



# The Coalminer

J.B. Watkins PTA  
Newsletter

December 1, 2010

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### 2010-2011 PTA Board Members

<b>President:</b>	<b>Angela Castillo</b> angelamcastillo@verizon.net 897-6939
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Karen Ladnier</b> ladnierk@yahoo.com 319-0445
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Colleen Kopidis</b> cnkopidis@mac.com 594-3607
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Beth Marshall</b> bmarshall@mcvh-vcu.edu

## President's Message

Dear J.B. Watkins Parents,

Our PTA has been very busy this Fall. We have already had many exciting programs and events, including Fall WEP, the Dash in Disguise Fun Run, a Skate-A-Way night, Adopt-A-Spot clean-up day, Pansy Day, the Reflections program, Chess Club, McDonald's and Chick-fil-A nights, a BINGO night, an Ornament sale, and more. We also had our Sally Foster and cookie dough Fundraiser, and we had an incredible turn-out for our Pumpkin Lighting.

In November, the PTA donated \$5,000 to 69 J.B. Watkins teachers and specialists. With all of the budget cuts this year, we are especially glad that we were able to give those checks to our teachers. We hope that they can use the money to buy equipment and supplies for their classrooms, or for however best it would help with their teaching at J.B. Watkins.

Upcoming December PTA events include Chess Club (Dec. 3), the Holiday Fest Craft Fair (Dec. 10 and 11), and McDonald's night (Dec. 9). There is no PTA meeting in December. The next PTA meeting will be January 11, 2011. January and February PTA programs will include Chess Club (Jan. 7 and Feb. 4), McDonald's nights (Jan. 13 and Feb. 10), Chick-fil-A nights (Jan. 25 and Feb. 22), Spring WEP (Feb. 16 through March 23), the Watkins Wiggle dance (Feb. 4), Skate-A-Way night (Feb. 27), and a String Celebration assembly (Feb. 28).

Thank you so much to all of our wonderful committee chairs and all of the volunteers that support our programs. It is only through all of their efforts that we are able to provide so many great programs and events to all of our children at Watkins.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful and safe Holiday season. Enjoy your family and your children.

Sincerely,

Angela Castillo

J.B. Watkins Elementary PTA President, 2009-2011



## Blood Drive Success!

The November 8th blood drive collected 27 units to help save up to 81 lives. A huge THANKS to all the donors! Ice cream vouchers have been distributed to students listed on the donor appointment forms. Stay tuned for announcements for our Spring blood drive, and we hope to see you then!

## PTA Membership News

J.B. Watkins has 707 PTA members. **100%** of our teachers and staff have also joined the PTA. Thank you to all of you who have joined. Your support is appreciated!

Melanie Suddreth  
Membership Coordinator



## Chess Club

Chess Club will continue to meet the first Friday mornings of each month with our next meeting on December 3, 2010. Please go to the Lantern for registration forms and other details.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky Rose at [rdrvet@verizon.net](mailto:rdrvet@verizon.net).



## Ornaments are here!!!

Ornaments pre-ordered via the J.B. Watkins PTA Ornament Fundraiser have arrived!

Be on the lookout in your child's backpack for ornaments to arrive home in the next week.

If there is a problem with your order please email me ASAP!

If you did not order an ornament but wish to own one now, there are a very limited number of extras available for purchase.

Beth Marshall  
[bmarshall@mcvh-vcu.edu](mailto:bmarshall@mcvh-vcu.edu)

## Save the Date for the JB Watkins Annual Science and Engineering Fair!

This year's Fair will take place on March 31, 2011 from 6:30-8:30. It will include projects submitted by students, a display of engineering projects completed in the classrooms throughout the year and hands-on exhibits and events. The fair itself is non-competitive and all students are eligible and encouraged to participate. Sign up will begin in late January and will be available online and through the classroom.

Do you want to get started early? Check out these great links:

<http://www.all-science-fair-projects.com>

<http://scienceclub.org/scifair.html>

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/sciencefaircentral>

<http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/pages/sciencefairzone/topics.asp>



Questions? Contact Barbara Cohen at [barbara.cohen@capitalone.com](mailto:barbara.cohen@capitalone.com) or 804-897-5655

## “Is There Education Without Legislation?”

County Council

Tim Bullis, CCPS Director of Community Relations and School Board Chairman Wyman gave an overview of the current school system budget at the November County Council meeting. They indicated that the \$27.1 million shortfall may increase depending on what the General Assembly does with the Federal Jobs Bill money. Senator Watkins (who was not in attendance) has publicly indicated that the General Assembly is considering another cut to higher education of between 3-5%. School Board Chairman Wyman indicated that the School Board will know more on December 18 when the Governor's Budget is finalized.

Both Tim Bullis and Chairman Wyman indicated that our State Legislators have been invited to attend the County Council meeting on Monday December 6 with a focus on “*Is There Education Without Legislation?*” They emphasized that it is very important for as many PTA members and parents to attend this meeting as possible in order to meet and speak with our State Legislators to impress upon them the importance of not cutting the school budget any further. The general membership meeting begins at 7 p.m. and is held at the School Board Administration Building, 9900 Krause Road in Chesterfield. I hope to see you there.

