



AROUND THE CIRCLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CIRCLE OF GRANDPARENTS -
A PROGRAM OF PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY AND CHARACTER

Volume 5 Issue 4 Debra R. Stephen, Coordinator/Editor (614-450-6062) November, 2011

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Character
Trait for
December

Mark Your Calendar

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, December 1
10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Worthington Education Center
Room 220

A **SUPER** Opportunity!
Meet Worthington's new
Superintendent,
Dr. Thomas Tucker!

No School

Dec. 22 - Jan. 2

New Year's Potluck

Thursday, January 5
12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Worthington Education Center



Wilson Hill Great Grandparent Audrey Clumm shared her teaching ideas with Circle members at the November 3rd meeting.



The Great Grandparents pictured above are now leading the COG efforts in their respective schools. Shown here are (left to right): Back Row-Marilyn Winters at Granby, Marilyn Wollett at Evening Street, Jim Mitchell at Liberty, Penny Truitt at Worthington Hills, Audrey Clumm at Wilson Hill. Front Row-Kris Courtney at Bluffsvieiw and Slate Hill, Debbie Curtis at Worthington Estates and (inset) Lyna Sauer Norris at Brookside.

COG IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



2,375 Students
95 Classrooms
84 Grandparents
11 Schools
1 Compass of Character



FROM DEBRA'S DESK



Dear Circle of Friends,
 What is going on? In the past month it seems as though our country has lost its way. First there were the senior citizens who were meeting at a Waffle House to plan the assassination of government officials and to wreck havoc on Atlanta by dispersing the deadly poison Ricin. That was followed by the divorce of Kim Kardashian after a quick 72 day marriage and a highly publicized wedding costing millions of dollars. And finally there is the Penn State scandal which involves the alleged serial molestation of young boys and cover-ups. Quite frankly, all of this makes me sick.

It is almost enough to make me want to throw in the towel on this whole character education thing. The key word is "almost". I am heartened by the fact that the media and regular people are all talking about these events. Doesn't that mean that these events are outside the realm of character and thus makes them discussion worthy because they are wrong? Perhaps there is hope.

I do not know what the answer is to the erosion of character that I see. However, I find myself wishing that there were more opportunities for the country to celebrate and think about character like we do in Worthington. As the saying goes, "If wishes were horses, everyone would ride". That suggests that it is useless to wish and that better results will be achieved through action. So, let's get back on the horse, and renew our commitment to the character education of today's youth. We never know when our efforts will be the spark that lights the fire of passion for character.

Love, Debra

"Look at the weaknesses of others with compassion, not accusation. It's not what they're not doing or should be doing that's the issue. The issue is your own chosen response to the situation and what you should be doing. If you start to think the problem is "out there," stop yourself. That thought is the problem."

- Stephen Covey

SUTTER PARK COLLARS GRANDPARENT FUR BOOK SALE



Grandparent John Witherspoon, aka Clifford the Big Red Dog, managed to stay for a picture with Worthington Superintendent Dr. Thomas Tucker at the Sutter Park Book Fair, which earned \$500 for classroom libraries.

Evening Street and Worthington Estates Grandparent John Witherspoon didn't paws for a moment when offered the chance to treat the students at Sutter Park Pre-K school to a howling good time by taking on the persona of Clifford the Big Red Dog. John is always itching for fun and dug right into the roll of this larger than life fur ball. Clifford enjoyed hunting for all the great tails available at the book fair. This picture begs for an acknowledgement to John's daughter in-law Jane Witherspoon for submitting a picture that is sure to tickle your funny bone!

MAX & ERMA'S FUNDRAISER

The figures are in and the Circle of Grandparents raised \$169.91 with October's fundraiser at the Sawmill Road Max & Ermas!

Thanks to everyone who participated.





FAMILY READING FESTIVAL

The Family Reading (formerly Read to Baby) Festival at the Old Worthington Library on November 13th was a big success. In addition to a presentation and book signing by Will Hillenbrand, several community groups were in attendance to provide families with information.

This year the Circle of Grandparents was joined by Active Parenting and the Partners for Community and Character (who sponsor both COG and AP). Approximately 75 children (and their people) stopped by our tables in 3 fast hours. COG provided each child with crayons and a coloring sheet on the Word "Respect" (Remember, Everything's Special – People, Environment, Critters, and Things).



