



# AROUND THE CIRCLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CIRCLE OF GRANDPARENTS -  
A PROGRAM OF PARTNERS FOR CITIZENSHIP AND CHARACTER  
**A JOURNEY OF CHARACTER - 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

Volume 4 Issue 8 Debra R. Stephen, Coordinator (614-436-4799) March, 2011

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**Character  
Trait for  
April**

## Mark Your Calendar

### Monthly Meeting

Thursday, April 7  
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.  
Griswold Center  
Thompson Room

Join us as Liz Hague takes us  
back in time and guides us  
through making pioneer dolls

### No School

April 1-8  
April 22

### A Journey of Character

Thursday, May 5  
Invitations Mailed April 6,  
**RSVP due by April 20!**



Worthington School Treasurer **Jeff McCuen**  
and Superintendent **Dr. Melissa Conrath** led a  
round table discussion about the state of the  
schools at the March meeting.

***“COMMITMENT IS LIKE RESPONSIBILITY AND  
DILIGENCE PUT TOGETHER”***

Marilyn L. Fecht, COG Handbook



**HOW CAN I ‘SPRING  
FORWARD’ WHEN  
THERE ARE  
ALREADY NOT  
ENOUGH HOURS IN  
THE DAY?!**

Please forgive me if the next two newsletters are less than perfect. With the “Journey of Character” just six short weeks away, I find that there are just not enough hours in the day! In an effort to make sure that our Journey doesn’t have any unexpected bumps in the road, I have decided to give the lion’s share of my time to paving that road. So, if you’ll kindly look the other way when you hit a pothole in the “Around the Circle”, I’d appreciate it! - Debra

## COG IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



**2,225 Students  
86 Classrooms  
68 Grandparents  
11 Schools  
1 Intergenerational  
Circle of  
Character**



## FROM DEBRA'S DESK



Dear Circle of Friends,

As plans come together for our end of the year celebration, I've been thinking about the word "commitment." I'd never thought about the degrees of commitment before. There are those things that we commit to out of duty or obligation, and we go through the motions of seeing them through to completion, and then at the other end of the spectrum are those things that we commit to heart and soul. The Circle tends to attract people who commit with their heart. New members, alongside members who have up to 11 years of experience have all joined in to make our upcoming "Journey of Character" and the Circle succeed. Did you know that about a dozen Circle members have devoted countless hours over the past year and a half to attend to the seemingly endless details of our "Journey of Character" on May 5<sup>th</sup>? No one asked, begged or forced them to be on the committee (*at least that I am aware of*), they are there because they wanted to. This committee has invested themselves to helping with the event 100%. What an excellent example of caring *and* commitment!

The caring commitment of all our members in this program is awe inspiring. Having seen character programs in other cities fail has given me a unique perspective. Given the same materials and guidance, their programs have failed because the people involved were not fully committed to working together as a cohesive unit for a shared goal. It breaks my heart that children and seniors alike are deprived of this much need connection for lack of commitment to the end goal.






**The Circle of Grandparent members, teachers, and principals are all to be commended for giving this program its heart and soul.** From what I see, I think your enthusiasm for the program becomes contagious to all who gather near. That enthusiasm appears to have begun in the school year of 1999-2000 when the right people came together at the right time with the unbridled enthusiasm of wanting to help make the world a better place one class at a time. Eleven years later, the Circle has expanded ten-fold and yet its members and supporters still offer the same caring and commitment that was there 11 years ago. The future of the COG is as bright today as it was back then.

Love, Debra

P.S. Mom was right when she taught us, "if you're going to do something, then do it right!"