If you have any questions or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Gary Powers, JB Watkins County Council Liaison  
[gpowersjr@coldwar.org](mailto:gpowersjr@coldwar.org)

## G.I.V.E. Get Involved, Volunteer in Education

### Volunteering

Someone asked me recently why I volunteer so much at school. I found this article in the *Parents' Source* magazine about volunteering which illustrates some of the many reasons why I LOVE volunteering in our school.

#### G.I.V.E. Get Involved, Volunteer in Education. Volunteering in the Classroom benefits Parents and Children Parents' Source, July 20, 1999

Much research has been conducted to determine the effects that parent volunteerism have on student performance. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, "School-aged children are more likely to get mostly A's, to enjoy school, and to participate in extracurricular activities, and are less likely to have ever repeated a grade and to have ever been suspended or expelled if their fathers or mothers have high levels of involvement in their schools. The National Education Association concludes that when parents assist teachers with their everyday duties, they allow the teacher to have more time to plan activities, try new teaching strategies, and work directly with children. "As a parent volunteer, you allow them to be more effective teachers, and the school obtains your skills and services that might be unavailable elsewhere due to financial limitations." There's no doubt about it. Students thrive when educators and parent volunteers form a partnership. But how does volunteering in the classroom help parents grow? According to the NEA, a parent volunteer becomes more familiar with their school's programs. "With this new understanding of educational needs and goals, you can give the schools the backing they need, and encourage others to do the same. You will learn more about everyday happenings in the classroom from the increased communication and interaction between you and the teacher. You will have the satisfaction of helping children during a very important stage in their development. You will be able to provide the teacher with valuable information about your child and your community, creating a link between school and community so vital in our society." What are some of the ways parents can help out in the classroom? As a parent volunteer, your duties are numerous and varied, depending on the needs and styles of the teacher. You can assisted with supervising art projects, running off copies, working one on one with students who might need a little extra help with a certain subject. You could also help with after-school events that are so valued in our school – 30 minutes to an hour for one after school activity, once or twice a year can make all the difference. I would also recommend that a parent volunteer be flexible, and expect the unexpected. A seemingly minor incident, such as a scraped knee or hurt feelings can have far-reaching implications. How do parents who work full-time outside of the home get involved in their children's education? The Parents Soup website offers the following suggestions:

- Become a member of your school's Parent-Teacher Organization
- Assist with out-of-classroom projects, such as publishing school newsletters, or volunteering for after-school events. Help with after-school events – 30 minutes to an hour for one activity, once or twice a year can make all the difference.
- Visit your child's classroom and discuss your career, or invite the class to tour your workplace

In summing up the benefits that volunteerism has on the community, Jonathan Green, principal of Brecknock Elementary School in the Eastern Lancaster County school district says, "When students see adult volunteers in their schools, they see firsthand how members of their community value education, and support their local school. When a community is very involved in their school volunteering, more people have a better sense of the total education picture, and see how dedicated so many people are to educating the community's youth. More involvement results in better understanding, more trust-building, and a commitment to even more support. School begins to feel like family!"

My volunteer work makes me feel ingrained in the school and all of its goings-on. The students are learning facts and developing skills that they will carry with them all through their lives, and I am a part of that process! What a difference a few years makes. What a difference volunteering makes!

Chantel Conway  
jbwminers@gmail.com

## Barnes & Noble “My Favorite Teacher” Writing Contest

Barnes and Noble has created a great contest for our families to thank all the wonderful teachers for their commitment to education!

Students in Kindergarten - Grade 12 are invited to write an essay, poem, or thank-you letter (500 words or less, in English on 8.5" x 11" white paper) sharing how a teacher has influenced their life and why they appreciate and admire them. Each entry should be submitted with the entry form and a parent or legal guardian must sign the entry form acknowledging that they have read the Official Contest Rules.

**Forms must be submitted either in person to the store or postmarked by 3/18/2011!**

The students who write the winning essays or poems will receive a certificate of recognition and be honored at their local Barnes & Noble store during a ceremony for the winning teachers.

The winning teacher will be recognized at an event at their local Barnes & Noble store where they will receive a special award acknowledging their achievement, a set of ten (10) Sterling Children's Classics books for their library, and additional recognition and praise from their community. The six regional winners will each receive a NOOK™ eBook Reader and a \$500 Barnes & Noble Gift Card. The winner of the "Barnes & Noble Teacher of the Year" award will receive \$5,000 and be recognized at a special event at a Barnes & Noble store. The winning teacher's school will receive \$5,000 as well. The winner will also receive five copies of the winning essay published in hardcover by Tikatok.com, the site where students create and publish their own books, and a \$250 Tikatok Gift Card that will allow the teacher to publish select stories written by students in their class.

