



Sunbeams

Sunrise Valley Elementary School • Parent Teacher Association Newsletter • April 23, 2010

Dear Sunrise Valley Families,

This week marked the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. In honor of this occasion, this edition of Sunbeams features a number of “green articles.” Found on pages 3 & 4, the articles feature things like tips from the SVES Green Team, ways our SVES community is “going green,” cool iPhone/iPod apps, and opportunities to commemorate Earth Day as a family.

Next week, we’ll celebrate a very special anniversary as Sunrise Valley Elementary School turns 30 years old! The Sunrise Valley community will commemorate this important milestone with two amazing events. First, on Thursday evening, April 29th, we’ll celebrate the talents of our amazing students with “Stars of Sunrise” —it includes a dessert reception featuring student entertainers, a gallery showing of Reflections Art Contest entries and winners, and a staged variety show showcasing more student performances. This event will be held at the school, and all members of the Sunrise Valley community—current and past—are invited to attend. This special evening will also include a preview of a commemorative student art project, and a raffle of amazing “themed baskets” created by our very own classroom communities. (Note: details on the baskets will be posted at <http://sunrisevalleypta.webnode.com> for you to view before the 29th.)

On Saturday, May 1st, we’ll hold Sunrise Valley’s 10th annual charity 5K walk/run at 8:00 a.m. at the intersection of Sunrise Valley Drive and South Lakes/Preston White Drive. This year, the charity event will benefit Hopecam, an organization that works right here in Fairfax County Public Schools to connect homebound students with their friends and teachers through technology. The entry fee is \$25 (\$5 for children under 12), and every participant receives a t-shirt. There’s still time to register at <http://www.active.com/running/reston-va/sunrise-valleys-10th-annual-5k-runwalk-this-year-benefitting-hopecam-2010>.

I look forward to celebrating with you!

Melissa Gifford
PTA President

Foreign Language Satisfaction Survey

If your child participated in a FLEX Foreign Language class here at Sunrise Valley, please take a few moments to complete the online satisfaction survey for FLEX classes at <http://www.fcps.edu/aceclasses/survey.htm>. You will need your child’s course and section number. Please contact Melissa Gifford at svesptaenrichment@gmail.com if you need this information.

Your feedback is important in shaping and improving this wonderful student enrichment opportunity. Thank you for sharing your views!

Desserts Needed for 30th Anniversary!

Donations of dessert items are needed for Sunrise Valley’s 30th Anniversary festivities on Thursday, April 29th. We need cookies, brownies (pre-cut), mini cupcakes, dessert breads (pre-cut), candies, etc.—anything that can be served individually and eaten on a napkin. (No items requiring forks please, and please label items containing nuts.)

Items can be dropped off in the school lobby from 8:30–9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 29th. Please email Melissa Gifford at melissa.h.gifford@gmail.com if you can donate a dessert item, or if you have any questions. Advance notice and collection is needed to make sure we have enough goodies!

Thank you!

Check out more SVES PTA news at <http://sunrisevalleypta.webnode.com>

Basketball Blast!



Thanks to the many folks who made the inaugural Sunrise Valley/Fox Mill ES Basketball Challenge a fun and successful event!

Special thanks go out to our awesome 6th grade boys and girls basketball teams and their coach, Mrs. Christy Winters-Scott, our spirited 5th & 6th grade cheerleaders and their coach, Mrs. Valerie Lister, our slammin' staff basketball team and their coach, Mr. Randy Platts, and our fantastic faculty cheerleaders and their coordinator, Mrs. Donna Frederick!

The South Lakes gym was truly rocking thanks to a HUGE showing of LOUD and ENTHUSIASTIC SVES fans (who showed great sportsmanship, by the way!) and our dedicated DJ and announcer, Mr. Platts! Thanks, also, to the many parents, alumni, and Scouts who volunteered to organize and run the event, especially Sumi Vintimilla, the SVES event coordinator, and volunteer leaders Lisa Nobles, Kevin Wolcott, Kathy Joyner, Susannah Palik, Kristin Helfer, and Lisa Hughes.

Finally, a very special thanks to Mr. Bruce Butler and the students at South Lakes HS for their hospitality, help and enthusiasm, and to Fox Mill ES for inviting us to participate and being fun opponents and partners!

Teachers' Appreciation Luncheon Slated for May

The annual teacher's appreciation luncheon is a great opportunity to show our appreciation to the teachers who are working hard with our precious children at school. Mark your calendar for Monday, May 17th. We'll give a luncheon of our hearty handmade dishes for them. What's your favorite recipe? Let's treat our teachers together! More information will come later.

