus on anti-bullying last year and saw good results. We increased the reporting of suspected bullying and decreased the number of behavior referrals. We are continuing our work this year. I have gone into each classroom this month talking with students about how they must stand together to let bullies know that bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. You should have received a "Standing Up Against Bullying" contract signed by your child's teacher, a board member, Mr. Moen (counselor), and myself. If you have not already done so, have your child explain our plan and then both you and your child sign it. If you have not returned the contract, please do so as soon as possible.

Students are focusing on doing and saying positive things to each other. These acts of kindness are noted and put in tin cans as an act of "filling someone's bucket."

Anti-bullying is also a part of our monthly Character Counts assemblies. Students plan and facilitate the program. Check the calendar for the dates and plan to join us! It is a great event!

**Homecoming Parade and Pep Rally** - Homecoming week ended with a parade, followed by a school and community pep rally at the football stadium. It was a wonderful event that brought everyone together to cheer on our football players. West had many students in the parade. Our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade football players, the winners of the fire poster contest, and the winners of our At Home Reading Contest were all riding in the parade. The rest of us watched from the sidelines and cheered them on. The pep rally that followed was an amazing and fun event that brought the entire student body together. An event such as this has not happened for many years.

**At Home Reading Program** - We kicked off our program this month with a contest between classrooms to see who could read the most minutes/pages in three weeks. The winners were Mrs. Black (3<sup>rd</sup> grade), Miss Reidy (4<sup>th</sup> grade), Mr Abildtrup (5<sup>th</sup> grade), and Mrs. Whitaker (6<sup>th</sup> grade). The students got to be in the Homecoming parade, received a free ticket to the football game, and got to form a tunnel for the football players to run through.

With such a great kick-off, we are on our way toward a great year of reading! Our October incentive is to be able to wear costumes for Halloween. Please encourage your child(ren) to read on a routine basis and to bring their reading logs to school as evidence of their reading. The best way to increase reading skills is to read, read, read! With your help, our reading skills will soar! Thanks in advance for your assistance and support!

**School Pictures** - It is time for those smiles to get caught by the camera again. Third and fourth graders will have their pictures taken on Oct. 2nd with fifth and sixth graders having theirs taken on Oct. 3rd. Every student will have their picture taken even if you do not choose to order pictures.

**Author Visit**-Joyce Crawford, children's author and former elementary teacher, will be at West on October 10<sup>th</sup> to visit with the students about writing. She will have books available for sale prior to the 10<sup>th</sup>. Included in this newsletter is more information and an order form if you are interested in purchasing one of her books. This is completely voluntary. If you choose to order a book, orders must be placed by October 8<sup>th</sup>.

**After School Program** - We had to make some choices last spring about use of funds and decided that it was important to increase the time that our interventionists have with students. In order to do that we had to cut our after school program this year. This was a valuable program for our students and hopefully we will be able to offer it again in the future.

**Procedures for picking up and dropping off students** - Our procedures before and after school are the same as last year. We believe that they keep our students safe as they enter and exit the building. Students who ride the shuttle buses are dismissed at 3:15 p.m.. All other students are dismissed at 3:17 p.m. Students who ride the late buses wait in the commons for the buses and are supervised by teachers. Students will be crossing the parking lot in two locations with the assistance of staff. **NO CARS** are allowed up into the administration or West parking lots before or after school until the buses are gone. Visitors to the building during the day may use the north end of the parking lot, remembering that **if you are there when school is dismissed, you will have to stay in the parking lot until the buses are gone**. We have placed cones in the parking lot to mark off a place for students to cross the parking lot to get to and from recess safely. We greatly appreciate your support with these procedures that help to keep our students safe.

The transportation department needs a little time each fall to get routes running smoothly. We have now determined that **on early release days** we can get buses out a little earlier so on these days **shuttle students are dismissed at 1:05 p.m. and the rest of the students at 1:10 p.m.** Students riding the late bus will remain in the commons until the buses return.

**News from PTO**-This a carnival year so save the date of March 29th on your calendars. Donations we are in need of include:

- Gently used stuffed animals
- Gently used books for grades K - 6
- Small toys to be used as prizes
- Half a Hog
- $\frac{1}{4}$  of Beef

Information will be coming soon regarding the US Cellular "Calling All Communities" contest to be held November 4<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>. Twenty schools will win \$25, 000 for a total of \$500, 000 to be given away by US Cellular. It is really easy to participate-all you have to do is vote for our school!

We are still collecting Box Tops, Milk Moola (which was going to expire in October, but they have moved the date), and Pizza Ranch wagon wheels on pizza and chicken boxes. See the attached fliers for more information.

Yours for Kids,

***Sandy Merritt, principal***

#### **October Events:**

October 2<sup>nd</sup> - School pictures for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade

October 3<sup>rd</sup> - School pictures for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade

October 4<sup>th</sup> - Character Counts assembly for Respect Pillar at 8:30 a.m. in the gym

October 7<sup>th</sup> - No School - Teacher learning day

October 9<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade to EWALU

- Mrs. Hearn's class to West Village

- PTO meeting at 7:00 p.m. at West

October 10<sup>th</sup> - Author Joyce Crawford assembly for students

October 23<sup>rd</sup> - Early Dismissal at 1:05 p.m.

October 23<sup>rd</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> - Red Ribbon Week

October 30<sup>th</sup> - Mrs. Brown's class to West Village

October 31<sup>st</sup> - Halloween parties