Left to Right are Active Parenting Facilitator Leslie Quickel, Active Parenting Coordinator Amy Ambrozich, Geronimo Stilton (internationally known author of his own children's series), PCC Executive Director Holly Richard and COG Coordinator Debra Stephen at the Old Worthington Library.

*[Editor's Note: It was wonderful to see how many children (and their parents) were familiar with our program! Each year, more and more children who attend the event have a Grandparent in their class and they enjoy telling me all about them. (Grandparents Carolyn Taneja, Braxton Tewart, Beth Arnold, Sheila Dickson and Helga Waldrop all received glowing reviews!) This is tangible proof that **our program is making an impact and is discussed at home with their parents!** To all our Grandparent volunteers, thanks for a job well done!]*



GOT CHARACTER (TREE) ?

Congratulations to all the readers who found that ever elusive character tree on Laura Keating's desk in last month's newsletter!

Have fun looking for character this month: Remember, you can find character in the most unexpected places!

IN HONOR OF DR. MCELLIGOTT



PCC Circle of Grandparents were the recipients of a generous and thoughtful donation from Jennifer Wene, Shirley Hamilton, and Vicki Gnezda in honor of Dr. Jim McElligott. The Circle is extremely grateful for their gift and to be associated with such a fine man. Thank you!



FIRST WATCH = FIRST RATE!

A big thank you goes out to General Manager Tara Hicks of Worthington's First Watch Restaurant. Tara generously donated 100 packs of crayons to the Circle of Grandparents to use at the Family Reading Festival! At the festival, the Circle provided the children a coloring sheet about Respect and crayons. The First Watch Restaurant has been one of our best supporters. The next time you are in their restaurant, please tell them how much we appreciate them.

*"The dew of compassion is a tear."
-- Lord Byron*





MEET THE NEW GRANDPARENTS



Catherine Barren

Catherine McCarthy Barren was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, graduated from Strong Vincent High School and Mercyhurst College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics. She has taught middle and high school as well as adult education for Penn State and the Ohio State Extension Services. She retired in 1999 as a home network/nutrition specialist at Action for Children and has resided in Worthington for twenty-one years. Catherine and her late husband, who was also a teacher, had six children and now have fourteen grandchildren ranging in age from five to twenty-six years old. Catherine enjoys spending time with her family, working part-time at the Wren House Gift Shop, traveling and gardening. She is looking forward to teaching and learning from the students at Evening Street Elementary.

GRANDPARENTS, DID YOU KNOW ...

- You are now required to have a Worthington Education Center issued ID Badge which is specific to the Circle of Grandparents? **You must obtain your badge as soon as possible at the WEC to continue volunteering with our program.**
- Your school now has a Grandparent volunteer ("Great Grandparent") who manages the Circle of Grandparents program in your school? *[The exceptions are Colonial Hills and Worthington Park, which are still managed by the Coordinator.]*
- Any questions, requests or concerns that you have will now be handled by your Great Grandparent?

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Bluffsvew/Slate Hill	Kris Courtney	419-619-3332 kristineagutknecht@gmail.com
Brookside	Lyna Sauer Norris	614-395-1249 lyna.norris@gmail.com
Evening Street	Marilyn Wollett	614-880-1070 mwollet2@columbus.rr.com
Granby	Marilyn Winters	614-889-7940 mimiwint@aol.com
Liberty	Jim Mitchell	614-847-4340 jimitchellis@gmail.com
Wilson Hill	Audrey Clumm	614-846-1253 aclumm@yahoo.com
Worthington Estates	Debbie Curtis	740-964-2753 debbiecurtis208@yahoo.com
Worthington Hills	Penny Truitt	614-846-6107 pennytruitt@yahoo.com



From Great Grandparent Jim Mitchell at Liberty elementary: *"I've also attached some pictures I took this afternoon. The class has made a big poster outside their classroom where they posted all of my cards I sent during my Montana trip. I send cards each day from where I travel, and they posted them on a map which showed the different states from which they received cards."*

Congratulations to Jim and his teacher, Mark Bradshaw for incorporating our program into a teachable moment! You two are Worthington school treasures!

KEEN ON THE KIWANIS

The Worthington Linworth Kiwanis invited me to speak at their November 21st meeting. What a wonderful group of people. They were the guinea pigs for my first ever PowerPoint presentation! Which went off without a hitch - *thanks to literally a last minute save by Vicki Gnezda and Jennifer Wene who came through with a projector, which I'd overlooked as needing!*

For those of you who didn't know, the Kiwanis' mission is "to serve the children of the world". It's no wonder I liked them! If you would like more information about joining them, contact their website at www.worthington-linworth.kiwanis.org or President Della Cross at dcross12@columbus.rr.com.

