

Communication PRinciples for Principals

SCHOOL YEAR 08/09 ISSUE ONE | SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

READ ALL ABOUT IT!



IDEA

Send the news to your community newspaper, installation or base public affairs office, or local AFN affiliate if you're overseas.

What's "New(s)" in your School?

The beginning of a new school year is a fresh start in many ways. Polished classrooms, new books, picture-perfect bulletin boards.... Besides all of the "newness" at the start of the school year, what's really "news" in your school?

Developing and establishing a system to capture news at your school takes time. It's part of the bigger communications picture that many school administrators want for their schools but in reality don't always have the time or resources to devote.

If you want others to know about what's going on at your school, take the first step and ask your staff to send you, or someone on your staff that you designate, a short paragraph about a special program or accomplishment in their classroom. You may even want to consider using the school's yearbook staff to help or weave it into your school's curriculum by making news collection a project for an upper-grade English or Writing class.

Don't be intimidated by having to write something. The "news" can be as long as the writer wants it. Collect the news items once a week, every other week, or once a month and it will be evident that there's a lot of news going on at your school – the special Colonial Days Activities in the 4th grade; the 5th and 6th grade band concert; the special visit by an author, musician or artist – the possibilities are endless. We've attached a sample from a "Media Tips" publication that's used by a Northern Virginia school district and sent to subscribers, to include the news media. Notice that some schools list the principal as a contact and some have a "news liaison" listed as a contact.

You can add to these stories with a picture of the activity or event – people love to see themselves in the news. A basic digital camera will do the job – the idea is to capture the faces and places that will make a good news story even better.



DoDEA HQ Communications Office

4040 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
USA

Telephone: 703.588.3030

Facsimile: 703.588.3000

Frank O'Gara: 703.588.3260

Frank.O'Gara@hq.dodea.edu

Elaine Kanellis: 703.588.3265

Elaine.Kanellis@hq.dodea.edu

Visit the DoDEA website
for more information.

<http://www.dodea.edu>

Now that you have all of this “news,” what can you do with it?

One thing you don't want to do is to let it sit in your inbox or on your desk – get the news out and moving. Here's how:

- Send the news to your community newspaper, installation or base public affairs office, or local AFN affiliate if you're overseas. The news briefs you provide today could be tomorrow's feature stories that are seen by an audience that transcends the boundaries of your school.
- Send the news to other principals in your district. Sharing the news is a two-way street. Your school will get noticed and other schools may get some great ideas for activities or events for their students.
- Send the news to your district office. One school's news may not make a big impact, but collectively, the news from your district can make a difference. Again, if the district sends the news to their local community newspaper, installation or base public affairs office, or local AFN affiliate, the news reaches an even wider audience.
- Send the news to your Area Public Affairs Office. While it is a fact that the area public affairs offices are only one deep, their effectiveness can be multiplied by having one person in every school that helps with the news. Just like schools and districts, areas can share the news with the appropriate outlets in their region and forward the news to DoDEA Headquarters as well. Pretty soon, the news in one school gets heard around the globe.

Here are some news samples to help you with the news from your school!

Kaelan Cuozzo of **Little Run Elementary** was named a winner of the Dream! Reach! Succeed! essay contest sponsored by the national Association of Elementary School Principals. Cuozzo was one of eight students nationwide selected as winners of the contest, which recognizes students who aspire to greatness at home, in school, and in their communities by modeling eight conditions developed by Russell Quaglia. For more information about the program, visit www.naesp.org. Contact principal Janet Johnson at 703-503-3500 or janet.johnson@fcps.edu.

If you want others to know about what's going on at your school, take the first step and ask your staff to send you, or someone on your staff that you designate, a short paragraph about a special program or accomplishment in their classroom.

TIPS



Spring Hill Elementary sixth grade student Caroline Mannon won first place in Virginia for her poster depicting five examples of protecting one's skin in the Limit the Sun, Not the Fun poster contest sponsored by the Shade Foundation. Mannon won an Apple iPod Nano for her winning poster, Shade Foundation sun safety bookmarks for her classmates, and a bag of color-changing beads students can use to experiment with the effects of the sun and sun block. The school received a UV sun meter that will be placed outside and that students can use to report on the daily UV index during the weather report on the morning news show.

Visit <http://www.shadefoundation.org> for information about the contest. Contact event liaison Mary Papanthassiou at 703-506-3400 or mary.papanthassiou@fcps.edu.

The team of Anisha Apte and Swetha Pasala of **Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology** won second place in the B'nai B'rith International Diverse Minds Youth Writing Challenge for their story, "Princess Sophie's Garden." The competition is part of B'nai B'rith International's series to promote tolerance and equality. High school students are asked to write and illustrate a children's book that discusses tolerance and diversity. For more information, visit <http://www.bnaibrith.org/diverseminds/>. Contact principal Evan Glazer at 703-750-8300 or evan.glazer@fcps.edu or Heather Sondel at heather.sondel@fcps.edu.

Meghan Nelson, a junior at **Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology**, has been named The Most Philosophical Student in America for winning the high school division of the 2008 Kids' Philosophy Slam. Nelson's essay is titled "Is global warming the greatest challenge facing humankind?" Designed to make philosophy fun and accessible to students in grades K-12, the Kids Philosophy Slam promotes critical thinking skills and encourages

dialogue between students and adults. Students can express themselves in words, artwork, poetry, or song, and each grade level has its own national winner. The top four high school students debate a philosophical question at the national finals to compete for the title of the Most Philosophical Student in America. Schools compete for the title of the Most Philosophical School in America. For more information, visit <http://www.philosophyslams.org/>. Contact principal Evan Glazer at 703-750-8300 or evan.glazer@fcps.edu or Heather Sondel at heather.sondel@fcps.edu.

Students in the Biz World cluster at **Westlawn Elementary** contributed \$100 to the Fairfax County Park Authority's Invasive Management Area program. The students, who learn how to run a business in Biz World, sold bracelets to raise the funds. The Invasive Management Area program supports tree preservation and habitat restoration of the natural areas of Fairfax County. Volunteers help remove invasive species such as kudzu and English ivy, and replace those plants with native trees, shrubs, and flowers. The Westlawn students' donation will be used to purchase native trees to help keep local forests healthy. Contact principal Kim Dockery at 703-241-5100 or kim.dockery@fcps.edu or news liaison Catherine Keefe at catherine.keefe@fcps.edu.

