

# HILLTOPPER

WESTERN HILLS ELEMENTARY  
633-5900  
www.wdm.k12.ia.us/whills

BETH THORNTON, PRINCIPAL  
October 5, 2009

## CHARACTER EDUCATION QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up."  
--Mark Twain



Every Wednesday is an early dismissal day. School dismisses at 3:10 p.m. Please make sure your child knows what they are to do on these days.

## PICTURE RETAKES

The photographers will return to Western Hills Fri., Oct. 9 for retakes. If your child was absent on the day pictures were taken, send your money envelope with payment Friday. Those who need pictures retaken must bring their picture package back to school on the day of picture retake and return the package to the photographer.

## LUNCH ACCOUNTS

The 2009-10 school year is well under way. Please watch for a negative balance letter to come home with your students. These yellow notices are to alert you that it could be time to make a deposit to your child's lunch account. When money is sent to school, be sure it is in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name and grade. Lunch payments can also be made online at PaySchools. Just access the district website at [www.wdmcs.org](http://www.wdmcs.org) and click on the PaySchools icon. If you do not know your child's ID number, call the school office.



Please remember that the lunch account is not a credit account but a debit account. Any money remaining in the account at the end of the school year will carry over to next year.

If you are having lunch with your student please contact the office by 9 a.m. of the day you are having lunch in order for us to add you to our lunch count.

If you have concerns about your student's lunch account. Please do not hesitate to call Mrs. Gibson at 633-5903.

## CARING AND SHARING

### Make A Difference Week is October 19-23

Make a Difference Day is October 24 and is the nation's largest single day of volunteering. More than three million people turn out to perform thousands of charitable acts for others. This year, the West Des Moines Community School District's students and staff will be collecting personal hygiene items, toilet tissue and Kleenex boxes for WDM Human Services, which currently serves over 325 families a month. We will also be collecting donations for Koins for Kids, a scholarship fund to help low-income families participate in local programs. Last year WDM Human Services provided 3,777 orders of personal care products to households in need. Over the last few months WDM Human Services has seen an increase in households in need, and, unfortunately, they have not been able to keep up.

During the week of October 19-23, our school will be collecting personal care products. On Fri., Oct. 23, the WDM Community Education staff will collect the items from each school, deliver them and stock the personal care product shelves at the WDM Human Services center.

Thank you for your support of this great cause! Any questions please contact Libby Blazeovich or Carey Buchanan.

## COGNITIVE ABILITIES TESTS

During the week of October 5, all third and sixth graders will be taking the Cognitive Abilities Test. The purpose of this test is to appraise student reasoning abilities in the areas of verbal, quantitative and nonverbal skills. Results are used as part of a more encompassing process to determine the needs of all students. The total testing time is usually three hours that is spread over three days during that week.

## RED RIBBON WEEK and CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK AT WESTERN HILLS IS OCTOBER 19-23

National Red Ribbon Week is October 23-31 and in preparation, Western Hills will be involved in activities the week of October 19-23 to recognize the need to live a drug-free healthy life style. National Red Ribbon Week was first started in 1980 by the National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth. The goal of this campaign is to present a unified and visible commitment toward the creation of a drug free America.

It is also Character Counts Week throughout the United States. Western Hills believes strongly in the need for character education.

Please discuss the activities that we will be doing at school with your family and show your spirit during Red Ribbon and Character Counts Week. The Western Hills Student Council has helped to decide the activities for each day. Please review these ideas with your student(s).

- **Monday:** "Stop Drugs, Start Books"  
The whole school will stop and read books for 15 minutes.
- **Tuesday:** "Walk Away From Drugs"  
Each class will take a walk around the school grounds.
- **Wednesday:** "Sock It To Drugs"  
Wear fun and crazy socks.
- **Thursday:** "Pick Up Trash, Not Drugs"  
Walk around the school and playground and pick up trash.
- **Friday:** "Pride in Our Good Character"  
Wear clothes that are the colors of the 6 pillars.



Thank you to P.T.A. for purchasing the Color My World Drug Free pencils that change color with the heat from your hands and also for the Let's Show Good Character by Being Drug Free badges each child will be given.

Please contact Sue Cross, Counselor with any questions.

## PTA NEWS

### Barbecue Bonanza

Join us for a long standing Western Hills tradition, with a twist! This year the Waffle Dinner has become the Barbecue Bonanza in the Western Hills cafeteria. It will be held Tues., Oct. 6 from 5-7:30 p.m. Come browse our Destination Book Fair and enjoy some KC barbecue from our very own Western Hills family – The Etzel's. Reserved seating is \$4.50 or \$5.00 at the door. Questions or if you feel destined to volunteer, call Sue Roberts at 327-8934 or Lisa Gavathas at 224-7487.

### Family Gym Night Volunteers Needed

PTA is still in need of a family or more to help run the Family Gym Nights in January and February. The gym will be open Thursday nights are from 7-8 p.m. during these cold months. We need volunteers that would be willing to be at these family gym nights to supervise the children who attend. If there is more than one family that volunteers, you can rotate the nights. Please consider this opportunity and let Pat Roberts or Carey Buchanan know if you are willing to help out. Thanks!!

