

The Swanson Anchor

June 2014



From the Principal's Desk

The end of the school year is time to say thank you, goodbye, and hello to different members of our school community. This school year has been a busy year filled with joys, rewards and learning for our students, parents, teachers and staff. I thank our faculty and staff for the encouragement and guidance they provide to our students, to each other and to me. The Swanson staff is an amazing group of professionals who are dedicated to children. They give numerous hours to planning and presenting lessons, grading, planning field trips, tutoring, sponsoring clubs, coaching sports teams, attending after-school activities and so much more. They are the living embodiment of our Swanson statement:

We are Swanson Admirals.

We are **Scholarship** — striving to think deeply and open our minds.

We are **Service** — connecting to one another, our community, and to the world.

We are **Spirit** — celebrating our successes, ourselves, and our school.

We are Swanson Admirals.

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA

As the school year draws to a close, I personally want to thank PTA Executive Board members Juli Hardy, Teresa Foor and Anne Horton for their service to Swanson students and parents. I also thank all of the PTA committee chairs who worked so hard and made the many Swanson PTA events that took place possible this year.

The 2014-15 PTA Board will be voted in at the first PTA meeting of the next school year, to be held on Tuesday, September 9 at 7 pm. Please plan to attend the meeting if you can and show your support. We have a fantastic, dedicated Executive Board of fresh faces for the upcoming school year, and I feel confident that you will support their efforts with your time, talent and treasure as you have so faithfully done this past year. Incoming PTA officers are Tish Jenkins, President; Karen Hancox, Vice President; Lynn Gant, Secretary; and Teresa Foor, returning for her second year as Treasurer.

While we have a great many PTA Chair positions open, there is a serious and immediate need for commitments to the following positions for the following year:

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June 2014

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 3 | CCPTA Student Scholarship Awards Ceremony and Reception
5:30 pm
Spring Sports Banquet
6:00 pm |
| 5 & 17 | School Board Meeting
7:30 pm |
| 6 | Spring Instrumental Music Concert
7:00 pm |
| 19 | Last Day of School for Middle School (early release) |
| 20 | Report Cards Issued |

PTA Board

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From the Principal's Desk *(Continued from page 1)*

We say goodbye to Steve Peters (Schooners Science teacher), Charlotte Kelso (Health and PE teacher), Mary Roos (instructional assistant), Nicole Goerss (Schooners Reading teacher), Katie Swift (Captains special education teacher) and Ken Campbell (instructional assistant) who are retiring or moving on to new adventures. We will miss them and wish them well.

Thank you to all our parents and PTA members led by President Julie Jernigan, Vice President Juli Hardy, Treasurer Teresa Foor and Secretary Anne Horton. The generosity of the PTA afforded our teachers opportunities to apply for grants to support extra activities in the classroom. Many of the learning experiences available to our children are because of parents who volunteer their time and energy. We appreciate the commitment all our parents give to the school and look forward to working together next year.

Congratulations and good luck to our 8th grade students. We hope they enjoy high school and the adventures that await them ahead. We will miss these admirable admirals and their families. We wish our 6th and 7th graders a great summer. Please check the Swanson website at www.apsva.us/swanson for start-of-school information, and remember to complete your summer reading and math review packets.

Finally, we say hello and welcome to all students and families new to Swanson. We are so glad you will be joining our learning community! You will receive lots of information throughout the summer. Please contact the school if you have any questions.

We wish everyone a restful summer full of family activities and time together. Please make reading a part of the summer. Enjoy!

— Bridget Loft, Principal

From the PTA *(Continued from page 1)*

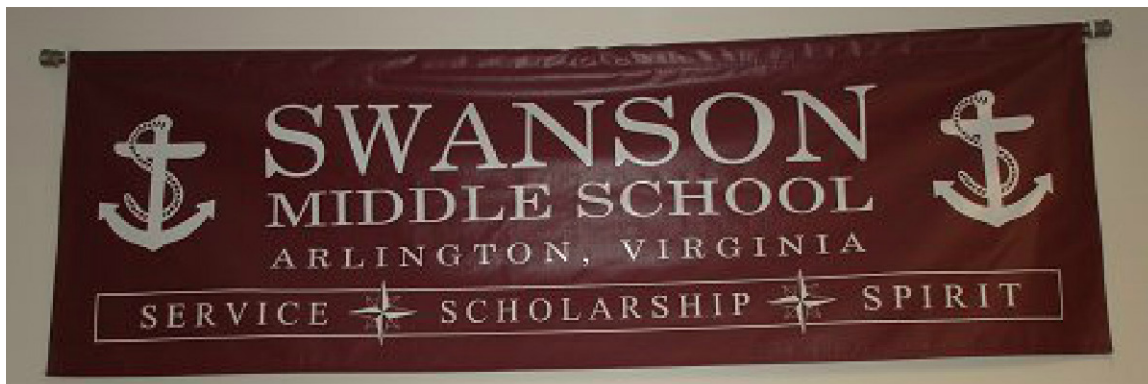
- Anchor Distribution
- First-Day Packets (Bonus: this will be done before the school year even starts!)
- Reflections
- Staff Appreciation
- Teacher Lounge Restocking
- Volunteer Coordinator