P.S. They are helping with the Toys for Tots and Food Pantry Drive at the Worthington Fire and Police Department on Saturday, December 10th from 8 to 3. They hope to see you there!

Coordinator Debra Stephen speaking at the Worthington-Linworth Kiwanis club.

(Picture courtesy of Della Cross)



READ ALL ABOUT IT

Worthington Estates' Grandparent Carol Bogaards heard George Joseph, our very own Worthington Education Center's Executive Director of Administrative Services, deliver an inspiring speech on Thomas Friedman's book "*The World is Flat*" published in 2004 and wanted to hear more! George has graciously agreed to talk to us about Friedman's new book entitled "*That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World it Created and How We Can Come Back.*" George's presentation will be at our Feb. 2nd meeting. With the holidays and long winter nights at hand, you might want to add this book to your wish list to help wile away the hours until George's talk.

POTLUCK APPROACHING

Information about the Jan. 5th potluck (12:30-2 p.m.) luncheon will be sent out mid-December!



MEETING RECORD

WORTHINGTON EDUCATION CENTER - ROOM 106

NOVEMBER 3, 2011 - 1:00 P.M. - 2:15 P.M.

In attendance: **Catherine Barren, Carol Bogaards, Audrey Clumm, Debbie Curtis, Sarry Dylan, Dorie Eisenman, Mitch Garner, Elizabeth Hague, Gwen Isaly, Mary Jane Kibby, Betty Menear, Bill Mrukowski, Linda Mrukowski, Georgia Reinbold, Carole Shaffer, Tom Smith, Debra Stephen, Penny Truitt, Joan Van De Weghe, Marilyn Winters, Marilyn Wollett**

Coordinator Debra Stephen opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and in particular Mitch Garner the Treasurer from the Partners for Community and Character (PCC). A sign-up to bring snacks to meetings was passed around. Posters and coloring books were available to members attending for use in their classes. Debra briefly talked about participating in the upcoming Family Reading Program at the Old Worthington Library. PCC would also be attending.

Debra explained to everyone that the Great Grandparent program had officially been kicked off. All members would now report to the Great Grandparent assigned to their building. (See page 4.)

Audrey Clumm was introduced as the speaker. Audrey taught Pre-K for over 20 years. She is now serving the COG as a great grandparent at Wilson Hill in the Kindergarten and first grade. Audrey began by explaining to members that she was a list person who worked best when she had everything planned out. So, she would plan out her curriculum for the whole year. Her focus is mostly literature and art with music and science added.

Audrey brought copies of her patterns to share and offered to bring samples of her lessons with her each month for members. Audrey likes to use books that have CD's and tapes. (The kids like the additional sound effects.)

Audrey class time is 25 minutes. During that time she tries to do a story and a craft but sometimes she'll have to send extra stuff home to finish. The teachers also take some of the projects to complete at other times during the week.

Audrey shared the following plans for the coming school year. [*For your convenience, the suggested books are bolded.*]

November - Self-Discipline She ties the holiday into her character trait because she thinks that helps trigger a remembrance. She talks to the children about self-discipline meaning waiting your turn and not being too excited and keeping yourself under control. Unlike the plush toy turkey that she brings to class that gobbles when you push its belly. She asks Mr. Turkey not to interrupt her with his gobbling when she is speaking. Mr. Turkey is then instructed not to talk and she passes him around the class for the students to look at. She uses Mr. Turkey as an object lesson for self-discipline. Every time they look at him they will have to practice self-discipline to wait their turn and to NOT make him talk. It never fails that at least one student, usually a boy, will make Mr. Turkey talk (which is secretly wants to happen) and Audrey will stop and ask Mr. Turkey to practice his self-discipline and to not talk when she is.

Audrey likes to send art home so that parents will ask what it is about. She often puts the character trait on it. For instance, on her cornucopia each vegetable has one of the character traits on it. As they do their art, Audrey would talk to the children about how they are using their self-discipline as they color in the lines, and carefully cut things out. She also uses puppet bag puppets which the students make by using self-discipline. She might also ask the students to make turkeys by tracing their hand and cutting out, but they use self-discipline by using the hand that is the hardest to do. For her first graders, she is giving them a word-find with a crazy looking turkey to color. They can't color the turkey until they have the word-find completed. They talk about how they have to do the task that they HAVE to do before they can do the task that they WANT to do.



