

Great Oaks Elementary

Gecko News

2009-2010 SECOND EDITION

OCTOBER, 2009

PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Wow!!! Friday mornings are exciting at Great Oaks. During our weekly enrichment hour students are participating in a wide variety of fun activities including:

- Multi-cultural studies of celebrations, art, music, language, and food from other countries
- Sign language
- Claymation projects with a community service focus
- Water conservation project coordinated with the community and district partners
- Professional drawing lessons with a service project as the final product
- Origami lessons - bringing together creative art and math skills
- Scrapbooking
- Independent Research
- Science experiments
- Exploring historical time periods
- Math games
- School Newspaper
- Script writing
- Gardening
- And more....

We appreciate the parents who have been here helping with enrichment. If you have an area of expertise or interest that you would like to share with a group of students, please contact your child's teacher. You are welcome to join us!

Along with Friday enrichment, we want our students to excel in and enjoy daily instruction. You will have the opportunity to discuss your child's goals and progress during the upcoming Parent/Student/Teacher conferences. Monday, October 12, is a student holiday. The teachers will be available all day on October 12 for conferences, so please contact your child's teacher for an appointment.

Jana Stowe, Principal

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 5-9: Education Go Get it Week! (College Week)

October 6: PTA Board Meeting GOE Library @ 6:30 P.M.

October 7: National Walk to School Day!

October 10: Parents Night Out at Lifetime Fitness

October 12: Student Holiday; Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences

October 15: SEPAC Meet and Greet, GOE Library @ 8:00 A.M. (Special Education Parents Advisory Council)

October 16: Rock Solid Character! Rock Wall Climbing for 4th and 5th Graders

October 22: First Grade Family Reading Night @ 6:15

October 26-30: Red Ribbon Week!

October 26-30: PTA Reflections Entries Due! "Beauty is..."

October 26: Kindergarten Classes go to Elgin Tree Farm

October 30: Third Grade Classes go to Pioneer Farms

October 30: PTA Sponsored Family Movie Night! 6:30 in the Cafeteria

PTA UPDATE

International Walk to School Day is October 7th. This is a great chance to participate in a physical activity with your child. We encourage all families to walk, run, ride or scooter to school this day. We will be having a big Cha-Cha Town Hall on the field in the morning to celebrate. Be watching for more information as we get closer to this day. Last year we had almost 100% participation and we are aiming for that again.

Family Movie Night: Please join us for Family Movie Night on Friday October 30th at 6:30pm in the cafeteria. We will be showing the movie "Earth". There are many fun events planned for the evening and many chances to learn how we as students and families can reduce, reuse and recycle. Watch the Wednesday eFolder for more information, or contact Holly Zeiner at 487-5457 or holly.zeiner@austin.rr.com.

Reflections: Reflections is a national fine arts program sponsored by PTA. Students from Kindergarten to seniors in high school are encouraged to submit entries that depict the theme. The Reflections theme for this year is "Beauty is...." Students can submit original works from October 26-30th. Please check out the e-folder for more information.

Parents Night Out: Our next Parents Night Out at Lifetime Fitness will be Saturday October 10th. Registration forms are in the e-folder and must be turned in (with payment) the front office at school by Tuesday October 6th.

Student Directories: Student Directories are still available for sale (\$4) until Friday, October 9th. We hope to have them available for distribution by late October or very early November.

Want to place an ad for your business in the directory? Ads range in size from business card (\$10) to full page (\$150). Order forms for purchasing a directory or placing an ad are in the efolders starting on Sept. 23rd. For more information please contact Rhonda Hormuth at 238-8250 or rhondah@austin.rr.com.

Membership: We finished our fall membership drive on Friday 9/25 and have 214 members sign-up. You can still sign up to be a member and enjoy the benefits of membership. Contact Liz Sledge at lsledge1@juno.com to sign up. Be sure to check out the Texas PTA website for information on all the discounts members are entitled to (www.txpta.org).

Spirit Sales: Latest round of School Spirit shirts (except youth medium size) were delivered on Wednesday. Printer is working on the Youth Medium. Spirit Sale items are still on sale! Back by popular demand Car decals! New gecko shirts, water bottles and drawstring bags also available. Check out your past efolders for an order form or pick up a copy outside the main office door.

Clothes Closet: The Clothes Closet is off to a great start this year! Please remember to keep us in mind when you are cleaning out your closets. The gently used clothing is greatly needed to benefit families within our district. The Clothes Closet is also in need of new socks and underwear, all sizes. You can drop your donations off in the wooden chests in the front entryway to the school.

If you have any questions or would like to help, please contact Becky Thomas at beckythomas@austin.rr.com or 388-8985.

Box Tops Contest: Don't forget to submit your Box Tops, Campbell's Labels for Education, and Tyson A+ labels to your child's teacher before October 16. Not only are you helping the school raise money, but your child's class could win a new game.

Safety: One of our primary missions as PTA is to promote the welfare of our children and youth. Be aware that signs are now posted prohibiting cell phone use in the school zones.

Karina Bolger, PTA President

COUNSELORS' CORNER

We will be observing "Education Go Get It Week" October 5-9. The purpose is to encourage our students to pursue post secondary education. Here is a snapshot of the week's activities.