Pat Roberts: [upward1global@aol.com](mailto:upward1global@aol.com)  
Carey Buchanan: [buchananc@wdmcs.org](mailto:buchananc@wdmcs.org)

## CHESS CLUB NEWS

Do you know how to play chess? (Just how the pieces move, not the heavy theory stuff.) We've got a lot of 'lil nippers who need one on one instruction. If you are a parent or are in fourth, fifth or sixth grade, come to chess on Friday at 8 a.m. in the library for the next few weeks and we'll pair you up with someone to play with. Questions: 327-8840, [Lee@LeeCole.com](mailto:Lee@LeeCole.com)

## WESTERN HILLS PTA FIRST ANNUAL COMMUNITY TRUNK OR TREAT

Please join us for our first annual Western Hills PTA Community Trunk or Treat Mon., Oct. 26 from 6:30-8 p.m. Our Trunk or Treat event will be held in the Western Hills west parking lot.

Trunk or Treat is an event where people decorate the trunks of their cars and hand out treats from a single parking lot. The kids (dressed in their costumes) get wristbands and go from car to car to trick or treat. Some cars have simple games. Refreshments can be purchased. And there is a contest to see which decorated car has the most Tricked Out Trunk.

Trunk or treat is a fun, safe environment for the kids and has an almost festival feel to it. Here is a website with some pictures: <http://trunkortreat.homestead.com/>

If you are interested in entering your trunk in our Tricked Out Trunk contest or would like to help with our Trunk or Treat event please contact Carly Stahn at [stahnc@wdmcs.org](mailto:stahnc@wdmcs.org), Carey Buchanan at [buchananc@wdmcs.org](mailto:buchananc@wdmcs.org) or Andi Lipman at [jmlipman@mchsi.com](mailto:jmlipman@mchsi.com).

## BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Thank you to everyone who has sent in Box Tops for Education in the past few years. Since 2002, our school has earned over \$9,000 to help fund Character Education activities!! We are once again collecting any Box Tops you may have at home. Please have your child bring them to school as soon as possible. **The official due date is October 16.** Your child may turn them into their own classroom. The three classrooms that bring in the most Box Tops will earn a classroom reward picked by their teacher. Please remember to do the following things when turning them in. It REALLY helps us if you could:



- ✦ Cut each Box Top out on the dotted line
- ✦ Check the expiration date on each one
- ✦ Place them in bags of 50 (if possible)
- ✦ Keep Bonus Box Tops separate
- ✦ Mark on the outside of each bag the total number and class section of your child so they get credit.

If you have any questions, contact Mrs. Buchanan at 633-5915.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance maximizes student learning and achievement. We appreciate parental reinforcement of a positive attitude toward school attendance and promptness. If your child needs to stay home or be late for school, please call the school office before the start of the school day and report your child's name, homeroom teacher and reason for the absence or tardiness. If a child is reported absent by the homeroom teacher and the school has not been notified by parents, the secretary, school nurse or health assistant will contact the home to ensure the child's safety. Please note the following attendance procedures:

- One hour or more of absence (a.m. or p.m.) is considered absent for the session.
- Less than one hour of absence (a.m. or p.m.) is considered tardy for that session.
- Written excuses may be required for each absence and/or tardy. Until the reason for absence is documented, absences/tardies are noted as unexcused. In the case of excessive absences, a physician's note, school nurse or building administrator's documentation may be required to excuse the absence.

Teachers, guidance counselors and administrators work very closely to carefully monitor every student's attendance pattern. Every effort will be made to communicate and work with the families of our students who demonstrate a pattern of poor attendance. It is important to understand that if attendance disruptions remain excessive despite the school's efforts to assist the family, the matter may be turned over to the County Attorney's office as a truancy referral.

Thank you for doing your part to ensure your child is able to take full advantage of his/her educational opportunities in school!

## Students Arriving Late

If a student will be arriving late to school, a phone call notifying the school should be made or a note from home should accompany your child stating the reason for his/her late arrival. All late-arriving students are required to stop at the office and obtain a pass that will allow them to enter the classroom.

## Students Leaving Early

Students leaving the school before dismissal time must check out through the office. No student will be allowed to leave early unless we have received a note or phone call from the student's parent/guardian granting permission to leave the school early. If someone other than a parent or guardian will be picking the student up, the note or phone call should tell us who that person will be. Proper identification may be required. All students will be required to wait for parents by the office at the main entrance to the building. Parent(s) arriving early to pick up a child must sign out at the office before leaving with their child.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 5-9 Western Hills Book Fair Week
- 5-9 Cognitive Abilities Testing, Grades 3 and 6
- 06 Barbecue Dinner
- 09 Picture Retakes
- 12 **NO SCHOOL**
- 15 WH PTA Meeting in Media Center at 7 p.m.
- 30 Fall Parties

### NOVEMBER

- 2-6 Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Grades 3-6
- 12 WH PTA Meeting in Media Center at 7 p.m.
- 13 Fine Arts Day
- 17 WH Parent-Teacher Conference
- 19 WH Parent-Teacher Conference
- 25-27 **NO SCHOOL**
- 30 School Resumes