Visit the link below for specific rules and entry form:

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/my-favorite-teacher/379002376/?cids2Pid=26226>

## Watkin's Skate Night

**When:** Sunday, February 27

**Where:** Skate A Way  
3330 Speeks Drive (off of Hull Street near the Waffle House)  
Midlothian VA 23112  
674-5070  
www.sk8away.com

**Time:** 6:00 - 8:00 (Doors open at 5:30)

**Cost:** \$5.00 Admission \$2.00 Roller Skates \$3.00 Roller Blades

**TEACHERS AND STAFF SKATE FOR FREE!!!!**



Concession stand will be open for drinks and snacks. Any questions please contact Shelley Neofotistos at 897-8279 or paris972@msn.com.

## nList Facts

- Secure – nList is password protected for your protection. All information entered on your classroom site is only available to your fellow classroom parents.
  - The only exception is the Student Directory.
- Classroom sites are separate, but allows the PTA to communicate with the whole school
- Convenient - All of your classroom events and sign-ups can be entered on this site.
  - Forget what you signed up for in September for the Valentine's day Party – Check nList
  - Do not know what you did with the Teacher Questionnaire – Check nList
  - Not sure when the field trip is – Check nList
- Room Parents! nList is not just for sign ups! You can:
  - Post Teacher Questionnaires on your classroom site
    - ◆ Actually I have already put a template on each classroom site – it just needs to be filled out
  - Post a Calendar list on nList – When was that report due? What day is the party?
    - ◆ This can include important dates for your classroom, including field trips, birthdays, parties, reports due date ect.
    - ◆ Not sure how – contact Chantel Conway at [jbwminers@gmail.com](mailto:jbwminers@gmail.com)
- Teachers:
  - Need egg cartons in a hurry – post on nList
  - Parent volunteer not able to come in – send a new request on nList
  - Forget to send homework assignment home – Put it on nList
  - Actually, No need to type, print, copy and distribute
    - ◆ Have an ongoing Vocabulary word list on nList and just update that each week.
  - Have different spelling words for different groups
    - ◆ Make a nlist with columns or rows for each group and type them
    - ◆ Better yet, have a student type the in for you. It is great practice typing
  - Not sure how – Contact Chantel Conway at [jbwminers@gmail.com](mailto:jbwminers@gmail.com)
  - The PTA President's letter is now going to be published via the PTA nList site. Not a member of the PTA nList site
    - ◆ Email [jbwminers@gmail.com](mailto:jbwminers@gmail.com)
    - ◆ Subject Line: PTA nList invite
    - ◆ Please indicate exactly how you would like your email to be shown and I will send you an invite.



Don't forget the monthly Chick-fil-A and McDonald's Nights.

**McDonald's** — Thursday, December 9 and

Thursday, January 13 from 5-8 p.m.

**Chick-fil-A** — Tuesday, January 25 from 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Come out to skip a night of cooking while supporting the

J.B. Watkins PTA!

### Ways you can support our school on an ongoing basis:

- ◆ Sign up for Martin's A+ School Rewards
- ◆ Collect Box Tops for Education
- ◆ Enter My Coke Rewards Codes from Coke Product bottle caps

It's so easy!

## Green Team News

Thanks to our 35 volunteers who helped on November 14 for our Adopt-A-Spot school clean-up. We collected 10 bags of trash and recycling and really made the grounds look great! Also, thanks to those who donated items for our "Recycling Round-Up" which celebrated America Recycles Day on November 15 & 16. We collected enough plastic bags to fill up the entire back of my van and many other items. We will continue to collect the following recycling items throughout the year:

- \* Bottle Caps (shampoo, water, soda, milk, flip tops and many more)
- \* "Rechargeable"(not alkaline) batteries
- \* Printer cartridges
- \* Cell Phones
- \* Used & Broken Crayons
- \* Glue sticks and glue bottles (\$0.02 per item goes to Watkins)
- \* Drink pouches (\$0.02 per item goes to Watkins)
- \* Newspapers, cans, PHONE BOOKS, MAGAZINES, CATALOGS, HARD AND SOFT BACK BOOKS!!! - can be deposited in the red and green bin in the teachers parking area and this helps raise money for our school!



Remember to start saving your greeting card fronts we will be collecting those in January!

Our Walking Wednesday's will continue throughout the year. Remember to find a safe route and invite your friends and their kids to walk along with you. It's a great way to get outside, get exercise, and be with friends. Remember Safe Routes to School suggests that you have no more than six children to one adult.

We would like to thank the Red Robin restaurant again for donating 500 reusable cups to for our Class Parties. If all the classes that took cups use them, we can keep over 2,500 juice boxes out of the landfill. We appreciate their generous donation!

If you are interested in helping with our Drink Pouch Brigade, please email me at [greencatharine@gmail.com](mailto:greencatharine@gmail.com).

### Upcoming PTA Meetings:

**January 11, 2011**

(J.B. Watkins Library)

**February 8, 2011**

(J.B. Watkins Cafeteria)

Do you have something you would like to have put in the next newsletter?

Submit items to Coalminer Editor

Beth Marshall

Email: [bmarshall@mcvh-vcu.edu](mailto:bmarshall@mcvh-vcu.edu)