

Westside Wire

News and information for WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Parents and the West Houston community.

From the Principal *Michael McDonough*

Inching Toward June

It's early February and so much has happened. The school year is more than halfway complete, and it seems like so much more is on the horizon still. Inching toward June, we find ourselves as a school community battling so many of the same challenges that are inherent this time of year. Are the kids going to be ready for the battery of tests coming their way? Have we put our resources in the best places so that we can leverage as much as possible to ensure that kids find success? What are the elements that will drive our work toward the 2012-13 school year? Will the fine arts programs continue to grow and will we continue to beat Bellaire in each sport? All of these are valid questions and ones we continue to answer every day.

We will be held accountable by the success of our students.

When I look toward the new pieces we have employed this school year, I

am reminded of a bond project I once was in charge of overseeing back during my days as an assistant principal. The district had designated \$13 million and the school and community were excited. Nearly 80% done, many asked when would the work begin. You see, it was all infrastructure type stuff – new windows, whiteboards, AC support, and piping replaced. There was nothing “splashy” about it. Very much needed and certainly worthwhile – but no fireworks. I align some of this year’s work in the same way.

As a campus we have refocused our attention to the classroom. The manner in which we have structured the work by our teachers within their curriculum teams has us excited about the future. Greater attention to planning details is leading to improvements in the way we assess

learning. Developing the culture of how we work as a school community is at the heart of it all and we are making great progress. Now, the “splash” is not there yet. We will be held accountable by the success of our students on all of the different measurement criteria.



Continuing to graduate more students each year (at a higher rate) is one very public measure. Add in the amount of money that our kids earn in scholarships (district-leading \$21 million last year) as evidence of helping find options for post-Westside learning. Finally, our achievement levels

continued on page 2

Familiar Faces Return for Alumni Breakfast

On January 5th, more than one hundred Westside Alumni, both students and teachers, returned once again to campus for our eleventh annual Alumni Breakfast, sponsored by the PTO. They shared updates about their college lives, reconnected with old friends, told teachers how their lessons continue to help them, and then shared lessons with our future alumni, the class of 2012.



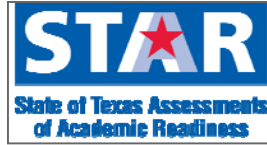
The abundant free breakfast food may be a bit of a draw for the some of our more recent graduates, but what is truly special is how many college graduates return to share their tales of success or show off their new wedding rings or baby pictures. It was also a joy to see the return of former principal **Scott Van Beck** and former Teacher of the Year **Anne Heil**, whose presence reaffirmed how much they love their former Wolves. What our parents and sponsors have created is something truly special, and many teachers and alums look forward to this program each year.

WHS on the Web
For a complete calendar of Westside events, visit us at www.westsidewolves.org



Principal *from page 1*

on all of the different state and national tests speak to those outside of our community about the wonder and success that make us proud within our community.



Westside freshmen will take the new STAAR test this spring. We know it will be harder and that the stakes are higher. At the same time, we have sophomores and juniors that still have to pass the TAKS in order to graduate. We cannot take our eye off the ball of TAKS and simply look to the future of STAAR. That would be irresponsible. Finally, we have kids from every grade level that will sit for at least one AP exam this May. As perhaps the greatest indicator of college readiness, success on an AP



exam can brighten a student's future. We must hold ourselves diligent to that

task as well. Elementary & Middle schools have only the STAAR. High Schools will be much more rigorous this year and in the future.

I have spoken often of the unique characteristics that make up Westside High School. Faced with many different constituencies to serve, we must navigate through it all and prepare for the unknowns. There is a norm that is often used in different meetings that says, "Assume good intentions." Westside High School works hard every day to be so many different things in response to so many different needs. Of course that is what a community does, right? Members rally and participate and support and persevere and learn and laugh and cry and celebrate. In the nearly 12 years that Westside has been open we have done all of that. And with you we are ready for even more of the same.

Westside is a successful comprehen-

sive high school because it is committed to being comprehensive. We have it all. And isn't that how one would describe this city? Or this country? At the core of all of these is the practice of building on your strengths to overcome your weaknesses. Westside is no different. So it's February and we've got work to do. Much is new and much is the same. To what extent can we count on you?



