

The Messenger

Washington Christian Academy

1820 Franwall Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20902

Tel: 301 649-1070, FAX: 301 649-9863

OUR TEACHERS AND STAFF

A New-Year Report Card. While the start of a new calendar year is time for resolutions and beginnings, at WCA the occasion of new year 1999 offers us, the parents and staff of WCA, a chance to reflect on the effectiveness of our participation in the process we call Christian Education.

How would you grade your participation in your child's classroom and in homework follow-up? I know many could give yourselves an A+. We can't walk down the hall without running into some of you as you run things off for teachers or arrive for a conference with a teacher. Others are helping at home with PTF or advancement projects. For some of you, unfortunately, other priorities seem to preclude your participation in the life of the school. The number who fall into this category is dwindling, but it is still too high. Our success with your son or daughter is predicated on your participation in the process.

How are we doing with the "Matthew 18 principle" and resolving conflict? Are we careful to limit our discussions of concerns and criticism to those who are a part of the problem or a part of the solution? I am heartened that, as situations come up, so many parents are asking "What is the proper process?" instead of "Are you going to take care of this for me?" Our school community is maturing in its application of biblical principles!

What would your grade be in "Encouragement and Prayer Support for the Teacher and School?" Have you written notes of thanks or encouragement to the men and women who spend 6-8 hours a day with your child? Do you pray for them and bless them before others in your Sunday School class or Bible study?

Finally, we must assess our participation in the Christian church. It is my belief that each family's weekly worship and biblical instruction are integral to our success in educating the covenant children.

As we said at our Back-to-School Nights in September, we are co-owners in this process. We work together and communicate with each other

about the task at hand. We ask not "What can I get out of this school?" but "What can I do to improve my school so that our kids are better equipped to know and do God's will?"

I implore each of us as co-owners to persevere under trial and to renew afresh our commitment to link arms and move forward together to produce the finest Christian school possible.

--James H. Koan, II
Headmaster

Teaching the Catechisms. *The Heidelberg Catechism & Westminster Shorter Catechism* are two of the doctrinal statements that form the theological basis for WCA. Questions from these catechisms have long been included in our Bible curriculum, but we have not systematically covered every question of each catechism. Next year, we will implement teaching *The Heidelberg Catechism* in grades four, five, six and the *Shorter Catechism* will be taught in grades seven and eight. Each year these grades will learn a portion of the assigned catechism and as students progress through the grades they will master the entire catechism, e.g. students learn the entire *Heidelberg Catechism* from fourth through sixth grade.

Presently, in the second semester (beginning Jan 26) we will conduct a "Catechism Pilot" which will prepare our students and faculty for next Fall. The "Catechism Pilot" will include grades four through eight while all other grades will continue with the catechism learning currently assigned, (e.g. grades one through three memorize "The Children's Catechism"). Those grades in our "Catechism Pilot" will all study the first ten questions of *The Heidelberg Catechism*.

At our January 7 faculty meeting, Dr. Rob Norris of Fourth Presbyterian Church spoke about the history and importance of teaching the Catechisms. Three significant points that he made are:

- The Catechisms were written for the consistent teaching of children in the home, the school, and church using a question and answer format to aid memorization and understanding.

- The Catechisms reflect the truths taught historically in the Christian faith by all God's people.
- The Catechisms provide a framework of God's truth which allows students to put Bible content (stories, events) into the context of God's truth (e.g. the sovereignty of God).

If you are unfamiliar with these Catechisms or if you would like further information please contact me!

--Jan Adams

Associate Headmaster/Academics

“Teaching Kids to Study Smart.” This workshop will be given for parents by Carol Parent on Thursday, February 18, at 2 PM, in the Library. Don't miss it.

Academy Fund Drive. This is a time in WCA's history when we are focused on paving the way for a stronger future, and it shows in your giving. We already have \$80,000 this year. Repeated gifts are coming in from school families at all levels of giving. And many of our grandparents, too, are sending in gifts for the first time. We should all be encouraged by this show of God's blessing on the educational endeavor at WCA.