December – Compassion The story of “**Rudolph**” is good because the other deer were not compassionate toward Rudolph, but he showed them compassion by helping them out. She uses different crafts with reindeer for the children to take home. Some involve coloring just a red nose to glue on and others are more complicated with a candy cane, pipe cleaners and wiggly eyes. The story of “**The Grinch who stole Christmas**” by **Dr. Seuss** was effective at teaching compassion and also “**The After Christmas Tree**” by **Linda Wagner Tyler** where the tree is decorated with things that birds would like and it is placed outside. For their craft they color a tree or make one from sticks. Students also like the little paper bag puppets too. You could also dry out oranges and have them string or you could use cereal to put on trees to have compassion for the animals in the winter. For a non-Christmassy book, she uses “**One Snowy Night**” by **M. Christina Butler** where a little hedgehog is caught unprepared for the cold winter night. Older children like to send cards with a word of encouragement to someone. The cards are taken to her church that works with the intercity ministry. Cards are signed only by the child’s first name for safety and their school is not revealed. “**Stone Soup**” by **Marcia Brown** is a good book because these people did not have compassion for people who did not have something to eat or and the characters had to learn compassion. Audrey asks her teacher before using Christmas books. She wants to make sure that the teacher is comfortable with the book. Last year, she used the Grinch who stole Christmas without a problem. Audrey suggested asking the teacher before doing anything that you think might be controversial. For instance, she asked if play-doh would be allowed in the room, before using it.

January – Tolerance Audrey gets some of her materials at a website by Teaching Tolerance located at www.tolerance.org. Most of their materials are free. You can always work in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She also uses the “**Spectrum Song**” from **Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color (available on Classic Disney, Volume 1: 60 years of Musical Magic CD**. She will bring in food color and will make red and yellow colors. She asks the children what if that was all the color that we had. Then she will put them together and they become orange. And then she says, “Isn’t it great that we have red, yellow and orange.” She ties it all into tolerance and uses this as a visual. She also likes the book “**The Only Boy in Ballet Class**” by **Denise Gruska**. For the project with this book she has a paper boy. Every time in the book that they hear something that is hurtful, then she tears it a bit. At the end of the book they discuss what they could have done differently and they will put a Band-Aid on the tears to fix the hurt. Another book is “**The Sneetches**” by **Dr. Seuss** to learn tolerance. The project would be a sneetch to color. Audrey also brings in props, i.e., a stuffed sneetch for a visual connection. She tries to put the word with the art so that they can remember the word.

February – Honesty There is no better story than “**The Big Bad Wolf**”. There are many versions of the story, including “**Where’s the Big Bad Wolf**” by **Eileen Christelow** where the wolf disguises himself as a sheep and when confronted about it, he lies. With that she makes stick puppets. She also had a paper wolf that they covered with cotton balls like he was disguised in sheep’s clothing. There is also a book called “**The True Story of the Three Little Pigs**” by **Jon Scieszka** which is the wolf’s fabricated version of what happened when he tangled with the 3 little pigs. She uses stick puppets of the wolf and pigs so that they can tell their own story. She also uses “**The Cat in the Hat**” by **Dr. Seuss**. For the craft you could make the Cat in the Hat or just make a hat and in the white space the children could write ways to be honest. The best part of the book is the question at the end of the book, which is “What would you do if your mother asked you”. This question leads to a good discussion on honesty. She also will play music and ask them to draw a happy face without looking. She asks them to be honest and not to look as they draw it. When they are done, she will say to them, I know it’s hard not to look and I know that there are probably people who did look and they will usually tell her that they did look. She then compliments them on being honest.

March – Diligence She brings in baking powder and vinegar. When you combine the two you get a nice explosion of bubbles. She will add a little bit and won’t get any bubbles, but she will be diligent and keep adding until they get the explosion. By keeping at it, they see success. She could do shamrocks where they could write the character traits or ways to be diligent. She also likes the Froggy books. For diligence she would use “**Froggy Rides A Bike**” by **Jonathan London**. When she reads the book she will loudly call out his name “**F R O G G Y !** and that helps keep



their attention. For that take home project she has a more difficult project that takes diligence to complete. You could also have the children make-up a book about the Frog who learned diligence. Perhaps he couldn't jump like the other frogs and had to practice and practice. Students love making up stories. **"Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss** is also a great book for diligence because Sam I Am was very diligent to get that little guy to eat those green eggs and ham. The take home for that would be a place setting where kids could draw the green eggs and ham. Again the goal is for the parents to see something so that they ask what it is about. Another idea for diligence is stringing pasta. You could color it or it could be plain. It could be cheerios or beads. That is a very diligent task for small fingers to complete.

