

IN THE LOOP

August 2008
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Varsity Lakes Middle School PTSA
Parent Teacher Student Association



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Upcoming Events

- ◆ DQ Spirit night
- ◆ Basketball intramurals and tryouts
- ◆ Fall Fundraiser Kick off

President's Greeting Principal's Welcome

Happy August! My name is Brenda Reynolds and I am President of this year's PTSA.

The PTSA produces this newsletter as one of our services to Varsity Lakes Middle School. The purpose of this newsletter is to share information with parents so they can more fully stay connected to their children during this important stage— the middle school years! Its goal is to share information on campus happenings in one correspondence. *IN THE LOOP* will be published monthly and include information on Sports, Intramural tryouts, club activities, plus upcoming events such as PTSA meetings, Drama productions, concerts, dances, and school outings. We will report on Fundraisers and opportunities to volunteer. **If you would like to receive *IN THE LOOP* via e-mail, please provide your e-mail address. This is a great way to ensure you receive it! Watch for announcements about PTSA's First General Meeting of the year.**

We also wish to bid a fond farewell to Principal Davis who has moved onto principal of East Lee High School. We wish to warmly welcome our new principal Scott Cook and look forward to working with him.

Information Round Up

Bell times: 9:45 am and 4:00 pm.

Early pick up or phone calls: All early student pickup and all messages for students **must be completed no later than 3:40 pm.** After 3:40 we cannot contact the students. We recommend parents allow 20 minutes for this process.

Activity Bus: VLMS provides an Activity Bus for current bus riders Tuesday and Thursday. These students can remain after school for club meetings or sports activities and then catch the late bus home. All other students staying after school will need to be picked up by a parent no later than 5:30 pm or walk home if that is their normal routine.

Welcome to the 2008-09 school year! I am glad you have chosen Varsity Lakes Middle School to meet the educational needs of the middle school students in your family.

The student enrollment at VLMS continues to increase this year. Additional teachers were added to the faculty and many student schedule changes were made to accommodate the growth over the summer. A new program has been started this year that is designed to meet the needs of fulltime gifted students. This program is intended to provide students with the necessary academic skills in a college preparatory program including the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

VLMS achieved the grade of "B" on the Florida A+ school grading system last year with our final score nearly meeting the grade of "A." We need only about ten points to meet the 325 required points for the "A." The faculty and staff are continuing their efforts to improve the success of our students on the FCAT and Florida Writes. Our SAC and faculty leadership team is very focused on student achievement and we have set the goal for becoming an "A" school this year. It will take hard work on everyone's part to achieve this goal but I believe it is attainable and by working together it can be achieved.

Thank you once again for enrolling your student(s) at VLMS. This school year is off to a great start and I look forward to assisting you and your students in achieving success. I hope to see you at Open House on Saturday.

- Principal Scott Cook

VLMS phone: 694-3464.

After School Tutoring: Many of our talented faculty members stay after school to provide free tutoring services in all subject areas Monday through Thursday. Activity Bus provided Tues. and Thurs. Parent pickup by 5:30 pm.

Before Care – 7:00am - 9:30 am – contact the office for information on cost and sign up **VLMS website:** <http://vlm.leeschools.net/> includes link to: Lee County School District website <http://www.leeschools.net/home.htm> which has School Calendar and school lunch menu.



Intramural News

Intramurals at VLMS are an opportunity for every child in the school to learn and participate in sports. Interested students must turn in an intramural form and provide proof of insurance on that form. School insurance can be purchased as needed. Intramurals will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:15 to 5:15pm. All students must be picked up no later than 5:30. There will be an activity bus for students who normally ride the bus to and from school. Intramurals last two weeks and are followed by tryouts for the extramural team. Team members are chosen based on attitude, ability, attendance, and a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

We start in August with Basketball (8/25-9/11) and in September, Cross Country Track (9/2-9/18).

Upcoming Sports: Volleyball: 10/28-11/13; Soccer 1/5-1/29; Track and Field 3/16 -3/26; Tennis 4/15-4/30; Golf 4/15 - 4/30

Contact Intramurals Director Craig Bullock at 694-3464 or craigab@leeschools.net for more information on intramurals or insurance.

All Sports

ALL SPORTS will have practice and games only Tuesday and Thursday afternoons this year. Individual sports may however have morning practices. See individual sports coaches for practice requirements.

