

Counselors' Connection

By: Laura Jones

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Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on Oct. 9, 16 & 23, 2006. Please call the guidance office at (240) 236-3508, if you would like me to attend your child's conference. Or, if you wish to arrange a guidance conference time.

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Visit us at:
<http://schools.fcps.org/kes>

Back to School: Making the Most Of a New Beginning

Going back to school is an adjustment for a child of any age! Ensuring a smooth transition and a successful school year involves more than purchasing the correct supplies and the right wardrobe.

This is the time of year when a little extra effort and organization on your part can minimize headaches later on.

Set high expectations. Let your child know what you expect from them, both in terms of doing their best in school and taking responsibility for appropriate actions.

Open the lines of communication. Attend "Back To School" night and schedule one-on-one parent/teacher conferences early in the fall. Create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for your children to communicate with you.

Be visible and vigilant. Your presence while homework is being done and occasionally at school for events or visits will express your interest in and commitment to your child's academic success more than anything you will ever say. Keep abreast of how things are going.

Show understanding, but send your child to school. Regular and prompt attendance is paramount to students success. Firm and calm insistence that the child attend school may help minor "separation anxieties." Establish a consistent daily routine so that your child is sure of the details of his/her day.

Stay involved! Studies show that children do better in school when their families stay involved in their education.



Welcome New Students

On September 26, 2006, we hosted a New Student Social where we invited all newly enrolled students in grades 1-5 to a social gathering featuring cookies, juice and "Get To Know You" activities followed by a question and answer session with Mr. Parsons and Mrs. Poling.

In addition, all the new students were asked to appear on the morning announcements for all to see and recognize.

We would like to officially welcome all our new students and families and would encourage you to become active members of our KES community.

Get Ready for The Parent-Teacher Conference

This fall parent-teacher conferences provide an excellent opportunity for you to discuss your child's academic progress and to ask questions that you might have regarding classroom procedures and expectations with your child's teacher. The following are some helpful tips that might help you during conferences:

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE:

- Talk with your child. Ask: What do you think the teacher will tell me? What do you like best about school? What would you like to change? What would you like me to talk to the teacher about?
- Think about things happening at home that may affect your child's school performance.
- List concerns or questions for the teacher. What will be covered this year? What are your expectations for homework? Is my child getting along with others? Is my child working with other teachers? What can I do at home to help my child?
- Bring documentation that you may have concerns about (i.e. child's work, interim.)

CONFERENCE DAY:

- Be on time. Conferences are short. If you have more concerns than time allows, make arrangements for another conference.
- Discuss your most important concerns first from the list you prepared ahead of time.
- Listen, relax, and remember you and the teacher are on the same team.
- Plan a course of action for improvement.



Fall into conferences!!

AFTER THE CONFERENCE:

- Meet with your child privately in a quiet setting. Share the positives. Make a plan with your child for improvement and monitor it frequently.
- Stay in contact with the classroom teacher.
- Reward each step forward toward success.

Character Counts Kick-Off

Character Education is an integral part of the instructional program at Kemptown Elementary. Students will be recognized on a regular basis for exhibiting these character traits in their day-to-day performance. The pillars are: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring & Citizenship.

Each month Frederick County focuses on one of the 6 pillars. The Character trait and its meaning are announced daily on the morning announcements.

To "kick-off" our Character Counts program, staff members were given "Paw Prints". These awards are given to those students who were "Caught Showing Good Character". Students names are drawn weekly and announced on the morning announcements.

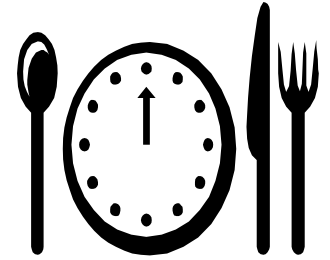
We encourage you to continue modeling the pillars of Character at home, too.



Character Counts at
Kemptown Elementary

Learning Lunches

Learning Lunches have begun! What is a Learning Lunch? A Learning Lunch is an opportunity for students in fifth grade to eat lunch together and learn about the career, talent, or hobby of a special guest speaker. This educational opportunity is available to Fifth Graders who want to learn more about the variety of careers.



On September 26, we heard from Andy Nichols who is the founder and director of Team Link, Inc. and Team Link Mountain Sports Center. He is a master educator of outdoor living skills and provided a fun and interactive session.

On October 19, we will hear from Ryan Sakamoto, Public Relations Director of the Frederick Keys who will share with us his work with the team.

And, in November, we will have Dr. Hinkle from Chiropractic, Alternative Medical, Rehabilitation & Exercise as our guest.

