



*Dr. Stella*

# PARENT UPDATE FROM DR. STELLA SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

October 25, 2012

[www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us](http://www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us) Woodbridge School District  
40 Beecher Road (south) - Woodbridge, CT 06525 - 203-387-6631

## **BRS Extended Day Program flourishes and nourishes for 20 years**

**M**any programs make Beecher Road School unique. The *Extended Day* program is one. Research shows that children who attend quality before or after school programs benefit in many ways, including:

1. personal attention from caring adults
2. opportunities to explore new interests
3. academic support
4. development of a sense of belonging to a group
5. new friendships with peers
6. opportunities for leadership roles
7. a sense of self-esteem independent of their academic talent



### **BRS Extended Day is like no other**

With hundreds of families participating, the *Extended Day* program operates before school from 7:30 – 8:20, and after school until 6:00. During vacations, from 8:00 – 5:30. The program goal is to ensure that your child is safe and happy while you’re at work or otherwise occupied. The staff provides a relaxing environment where children from kindergarten through sixth grade may play with friends or work in both structured and unstructured activities.

Though after school programs are common across the country, BRS’s program is unique. For one, the program is run by the same certified teachers and staff members who work at BRS during the regular school day. In addition, students from Amity High School and college students, many of whom are BRS graduates, are members of the staff and serve as positive role models for the younger children. There is a low student to adult ratio as well as a consistent nucleus of professional, friendly and caring staff.

The program is a blend of academic support, personal growth, and supervised play for children in a nurturing environment. Whether through playing sports, swimming, creating computer games, participating in different forms of the arts, doing homework, or just having fun with friends, the program brings students together. Family pot luck dinners provide children and their families the

opportunity to celebrate friendship and diversity. Students make the decorations, serve the food, and provide the entertainment at these well-attended multi-cultural, multi-generational events.

### **Frequently asked questions**

***Is there a cost to me for Eday?***

- Yes. Various options are available.

***How can I register my child for this program?***

- Registration is done online through the BRS website.

***If I need to, can I sign my child up for just mornings?***

- Yes, we begin at 7:30 a.m. in the library and end at the start of school.

***If children go to a Woodbridge Recreation program, can they come to Eday afterwards and stay until 6:00 p.m.?***

- Yes, we have staff that picks up the “rec” children and walks them to the Eday baseroom.

***What is the best way to know what courses are available on the day my child attends Eday?***

- Visit our website.

***What if my child signs up for a course and does not enjoy it, can he/she switch out?***

- Yes. Absolutely.

***Can my child have an opportunity to work on homework at Eday?***

- Yes, Monday – Thursday children may attend homework sessions in the library. Two teachers are assigned to assist children.

***Is there an opportunity for playtime?***

- Yes, from 3:30 – 4:30 or in organized sport activities.

***It is a very long day, is there a snack for my child?***

- Yes. We provide a snack for the

## **Reminder: Are you prepared to receive “Instant Alerts”?**

BRS uses the *Honeywell Instant Alert System* for all routine and emergency messages. This system allows users to choose from a variety of messaging devices and levels of urgency. Routine messages can be sent to email while emergency messages and school closing information can be sent directly to land line and cell phones.

You must be signed up in order to get these messages. Direct your questions about *Instant Alert* to Lola Johnson at BRS Office.

## **Halloween Hoot**

**T**his Saturday, Oct 27, join me, Mrs. Prisco and members of our school team at the annual PTO-sponsored **Halloween Hoot**. What a celebration it is! The theme this year is: **Haunted Old West Ghost Town**. On this day, there is always magic and excitement in the air as hundreds of families come together to celebrate. There will be lots of good times, tasty food, entertainment and countless unimaginable surprises.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Parking is available in the north parking lot, on the grassy area near the north parking lot, and the south parking lot. To assure a safe environment for the day, the law insists you **do not park in the fire lanes**. Car pool when possible. We thank the PTO and the dozens of volunteers who have worked countless weeks, days and hours to prepare for this one of a kind event. Check the BRS PTO web site for more information.

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children.

**Are there daily physical activities?**

- Yes. Examples include indoor/ outdoor games, court games, floor hockey, archery, and *Capture the Flag*.

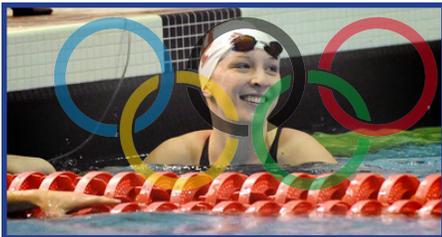
**Is there an appropriate program for my kindergarten child?**

- Yes. There is a program designed to meet the needs of our youngest children. They are in the kindergarten wing and have use of the kindergarten playground. This program includes story time, art activities, and play.

