



October, 2008

Valley Oaks Elementary

Where Eagles Learn to Soar!



Dear Parents,

*Principal's Message
Gary Henry, Principal*

Welcome back to Valley Oaks. This month has been unusually challenging for all of us. However, now that school has started back up again and most of us have full power after the storm, things are starting to get back to normal. Losing a week of school created some issues with our calendars so please take note of the changes in dates and times regarding previously planned events. A new feature which should assist in your planning of upcoming events is our new school website. I have created our new website.

You can reach our website by:

- ✓ go to www.springbranchisd.com then click on schools
- ✓ find Valley Oaks Elementary
- ✓ click on "Campus Home Page"
- ✓ enjoy browsing our webpage

You will find short blurbs regarding upcoming events; there is a direct link on the home page which will allow you to register to be a VOE volunteer and there is a direct link on the page to our Valley Oaks PTA website. This website was designed to be user friendly, pleasing to the eye, to provide information to perspective families regarding Valley Oaks and to provide each of you with information of upcoming events. Save it to your "favorites."

It is very refreshing to see everyone back at school this week. I am extremely glad everyone made it through the storm healthy. Our staff has worked extremely hard to make sure the children are taken care of and have that feeling of comfort when they are on campus.

Have a great month of October! I hope to see everyone at the Family Supper on the 17th.

Mr. Henry

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PTA Press

Joan Flynn, President



Hello. Well, fall is in the air; and although Ike slowed us all down temporarily we are "full speed ahead" now. I hope you will all be able to attend the Fall Family Supper on Friday, October 17. This is always a fun time for the entire family. And, don't forget to check out your children's art work on that same evening, for the chance to order some wonderful Original Works of Art items, which make great gifts for the upcoming holidays. The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, October 14th, at 6:30 in the Multipurpose Room, and I hope to see you there!

Joan Flynn

We Need Your E-mail Addresses!

The Valley Oaks PTA wants to make sure you are receiving the most up to date information possible about events at the school. In order to do this, we have been collecting e-mail addresses.

The school does not give us your e-mail address, so if you listed your e-mail address on a school form, we don't have it. If you have not received an e-mail from us recently about the Book Fair, Family Supper or Sally Foster, we don't have your correct address. You can add your address to the e-mail list by sending a quick e-mail to valleyoakselem-pta@hotmail.com or lang_carla@hotmail.com. We look forward to communicating with you!

Start Making your List and
Check it Twice!!!!!!!

The VOE Book Fair will be on:

December 12th, 15th, 16th, & 17th

There will be a larger selection this year so plan on shopping for Christmas gifts at VOE. If you have any questions or would like to volunteer just call Rebecca Robertson, Charleen Siroky or Pat Walker.

AVAILABLE PTA COMMITTEE POSITIONS

Participation in the VOE PTA is so rewarding and a great way to share with your children just how special their school is. It will also keep you up to date with all the events and information. The following positions are available. If you are interested in serving please let me know. We are excited about a great school year and I'm looking forward to hearing from you!! Please consider these fun and important ways to get involved with your child, school, and PTA. Thanks!!!!

Jamboree – This is a spring event for the children and families of Valley Oaks. There is plenty of food, games, fun and, oh yeah, **Confetti Eggs!** This event is held on a Saturday in the spring.

Yearbook – The yearbook is produced annually through the effort of the chairperson(s) and his/her many helpers. This photographic diary of the school's year is invaluable.

Eagle Eye Newsletter Translator – This is a monthly publication that includes upcoming events; information on the grade level plans/events for the month; updates from the principal, etc. We need someone to translate the articles from English to Spanish.

Parent Education – This committee plans speakers and events designed to enrich and inform parents regarding parenting and raising children.

Joan Flynn, PTA President
joan.pta@jb.bz
832-443-8868

www.valleyoakspta.com

Reserved Parking

The reserved parking spaces in the West, East, and North parking lots have been generously purchased by families at our Dinner/Auction Event.

Please be respectful and do not park there unless your name is on the sign. ☺

VOE Annual Family Supper October 17 6 – 8 pm

This fall, we are celebrating 80's style, so break out your leg warmers and parachute pants and get ready to dance! Join us to mingle with old friends and meet new ones while you enjoy an evening filled with great food, chart topping tunes from the 80's and other great entertainment. Watch your child's Friday folder for ticket information.