PTO to Host "Casino Night" Fundraiser February 25th

Parents, faculty and staff, alumni families, and community members are invited to "Westside Casino Night". This exciting evening out will be held on Saturday, February 25th at 7 PM at the Pelazzio Banquet Center, which is conveniently located right behind Luby's and Pap-padeaux's on Westheimer. The event will feature dinner, a silent auction, and Vegas-style casino games with great prizes!

Pre-paid tickets are required and are now available. Open seating is \$65 per person and reserved seating for a table of ten is \$75 per person. Your ticket price includes a fabulous dinner with appetizers and dessert, soft drinks, tea & coffee, beer & wine from 7-11:15 PM, \$1000 in chips to get started (extra chips will be available for purchase), and all

your favorite casino games. Winnings get exchanged for raffle tickets and at the end of the night three grand prizes will be drawn!



You will not want to miss this event! The atmosphere will be relaxed and the attire is Vegas-casual (yes, dressy jeans are fine). There will be something for everyone whether you are looking to try your luck at the game tables, shop the silent auction, or just enjoy an evening with other friends of Westside High School.

Please go to the PTO website, www.westsidpto.org for a link to the invitation/order form. The reservation deadline is February 15th, so

save the date for February 25th and download your ticket order form now!

From the PTO President *Debbie Noriega*



Get Involved in 2012

Our public schools are one of the cornerstones of our West Houston community. Their success and public image are crucial to the value of homes and businesses in our neighborhoods. Their success is dependent on enthusiastic support from parents and local business owners.

We have many active and supportive parents in our Westside PTO, and I thank them for their commitment. Many other parents are limited by time or other factors, but any involvement at all is greatly welcomed and encouraged. At Westside our PTO meetings are a great opportunity to learn what is happening at the school, voice your concerns or suggestions, and meet other dedicated parents. Some of the best ideas for improvement have come from voices at these meetings. Please make a resolution to attend our monthly PTO meetings. Our goals of enriched educational experiences for all students, and promotion of school spirit can be enhanced by your involvement. Research studies have repeatedly concluded that strong PTO's and parent involvement produce these results:

- Students do better in school and in life
- Parents become empowered
- Teacher morale improves
- Communities grow stronger

This semester our PTO is sponsoring an evening event, "Westside Casino Night" on February 25th to build community spirit among parents, alumni families, and faculty, and to raise funds for Westside. The proceeds will support our annual Spirit Scholarships (10 awards of \$1000 each to graduating Seniors), and a program called "Teen Truth Live" for our Freshmen and Sophomores. (see article in this issue of the Wire). I know this will be a very fun evening and will help us meet our goal of providing special programs and scholarships. It takes much work and financial support to make these possible. The more parents we can add to our ranks, the better our school will become. Join us in our efforts and have fun at the same time!

"In this complex world it takes more than a good school to educate children. And it takes more than a good home. It takes these two major educational institutions working together."

See you at the next Westside PTO meeting!

Westside Wire

WESTSIDE PTO

PRESIDENT

Debbie Noriega

1st VICE PRESIDENT (MEMBERSHIP)

Disa Lyon

2nd VICE PRESIDENTS (FUNDRAISING)

Barbara Nassab

Dawn Zieren

TREASURER

Trish Milstead

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Kelly Cramer

RECORDING SECRETARY

Kelly Simmons

VIPS COORDINATORS

Michelle Dunwell

Mary Stamos

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Shelby Doehring

Upcoming Performances



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum

February 9-10, 7pm, Black Box

"Shades of Blue" Dinner Concert

February 28, 7pm, Commons

Orchestra Concert

March 6, 7pm, Auditorium

"Desquetary" UIL One Act Play

March 7, 7pm, Auditorium

Choir Pre-UIL Concert

March 8, 7pm, Auditorium

Student Directed One Act Plays

April 11-13, 7pm, Black Box

Inertia Spring Concert

April 19-21, 7:30pm, Mini Theatre

"The May Concert" Dance Show

April 27, 5pm, Auditorium

Pride Spring Show

May 4, 6:30pm, Auditorium



HOSA Blood Drive

Westside's HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) will host a blood drive on March 21. Donors can give blood beginning at 8am in the Lego Gym.

Give the gift of life!