## NEED TO KNOWS FOR THE JOURNEY OF CHARACTER!

-  Invitations will be mailed April 6. If you do *not* receive your invitation, please contact Elizabeth Hague at 885-8845.
-  **RSVP IS A MUST!** There is limited seating available, so please reserve your seat by April 20<sup>th</sup>, along with your meal preference and the name (and spelling) of your guest's name. (*Please wait until after you have received your invitation before responding.*)
-  **GRANDPARENTS PLEASE NOTE - All Grandparents need to be in front of the Presbyterian Church promptly at 5:15 p.m. on the 5th for a group picture. The picture will only take a few minutes, so you must be present on time to be included. Remember to bring your best smile!**
-  See article bottom right of page 3 if you have anything you would like to display.
-  Parents, siblings, and grandparents typically attend with their choir to hear them perform, so be aware that the seating along the edges of the room will be reserved for the Liberty folks. **Grandparents should find a seat at the tables with gold tablecloths.**



## "THAT WAS EASY" STAPLES CONTRIBUTES TO COG!

**Staples** donated \$25.00 to the **Circle of Grandparents** to help defray the costs associated with our end of year celebration.



### POLLY TEWART ALSO HONORED BY THE STATE OF OHIO SENIOR CITIZEN HALL OF FAME



**Jan Elliott** recently wrote the history of the Circle of Grandparents for our records. While reading it, I saw that there were *SEVEN* charter members, not *SIX*! Somehow, over time **Polly Tewart's** name had been accidentally left off the list of the **Circle of Grandparents Charter Members**. Having never been corrected, I nominated the six charter grandparents to the Hall of Fame and all six were accepted last fall. Being the kind, gracious, and unpretentious people that they are, neither **Brax** nor **Polly** said a word during the whole nomination or acceptance process. After finding out that **Polly** had been omitted, I called to apologize to **Polly**, who simply stated that it was OK, and to just let it go. She explained that after a period of time she moved from the **Circle** back to Thomas Worthington High School to create the Quest program while **Braxton** continued with the **Circle**. Even though **Polly** did not want me to make any waves, I was uncomfortable not including her as one of our founders. **Melanie Ayotte** of the Ohio Department of Aging agreed with me and took this information back to the nominating committee.

I am pleased to announce that all wrongs have been righted, and **Polly Tewart has been accepted to the Hall of Fame** alongside her husband **Braxton**. I deeply regret the oversight but I am pleased that all the records have now been corrected to reflect **Polly's** involvement and that she will be receiving recognition for her contributions to the character education of Worthington's children from the State of Ohio!  
 – **Debra R. Stephen**

### GOT CHARACTER (TREE)?

Did you find last month's tree? Last month's was way too easy with several members finding it in the banner on the top of page 1. This one will be harder. Have fun finding it!

### BLUFFSVIEW DONATES \$50.00

Our friends at **Bluffsview PTA** donated \$50.00 to our program! I wanted to share part of the letter that came with their check, "**The Bluffsview PTA** wishes to express its gratitude for the volunteer efforts of the **PCC Circle of Grandparents**. Many of the students in **Bluffsview Elementary** have benefited from the unique relationship that they have formed with a member of our Worthington community through this program."

A heartfelt thank you to Bluffsview! We appreciate the kind words and generous donation.



### EVENING STREET PTA OFFERS



### SUPPORT TO THE CIRCLE

**Evening Street's PTA** sent a check for \$25 to help defray program costs! Their support is *greatly* appreciated!

### GEORGIA REINBOLD IS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS WITH HANG-UPS



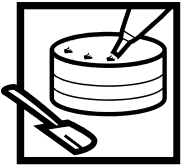
Grandparents,  
 If you would like to contribute art work that your students have given you to share as part of the room decoration at the banquet (things that we can hang on the walls), please bring it to the church on the day of the "Journey of Character" (Thursday, May 5). I will be there between 10 and 12. If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

-**Georgia Reinbold**, 436-9366.