Questions? Contact Sumi Vintimilla at sumivan@verizon.net



Themed Basket Raffle



As part of the 30th Anniversary Celebration, each class at SVES has collected a basket of items around a theme—cookies, ice cream, movies, summer fun, sports, pasta dinner, and so on. These baskets will be raffled off at the STARS of Sunrise event on Thursday, April 29th. Take as many chances as you like on any of the baskets you like! Each basket will have a container next to it. Simply place tickets in the container next to the basket(s) you want. One ticket will be drawn from each container and the selected ticket holder wins the corresponding basket! Check out a preview of a few of the baskets on page 6 and look for more info on the PTA website next week.

Saving Trees (and “Green”) One Sheet at a Time

Over the past several years, the SVES PTA has taken steps to help the environment and save resources by reducing our consumption of paper. We thought it would be interesting to try to quantify the impact of the measures we’ve taken. Here’s what we’ve done:

■ **One Per Family:** By sending information home with the oldest child in a family (rather than all children) we save about 150 sheets of paper per page sent. During the course of a year, this saves approximately 4,500 sheets of paper.

■ **Electronic Newsletter:** By publishing the bi-weekly PTA newsletter on the school and PTA websites

instead of printing, we save about 20,000 sheets of paper per year.

■ **Online Directory:**

This marks the first year that the PTA has not printed the student directory, which saves approximately 13,000 sheets of paper annually.

■ **“Paperless” PTA Meetings:** Rather than print one copy of PTA meeting materials per person, we now use a laptop and projector supplemented by one copy per

table. Annually, this saves about 500 sheets of paper.

■ **Electronic Communication:**

Where we used to send home multiple paper fliers per community event, enrichment program, fundraiser, etc., now we typically send an initial flier and follow up using the Keep in Touch email system (KIT). Where possible, we use KIT exclusively. In addition, our new content-rich website (launched

this year) keeps a wealth of information at families’ fingertips “24/7.” The Sunbeams newsletter is another great communication tool. Using these electronic media saves in the neighborhood of 22,000 sheets per year.

This comes to a savings of about 60,000 sheets of paper per year! So what does this mean in real terms? Conservatree roughly estimates that one tree makes 8,333.3 sheets of paper. So by saving an estimated 60,000 sheets of paper per year, we can save about 7 trees annually! In addition, we reduce operating costs by more than \$1,000! So a little bit really does go a long way!



Think Recycle!

So far this year, the Sunrise Valley community has collected more than 500 cell phones, ink-jets, and toner cartridges, diverting almost 300 pounds of debris from landfills, reducing their environmental impact, and preventing potential contamination of air, water, and soil. Also, *seven trees have been planted in the name of SVES*, which helps in cleaning the air we breathe!

After hearing about the benefits of the Sunrise Valley ink recycling program, Langston Hughes Middle School has also signed up for this recycling program. Not only will their participation increase the number of items saved from the landfills, but SVES will get a percentage of their recycling because we referred them. If you know of other schools or organizations that we can refer, let us know.

Thanks and keep putting those items in the THINK RECYCLE box at school. Contact: *Melissa Smith svesptafundraising@gmail.com*.

Recycle Gently Used Books

Reuse, recycle and renew can apply to anything: paper, plastics and even books. Sunrise Valley will have the opportunity to put the latter into practice during a book drive May 3–14.

SVES will be collecting books for AV Bukani Elementary in Addo, South Africa. Northern Virginia educators Eileen and Larry Kugler are creating a library for the children at the South African school. So check your bookshelves, tables and desks!

Any gently used books for primary school age children will be accepted. There will even be an opportunity to purchase new books for the book drive during the SVES Book Fair May 10–14.

Remember: Books your family members may have lost interest in or outgrown have the potential to delight and excite children at this school. For more information, contact Valerie Lister at 703-391-0303 or vallister93@verizon.net.

Thank you!



Celebrate Earth Day!



Happy Earth Day! Here are a few tips from the SVES Green Team to help make Sunrise Valley a green and healthy place to live. Remember that **recycling** is good, **reusing** is better, and **reducing** is best!

■ Mail Boxes at Plaza America will accept Styrofoam, packing peanuts, packing materials, and boxes in good condition. Keep a plastic garbage bag handy at home to collect those small items and drop them off when you have a bunch.