There are still lots of ways to help prior to and during this evening – please contact Ginny Langenkamp at 713-320-1024 or at ginny@langenkamp.com.

SEE YOU THERE!



Original Works of Art....Turning Your Child's Artwork Into Professionally Made Products

Be on the lookout for important information that will be in your child's folder in October regarding the Original Works of Art fundraiser.

Your child has been busily working in art class to prepare artwork for this unique fundraiser. Don't miss this opportunity to preserve your child's work and support VOE. OWA items also make terrific gifts!

Artwork and order forms will be sent home in your child's folder on **Friday, October 17, 2008**. Samples of OWA items will be on display at the Family Supper on Friday, October 17, 2008. Be sure to stop by and check out this year's new OWA items such as the wall clock, soap/lotion dispenser sets, pocket pads, and luggage/bag spotters. Orders may be returned in your child's folder or can be handed in at the Family Supper. All orders are due by **Monday, October 27, 2008**.

For more information, please contact Kim Graham or Tracey Tomaro-McCall at:
art_works@valleyoakspta.com

Scholarly Scoop

Kindergarten

Our first month in Kindergarten has been very memorable. We have had a lot of fun learning about school routines, meeting new friends, and identifying patriotic symbols. The kindergarten team knows that the last few weeks have been very difficult on everyone including our students. We are so glad that school is up and running, so that we can bring some normalcy back into the day. October is going to be a great month. In Math we are going to be focusing on writing, identifying, and counting sets of numbers. Our Science units for October will include learning about magnets, spiders, and plants. In Reading we will continue to develop their knowledge about books and the importance of the beginning, middle, and end in a story. We will also be looking at a lot of patterned text using familiar words. The focus for writing will be making lists, labeling objects, and journal writing. We look forward to meeting with you during our October conference time.

First Grade

First Grade is off to a Flying Start! We welcomed our first graders by starting off learning about rules and laws and how to be good citizens! In reading we have been learning the strategy of connecting new to known. We have learned to make connections from the text to ourselves, from text to text and from text to world. When reading with your first grader listen as they share the connections they have made. In science we have been learning about the rules and tools that scientists use. We were introduced to the scientific method, and how to be safe during experiments. Next we studied about our 5 senses and how they are important to us! Then it was on to cycles! We learned the life cycle of plants, seasons and ourselves! In math we have learned that math is everywhere! We are practicing counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's. We have learned about shapes and where they are in our world. We have also found patterns in our world as well. Coming up we will travel the world with Atlas Joe! We will learn our cardinal directions, and how to make and read maps! First graders are always on the go!

Welcome to Second Grade

The year has gotten off to a great start! We know it has been a difficult time for many families and we hope that your child has transitioned back into the routine of school again. The first nine weeks focuses on establishing routines and creating a safe and productive learning environment for all students to succeed. Take a look at what your awesome second grader is doing!

Reading:

The focus for the first nine weeks is making connections. Students have been learning how to make meaningful connections. Students are able to connect stories to their own life, other books and the world.

Writing:

Students have been learning the steps of the writing process and have been actively composing a personal narrative (a true story about an experience that has happened in their life). Students will brainstorm ideas, create a web, write a rough draft, revise and edit, conference with other students and the teacher and finally write their final copy.

Math:

Students have learned about place value to 99. Second graders love learning two digit addition and subtraction. Also, they are learning how to solve problems and recognize key vocabulary words (sum, total, fewer, difference) in word problems. Other concepts, they will learn over the course of the nine weeks are analyzing picture and bar graphs, customary and metric measurement, and time to the half hour. Students will take a Math Benchmark at the end of the nine weeks.

Scholarly Scoop

(Continued from page 4)

Social Studies:

Second graders are learning how to be a good citizen in our community, resolve conflicts, and understand why it is important to follow rules. Students have discovered important symbols of Texas and the United States as well as other interesting facts. They are also very interested in learning about the mayor, governor and president.

Science:

Hurricane Ike has provided a springboard to introduce and explore weather concepts! Many hands on experiences will enrich the learning of your second graders. Students will participate in observing clouds, learning the water cycle, exploring temperature, wind, hurricanes and much more!