### A Journey of Character –



Planning Committee Meetings  
**Thursday, April 14, 2011**  
 Monday, April 25, 2011  
**CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**GRISWOLD CENTER**

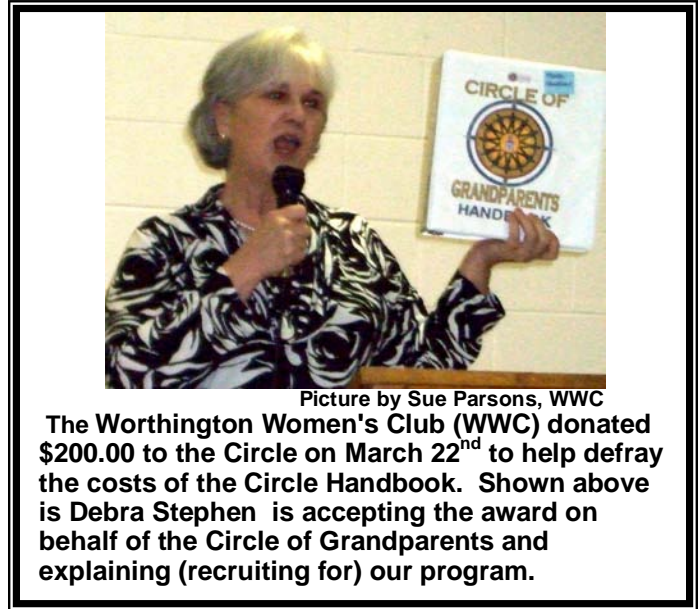


JUST IN



## GIANT EAGLE TAKES THE CAKE!

Busch Boulevard Giant Eagle has informed us that they will provide *TWO* full sheet cakes for the "Journey of Character" celebration *and* they will custom decorate them for us free of charge! The enthusiastic support of Giant Eagle for our program over the past two years is really appreciated.



Picture by Sue Parsons, WWC  
The Worthington Women's Club (WWC) donated \$200.00 to the Circle on March 22<sup>nd</sup> to help defray the costs of the Circle Handbook. Shown above is Debra Stephen is accepting the award on behalf of the Circle of Grandparents and explaining (recruiting for) our program.

## MEETING REPORT

March 3, 2011

Thompson Room of the Griswold Center

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

In attendance: **Beth Arnold, Carol Bogaards, Marilee Lowery Bush, Audrey Clumm, Dr. Melissa Conrath, Elizabeth Hague, Jeff McCuen, Mary McRury, Linda Mrukowski, Heinz Putz, Wallie Putz, Debra Stephen, Joan Van De Weghe, Marilyn Winters, Marilyn Wollett**

The meeting began at 10:00 with **Audrey Clumm**, a **Wilson Hill** Kindergarten "Grandparent" sharing how she taught **Honesty** (February's trait) to her class by asking the students to draw a smiley face on a piece of paper with their eyes closed. She then asked them how many had peeked, and thus began their discussion of **Honesty**.

**Carol Bogaards**, first grade "Grandparent" shared the lesson she's prepared for **Diligence** (March's trait). She was going to talk about **Diligence** in nature using the sequoia tree. She is also going to talk about the **Diligence** that teachers have to have and also talk about the 7 intelligences of the students, as taught at **Worthington Estates**.

Coordinator **Debra Stephen** thanked **Beth Arnold** for the snacks. **Debra** talked briefly about the upcoming "Journey of Character" and announced that **Mary McRury** was the new **PCC** representative from the **Circle of Grandparents**. **Debra** shared that a pamphlet in **Mary's PCC Handbook**, dated 1998 stated, "*A Journey has Begun.*" She thought it was incredible the forefathers had used the term "Journey". The theme for the upcoming end of the year celebration "*A Journey of Character*" had been pulled out of the air by **Carol Bogaards** last year. What a coincidence!

**Debra** also announced that Ohio Supreme Court **Justice Yvette McGee Brown** was scheduled to be the keynote speaker.

Cards were distributed for members of the Circle who were ill and having surgery.

[www.circleofgrandparents.com](http://www.circleofgrandparents.com)



Worthington school Superintendent **Melissa Conrath** and Treasurer **Jeff McCuen** were introduced. **Dr. Conrath** shared the following information with the members.

