

GATOR GRAM



William B. Gibbs, Jr Elementary School
12615 Royal Crown Drive, Germantown, MD

September 2009 Volume 1, Issue 1

President's Message

By Sue Amick

Welcome to William B. Gibbs Elementary School! This is an exciting year of "firsts" for us. This is the first edition of The Gator Gram, the Gibbs PTA newsletter. The Gator Gram is one of the ways the PTA will communicate with our families about what events and activities we have planned during the coming months. Another way we can communicate is through the Gibbs list serve. This is a closed Yahoo Group that only the President and Vice President of the PTA can post messages. We will post messages that may be of interest to the community but most of the messages will be about events at Gibbs ES. To join this group, contact me at sueamick@hotmail.com.

I also invite you to attend our monthly PTA board meetings. EVERYONE is invited whether you serve on a PTA committee or not. Attending these meetings is a great way to learn about our PTA and our school, meet parents and discover a variety of ways to be involved. Starting in October, we meet the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Gibbs Elementary School Media Center. Childcare will be provided.

The PTA has been working all summer to plan activities for the upcoming school year. Our first event is a Fun Run/Walk through the Milestone community. This event is a healthy, family event that is also designed to be our fall fundraiser. I realize that fundraiser is a dirty word to some people but in order to provide our students with cultural arts programs (assemblies), family fun nights, Grandparent's Tea, Moms & Muffins, Dads & Donuts and field trip supplements as well as provide our teachers with a small amount to offset their "out-of-pocket" expenses, we need to raise some money.

Finally, we're delighted you're here and want to help you find a way to be involved. There are many opportunities to be involved no matter how much time you can give. We welcome and value any time you may have. For more information on volunteer opportunities, please contact Karen Ward at wardkk@msn.com.

I am looking forward to a great school year!

Meet the Board

President:	Sue Amick sueamick@hotmail.com
Vice President:	Katherine Schwartz kases@comcast.net
Treasurer:	Amy Kalomiris apk926@yahoo.com
Secretary:	Dana Walker ddkwalker@comcast.net

The PTA NEWSLETTER IS GOING GREEN!!!

In an effort to save lots of paper, time and money, the PTA will no longer distribute paper copies of the newsletter unless you request one. Beginning January, the newsletter will be distributed electronically through the Gibbs listserve. If you prefer a paper copy be sent home to you, you **MUST** request it by **no later than December 4, 2009**. Anyone who requests a paper copy will receive the newsletter in that form every month, unless otherwise noted. We want to make every effort to distribute our newsletter to ALL families, yet in a more environmentally and fiscally responsible way. Please contact Sandra Nail, newsletter editor, to request paper copies: sannobrien@hotmail.com.

5K Fun Run/Walk

By Karen Ward

We welcome you to join us in the Gibbs Elementary/Cedar Grove Elementary 1st Annual 5k Fun Run/Walk, hosted by the Gibbs Elementary and Cedar Grove Elementary PTAs. Gibbs Elementary is a premier new "green" school. As a "green" school, we are not only promoting a healthy environment for our students, we would also like to promote a healthy attitude in their lives including daily exercise, drinking lots of water and eating healthy foods.

With health in mind, there is no better way to kick off the school year than to have a Fun Run as our opening fundraiser. On October 3, 2009, the Gibbs Elementary PTA will host its first annual 5k Fun Run/Walk.

The 3.1-mile course runs through the Milestone Community with the starting and finishing lines at Gibbs Elementary. Water stations will be set up at the Waters House and at each mile interval. Snacks and drinks will be provided after the run/walk is finished. A 1k Fun Run/Walk for preschool and kindergarten children will run around the perimeter of the school field coordinated by Mr. Benco, the physical education teacher. All 5k and 1k participants will receive a goodie bag full of items donated by our sponsors (while supplies last). First place winners in men and women and boys and girls divisions will receive special prizes.

We urge all Gibbs families to join us in this major fundraiser for the year. We are not asking you to sell anything, we are just asking you to walk with your children. Thank you!