Juniors Taking the SAT

The SAT will be administered to all Juniors on Tuesday, March 20th beginning at 8am.

Practice now to improve your score! Go to westsidewolves.org and click the **SAT Question of the Day** link on the left side of the page.



Westside Wire

AP Kickoff

On January 20th, Westside kicked off its Advanced Placement (AP) season with a breakfast honoring students who have scored well on AP tests in the past. Over 400 students qualified for an invitation to the breakfast by making a score of 3 or better on at least one AP exam. Breakfast tacos and fresh fruit were enjoyed by all.

Students who have scored 3 or higher on three or more exams were awarded plaques in recognition of their accomplishments.



Domination in the Houston All-City Band

Congratulations to Westside Band members who auditioned into the Houston All City Band.



Westside band students earned 40 of the 89 seats available in the honor band. That's a whopping 45% of the entire band!

Go Wolves!!



“Teen Truth Live” and “Shattered Dreams” Coming to Westside

The student council and PTO are teaming up to bring a program to Westside called TEEN TRUTH

LIVE. The 90 minute presentation will be attended by all Freshmen and

Sophomores during assemblies in late February. TEEN TRUTH LIVE offers several programs which focus on different issues experienced by American high school students. Our student council has selected the topic of body image for our program at Westside.

TEEN TRUTH LIVE: BODY IMAGE & SELF ESTEEM is an interactive, multi-media experience that incorporates a motivational presentation with a 22-minute film that was created with the help of students.

Funded in part by four leading non-profit organizations focused on educating the public about body image issues, TEEN TRUTH: BODY IMAGE & SELF ESTEEM presents a raw look at girls in their quest to be skinnier, boys trying to get bigger and stronger, and the ever growing issue of compulsive eating. Using storytelling, humor, real world examples and audience participation, the speaker educates students about the serious consequences of a negative body image. Issues covered in this presentation include eating disorders, performance enhancing drug use, binge eating, and obesity. This gripping presentation challenges the audience to think more about this secretive issue and find the REAL beauty in themselves and others.

Westside PTO is proud to fund this program for our Freshmen and Sophomores.



In April, Westside Juniors and Seniors will again experience the

dramatic program, SHATTERED DREAMS, which focuses on the very real problem in our city of teenage drinking and driving. This program is sponsored and provided by the Harris County Emergency Services. Police, Fire Fighters, and EMS personnel stage a fake crash scene on the campus and show students the deadly consequences of driving under the influence. This life changing program was last offered at Westside two years ago.

This year there will be a new component dealing with parental responsibilities including the illegal serving of alcohol to minors. Thank you to our principal, deans, and faculty for bringing back SHATTERED DREAMS to impress the seriousness of safety on our students, especially during the approaching Prom season.



The school administration hopes to have both of these programs every other year. Each student then will experience both programs once during their four years at Westside. Parents can learn more about the programs at these websites:

www.teentruthlive.com

www.tabc.state.tx.us/education/shattered_dreams.asp

Athletic Booster Club's First Annual Golf Tournament

The Athletic Booster Club (ABC) is holding its first annual golf tournament fundraiser on Wednesday, February 29th. Join coaches and other parents for a fun day of golf, followed by awards, a fiesta dinner, and a lively auction! Proceeds will benefit Westside's athletes through funding in the following areas:



- First aid supplies
- Scoreboard maintenance
- Field & facilities maintenance
- Awards ceremonies
- Athlete college scholarships


The tournament will be held at Cinco Ranch Golf Club. Check in is at 11:00 am, and scramble play begins with a shotgun start at 1:00 pm.

We are looking forward to a fantastic time and hope you can join the fun!

To register please contact Shantra Wilson (shantrawilson26@gmail.com).

To donate auction items contact Jane Miller (sgmillers@sbcglobal.net).

To volunteer please contact Dana Aleman (islebeback@yahoo.com).



Class of 2012 Graduation

Mark your calendar! Graduation for the Class of 2012 will be held Saturday, June 2, 5pm at Hofheinz Pavilion, University of Houston, 3100 Cullen Blvd., 77004.

Westside Wire



Football News

The Westside football team held a food drive before the holiday break and donated over 3,000 pounds of food to the Houston Food Bank! Thank you players and parents!