You can find role descriptions at www.apsva.us/swanson under the PTA tab. Please contact me at 3jernigans@verizon.net ASAP if you are willing and able to commit to one of these positions.

As our family wistfully moves on to the next level of our daughter's education, I also want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Swanson 8th grade families who have children moving on to high school for the time and energy that they have given to the school. You will be missed but not forgotten! To all rising 6th grade families, welcome to Swanson! It's not too early to sign up for the PTA email list serve today by sending an e-mail to swanson-pta-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the account where you want to receive emails from the PTA. Volunteer opportunities and other important announcements will come out over the summer months, and you'll want to begin your experience as a Swanson parent with as much information as possible.

It has been a privilege to serve as president of the Swanson PTA for the past two years. While we'll be at Yorktown next year, Swanson will never be very far from my thoughts and happy memories. May a restorative and happy summer be yours, and may we all return to school in the fall more rested and ready for new challenges!

— Julie R. Jernigan, Swanson PTA President



Civil War to Play Out at Swanson!

The Civil War is coming to Swanson on June 10 during Mods 1-5! The entire 6th grade will hear presentations from experts and historians and participate in a variety of Civil War activities including camp life, soldier's equipment, medicine and diseases, dancing, Lincoln's assassination, art, Arlington's role in the war and much more!

All 6th graders have spent several weeks learning about the Civil War and will further prepare for this event by memorizing the Gettysburg Address and preparing decorations for the day. We are thrilled to bring history alive at Swanson. Please contact emily.schrecker@apsva.us with any questions.

— Emily Schrecker, 6th Grade Social Studies Teacher

Take Time to Make Time for Summer Reading!

Summer is right around the corner! As you get ready to make your plans, we want to remind you and your child to make time for summer reading.

Research shows that students actually lose one to three months of learning during the summer when they don't engage in academic activities. Reading is one way to keep the mind sharp during the summer months. To jump-start summer reading, students can check out two books from the Swanson Library to keep and read over the summer. The library will be open for summer checkout and returns from July 7–August 7 from 8:05 am–12:35 pm.

Also, the Arlington Public Library will once again sponsor its summer reading program, which includes a reading challenge with prizes and engaging activities. The theme for this summer is Think It! Read It! Make It! Please encourage your child to read over the summer and participate in the many wonderful activities that the public library is offering.

Happy reading!

— Genelle Schuler and Amy Hailey
Library Media Specialists

Insights on Minority Achievement Programs at Swanson

The Office of Minority Achievement is dedicated to helping students discover and utilize resources that will help them progress toward their personal goals. This office works to create an equitable, hospitable, safe, and inclusive environment for students, families and staff members. This leads to an atmosphere of mutual respect, and an appreciation for diversity of cultures, learning styles, perceptions and actions (APS).

This year, in partnership with Swanson Equity Team Students Cultural Awareness Committee (the "SET"), we facilitated multiple affinity groups at Swanson. These groups included, LAYLAS - Latinas Youth Leading at Swanson, BoyzIIMen Group, Sisterhood in partnership with the National Coalition of 100 Black Woman Mentoring Group, Lunch Talk about Race and Identity in every grade, The Youth Ballroom Dancesport Club, HILT Lunch Talk, Asian/Asian-American Lunch Talk and Emerging Scholars.

Students and teachers describe the experiences participating in some of these groups in their own words:

8th Grade Lunch Talk about Race and Identity

"This year the group lunch talk about diversity and race served a smaller number of students. The reality is many of our students are overlooked, and their lunchtime is precious. Nevertheless, the conversations were still valuable to those involved. Topics were deep and content was accurate and honest. Although the conversations are confidential, the topics are not. Topics included a variety of issues including Multicultural Night, the Optimist Club's oratorical contest, discrimination in daily life, gender identification and racial privilege.