Reminder:

Remember to read nightly for 20 minutes and practice math facts for 5 minutes each night. We hope you and your child had a super start to school. We look forward to the rest of the year!

What's Going on in 3rd Grade?

In **Math** we are working on identifying shapes and solids, creating and interpreting graphs and measuring with metric units. We are also working on solidifying our grasp of addition and subtraction with regrouping and **MASTERING** our addition and subtraction Math Facts. **Parents: Please work with your child to review their math facts every night. Being able to recall the sums and differences of two numbers quickly aids in solving more complex problems as the year goes on.**

In **Language Arts** we are learning the strategies good readers use when reading. We have been practicing making good connections, identifying the important information in a story, choosing good summaries and asking questions before, during and after reading. On top of that, we are very engaged in Writer's Workshop and learning to type on keyboards without looking so we can create typed versions of our writing. **Parents: Please make sure your child is reading at LEAST 20 minutes every night. Choose a couple of days a week to read out loud with your child and question them about what is going on in the book.**

In Science we are learning about the three states of matter: **Solids, Liquids and Gasses** and the changes matter can go through. In Social Studies we are continuing our study of **Geography** before we move into local government.

VOE Hospitality Committee

The purpose of the VOE Hospitality Committee is to demonstrate our appreciation to the faculty and staff through seasonal birthday lunches, treats and gifts throughout the year. We kicked off the school year with the fabulous Teacher Welcome Breakfast on Friday, August 22. Faculty and staff members enjoyed a delicious spread of casseroles, baked goods, fruit, coffee and juices. Additionally, a drawing was held for gift certificates to Pappas restaurants, Target, Starbucks, 'Take Home Dinners', and buckets of classroom supplies. VOE Hospitality would like to thank the following parents for contributing dishes to the breakfast: Jenny Fett, Becca Robertson, Kristy Montgomery, Tammy Evans, Sandy Skrehot, Manisha Patel, April Hill, Joan Flynn, Orfa Rice, Kim Graham, Rhonda Reese, Carla Barden, Stephanie Post, Janice Sedita, Rebecca Kiest, Madeline Bingamon, Amber Willet, and Stephen White.

Upcoming events include Fall Teacher and Staff Birthday Lunches and Thanksgiving Pies!

Elizabeth Honeycutt-Martin and Shannon Whiting
VOE Hospitality Committee Co-Chairs

Library Corner

The Valley Oaks library is up and running, and this is year #5 for Miss Lee at the helm!

Here are a few reminders...

* The Library is open from 7:15 - 3:15 each day.

* The Library is for parents, too!

You are welcome to come and register in our system and check out whatever you like!

* Books are due within one week of checking them out, however, we are pretty flexible with overdue books, until more than a month has passed with a missing book.

* We do not charge fines, but we do ask that you pay for any lost books so that a replacement can be purchased.

* In general, students check out once a week during their scheduled library time, but they are welcome EVERY DAY if they want to come that much.

* The Library could always use volunteers for any length of time to re-shelve books, repair books, and work in the back area on book processing. In particular, Monday mornings and Tuesday/Thursday afternoons could use a volunteer or 2... or 10! :)

* If you ever have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me! It's hard to get the phone what with all the kiddos in and out all day, but I can be easily reached by email...
Becky.Lee@springbranchisd.com.

I welcome you and your children to our library this year. We don't run a very tidy, quiet library, but we do run a lively one with lots of laughter and love for books and technology. Come by anytime!

Becky Lee
Librarian

Fifth Grade

What a month we have had! We started school, had a hurricane, and started school again! So many of our VOE families have suffered loss of power, water, and damage to property but through it all, there is this amazing spirit of friendship, community service and survival. It is amazing to see everyone come together to help with their shovels, rakes, wheel barrels, trash bags, axes, saws, food, water, and "borrowed" energy from generators! Kids have discovered the outdoor world we "older folks" used to enjoy when we didn't have videos, computers and iPods! And we have ALL learned again the power of togetherness... working together, playing together and giving needed emotional and physical support! Laughter, tears, and listening ears... VOE has a gift of community that is truly a treasure!