■ Reuse your take-out containers (the more substantial plastic ones). Keep several of them in a clean cloth bag in your car, and take them to restaurants for “doggie bags;” to grocery stores for olive/salad bars (check with Customer Service first—Whole Foods will allow it); and to Chinese restaurants for take-out food.

■ Buy some cotton cloth napkins and use them instead of paper napkins. Buy them in several colors so each family member has his/her own color. Simply add them to your regular wash load when they get dirty (every few days unless you have spaghetti).

■ Stop buying bottled water, and start using a good reusable bottle. Here is a

website with some information about bottled water and plastics: <http://www.reusablebags.com/facts.php?id=18>.

■ Cut up old T-shirts for rags instead of using paper towels for cleaning around the house. Use natural cleaners such as vinegar and baking soda.

■ Whole Foods will accept #5 plastic containers (yogurt, cottage cheese, etc.) if your curbside pickup service doesn't. Look for the container near the eat-in area.

■ PC Recycler in Chantilly has a monthly collection event for many electronic items, cords, cassettes, etc. There are fees for a few items, and the complete list of dates and acceptable items is on their website: <http://www.pcrecycler.net/services/drop/monthly-collection-events/>. The next event is on May 8 from 10:00–2:00. The line forms around 9:15, so plan to get there early and wait. Be sure to turn off your engine while waiting. (See next item.)

■ Check out these two websites to find out about emissions when your car is idling. Let's see if we can keep the air at Kiss and Ride clean for all of us:
• <http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/pdf/Anti-Idling%20Brochure.pdf> and
• <http://maplewood.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/27/cut-your-engine-to-curb-pollution/>

■ Get a Greenswitch for your home and save money. This is a single wireless remote switch that will turn off whatever outlets in your house you choose when you leave the house. You can keep the telephone answering machine on, but turn off anything else not needed so you don't waste that “phantom power.” You can attach the switch right by the door you use most. Here's the website: <http://www.greenswitch.tv/products.cfm>

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Leatherwood (kleatherwood@fcps.edu) or a Green Team member.

3 Free iPhone Apps to Help You Go Green

■ **iRecycle** is a great resource that allows you to look up locations for recycling 240+ materials in your area. Simply type in whatever object you'd like to recycle and nearby centers with contact information, hours of operations and any restrictions are listed.
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/irecycle/id312708176?mt=8>

■ **Find Green** provides information on local green businesses in your vicinity. With 23 industries to choose from, including health and wellness, retail/consumer, and dining, you can opt to patronize businesses that have made a commitment to improving the environment. Turn-by-turn directions to each business selected are also included in this app.
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/find-green/id325640751?mt=8>

■ **Climate Counts**—If you ever wonder how the companies you frequently purchase from rank on the environmental awareness scale, ClimateCounts is a good app for you. Using a rating system and a 100 point scale, each company is scored on its climate impact and given a “striding,” “starting” or “stuck” ranking. Examples of striding companies: Anheuser-Busch and FedEx. Examples of stuck companies: Air Tran and Capital One.
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/climatecounts/id342541675?mt=8>

Source: Excerpted from “10 Free iPhone Apps to Help You Go Green for Earth Day” by Jeana Lee Tahnk at <http://mashable.com/2010/04/22/free-iphone-apps-green/>

For information on some local Earth Day events and opportunities, check out the “In Our Community” page of the Sunrise Valley PTA web site at <http://cms.sunrisevalleypta.webnode.com/community-events/>.



IEPs: State Special Education Regs and Review of IDEA

By Lori Allred, Special Education Representative

It's that time of year! Teachers and parents are preparing for their student's IEP meeting. In this article, I will give some advice based on my experience, review some changes in the Virginia Special Education Regs, and include relevant information from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).

You will receive advance notice of your child's IEP meeting. Usually, the teacher will consult with you to schedule an appropriate day and time to ensure parental attendance at this important meeting. As soon as you set the meeting, ask your child's teacher for their draft goals and objectives.

At the heart of the IEP are three key components:

1. The child's present level of performance;
2. Measurable annual goals (and measurable benchmarks and objectives for some students), and
3. Statement of needed special education and other services.

Below is some specific language from the Virginia Special Education Regulations:

- During the development and revision of a child's IEP, the IEP team must consider academic, developmental and functional needs of the child. All 3 of these needs must be met!