As expected, I was stretched to speak about difficult topics. There is always a question as to whether or not the audience is hearing the entire conversation. These students were not only good listeners, but they took the same risk. That risk is what makes the conversations so important and real."

— Eric Tarquinio
World Geography teacher and group co-sponsor



brainstorm ways to navigate difficult situations involving discrimination, and practice communication skills necessary for increasing understanding of one another. In our discussions about diversity, we learn to value the commonalities we share, including the goal of increasing cultural awareness and tolerance in our lives.”

– Cindy Chiu, Reading Specialist and group co-sponsor
with Monica Lozano

Found Poem

– By Swanson’s Asian/Asian-American Lunch Group

I became convinced that writing is not only an appropriate pathway of human development, but an essential pathway

Quiet for a million, million years

And yet a voice forever

Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die, life is like a broken-winged bird that cannot fly

My writing is tattooed; it is etched into my skin, into my being

From hours of pain, moments of relief, and days of happiness

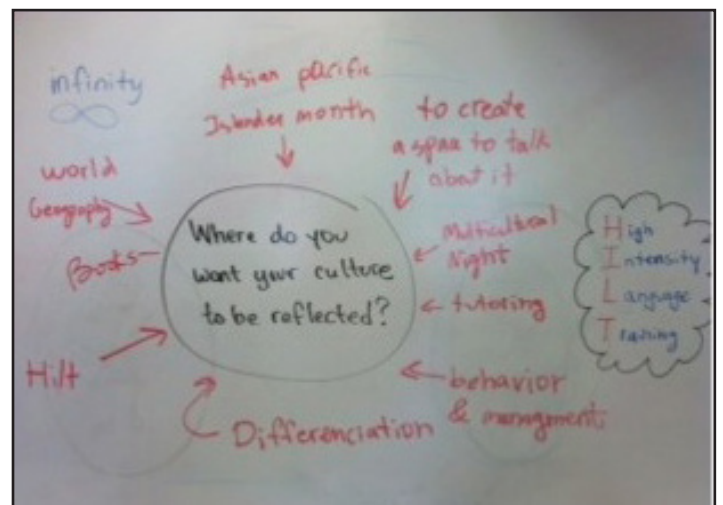
Inspired by: “Lincoln Monument: Washington” and “Dreams” by Langston Hughes, “Salvaged from a Cylinder” by Preston Davis

“Thursday lunch talks are held with Ms. Lozano and Mr. Tarquinio. These lunch talks are rather important seeing as many people don’t talk about race and identity or have a hard time talking about these topics. It allows us go talk about our experiences because everyone has experienced some form of rude remark or heard it. It gives us something to look forward to every week. It gives us a chance to know how to deal with these life experiences. It’s something I always look forward to.”

– Alessandra Reyes, 8th grader

The Asian/Asian-American Lunch Group

“The group, meets every Tuesday to share cultural experiences and formulate strategies to improve tolerance in our school. Any student interested in conversations about race and identity and learning more about Asia is welcome to join. This year, participants have taken a more active role in leading discussions by presenting individual experiences, sharing personal writing, and bringing articles revolving around issues such as restorative disciplinary systems, Asian stereotypes, marginalization of women and minorities, and ways to promote our identity. Each week, we focus our discussion around one central question,





The Multicultural Crew

“The Multicultural Crew is a safe space to discuss questions and concerns. It is a mix of students from different backgrounds, some of whom meet as part of the other groups we will be showing you. At Crew meetings, students tackle sensitive issues of race, stereotypes, and culture with courage and candor.”

— Genelle Schuler, group co-sponsor

Sisterhood & National Coalition of 100 Black Woman Mentoring Group (6th, 7th and 8th grade)

“I am a young black African American woman and my name is Bethlehem. For the past three years I participated in the National Coalition of 100 Black Woman, also known as NCBW. I was also involved in Sisterhood group at my school, Swanson Middle School. In these two programs, we talked about race and identity and the challenges that we might encounter in our daily life. It was a chance for me to meet people who had set and accomplished their goals. I was more than pleased to see more people of my color in such high positions. The program taught me to be proactive and aware of the opportunities around me. This was a really good program and I hope to do it throughout high school.”