Meanwhile, parents have been trying to find appropriate ways to help students practice and master learning during their days off with no power. While we all know it is essential to encourage self-awareness, we are challenged in our quest to teach students sense of conscience, imagination and willpower. To develop healthy self-awareness, we absolutely **MUST** teach our kids to be **THINKERS** and **GOOD DECISION MAKERS!**

There are numerous ways to help your fifth grader expand his/her mind! However, the best approach may simply be to read. As the saying goes... reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. Reading is foundational to everything else and doesn't cost that much, unlike other methods, such as traveling. Please encourage your child to read from many different genres! Magazines, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, even the internet... when it is up and working! ☺

This month, we will continue to enjoy the presidential election process as we come to the close of a very long campaign. We have talked about who can run, what a primary and caucus is, investigated the national convention of BOTH parties, discussed candidates, their issues and how they want to change America. We have the freedom of choice and the responsibility of being informed and involved Americans! We look forward to the actual election, learning about the Electoral College and celebrating the 2009 inauguration!

Health Fitness News

The health fitness classes are off to a great start! We are getting ready for our Pumpkin Run on October 31st. You will be receiving a letter to inform you of the event shortly. We are also getting ready to start a new program that involves YOU!!! The program is called Active Life Challenge and will be starting on October 6th. It is an exciting and FREE opportunity for the whole family. You will also be receiving more information on this new program as well.

2008-2009 Gifted and Talented Elementary Screening Parent Information

It is currently that time of the school year when the gifted/talented screening process for elementary students in Spring Branch ISD begins. Both parents and staff members may recommend students for referral to the G/T screening process. This assessment process is not designed for all students. It is solely for students who are currently exhibiting a preponderance of characteristics of giftedness at home and/or in school. Gifted/talented referrals for assessment are typically made for students who exhibit superior abilities in the areas of reasoning and problem-solving skills and who perform at a significantly advanced grade level in content area subjects.

Referrals for G/T assessment are currently being accepted. The **SBISD G/T Community Awareness Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at 7:00 P.M.** in the board room of the SBISD Administration Building at 955 Campbell Road. If you are unable to attend this meeting, you may still obtain a parent referral form from the VOE school counselor, Ms. Doudican. All parent referral forms for G/T assessment must be thoroughly completed and returned to the Ms. Doudican by **3:00 p.m.** on **Friday, October 17, 2008**. No referrals will be accepted after that date.

Please give serious consideration before referring your child for G/T assessment. It is a very time-consuming process and the tests are quite lengthy and rigorous for young children. Please be mindful that this process is designed to assess children who are currently exhibiting the characteristics of giftedness and who are truly in need of a special educational academic program. The tests utilized in this process are cognitive ability assessments, not achievement tests. These tests do not yield scores which indicate reading or math levels. G/T referrals should not be made if your primary interest is to understand your child's current academic levels/performance in specific subject areas. That information is available through your child's classroom teacher and/or the campus instructional specialists.

The G/T screening process will be completed in various stages throughout the fall and spring semesters. Kindergarten students who are identified for entrance into the G/T program will begin receiving services on **February 27, 2009**. Parents of students in grades 1-5 who are accepted into the G/T program will be notified during the month of April, 2009. PGP and SPIRAL services for newly-identified students in grades 1-5 will begin in **August, 2009**.

You may obtain additional information regarding the SBISD G/T Program and screening process by going to the SBISD website at www.springbranchisd.com/instruc/adac/adac.htm.

Please contact **Ms. Doudican, Valley Oaks school counselor**, at **(713) 365-4080** if you need further information regarding the G/T screening process or to request a referral form.

Save the Date Valley Oaks Dinner and Auction Saturday, February 21, 2009

"GO Green in the Valley"

is our theme.

Look for much more fun and exciting
information

to be announced

in the coming weeks.

We hope to see you there!

If you have been thinking about
volunteering to be on
the committee
please don't be shy
we would love to have you!

Thanks so much!

Please contact
Tamara East

email: twisdomeast@yahoo.com

or

Trudy Singleton

email:

Trudy.Singleton@CoastalSecurities.com

FAMILY SCIENCE NIGHT

Is moving to

January 15, 2009

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



WE STILL WANT YOU...TO JOIN THE PTA TODAY!