If you have an interesting occupation or hobby that you would like to share with our school, please contact the Guidance Office at (240) 236-3508.

Classroom Guidance

Counselors Care

During the first two weeks in September, Counselor Introduction lessons were completed in Grades 1-4. Introductions were made. The role of the school counselor was explained and how I can better provide support for your child(ren).

I visited each Fifth Grade class regarding our Peer Mentor Program. The expectations and duties of our Peer Mentors were explained during the initial classroom lesson. All students must complete the Peer Mentor application and those interested in becoming a Peer Mentor will be interviewed. The selection process will be based on student interest, teacher recommendation, and parental consent. There are only 15 positions available for Peer Mentors.

Kindergarten "Helping Hands" lessons were completed. Students were read a story and were given opportunities to discuss the many ways to use their hands for helping (not hurting). They compiled a class "Helping Hands" booklet.

In early October, Fourth Graders will have the opportunity to view the film "Lots of Kids Like Us." This is part of the Here's Looking At You 2000 drug and alcohol curriculum for Frederick County Public Schools.

Classroom guidance lessons will be provided to Fifth Grade students who will learn and practice conflict resolution skills. Students will learn the steps for solving problems (STOP-stop, think, options, pick) and will develop strategies for resolving those conflicts peacefully.

National Character Week

October 16-19, 2006

This year we will be recognizing National Character Week by "collecting random acts of kindness." Students are encouraged to bring in items to be included in care packages sent to the troops that are currently deployed.

In order to complete these "Care Kits", we are asking that each grade level bring in specific items. Please send in the following items:

Kindergarten: Communication/
Stationary items (paper, pencils, pens, envelopes, stamps, International phone cards)

First Grade: Snacks/Candy (candy, gum, beef jerky, cookies, crackers, gummy bears, trail mix, powdered Gatorade mix) NO CHOCOLATE, please. It melts.

Second Grade: Toiletry items (toothpaste, tooth brushes, deodorants, shampoo, soap, q-tips, etc.)

Third Grade: Sanitary/Personal Hygiene needs (wet wipes, Clorox wipes, lip balm, sunscreen, bug spray, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, etc.)

Fourth Grade: Breakfast items (mini boxes of cereal, breakfast bars, pop tarts, granola bars)

Fifth Grade: Games/Entertainment (playing cards, paperback books, magazines, word search/Sudoku books, Nerf style balls, etc.)

Thank You!! Thank You!! Thank You!!

Thank you for taking part in our Guidance Needs Assessment. Your input is essential in helping us provide educational programs, lessons, and support to you and your child.

We are already in the process of analyzing the data and integrating it with the information we received from the Student and Teacher Needs Assessments. From the information we have received, we are forming special groups dealing with the following issues: Changing Families, Grief, Anxiety, Self-Esteem, & Social Skills.

Should you have a child that you believe would benefit from one of more of these groups, please contact the Guidance Office.

Again, thank you for your participation in helping us improve our developmental guidance program.

Red Ribbon Week: October 23-27, 2006

National Red Ribbon Week is a drug awareness week where it is our commitment to educate our students regarding the hazards of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The following is a list of activities, which KES will be participating during this week:

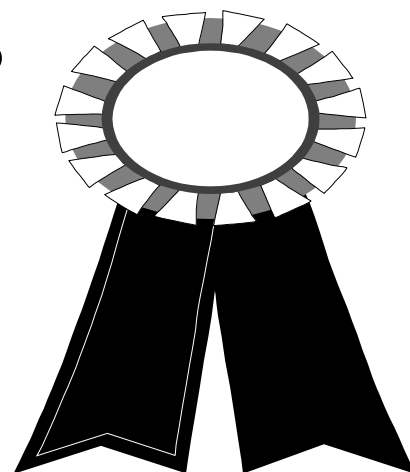
Monday, October 23-"Walk Away from Drugs"-Students are encouraged to participate in a Mini-Walk to raise money for the Frederick Rescue Mission.

Tuesday, October 24 -"Red Ribbons on Classroom Doors"- Teachers will be given a red ribbon to place on their classroom doors. This serves as a visual reminder of our pledge to be drug free

Wednesday, October 25-Students will receive a peppermint candy for their "commitment" to leading a drug free life.

Thursday, October 26-"Drug Free Pledge Stickers" will be handed out to each student.

Friday, October 27-"Wear Red Day." Students and staff are encouraged to wear red.



**"I PROMISE TO BE DRUG
FREE AND TO BE AS SAFE
AS I CAN BE!!!"**