— Bethlehem Dantie, 8th grader

LAYLAS - Latinas Youth Leading at Swanson

“The most important issue our group discussed during the school year was immigration and its impact on our community. Students are currently working on writing letters to Congress in order to support immigration reform.”

— Maritza Carpenter
group co-sponsor and Spanish teacher

6th Grade Lunch Talk about Race and Identity

“The 6th grade Lunch Talk has had countless fun and meaningful conversations this year. We have learned how to ask good questions without being afraid of being offensive. We have felt open about sharing personal beliefs. We talked openly about our heritage, religion and cultural experiences. One week we learned how to salsa and the next we learned about Nelson Mandela’s recent death. We were welcoming to everyone and appreciated seeing new faces throughout the year. One thing we will all take away is the love of getting to know other people in a way that doesn’t normally happen in a classroom environment.”

— Emily Schrecker, group co-sponsor

8th Grade FACS Students Doing Good for Others

The 8th grade students enrolled in Life Management are hard at work sewing hospital gowns for children in Honduras. Our goal is 30 gowns! We’ve been cutting, stitching and ironing the gowns out of fun fabrics we hope the kids will love. A huge thank you to Joanie Lehman (mom of 8th grader Emma Lehman) and her efforts in helping us get this project underway!



The gowns will be taken to the hospital when the Virginia Hospital Medical Brigade goes to Honduras next. Engaging our Swanson students in community service projects and helping them reap the intrinsic rewards of doing something for someone in need supports our Swanson Motto of Service, Scholarship and Spirit.

— Chris Taylor, Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher



Special Education Corner

Special Education Cycle

The Eligibility Process for Your Child to Become Eligible to Receive Special Education Services



Before your child can become eligible to receive special education services, the school is required by law to determine your child's specific needs. The school determines these needs through a process consisting of many steps, often termed the "Special Education Cycle." When viewed as an ongoing cycle with several steps along the way, the special education process is easier to understand.

Here's a breakdown of what happens once your child has been referred to a Student Study Committee, which is the second step of the Special Education Cycle.

Student Study Committee (SSC)

What The SSC committee reviews the "Referral to a Student Study Committee," and discusses the information in the referral.

Who The SSC is made up of at least three people, including the principal or designee, teacher(s), other staff who have observed or worked with your child, and the person who made the referral. The school can hold the Student Study Committee meeting without your permission but must invite you to attend and will notify you of the date and time of the meeting. Though your attendance is not required, you should attend, if possible, because you have important information about your child to share with school staff.

When Within 10 business days of receipt of the referral

Next After reviewing all the information presented, the committee discusses the child's needs and makes one of the following three recommendations:

- a. The child should stay in a general education class. Sometimes the SSC will suggest specific ideas for classroom modifications and alternative teaching techniques to the child's regular education teacher. Sometimes, arrangements are made for a child to work with other professionals, such as the reading specialist or school counselor.

- b. The child should be given certain tests to find out whether he or she may be eligible for special education and related services. Testing cannot begin until you give your permission. This is done by signing the form called, “Request for Parental Permission to Conduct Evaluations for Consideration for Eligibility for Special Education.” Please read it carefully. You will receive this statement of rights at each step as your child proceeds through the cycle.
- c. The committee feels they need to gather more information before they can make a decision. In this case, the committee obtains additional information and meets again within a specified time period.

Please look for highlights of topics related to special education services in future issues. You can also view this information on the APS Special Education website: <http://www.apsva.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2865>

— Shannan Ellis, Assistant Principal

The Latest in Latin

Swanson Latin has had a productive year and I am very excited about the inclusion of a new “Foundations of Language” class in Latin next year. For those who want to know more about the activities and achievements of the Latin classes at Swanson this spring, read on. This is a long entry (my apologies), but there was a lot happening and all the students mentioned deserve recognition, so I hope you will take the time to read to the end.

— Melanie Stowell

The Ides of March

March and April were busy months for Latin students. On the Ides of March 44 BCE, Caesar was assassinated in the Senate House in Rome, and on the same day 2,058 years later, Swanson’s Latin students sat for the annual **National Latin Exam**. Over 150,000 students in all 50 states and 12 other countries take this exam. It tests students’ knowledge of Latin grammar, Roman history, classical mythology and Latin sayings and derivatives. Swanson students did themselves proud, with **36 of the 56 students who sat for the exam earning an award**, and with Swanson earning nine of the 11 Level I and II gold medals countywide.