- One of the ways to measure student's achievement is the state report card. With just one exception, Worthington (W) has been rated excellent.
- Last year's graduating class of around 700 students was awarded over 12 million dollars in scholarships.
- The community overwhelmingly says that the W schools do well because of the experience and training of the teachers and staff.
- The community also appreciates the breadth of opportunities offered to W students.
- Last year W students logged over 30,000 hours of community service.
- Changes in the state curriculum mean that W will be adjusting in the next year to year and a half to change what we teach and at what grade level those things are taught.
- In two years, students will take their required tests on a computer and will get immediate results.
- Students can now earn credit for classes by taking a proficiency exam, if they pass it they can earn credit for the course. Credit can also be earned by independent study and by on-line learning opportunities.
- This summer the last funds of a bond issue passed 5 years ago will be used to renovate and maintain the buildings, purchasing school buses and upgrading technology.
- We have begun a slight gradual upswing in enrollment. A study confirms that there is space for students who will arrive and no new buildings will be needed.

**Jeff McCuen** spoke about finances and legislation concerning the district and shared the following.

- Just as the community values education, they also expect the district to be responsible with the dollars given to them.
- With the restructuring of the middle school and moving students from Perry to McCord, over a million dollars was saved.
- With reduced enrollment at the high school in the past few years, approximately 20 positions have been eliminated.
- We will lose 6 or 7 positions at the high school in the next school year. The graduating class is much larger than the incoming freshman class.
- About \$800,000 was saved by being self-funded for Worker's Compensation.
- W asked the state to do a performance audit as a way to seek even more ways to save money. The three areas that they suggested W look at were 1.) staffing, 2.) health care and 3.) transportation.
- With the reductions at Perry and the high schools, Worthington is now back in line with the staff needs, however, this fall when everything is in place this issue will be rechecked to make sure it is still in alignment.
- 25% of the staff has 25 years or more experience, which means their health costs are higher, but as they retire the health costs will probably go back down below the line to be equal with W's peers.



- Teachers paid 6% of the premium of health care costs in the past, but are now paying 14%.
- State law dictates that students living within 2 miles from school do not have to be transported. In W we use 1-1/2 miles for elementary and middle schools as the standard. There is no intent to change that.
- Be shifting starting and finishing times of two elementary schools by 15 minutes the district can save \$120,000 a year.
- We are required to transport students in the Worthington boundaries who attend a private or a charter school, unless it is deemed impractical. There are 10 schools with less than 10 students attending, and W has notified the parents of those students that it is W's intent not to transport those students because it is impractical. This would result in a savings of over \$200,000.
- W worked with all four of its legislators in January, regarding the state mandated all day kindergarten. All day kindergarten would cost W 1.2 million dollars to provide. House Bill 30 has passed, which allows W to charge and maintain the program which our community has valued for 8 years.
- With state budget cuts, it is estimated that we will receive a cut somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of our foundation payments that we receive. The W budget is currently projecting an 18% reduction.
- In the last decade W's poverty has gone from 6 percent to 22 percent, yet the district is still considered very high wealth.
- The greatest concern financially is the phase out of the business tangible tax. W is meeting with legislators to discuss its impact on the district.

A general discussion followed...

- **Dr. Conrath** will "officially" retire until this December. The Board has decided that they will try to find a suitable replacement in August. She will be available to help with the transition and there will be an overlap in August and September, with **Dr. Conrath** being available until December.
- **Dr. Conrath** offered to introduce the new superintendent to the Circle so that a new relationship with him or her can be established.
- The advantages of a volunteer fair or a volunteer clearing house were discussed as ways to let the community know about volunteer opportunities in the schools. **Dr. Conrath** was going to discuss this idea with the PTA's at an upcoming meeting. She thought that having it twice a year would be a benefit.
- As more and more students bring their own technology to school, schools are able to focus their resources from providing hardware to making sure the infrastructure is in place to allow for wireless and internet capabilities
- Over 100 students from W attend the Delaware Career Center, which partners with W.
- Primary grades (K-3) have a student to teacher ratio of approximately 24:1, the intermediate grades (4-6) are approximately 28:1.

Dr. Conrath and Mr. McCuen were thanked and the meeting was adjourned.  
The next meeting is April 7.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra R. Stephen