April – Commitment **"The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein** is a good book about commitment. Her project with that is to make a tree or do something with apples. She also likes **"Here Comes T. Rex Cottontail" by Lois G. Grambling**. It is about a dinosaur helping out the Easter Bunny when he is sick and he didn't do a very good job. But the Easter Bunny and his friends were committed to making sure the children got their Easter eggs and they delivered the eggs behind him so that T. Rex didn't get his feelings hurt and that the commitment was still kept.

May – Trustworthiness The story of **"The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear" by Audrey Wood** is about a mouse who just knew the bear would eat his strawberry and did not trust the bear at all. The mouse finally just gobbled it up because he was so afraid the bear would eat the strawberry. Had he (the mouse) had more trust in the bear (who never did come to eat the strawberry) the mouse could have eaten the strawberry over days instead of eating it all in one night. Her project could be something as simple as making a strawberry and writing on it how a person can be trustworthy.

She loves the Big Bad Wolf and there is a book where he is reformed. **"Big Bad Wolf is Good" by Simon Puttock** is a story where the wolf has a chance to show everyone who is afraid of him that he can be trustworthy by taking a lost duck home instead of eating him. There is also **"The Cheese" by Margie Palatini** which is a humorous take on "The Farmer in the Dell" nursery rhyme. One by one, the rat, the cat, the dog, the child, the wife, and finally the farmer challenge the silly rule that requires the cheese to stand alone. She likes this book because you don't know until the last page if the rat could be trusted not to eat the cheese. Another favorite is **"Earthquack!" another book by Margie Palatini** which is on the line of the Chicken Little book. The older kids love **"The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales" by Jon Scieszka** which is an irreverent variation on well-known themes.

Looking forward, Audrey is currently thinking about ways to use the beach and ocean. Her father was a pioneer at NASA and she would also like to do a character curriculum using space. She does not like to do the same program all the time. She enjoys making up new lessons.

Audrey brought her boom box that the kids absolutely adore. She then lead the COG through an exercise called *Freeze*. She uses this with her lesson on self-discipline. Part of self-discipline is keeping your body in control so you don't knock into your neighbor. You dance to the music stops. When the music stops, you are supposed to stop. Even with her 25 minute class time the students need to get up and move some to get the wiggles out. The members had great fun during this exercise. The song "Freeze" is available at the library (or Amazon) it is called **"Kids in Motion" by Greg & Steve**. [Editor's note: Later the Coordinator heard from people that work at the Worthington Education Center that people were talking about a big party on the 2nd floor where people were dancing!] Audrey said that most classrooms have a CD player, but if your music is on a cassette you would need to bring your own equipment to play it.

Carol Bogaards recommended "Tooty ta" a song by Dr. Jean Feldman which goes like this:



Chorus:

(Hands over head and clap)

A tooty ta,

A tooty ta.

A tooty ta ta.

A tooty ta,

A tooty ta.

A tooty ta ta.

Thumbs up.

(Stick thumbs up in front of you)

Elbows back

(Elbows back)

Feet apart ...

(Extend feet)

...

...Turn around

(Turn around)

She also recommended **Shel Silverstein's book "Every Thing On It"** for its wonderful poems and drawings.

Dorie Eisenman who also has a preschool teaching background and works with Kindergarten at Brookside added that any of the ideas that Audrey presented can be ratcheted up to apply to high grade levels.

Debra added that the beauty of the Circle of Grandparents is that everyone brings their own style and personality into the classroom and that new members should not be intimidated by all the ideas that were presented by Audrey. Audrey is coming to the Circle with over 20 years of preschool experience and generously offered up her lesson plan as encouragement and support to the newer members who may be looking for help with ideas. Audrey has set a very high standard and that is perfect for her. What you do in your class will be right for you. Audrey also offered herself as a resource for any volunteers. Her contact information is on your roster.

Liz Hague encouraged members to have fun. If you do that, everything else will take care of itself. Do Your Thing! To that Debra reminded volunteers that one of the requirements for being a Grandparent was to SMILE!

The group then broke into discussion groups with their Great Grandparents until 11:15.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra R. Stephen