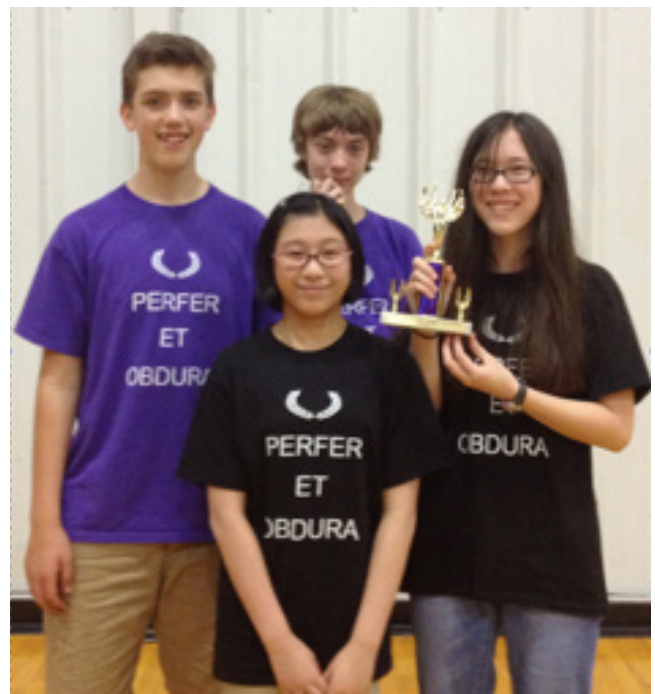
In Latin I, six students earned gold medal “*summa cum laude*” awards: Natalie Chin, Claire Cofield, Jared Garfinkel, Calder Lowenthal, Samantha Haga and Michael Tuvshinsaikhan.

Silver medal “*maxima cum laude*” awards went to: Draken Garfinkel, Drew Kellenberger, Sophie Lent, Owen Schaff, Karuna Shipper, Ashby Shores and Ben McCracken.

Bronze “*magna cum laude*” awards went to: Lily DiBenigno, Nick Donnelly, Isabella Drake, Bridget Flynn, Gus Grohmann, Maddie Shakespeare, McCarthy Simmons and Bronte Waddoups; and Lily Corey, Paul Dalzell, Charlie Edwards, Hannah Gagelin, Miles Hahn, Lydia Troup and James White earned “*cum laude*” awards.

In Latin II, Kara Probasco, Livia Polise and Jacob Stowell earned gold medals; Kashi Nikore and Leonie Alder earned silver medals; and Joe Myers, Owen Alfaro and Will Kulok earned “*magna cum laude*” awards.

While I would like to recognize the efforts and hard work of all my students who took this challenging exam—award winners *and* others—special mention and congratulations has to go to the **five Latin I students** who not only earned gold medals, but attained **perfect scores on the exam**—something less than half a percent of participants achieve nationwide: Natalie Chin, Claire Cofield, Jared Garfinkel, Calder Lowenthal and Samantha Haga.



Virginia State Final Certamen 6th place team: Ben McCracken, Gus Grohmann, Claire Cofield and Natalie Chin.



Latin II students just checking that those medal are real gold...oh and that those certificates are the genuine article as well.

National Mythology and Roman Civilization Exams

The National Latin Exam was not the only test Latin students took in March. Some students volunteered (wait... you can *volunteer* to take exams...sign me up!!) to take the **National Mythology Exam** and/or the **National Roman Civilization Exam**. The Mythology exam only awards medals to scores over 90% and gold medals only go to perfect scores. Despite this tall order, Calder Lowenthal earned a perfect gold! Silver medals went to Gus Grohmann and Claire Cofield; and Livia Polise and Owen Alfaro earned bronze medals. In the Roman Civilization Exam, 10 students participated in Swanson's first try, and six earned awards: Ashby Shores and Jacob Stowell earned gold medals; Calder Lowenthal and Bronte Waddoups earned silver medals; and Kara Probasco and Claire Cofield earned bronze medals.

Happy Birthday, Rome!

The Monday after Spring Break, April 21, was **Rome's official birthday**. Although there have been recent news articles about excavations dating Rome back a good few centuries prior to its official birth year, the Ancient Romans traditionally dated the founding of their city by King Romulus to the year 753 BCE (though, of course, to them it was just "the year of the city's founding" and all their dates would be calculated from that year). Swanson students brought in food and cakes and celebrated the day with some informal, in-class competitions.