We need many, many volunteers for this event, please contact Karen Ward at wardkk@msn.com or 301-540-0037 if you would like to volunteer or have any questions.

Free Money

By Michelle Reed

Every time you go to the store you COULD be earning FREE Money for Gibbs. But if you haven't registered, we could be missing out! Here's what you need to do:

Giant A+ BonusBucks: Link your Giant Bonus card to Gibbs Elementary and earn cash for the school. Enroll at www.giantfood.com/aplus or fill out a registration card at any Giant store. **You MUST enroll each year!** The program runs from October 9, 2009 until March 25, 2010. **(We are currently registering for a school ID number and will let you know what that is before the program starts).**

Safeway/eScrip: Safeway and eScrip merchants have a system to contribute a % of your purchases to our school. Sign up at www.escrip.com. **You MUST enroll each year!** You can enroll multiple credit cards with this program. Please go to the website for information. **(We are currently registering for a school ID number and will let you know what that is before the program starts).**

Target VISA or Target Redcard: Target Take Charge of Education donates 1% of your Target purchase to our school if you use their credit card. You can sign up at www.target.com/tcoe or call 1-800-316-6142. This program runs year round. Gibbs' ID number is 151445.

Box Tops for Education: Box Tops can be found on hundreds of General Mills and other products such as Kleenex, Hefty, Pillsbury, Ziploc, Betty Crocker and many more. Cut out the box tops and put them in an envelope or plastic baggie and have your child turn them in to their teacher. Be sure to write your child's name on the back of each Box Top. We will have drawings for prizes. Each box top is worth 10 cents to our school, so be sure to cut them out every little bit helps.

Thank-you for taking the time to register. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Reed at michelle.reed1024@gmail.com.

Staff Appreciation Luncheon

By Nikki Haddad

On Friday, August 28, the Gibbs ES PTA hosted the first Staff Appreciation luncheon of the 2009-10 school year! It was a great success for both the PTA as well as the great staff at Gibbs! Staff members were treated to a luncheon which included appetizers, salads, sides, hot and cold entrees, plenty of fresh fruit, desserts and assorted beverages. Thanks go out to all who contributed to this luncheon, including Annette Bell, Khristina Kartsakalis, Jennifer Sengbusch, Jacqueline Moore, Bindu Thundathil-Radhakrishnan, Jessica Moon-Duvall, Dena Jones, Ojas Shroff, Ramani Sista, Karen Ward, Ana Ko, Gayle Maurantonio, Michelle Reed, Ashima Arora, Julie Long, Kathryn Hoffpauir, Erika Bragger, Amy Crumrine, Sue Andres, Megan Clarke, Katherine Schwartz, Jeanne Shawahin, Cheryl Shalgian, Sandra Nail, Cathy Ghosh, Edward and Swee Lee, Amy Kalomiris, Mona Ali, India Whitehead, Lee Marshall and Nikki Haddad. Whatever your part was thank you for making this lunch a success and for helping us show the teachers how much we appreciate all they do for our children.

Later this month a form will be sent home asking you to do your part to support to future Staff Appreciation events. We would appreciate everyone pitching in and helping out in whatever way they can to support this committee and help us show our staff throughout the school year just how much we appreciate their hard work and dedication the to the Gibbs community. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lee Marshall or Nikki Haddad, Staff Appreciation Co-chairs. With your support we look forward to making this an outstanding first year at Gibbs Elementary.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September

- 11th FLES Registration Ends
- 11th Hands On Science Registration Ends
- 14th Chess Club Begins
- 15th Back-to-School
6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 23rd Spirit Night - Chik-Fil-A
(4-8 p.m.)
- 28th School Closed

October

- 2nd Early Release
- 3rd 5k Fun Run/Walk
(8:30 a.m.)
- 6th PTA Meeting
(7:00 p.m.)
- 30th Fall Harvest Festival
(6:30-8:30 p.m.)
- 30th Scholastic Book Fair (Fall)
(until November 6th)

WE'VE GOT SPIRIT, YES WE DO...