The following football players were selected as All-State Academic by the Texas High School Coaches Association. Congratulations!

- Omete Anassi
- Xavier Moss
- Deante Gray
- Benjamin Catalon

Football Cookie Sales begin February 7th.

Spring Football practice begins April 30th.

Check the football website to stay current with what's going on!

Mywolvesfootball.com

National Honor Society Membership

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. It serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. Our Westside NHS will send out invitations the last week of February to students who qualify scholastically; this includes sophomores and juniors who have a 3.8 cumulative grade point average or higher for all

work done through the Fall Semester, 2011.

Once a student receives an invitation, he/she needs to get a packet from Ms. Patch in S-236 and return it by the date specified. The entire Westside staff has input on the character, service, and leadership of the student; then a panel reviews the information and the final selection of students occurs.

We are fortunate to have so many



outstanding students who meet the minimum academic requirement but the initial step of being invited to apply does not necessarily mean the student will become a member; it is

a privilege bestowed upon a student by the faculty of the school. If you have any questions, you can email Donna Patch at

dpatch@houstonisd.org

Early Dismissal



Mark your calendar! Westside students will be dismissed at 12:45 on the following dates:

- Wednesday, February 29th
- Wednesday, April 18th.

WHS Baseball Season Begins



The 2011-2012 Westside Baseball program has been busy trying to make its

presence felt in the community. The team volunteered its time at Winter Wonderland at Westchase Quillian Center this past holiday season. The boys helped raise over 2800 pounds of canned goods as well as clothing for the needy in Houston. It is a yearly activity that demonstrates how committed Westside Baseball is to the community. The boys will also be making their trip to Texas Children's Cancer Clinic before the season starts as they do every year.

On the field practice officially started on January 28th, and the first game of the year at all Levels will be Feb 21.

The Varsity baseball team will begin its journey to the State championship game. Last year's team came so close in chasing Westside's first State Championship, being one of the final 9 teams in the state.

Seniors Daniel McConn and Kendall Grigg will lead the way with a great supporting class of Juniors led by All District returners CJ Pickering, Chris Lykins, Miguel Figueroa and JT Cherry.

Expectations are always high at Westside and the boys are hungry to live up to the tasks at hand.

Westside in the Marathon

Westside teachers and students participated in the Chevron Houston Marathon and Aramco Houston Half Marathon in various ways from running to cheering to hydrating the runners.

Our very own Kate Taylor stood out from the pack. With a time of 1:35:06 she placed first in her age group, 123rd in the female category and 540th overall out of over 9000 runners! Other half marathon runners included Ms. Lori Lambropoulos and Mr. Cedric French. Ms. Kristen Dobbs finished the Houston's full marathon for the second year! Congratulations to our runners!

On the sidelines, Westside had approximately twenty NHS students who joined Ms. Patch handing out water, Gatorade, and words of encouragement. They kept mile 21.5 lively and kept the runners going as they approached end of the course.



Westside Student Has Best of Show

Westside artist Christina Seo's months of hard work are paying off. Her art piece was selected as Best in Show for HISD in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Art Contest. Only one high school student per district has the honor of being selected as Best of Show so this is a huge achievement. Christina's art will now be eligible to win scholarship money and will possibly be entered into the auction. Additional awards will be announced on March 3 at a special awards presentation.

Christina spent months working on her piece. The majority of the piece was created using color pencil while the black cow was drawn with pen and the white cow had some watercolor added to it. One thing that makes the artwork so interesting is the use of repeated

triangle composition. The triangular composition has been used in art since the Renaissance.

Although Christina studies art at Westside as well as at a private art school, she has only been formally studying art for the past year. Christina decided to explore the area of drawing because she is interested in game design and strong drawing skills are a necessity in this career area. When she graduates next year she'd like to attend Full Sail University, an Award-Winning School for Entertainment Media, where she will major in Game Design.



Westside's New Freshman Transition Program

Westside has implemented a new Freshman Transition Program. Noelle MacGregor has accepted the role as our new Dean of Student Transition. She's sure to do a great job for our students because she loves Westside and one of her favorite things to do is talk about all of the amazing opportunities we have available to students. During her past four years as the Magnet Coordinator, a big part of her job was marketing Westside to prospective parents and students. Talking about our clubs, sports, fine arts, and academic opportunities is what she loves to do and she'll have plenty of opportunity to do just that when working with freshmen.

also the unknown, which can be scary. Dean MacGregor will be helping incoming and current freshmen get their bearings, figure out the system, and find their niche.