The quizzes were for some students their first taste of the kind of questions asked at the statewide "certamina" (quiz-bowl contests) that our students attend on a few Saturdays throughout the year. This year, three Swanson teams participated in the **Virginia State Final Certamen** on April 26 at Flint Hill School in Oakton. The competition at the State Final is always stiff, but the atmosphere is still relaxed



Calder Lowenthal with the YUMMY cake he made for Rome's 2767th birthday celebration: felicem diem natalem MMDCCCLXVII, Roma!

and fun (helped by having the students gather in a gym filled with basketballs...). One of our Latin I teams did very well and brought home a 6th place trophy. The certamen "giants," TJHSST, Flint Hill, Classical Cottage and a newcomer to certamen—Basis DC, a Washington DC charter school—held the first five spots. Everyone is looking forward to returning to the certamen circuit next year.

Bene Fecistis Discipuli Omnes!

—Melanie Stowell, Latin Teacher

Technology Student Association Does Swanson Proud at Spring Competitions

It has been a busy time for the Swanson Technology Student Association (TSA) with students working on projects throughout the year in preparation for the spring competitions. A team of 11 TSA students represented Swanson at Technosphere 2014, the 43rd Annual State Leadership Conference held May 2-4 in Richmond. The Swanson team traveled with students from Williamsburg Middle School and Washington-Lee High School for the

three-day event. They joined over 2,000 students from 126 TSA chapters from across the state.

The following students participated in the competitions at the state conference: Max Berger, John Blair, Teddy Chapman, Nick Gartner, Jay LaPiana, Scotty Larsen, Matthew McNight, Livia Polise, Owen Potts, Shambhavi Ramaswamy, and Jared Wal. The team of Max Berger, John Blair, and Owen Potts advanced to the top ten finalists for video game design. Shambhavi Ramaswamy and Livia Polise made it to the semi-finals for Environmental Focus.

In March, Swanson also participated in TSA's Northern Regional Fair, which brought together about 1,000 local students at Mount Vernon for a variety of competitive STEM events, 12 being open to middle school students.

Eighteen students represented Swanson at the regional competition: Max Berger, John Blair, Teddy Chapman, Nick Gartner, Nate Karmel, Scotty Larsen, Ferris Linde, John Lopez, Matthew McNight, Zach Meiners, Greg Nardacci, Livia Polise, Owen Potts, Robert Ridgeway, Zack Rivero, Charlie Schiavo, Eli Todd and Jared Wal. The team of Max Berger, John Blair, and Eli Todd advanced to the finals and received third place in Stem Animation.

The Technology Student Association is a student organization devoted exclusively to the needs of Technology Education students engaged in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). TSA's membership includes over 200,000 middle and high school students in over 2,000 schools spanning 49 states.

—Jim DeMarino, TSA Advisor



Swanson TSA Team at Annual State Leadership Conference

Attention Rising 8th Graders Interested in Playing Football

Did you know that Arlington County rules allow 8th graders to play high school freshman football as well as other sports not offered at their middle school? In previous years, many students have taken advantage of this opportunity to meet new students and coaches while getting a taste of high school life. If you are interested in receiving all football information, you can be placed on the football booster email list by submitting your request to yhs.football@aol.com. If you think it is early to receive information about next football season, be aware that the football coaches are currently conducting weight-training sessions. Yes, current 7th and 8th graders can attend in preparation for next year on Mondays from 4:00 - 6:00 pm, Wednesdays from 3:00 - 5:00 pm and Thursdays from 5:00 - 7:00 pm in the Yorktown High School weight room.

Here is some additional information for your planning purposes:

- Participants must provide a current VHSL physical form to the Yorktown Student Activities Office, room 109, by August 1, 2014. The VHSL form may be found in the Student Activities Office or on the Yorktown Sports website, www.yorktownsports.org, under FORMS. Physical exams must have been done May 1, 2014 or later for the upcoming school year.
- During the school year, high school football practice begins at 3:15 pm and runs until approximately 6:00 pm. There is no transportation available from the middle schools, so you will have to accommodate transportation to and from practice.
- The only financial obligation is purchasing a girdle for hip pads for approximately \$45.
- Freshman and Junior Varsity games are typically on Thursdays. Other important dates include:
 - Parents meeting: August 11
 - Kick off dinner: August 26
 - First day of practice: the week of August 11 (TBD)

Please contact us today at yhs.football@aol.com to begin receiving all football information immediately.

—Mike and Carol Staples
Co-Presidents Yorktown High School Football Boosters