Spirit Night at Chik-Fil-A

By Karen Ward

We are hosting our 1st Spirit Night at the Germantown Chik-Fil-A on Wednesday, September 23rd from 4:00 to 8:00 pm. Please stop by for dinner or a late evening snack as we get together with Gibbs Elementary students and their families. Chik-Fil-A will donate 20% of all Gibbs purchases to our school.

Chik-Fil-A coupon forms will be sent home in each student's backpack to fill out and bring to Chik-Fil-A to give to the cashier. Don't worry if you forget, there will be forms at the counters also.

Please note drive-through purchases will not count at Spirit Night, so make sure you go inside Chik-Fil-A.

See you there!

Spirit Wear

By Ana Ko

What are Gibbs' Gators wearing this season? Four items will be offered for the Fall Sale:

- Dark Gray Hooded Sweatshirt
- Royal Blue Tie Dye T-shirt
- Black Mesh Shorts
- Light Gray Long Sleeve T-shirt

All items will have the Gibbs Gator logo. Check out the samples in the PTA display case in the school lobby.

Orders forms came home with students the first week of school. Additional orders forms will be available at Back to School Night.

Please place order forms with payment in an envelope marked "Spirit Wear" and return to your child's teacher no later than Friday, **September 18**. Expected delivery date will be the end of September.

If you have any questions, please contact Ana Ko at anako_99@yahoo.com.

The Gator Spirit is

GROWING

By Amy Crumrine

Our membership drive for the first year at Gibbs was a success, thanks to all of you! To date, we have 94 families as members of our PTA with 30 of them being charter members! In addition, we have a large number of teachers as part of the PTA - 29 staff members! This is especially crucial for our students as they play a large role as their advocates in our child/ren's lives during the school hours. Kudos and a very special thanks go to each and every staff member for joining our PTA!!

It's still not too late for you to become a member of the PTA! If you have not done so yet, please fill out a membership form, and ask your child to give it to his/her teacher. By joining the PTA you receive membership in the Gibbs PTA, Maryland PTA and National PTA. You will also receive a single copy of the Gibbs Directory. Membership cards will be sent home with your child over the next few weeks.

There is also an opportunity for you to become a Charter Member. All Charter members get their last names engraved on a plaque to honor the opening of the new school in addition to PTA membership for the year. This is a terrific way to instill memories for your child for years to come!

Often parents ask why it's important to join the PTA. When you join, you join over 6 million people nation-wide who care about issues that affect our children such as supporting better education, greater parent involvement, better resources, and safer schools for every child. Working together we can accomplish more than individuals could accomplish separately.

On behalf of the PTA, **THANK YOU** for joining the PTA and for being an involved advocate for your child.

Counselor Corner

The first thing I want to do in this 1st edition of The Gator Gram, is to say hello and to say how excited I am to be working with and for the William B. Gibbs Jr. Elementary community. I know that we have many years working together to help raise happy, successful, and well-rounded students with bright futures.

My name is David McCord. I was born and raised in West Virginia and currently live in the Eastern Panhandle of WV. This is my fifth year of being a professional school counselor and my third year working for MCPS. I bring with me a drive to do my best for every student I serve, a positive attitude and belief that all things are possible through hard work, and a commitment to meet the needs of the students of Gibbs Elementary through collaboration with all the stakeholders of our school community.

The school counseling program at Gibbs Elementary will be a prevention-based program that works to address the needs of our students through developmentally appropriate classroom guidance lessons, small group counseling groups, individual counseling sessions, and school wide programs and activities. The classroom guidance lessons will be thirty-minute long opportunities for our young students to learn about: important character traits, communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, self acceptance and self esteem building, appropriate ways to deal with their feelings, and skills to deal with the changes and challenges that they will face in life. Small counseling groups are for students who need more support in dealing with their personal, social, academic, and career development. Group membership will be determined from referrals made by students, staff, and parents. Groups will

meet during lunchtime to reduce the impact on their academic development. These groups will meet for 6 to 8 weeks. Small group topics include: Dealing with loss/grief, family changes/separation/divorce, self-esteem, friendship/social skills, and conflict resolution/managing our feelings appropriately. Some of the school wide programs that I intend on having this year are: Red Ribbon Week-Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Prevention Week, Career Day-making connections from school to the world of work, and a fundraiser for a non-profit group/agency.