It is not too late. All you have to do fill out the below listed form, attach a check or cash and give it to your child's teacher. It is that easy!!! We would like to encourage you to be a card carrying member of the Parent-Teacher Association. We can't be a PTA without the "P" for Parent. The card and your membership also allow you discounts at places like LaQuinta, Aflac, T-Mobile, BarnesandNoble.com, SHARP Electronics, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Southwest Vacations, Nationwide Insurance, Schlitterbahn, Seaworld, and Fiesta Texas.

Remember: your dues help add to the income that is used to fund the following activities for your students: Art Parents, Cultural Arts Programs, DARE Program, Field Trips, Fifth Grade Activity, Grounds Improvement, Hospitality (Teacher recognitions), Literacy Programs, Odyssey of the Mind, Parent Education, RIF Distributions, Safety Patrol, Sanitary Hand Wash, Shelter in Place Kits, Teacher Resources, Teacher Scholarships and Visiting Authors?

If you have any questions, please contact Karin Donovan, Membership Chair, @ karindonovan@hotmail.com or call (713)444-6508. Thanks for supporting Valley Oaks.

MEMBER FEES: INDIVIDUAL \$6.00, COUPLE \$11.00, LIFE MEMBER AWARD RECIPIENT \$5.00
Make check payable to Valley Oaks PTA

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Child(rens) Name(s): _____ Grade(s): _____ Teacher(s): _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Check One: _____ Individual (\$6.00) _____ Couple (\$11) _____ Life Member Award Recipient (\$5)

Circle One: Regular Member Faculty Member Community Member

Odyssey of the Mind at Valley Oaks

Welcome to a new year of teamwork and creative problem solving in the VOE Odyssey program! So far this season, we've participated in the VOE back to school fair (Aug. 21); held our second annual Cooperative Games session at the Corbindale Park on Labor Day (Sept. 1); participated in the Texas State Odyssey board meeting (Sept. 6); and HISD coach training (Sept. 27). There is plenty of time to still join the fun.

What's next?

- (1) Solidifying our teams for the year, hopefully by the end of October. Team rosters (maximum 7 on a team) need to be finalized by the end of November. If you want to participate, just contact me.
- (2) At least one coach from each team needs to attend coach training.
- (3) Each team needs to invite and register one Volunteer and one Judge to represent them at the local (Houston Area Regional Odyssey: HARO) tournament (Feb. 28) and state tournament (March 28).

We now have one of the largest Odyssey programs in SBISD. We restarted the program here at VOE in 2003, and now that group of 6th graders has moved on to three different middle schools, where they will continue to compete. Last year, we had seven Odyssey of the Mind teams at Valley Oaks, with 48 students, K-5. We hope to have at least the same number of teams this year, but it will depend on the availability of coaches. Let's continue harnessing the energy and bring home a few more trophies for Valley Oaks!

For more info on VOE Odyssey, contact Nina Rach, NRach@AutreVie.com; (713) 461-8605.
www.odysseyofthemind.com; www.txodyssey.org; www.autrevie.com/VOE_OotM.html

Upcoming Fall Odyssey of the Mind events:

Oct. 25 at Spring Woods HS

- 9th ann. **Theater Arts & OotM Workshop** [for kids; must register in advance because this event always sells out; Junior GS can nearly complete the Theater badge]

- **Advanced coach training** [for adults], led by Iris Story.

[For the full 2008-09 schedule, please see the September issue of Eagle Eye.]

The SBISD **Odyssey Awareness Meeting** that was scheduled for Sept. 27 at Parent U. will now take place in January;
www.springbranchisd.com/partners/parentu/parentu.htm

It's a Date

October 2008

SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
			1	2 6:00 PTA General Meeting 6:30 Open House	3 Patriotic Sing-A-Long Progress Reports	4
5	6	7 Individual School Pictures	8 7:00pm SBISD GT Assessment Mtg	9	10	11
12	13 SCHOOL HOLIDAY	14 6:30pm PTA Board Meeting SBISD College Days	15	16	17 6-8 Family Supper Original Art Works Fall Teacher/Staff Birthday Luncheon Deadline for GT Referrals	18
19	20 Eagle Eye Deadline	21	22	23 Early Dismissal	24 Early Dismissal	25
26	27 Orders Due: Original Art Works	28	29	30	31 Happy Halloween! Pumpkin Run	
Red Ribbon Week						

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