**If a situation occurs and I need my child to attend, when I haven't preregistered, can you accommodate us?**

- Yes. Drop-ins are always welcome in the morning and in the afternoon. Send a note to the homeroom teacher providing dismissal instructions and email Director Cathy Salinardi at [csalinardi@woodbridgeps.org](mailto:csalinardi@woodbridgeps.org) or Assistant Director Tim Rourke at [trourke@woodbridgeps.org](mailto:trourke@woodbridgeps.org).

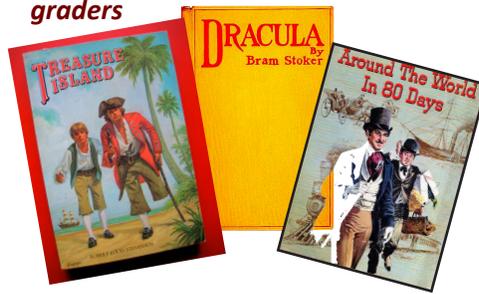
*Extended Day continued*



Last week, 2012 Olympic Bronze Medal Winner Margaux Farrell\*, 23, gave an inspirational speech to our sixth graders. She focused on setting near-term and long-term goals in life, having a positive attitude in approaching life, and dealing with diversity. She talked about her early years at BRS and how even then she had a goal to be a competitive swimmer. Focusing on that goal meant sacrificing other parts of her young life to make that happen. The children were mesmerized by Margaux's presentation and had lots of follow-up questions. Ms. Farrell's talk will help sixth graders work on their *student success plan*, which involves goal setting and follows them to middle school. The new *success plan* is required by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The presentation was arranged by Ms. Sandy Simowitz, one of Margaux's many former teachers at BRS, who are still teaching at the school.

*\*Ms. Farrell is an alumna of BRS and graduate of Amity High School. She has dual citizenship, France and USA, swam for France in the London Olympics and won a bronze medal as part of the women's 4x200 women's swimming relay.*

**The Classics hold sway over sixth graders**



This week, sixth grade students received a variety of classic literature titles available for their classroom libraries. Thanks to special funding from the Board of Education, BRS students will be reading the likes of *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne, *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, and, of course, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. In addition to the diverse selection of authors and titles, students will have access to both abridged and unabridged versions to appeal to all readers.

6th graders poring through the new collection of classics.



As our Intermediate readers begin to mature in both their reading ability and taste in literature, we expect these titles will serve as a bridge to the classical styles they will be exposed to in middle and high school. Reading classic literature will enhance their insight as they begin to see how elements of these original stories connect to contemporary literature and everyday life today.

At a recent BRS function, parking tickets were issued to several drivers who had illegally parked. It was unfortunate, but it underscored the need to look at the parking situation at BRS. First Selectman Sheehy recently convened a meeting with Police Chief Marcucci, Fire Chief Roland, and School Superintendent Stella to see how all Town departments can work closer on the traffic situation at BRS.

As a result of the positive meeting:

- Police will assist in directing cars on high traffic days such as the Halloween Hoot.



- Officer Vinny Lynch has been reassigned at BRS to help with morning traffic and to serve as community police liaison with BRS as well as our DARE officer.
- Fire Chief Roland and Dr. Stella had a follow-up meeting to establish protocols.
- New signs have been installed to clearly mark *no parking* and *fire lanes*

At the school:

- Boulders were pushed back on grassy area near North Traffic Circle to allow for parking on special event days.
- School is making a major effort to coordinate school/class presentations so as to avoid parking congestion.
- Car pool whenever possible

Bottom line: **NO PARKING IN FIRE LANES.**

**BRS building upgrades being planned**

The Town Building Committee (TBC), charged with planning and implementing a major infrastructure update project for BRS, has met regularly for a year. This summer, a *Request For Qualifications and Proposals* was issued by the Town. TBC has chosen *Energy Systems Group* (ESG) to develop a comprehensive facility improvement and energy conservation program for BRS. Beginning this month, the TBC has started work with ESG to move forward to determine the exact details of the project's scope, cost, financing, and construction time line. Ultimately, the contract that is negotiated will be presented to the Boards of Selectmen, Finance, and the Woodbridge Board of Education for approval. More information will follow, and public information sessions will be scheduled. We want the school community to be especially well-informed about this project and will work closely with the PTO to be sure all questions are answered.

**Web site gets new look**

The district and school websites are undergoing a design transformation. The goal of the recent redesign is to make needed information "one click away." The changes make the websites more user-friendly and finding information easier. Along with new navigational bars, the new design allows for a rotating image gallery on the home page and a new section called *Important Documents From the Superintendent*. The website is continually going through revisions and updates to make your time there more efficient and enjoyable. Contact *Web Master James Crawford*, with questions, ideas or concerns at [jcrawford@woodbridgeps.org](mailto:jcrawford@woodbridgeps.org).