ParentLink and other Websites - Stay Connected

The district-wide ParentLink system is available to all parents. It helps parental involvement with student grades, homework, and attendance. ParentLink uses the following communication methods:

Phone (239-337-3347) Parents can call in to check their student's information and hear about HW assignments and receive automated calls about their students.

Letter (hardcopy) Parents can receive automated reports or letters sent home.

E-mail Parents can receive automated e-mails about their students.

WEB <http://Parentlink.LeeSchools.Net> Parents can sign up for secure access to their student's grades, attendance, and other information accessible from any computer connected to the internet. Parent Login ID is the 8-digit student ID number of the oldest child in the Lee County School District followed by the parent's first and last initials (For example 12345678ab). Parents: Refer to your oldest child's interim or report card for student ID number. Parent Password is the birth date of the oldest child.

<http://www.lee-county.com/library/> offers Research and HW tools including Ask-A-Librarian.

The library system does provide a live chat with a librarian at The Florida Ask a Librarian Service. Live chat is available Sunday thru Thursday 10 a.m. to midnight E.S.T. and Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. E.S.T. You may reach this link from the library homepage. Click on "Research and Homework Tools" and then "Ask a Librarian." Also free tutoring is available through the Florida Learning Network website www.FLLearningNetwork.com. This resource is available from any computer with internet access, including the library. The Florida Literacy Coalition www.floridaliteracy.org (800) 237-5113 also provides referral services for tutoring.

Start working now on preparing for FCAT with the help of the FCAT Explorer website! Developed by the Florida Department of Education, it is a set of free web-based practice programs based on the Sunshine State Standards that are tested on the FCAT. **Your child already has been assigned a sign-in name and password.** To find your information, contact your child's Homeroom teacher or call the FCAT EXPLORER SUPPORT TEAM 1-888-750-3228. You can also use the FCAT Explorer Parent and Family Guide for free and you don't need a password. www.fcatexplorer.com

August/September Happenings

- ♥ August Open House - Saturday August 16, 9:30 am - 2:00 pm. Pick up schedules and meet teachers. Make sure you have already submitted proof of immunization to our Health Clinic.
- ♥ First day of School - Monday, August 18
- ♥ Fall Fundraiser Kick Off Assembly - Monday August 27 - Selling will begin that day and students have 2 weeks to sell and earn prizes. Runs 8/29/08 to 9/15/08
- ♥ NO School - Monday September 1 and September 29 and 30 (see District calendar <http://www.leeschools.net/home.htm>)
- ♥ DQ Spirit Night - Tuesday, September 9, 4-7 pm. Join us for this popular VLMS get together of students, families, and teachers at our local DQ Grill and Chill located on Rt. 82 by Publix Crossroads

Student News

There are many clubs and organizations at Varsity Lakes Middle for your student to be involved in. A partial list includes: Pep Squad, Latin Dance club, PTSA, Mathletes, Student Government, Newspaper, S.A.D.D., FL Future Educators of America, National Junior Honor Society, Builders Club, and Drama. Encourage your child to learn more about student clubs and join if he or she has an interest.

- Drama - Faculty Leader Ms. Rosario
- National Jr. Honor Society - Mrs. Wood
- Mathletes - Mr. Sijan
- Pep Squad - Ms. Hurst

For other club contacts — check with Asst Principal Fernberg

Welcome to Parents of 6th Graders

PTSA and the school administration warmly welcome our new parents and personally invite you to get involved. It is a great way to show your child your commitment to their education and to help make his/her school safe, fun, and successful. **If you were an active parent at your child's elementary school, this is not the time to stop caring!** So join PTSA, help your child sell whenever we have a fundraiser, and attend school games and functions. Be the change you wish to see in others.

"When my daughter enrolled, one of my first tasks was to get involved with the PTSA. Through that, I have a connection to my daughter and her school. It's a secure feeling," said parent Barbara Lukas.

Welcome from the Clinic

Welcome back to school. Now is the time to buckle down (and up) for school.

Do you know the best way to prevent getting sick? **HANDWASHING.** And that doesn't mean just running water over your hands. Soap up for 15 seconds. Sing Happy Birthday. It takes about 15 seconds and makes you smile. Rinse with your fingers down and dry off well.

Did you know it's best to sneeze or cough onto your shoulder or upper arm, not your hand? When you use your hands, you then can pass the germs to whomever or whatever you touch.

Please notify the clinic of any health concerns or medicines your child is on. We are here to help and assist. -- Lori Demeter, School Nurse, and Lisa Cavazos, Clinic Assistant

School Band: We have had great success with our VLMS Band. Students interested in learning an instrument or participating should contact the school Band Director, Ms. Tabitha Langis.