It's not “okay” for Christian education to be mediocre—we must strive for an excellence that appropriately reflects the nature of our God. Curriculum reform, which is not very expensive, will always lead the way at WCA; but facility upgrading, which is expensive, must follow in support of the education we provide. Teacher compensation at the levels they deserve is another area of reform, and it, too, has a price tag.

Thanks to our many generous and sacrificial donors for moving into the future in these crucial matters.

--Robin Gropp

Director of Advancement

SCHOOL LIFE ACTIVITIES

Early Childhood Classes. The Kindergartners (both classes) are learning about mammals. One of the teaching tools they are using is a kit from the National Zoo. They also took a field trip to the public library where they heard wonderful stories about winter and snow. God's creation is indeed declaring His glory.

Upper elementary. We praise God for restoring Vincent Carter's health and we pray for healing for the three students who broke their fingers (a strange epidemic).

The arrival of the long-awaited modular class rooms turned the playground into a construction zone, which is in full view of grades 4 through 6. The kids, of course, would rather watch concrete being

poured than pay attention in class, so this is a good opportunity to learn about self-control.

Mrs. Robinson's 4th grade class is excitedly looking forward to a visit by "Abigail Adams," who will teach them about the colonial times.

The Tait family moved back to New Zealand after making a "big splash" at WCA. We miss them.

Upper school. The 7th grade had an afternoon of bowling and pizza on January 18. Renee was the top Duck Pin bowler. We also compared notes about our recent ice storm experiences. Those living in Olney “won” by having had the longest time without electricity, some homes for over five days. Are we really thankful for our warm homes?

The Upper School Update, usually mailed with *The Messenger*, was sent out earlier at this time, as students and parents needed the time sensitive information it contained.

25/25 Alumni Club “Breakfast.” Mrs. Adams hosted a breakfast (at 1 PM, when all were out of bed) over the Christmas holidays for seniors and past graduates of SSCA and WCA. Many happy memories and tales of success and woe spiced the event and it was delightful to catch up with everyone. Our graduates are pursuing many exciting paths and in a future article we will spotlight how these young adults are glorifying God in teaching, law, medicine, computer technology, and physics.

Our former students view themselves as pioneers. They recalled how the first SSCA Administrator, Mrs. Robertson, praised them for their pioneering spirit! They remember well what it was like to be educated in less-than-ideal surroundings and were eager to learn of the expansion of the Upper School. Graduates are challenged with an opportunity to pledge to give \$25 each year for 25 years, with each year's collective gift devoted to some particular facility upgrade for the upper school.

WCA Children's Choir. WCA is planning to extend the use of hymns and Psalms, part of our rich heritage, in the classrooms as well as in Chapel. The Choir is learning these hymns and Psalms to be able to lead our student-body in the singing. For details, see Marcia DeYoung.

Promise Tree Auction. Our annual Promise Tree Auction will be held on Saturday, March 6th at 6:30 p.m. at Church of the Atonement. Watch the *Koan Zone* for details. Mark your calendar for this fun-filled evening of fellowship, school spirit and friendly bidding. Most of all, come with a generous

heart as the proceeds from this event go to tuition assistance to enable many to come to our school who otherwise could not afford it. Also, invite grandparents, relatives, and friends. This special tradition is a great opportunity to introduce new families to our school as well

Booster Club. Save the pennies! The penny campaign (one million pennies to boost our athletic program) will begin in February. Please look in the *Koan Zone* and your mail for more details.

Mark your calendar for May 21, the Booster Club's second annual sports banquet. Details will be sent to you in the next two months. For more information, contact Julio Barreto at 301-431-0235.

Student Council. The High School students will celebrate Valentine's Day together at the first annual WCA Valentine's Banquet. The banquet, scheduled for February 13, 1999, will be held at WCA and will be catered by a local restaurant. This fun, elegant evening, coordinated by the Student Council, will set a tradition for the high school students to enjoy and the middle school to anticipate. The student council requests parent volunteers for help with decorating, set-up, food pick-up/serving, and clean up. Also needed is a CD stereo system for use during the banquet. To volunteer, or for more information, please contact Christina Mason (301-251-6370) or Ashley Zupan (301-572-9382) A.S.A.P.