Students will be able to express their need or desire to speak with me in both formal and informal means. One way they can self refer themselves will be Counseling Referral Bins that are placed within the school near their classrooms. Students may also speak to their teacher about wanting to speak with me. During Classroom Guidance classes students can also ask to speak with me. Parents and guardians as well can contact me to ask that I speak with their child. Finally, as a school counselor I will be a visible presence at Gibbs Elementary. As I work each school day, students will be given many opportunities to speak with me directly, and/or to ask to meet with me.

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Counselor Corner continued

If you have concerns about your child and would like to speak to me or just would like to know more about the counseling program at Gibbs Elementary, you can contact me via the school phone number at 301-353-0800 or e-mail me at david_w_mccord@mcpsmd.org. I will give you a prompt response and will make arrangements to speak with you to hear and address your thoughts or concerns.

Another role that I have at Gibbs Elementary is the behavior coach for the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) school wide system. This positive behavior framework includes teaching students school behavior expectations, recognizing students and staff meeting those expectations, maintaining a school-wide behavior management system, and having clear and visible displays that remind everyone of what is expected at Gibbs. My job as the behavior coach is to be the cheerleader for our PBIS system and work with all stakeholders to create a positive school community. You will be learning more about the Gibbs Elementary PBIS system at Back to School Night. Your opinions, thoughts, and suggestions are greatly appreciated as we build, design, and evaluate our PBIS system.

Chess Anyone?

By Erika Bragger

The Gibbs Chess Club will **begin on September 14th** and will be held on Monday mornings from 8:00am-9:00am. Each class will include organized play in addition to group instruction. The chess club is open to students of all abilities in grades K-5. Beginning students will learn the pieces and their moves, while more advanced students will learn opening moves and game strategies. All flyers have been sent home. Additional flyers can be found at <http://www.chesscenter.net/scholastic.html>.

Please contact Erika Bragger at erika@bragger.net with any questions.

Foreign Language for Elementary School

By Britta Spiess

As the world becomes more global, learning a foreign language is of great importance. Let's give our children a head start!

William Gibbs ES offers Spanish classes in level

- IntroKindergarten and 1st grade
- Level 1Beginner 2nd to 5th grade
- Level 2Graduates of level 1
- Level 3Graduates of level 2
- Level 3 advancedGraduates of level 3

Please submit your registration and check to school soon! **Registration ends September 11th!**

For questions please contact the FLES coordinator Britta Spiess (240) 421-0300 or britta.spiess@gmail.com.

Hands On Science

By Erika Bragger

We have already begun registration for the fall session of Hands on Science. This year the focus of the classes will be on Anatomy. Grades K-1 can register for "Featured Creatures" where they will learn about camouflage and animals in a fun way, with lots of hands-on activities. Grades 2-3 will learn about "Jaws and Claws", focusing on how animals eat and their diets. Students will even get to take home a real shark's tooth. Lastly, 4th graders will have the opportunity to register for "Clue Club" where students will learn a wide variety of interesting and fun facts about animals and people. **Registration ends September 11th** and classes begin the week of October 12th. All flyers should have been sent home. If anyone needs an additional flyer or has any questions, please email Erika Bragger at erika@bragger.net.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

Registration forms for the following programs have already been sent home. If you are interested in any of these programs and did not receive the information last week, please feel free to contact the committee chairperson via e-mail.

In an effort to reduce copying cost in the near future, registration forms will be available on-line.

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Committee Chairperson</u>
Gibbs Gator Reusable Grocery Bags	Ongoing	Gayle.maurantonio@yahoo.com
FunRun	9/22	wardkk@msn.com
FLES	9/11	britta.spies@gmail.com
Membership	Ongoing	racumrine@aol.com
Spirit Wear	9/18	anako99@yahoo.com
Hands on Science	9/11	Erika@bragger.net
Group Piano	9/15	namitasacharya@yahoo.com
Chess Club	9/14	Erika@bragger.net