Spelling Bee Results: Memorial Day weekend 2008 Deanna Hambleton represented VLMS and Lee County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. She tied 91st out of 288 spellers. She correctly spelled words such as: otorhinolaryngology, cygnet, loquacity, and pyrrhic, but missed others such as: cacoethes, miscible, and pinyin. She studied very hard all year and was disappointed briefly but that didn't last long as she was soon at the event cheering on her favorites. Thank you Deanna for bringing recognition to Varsity Lakes Middle School and Lee County.

First PTSA Meeting

Our first General PTSA Meeting will be scheduled for September. Please watch for announcements on the specific date and please try and come out. (If you think you missed the announcement, contact us via the office in early September). The meeting will be a time to meet the PTSA Board and other parents and find out how our parents assist in making VLMS a great place for our children. You will have a chance to sign up to be a member or volunteer on any projects of interest. We also welcome your ideas.

The PTSA currently has committee openings for interested parents. So we hope to see you then or if you can't attend, definitely complete the PTSA application at the end of this newsletter so we can be in touch.

Fall Fundraiser Kicks Off

It's that time of year and we are super excited to bring you and your child the fabulous American Fundraiser Fall catalog. This catalog includes tons of quality and affordable items with over 100 items under \$10. We will be having a "Super Kick Off" in school for the kids August 29, with a DJ to pump it up, explain how it runs, and tell them about the **GREAT prizes they can win.** Every child selling just one item will be entered into a drawing for a Nintendo Wii. Someone is guaranteed to win. Everyone who sells 10 items or more will enjoy getting out of class for a special party event.

The fundraiser will run from 8/29/08 to 9/15/08 so help your child and your school raise money to purchase educational tools that benefit our students.

2008-09 PTSA Executive Board

Brenda Reynolds, President

To be elected, Vice President

Kelly Lauta, Treasurer

Tara Snyder, Secretary

*Newsletter Editor - Barbara Lukas
Deadline for September newsletter
submissions is August 25*

Contact us:

Varsity Lakes Middle School PTSA
801 Gunnery Rd, Lehigh Acres, FL 33971
Phone: 239-694-3464

Website:

<http://vlm.leeschools.net/>

We have a mailbox at school for messages
and mail.

JOIN THE PTSA

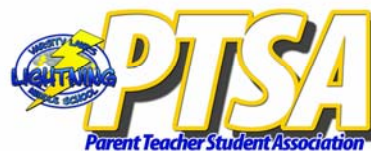
A PTSA is an association made up of parents, teachers, and students. At Varsity Lakes Middle School, we want to be more than just a fund raising organization. We want to achieve goals and produce activities that will benefit the school and its students and build community spirit.

By joining the PTSA, you will show your child how important their education is to you and you get a chance to help plan activities and determine how funds can be spent. To join, complete a membership form and submit \$5.00 per adult and \$3.00 per student. Application is at the end of this newsletter.

Por favor afiliese al PTSA, un grupo de padres, profesores y estudiantes que trabajan juntos para ayudar a la escuela y los estudiantes. Para unirse, complete un ingreso formal y presente 5.00 dólares por adulto y 3.00 dólares por estudiante.

Watch for First General Meeting announcement.

Varsity Lakes Middle School
PTSA
801 Gunnery Rd.
Lehigh Acres FL 33971



YOU ARE NEEDED>>>

Varsity Lakes Middle School PTSA is a non profit organization of parents, students, and teachers working together for the betterment of the students and staff at VLMS.

Membership Options: 1 adult -\$5 1 student- \$3 parent and student- \$8 2 adults- \$10

Member name _____ Member Name (#2) _____
E-mail _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____ Phone _____

E-mail ensures you get the newsletter sent directly to you.

Student name _____ Grade _____ Homeroom teacher _____

Check off any that apply

- I can make food for an event I can help in the evenings I can help with a fundraiser
- I can help during the day Call or e-mail me if you need help & I will see if I am available

I cannot join at this time but please contact me to help out.
(Complete contact information but do not enclose money)

Make your check payable to the VLMS PTSA
Amount enclosed \$ _____

Place the money and this form in an envelope. Make checks out to VLMS PTSA and mail to: VLMS PTSA 801 Gunnery Rd. Lehigh Acres, FL 33971 or have your child return it to the office attn; PTSA Mailbox.