The student council also invites students and parents to join the mailing list for updates, notices, surveys, and feedback. Our e-mail address is: WCACouncil@excite.com.

Open House. Much thanks to the many volunteers who made the Open Houses a success! There was lovely food (Karen Lees), numerous willing guides (Sue Ewell coordinated), beautiful signs, balloons, and flowers (Connie Mehring, Lisa Fred), and many other parents helped in various ways. Thanks to all of you for being at the heart of what makes WCA work.

The Open Houses were well attended and more people came because a WCA parent has told them about the school than for any other reason. Since Open House, we have had visitors almost every day and four families on Welcome Wednesday. When you tell your friends what WCA has meant to your family, you are not just marketing, you are ministering to other families who need what our families are getting.

--Robin Gropp

SOCIETY AND BOARD

Society Meeting. See attached Special Insert

The Reformed Heritage Library at WCA.

How can you learn more about the philosophical and educational basis of our Christian school? By checking out some of the materials in the WCA Reformed Heritage Library!

To help parents, teachers, administrators, society members, and even students better understand their school's foundations, a subcommittee of the WCA Education Committee has compiled a special collection of materials as a resource for the entire school community. According to our mission statement, WCA "educates children from a Reformed Christian perspective, developing each child's God-given talents so that they may occupy their places worthily in society, church, and state." To shed light on this mission, the library is divided into four sections: Reformed Theology, Classical and Christian Education, Christian World and Life View, and CSI (Christian Schools International) and ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) Recommended Books on Education. A white binder by the collection, which includes books, magazines and audio tapes, contains a short abstract on each title. Use the abstracts to help you choose material most helpful to you. Within each section, the few materials marked with an asterisk (*) are most highly recommended to those wishing to understand better our school's mission and approach to education. For example, for those desiring an introduction to or better understanding of Reformed theology, R.C. Sproul's *Grace Unknown: The Heart of Reformed Theology* is highly recommended, as indicated by an asterisk/star by the title in the binder and on the book itself.

Why did we compile the library? God's work in regeneration includes the renewal, by His Spirit, of our minds. The materials in the library challenge us to think biblically about our educational mission. C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "Reformed theology is nothing other than biblical Christianity." God's revelation of Himself is its focus. It addresses the creation from a comprehensive biblical perspective, viewing all aspects of life through the glasses of God's Word, the Scriptures. This includes our approach to education. To best appreciate the mission of WCA, school community members should understand some of the distinctive aspects of Reformed theology.

Community members should also understand the implications of God's revelation of Himself to all of life, particularly as it relates to the education of our children. Christians, regenerated by God, fulfill His

calling for their lives in the world when equipped with a biblical world and life view, understanding our world and culture from God's perspective. They can then fulfill the cultural mandate, doing the good works God created them to do in Christ Jesus, whether as parents, teachers, school board members, committee members, or administrators within our school community and in their various callings outside of it. Then God's people can impact all aspects of their society, including education, with a sanctifying and purifying influence. We hope resources in the library will help members of our community understand and develop a biblical world and life view. It is our sincere hope that the library will be a blessing to many in their service to the Lord.

--Dorry M. Kenyon
Chair, Education Committee

The WCA Reformed Heritage Library is located on the white bookshelf in the Office. On the shelf you find the white binder with the abstracts. Please, look through it as often as you like, and you may check any of the titles out (the instructions are on the bookshelf). As we have only one copy of most of the

books, we ask you to return the borrowed item within a week. Thank you, and may you have much blessing through these materials.

TO PONDER

"A sanctifying and purifying influence must proceed from the church of the Lord to impact the whole society amid which it operates," said Abraham Kuyper. To this end, he understood, "it is not enough to articulate a worldview but organizations must be built to implement it—a newspaper, a complete school system, a political party."

Abraham Kuyper applied this biblical worldview to all areas of his life. He was a pastor, educator, author, editor, politician, founder of a college, and Prime Minister of his country, the Netherlands. You may want to read his *Lectures on Calvinism*, known as the Stone Lectures, which he delivered in 1898, in our country. His messages are as relevant today as they were then. The book is available in the WCA Heritage Library.

Coram Deo