- The 30 day timeline which applies to the development of the IEP following the initial eligibility determination, also applies to the development of an IEP following reevaluation and eligibility process, if the IEP team determines such changes are necessary.
- The LEA determines the school personnel to meet roles of IEP team members. Parents may request certain people be included in the IEP team, but LEA does not have to honor that request. The person must have knowledge of the child.
- The IEP team must consider the child's need for benchmarks or short-term objectives. The IEP team must consider whether the child requires benchmarks or short-term objectives to receive FAPE. The IEP team's consideration must be documented.
- The IEP team must determine whether or not the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular state assessment of student achievement, and include a statement of:
 - o Why child cannot participate in regular assessment
 - o Why the particular assessment selected is appropriate for the child; and
 - o How the child's nonparticipation in the assessment will impact the child's promotion, graduation, or other matters.
- Additional provisions clarify the LEA's responsibilities for providing transition services to a child age 14 versus age 16:
 - o Age 14— IEP must be age appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based on age appropriate assessments related to training, education, employment, and when appropriate independent living skills. These services must be based on the child's needs based on their strengths, preferences and interests.
 - o Age 16—In addition to requirements for 14-year old students, the IEP must consider the student's need for occupational readiness upon school completion, including consideration of courses to prepare the student as a career and technical education program completer.

Language from the IDEA 2004:

Some requirements for the contents of IEPs changed with IDEA 2004 while other requirements remained the same. Here is a summary of some of the changes between IDEA 97 and IDEA 2004.

• Present Levels of Performance

In IDEA 97, IEPs were required to include "a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance . . ."

Under IDEA 2004, the child's IEP must include "a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance . . ."

Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are objective data from assessments.

• Annual Goals

Under IDEA 97, IEPs were required to include a "statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives." IDEA 2004 eliminated the requirements for "benchmarks and short-term objectives" in IEPs - except that the IEPs of children who take alternate assessments must include "a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives."

IDEA 2004 added new language about "academic and functional goals." IEPs must now include "a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals . . ."

• Educational Progress

IDEA 97 required IEPs to include a statement about how the child's progress toward the annual goals would be measured, how the child's parents would be regularly informed about "their child's progress toward the annual goals," and whether the child's progress was sufficient.

Under IDEA 2004, the child's IEP must include "a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals...

Review of IDEA (continued from page 5)

will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided.”

• Developing the IEP

In developing the IEP, the IEP team shall consider:

- the child’s strengths
- the parent’s concerns for enhancing the child’s education
- the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation
- the child’s academic, developmental, and functional needs (Section 1414(d)(3)(A))

The IEP team shall consider special factors for children:

- whose behavior impedes learning
- who have limited English proficiency
- who are blind or visually impaired
- who are deaf or hard of hearing (Section 1414(d)(3)(B))

• Educational placements

The law about educational placements is in Section 1414(e). Parents are members of decides the child’s placement. The decision about placement cannot be made until after the IEP team, which includes the parent, reaches consensus about the child’s needs, program, and goals.

Although the law is clear on this issue, the child’s “label” often drives decisions about services and placement, leading school personnel to determine the child’s placement before the IEP meeting.

These unilateral actions prevent parents from “meaningful participation” in educational decision-making for their child. When Congress added this provision to the law in 1997, they sent a message to school officials that unilateral placement decisions are illegal.

• Reviewing and revising the IEP

The IEP must be reviewed at least once a year to determine if the child is achieving the annual goals. The IEP team must revise the IEP to address:

- any lack of expected progress
- results of any reevaluation
- information provided by the parents
- anticipated needs (Section 1414(d)(4)(A))

- Important terminology:
 - “Functional” as used in “functional performance” and “functional goals”

Functional means non-academic, as in “routine activities of everyday living.” This clarification should help IEP Teams understand that the purpose of the IEP is to prepare children with disabilities for life after school. this should also help the

school understand that teaching children how to “function” in the world is just as important as teaching academic skills.

“It is not necessary to include a definition of “functional” in these regulations because we believe it is a term that is generally understood to refer to skills or activities that are not considered academic or related to a child’s academic achievement. Instead, “functional” is often used in the context of routine activities of everyday living.” (Commentary in the Federal Register, page 46661)

- “Appropriate” mean when used to refer to a child’s participation in “appropriate” activities? (Regulation § 300.320(a)(1)(ii))

This clarification emphasizes the need to focus on the unique needs of the child. An “appropriate” goal or activity for one child may be completely inappropriate for another child. Children are like snowflakes; no two are alike.

“The word “appropriate” in these regulations does not have a different meaning from its common usage. Generally, the word “appropriate” is used to mean “suitable” or “fitting” for a particular person, condition, occasion, or place. (Commentary in the Federal Register, page 46661)

Themed Basket Raffle