There are special challenges students and parents face during the transition from eighth to ninth grade as well as during the freshman year. As a school we are looking to make that transition smoother. She will be coordinating efforts such as Wolf Camp, Community Open House, Freshmen Parent Night, and more. She also hopes to seek out positive changes we can make to our current systems to ensure more success for our freshmen once they are here.

High school is such a new and exciting experience for freshmen, but it is

There are always growing pains and lessons to be learned with new



experiences, but Dean MacGregor is looking forward to the challenge. As always, she welcomes any suggestions or feedback on ways we, as a school, can make our students more successful.

Dean MacGregor is just an email away!

nstockma@houstonisd.org

Thank You "Dollars for Scholars" Supporters

The Westside PTO would like to thank all of the donors who supported the "Dollars for Scholars" fundraiser in the Fall. Through the generosity of our Westside community, the PTO funds many programs including scholarships for seniors, teacher appreciation, and special purchases to enhance the Westside experience. Thank you Westside families!



**THE SWINDELL FAMILY, THE MIGNOGNA FAMILY, THE MILLERS,
THE NASSAB FAMILY, LARRY AND DEBBIE NORIEGA,
THE BILBY FAMILY, CHRISTIE AND JIM PETRIE,
THE WRIGHT FAMILY, NORATO VICENTI**



**KELLY AND NEAL CRAMER, BRUCE AND KELLY SIMMONS, C. WHITE,
THE ANDERSON/MURPHY FAMILY, THE FOX FAMILY, THE MALONE FAMILY,
THE MCCONN FAMILY, THE MCDANIEL FAMILY, THE MCLAUGHLIN FAMILY,
THE MYERS FAMILY, THE SCHAEFER FAMILY, THE SILVERMAN FAMILY,
THE THOMPSON FAMILY, THE TOBY FAMILY, LILLIAN VALLADARES, THE VINH FAMILY,
THE WINKLE FAMILY, THE WONG FAMILY, THE ZIMMERER FAMILY**

**ANDY AND CARY ALFIERI, THE CARNETT FAMILY, THE CLEMONS FAMILY,
BETZAIDA DYER/SHELBY SANTOS, THE DYSON FAMILY, LINDA GOMEZ, KAREN GOWDY,
MAURICE AND BELINDA JONES, THE KAALSTAD/RAMSTAD FAMILY, THE MAXCY FAMILY,
JORDAN MOORE AND FAMILY, THE MORRELL FAMILY, THE MUDD FAMILY, KIM O'NEAL,
THE PATTERSON FAMILY, ELADIO PEREZ, THE ROBERTS FAMILY, MANUEL RODRIGUEZ,
THE SHAABAN FAMILY, THE SHAKERY FAMILY, JANETTE AND DOUG SMITH,
THE YUANIDIS FAMILY, THE ZIEREN FAMILY**

**THE BALDWIN FAMILY, BRYAN AND TARA BLOOD, SANDRA CACERES, THE CANLAS FAMILY,
AMAND CARRICO AND FAMILY, THE CASTANADA FAMILY, THE GRAHAM FAMILY, THE KILPATRICK FAMILY,
AUSTIN LUCAS FAMILY, THE MCKINNEY FAMILY, SIMEON MCLANE, HILDA MORALES, THE PANYARD FAMILY,
SANDRA SNYDER AND FAMILY, THE STERLING FAMILY, MIKE AND CLAIRE STEVENS,
THE TOOMEY FAMILY, ADRIANA TSAZA, THE WALSH FAMILY**

Westside

February 2012
Volume 12, Issue 3

Wire

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Houston, Texas
PERMIT NO. 5113

WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Houston Independent School District
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, TX 77092-8501

Westside Wire

Join the PTO Online

If you haven't already joined the PTO, you can purchase your 2011-2012 membership the easy way at www.westsiddepto.org/store.

Payments accepted through PayPal!



**PTO Meetings - 1st
Tuesday of the month!**

Be sure to check
www.westsidewolves.org and
www.westsiddepto.org
for the most current events information!