- Students are invited to wear school/college t-shirts each day.
- The Art teachers will provide students with the opportunity to create their own college pennant or t-shirt, and Watch DOGS will display them in the main hallway.
- The Wellness student teachers will share their career pathway with students on Friday.
- Each grade level will have a sign hung in their hall stating their expected date of college entry.
- A few faculty members will share information about their college on KGOE Monday through Thursday.
- A map will be displayed showing where Great Oaks staff members went to school.

- There will also be a variety of classroom activities.

Also as part of “Education: Go Get It Week” activities, the district is hosting a Career Fair for Pre-K through eighth grade students at Walsh Middle School, 3850 Walsh Ranch Rd., on Oct. 8 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. In addition to learning about potential careers, parents and students will be able to learn about the district’s new middle school program called “Future Forward,” a web-based career and college search program that can be accessed from home. Presenters will also discuss topics such as saving for college, financial aid and what colleges look for when selecting future students.

Our monthly parent newsletter, *Firm, Fair & Consistent*, is located in the Great Oaks Wednesday eFolder. It contains parenting tips to help guide children for school success.

If you or anyone you know would like to become a mentor at Great Oaks, please contact Maria Rivera at 464-6862. It can be a wonderful way to get involved and make a positive difference in a child's life.

Martha Robinson & Maria Rivera, Counselors

BOOKMARK THIS

Destination Book Fair: The Book Fair will correspond with the Thanksgiving Lunch on November 17. Please take a look at the library website for more information. You are welcome to sign up to volunteer. Please look in the efolder to print out the volunteer form and return it to the library so that you can help at the book fair. There is a discount for volunteers!

Bluebonnet Reading Program: If your child is in 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade, talk to them about the Bluebonnet Reading program and you can also go to the Bluebonnet Program link on the library web page (Mrs. Grindle's TeacherWeb).

Overdue Books: Books are overdue after 2 weeks. We do not charge for overdue books but we will send out overdue notices every Wednesday. Once a student receives an overdue notice, we would like for the student to bring it back as soon as possible to either renew it or return it. We do encourage students to visit the library often to return books and check out new ones.

Student ID Cards: Students who lose or damage cards will be charged \$3 for a replacement of their card. We hope that you can reinforce with your child the importance of taking care of his/her card. Many students will also have lanyards to keep their cards safe and out of their hands. The cards should stay at school so that students can use them for lunch & library.

Parent Services: Parents of Great Oaks students are able to use the library and may check out up to 5 books. If you would like to check out books, stop by the library and fill out an application form.

Clarissa Grindle, Librarian

NURSE'S NOTES

I am happy to report our school-wide screenings are completed. A huge thank you to all the parent volunteers who helped make these days run very smoothly. All students were screened for vision, hearing, height, and weight. Additionally, students in the 1st, 3rd, and 5th grades were screened for Acanthosis Nigricans. Students that did not pass one of the screenings will be re-screened in 2-3 weeks. If that student does not pass the second time, a referral notice will be sent home requesting an exam by his/her healthcare provider. Please return the referral form to me, once completed by the medical examiner. Parents will be notified only if their child does not pass this second screening.

What is BMI?

BMI stands for Body Mass Index. It is calculated using height and weight. It is used to measure if one's weight is appropriate for one's height. In children, age and gender are also taken into consideration. Take a minute to calculate your own BMI and then your child's BMI. The link below has both an adult and a child BMI calculator:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/>

Interpreting BMI results (adult and child)

<u>Adult BMI</u>	<u>Weight Status</u>
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese

<u>Weight Status Category</u>	<u>Child Percentile Range</u>
Underweight	Less than the 5 th percentile
Healthy weight	5 th percentile to less than the 85 th percentile

At risk of overweight	85 th to less than the 95 th percentile
Overweight	Equal to or greater than the 95 th percentile

- BMI is a reliable tool for screening one’s risk of being overweight/obese and thus, risk for future health problems. Such health problems could include: hypertension, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, and some cancers. It is not intended to be diagnostic, but can indicate the need for further evaluation.

Recent Trends

Did you know that more and more children/adolescents are being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes? Type 2 diabetes used to be known as adult onset. It develops when not enough insulin is produced or the body cannot effectively use the insulin that is produced because of increased insulin resistance. Risk factors associated with Type II diabetes include: family history, race/ethnicity, obesity, and inactivity. Two of these 4 risk factors are out of our control, but the 2 we can control are about healthy lifestyles—nutrition and exercise. With the increasing trends of poor nutrition and decreased activity, our children are at greater risk.

- 35% of TX children are considered overweight or obese (BMI>85%=overweight, BMI>95%=obese)
- 62% of adults in TX are considered overweight or obese (BMI>25=overweight, BMI>30=obese)
- It has been estimated that 1 in 3 US children born after 2000, will develop diabetes if current trends continue

Help your child develop healthy eating habits.

- Provide plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products.
- Include low-fat or non-fat milk or dairy products.
- Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils, and beans for protein.
- Serve reasonably-sized portions.
- Encourage your family to drink lots of water.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat.
- Limit calorie rich temptations, offering less frequently as a real treat.

Help your child stay active.

Children really need 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity daily. Remember children imitate their adult role models. Participating in activities together will not only add to quality time spent, but also help foster such habits. Reduce sedentary time by limiting the

total amount of time spent watching TV, playing video games, and computer time to no more than 2 hours. Some examples of moderate intensity activities can include:

- Brisk walking
- Playing tag
- Jumping rope
- Playing soccer
- Swimming
- Dancing

Tammy Petronzio, RN

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