

# The Swanson Anchor

September 2013



## From the Principal's Desk

Welcome back, Admirals! I hope your summer was filled with memorable adventures and time for relaxation. My husband (Andrew, director of bands at Robinson Secondary School), son (Ian, a 7th grader at Robinson) and I traveled to Hilton Head, SC. Then Andrew and I celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary at Disney World. We had a great time and I came back excited about the new school year.

The start of the school year is always filled with anticipation of new adventures and recognition that change is inevitable. Change defines the middle school years and at Swanson, we strive to support our students and families during this time of transition. Here are some of the exciting changes for the new school year:

Our campus has changed a bit with the installation of "the Embassies" (otherwise known as a four-classroom relocatable). Our World Languages classes will be held in them this year, with students traveling to and from the Embassies during the school day.

Another exciting change is that Swanson will be the county site of the APS Middle School Communication Program. It's an intensive alternative special education program for students with language deficits that significantly interfere with academic achievement and social interactions.

As our student population tops 1,000, we are fortunate to expand our staffing, as well. New positions include an additional assistant principal, librarian and several teachers and assistants. Please join me in welcoming the following new staff members:

(Continued on page 2)

## From the PTA

On behalf of the PTA, welcome (or welcome back!) to a new school year at Swanson! We encourage you to become active in the Swanson community by participating in various PTA-sponsored activities throughout the year.

I encourage 6th grade parents, parents new to Swanson and those parents who previously have been inactive to volunteer. It's a great way to meet other parents and become familiar with Swanson.

Swanson and its PTA rely on parent volunteers to help foster academic excellence and well-rounded students. Opportunities include chaperoning field trips, helping at school sporting events, assisting with music and drama programs, working at the book fair and Swanson Spring Fling, organizing the 8th grade promotion dance

(Continued on page 3)

## September 2013

### September

- 10 First PTA Meeting  
7:00 pm
- 12 "Meet Your Administrators"  
Breakfast  
8:30 am
- 18 Back to School Night  
7:30 pm
- 27 Fall Picture Day

### PTA Board

**President:** Julie Jernigan  
[3jernigans@verizon.net](mailto:3jernigans@verizon.net)

**Vice President:** Juli Hardy  
[jpott0305@gmail.com](mailto:jpott0305@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Teresa Foor  
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**Secretary:**  
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**Swanson Website:**  
[www.apsva.us/swanson](http://www.apsva.us/swanson)

**E-groups:**  
[Swanson-pta@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Swanson-pta@yahoogroups.com)

**Rachel Affleck** – Clippers English teacher  
**Nelly Andrade** – Lunchroom attendant  
**Laura Baxter** – Math 8 and Geometry teacher  
**Heather Boda** – Family and Consumer Sciences teacher  
**Stephanie Brown** – Mariners English teacher  
**Maritza Carpenter** – Spanish teacher  
**Ackesha Cathirell** – Voyagers special education teacher  
**Dana Cazan** – Sea Hawks English teacher  
**Cindy Chiu** – Changing jobs from Schooners reading teacher to Reading Specialist  
**Rosa Cordova** – Special education assistant  
**Julia Crull** – Administrative assistant  
**Shannan Ellis** – Assistant principal  
**Leslie Enright** – Hurricanes special education teacher  
**Kelly Flaherty** – Changing jobs from 6th grade special education teacher to Communications Program teacher  
**Nicole Goerss** – Changing jobs from Reading Specialist to Schooners reading teacher  
**Amy Hailey** – Librarian  
**Susan Harrison** – Dually identified HILT resource teacher  
**Vanessa Hernandez** – Special education assistant  
**Mary-Hannah Klontz** – Chorus teacher  
**LaTasha Nelson** – Communications Program assistant  
**Katie Nichter** – Captains English teacher  
**Patricia Pease** – Clippers Science teacher  
**Beth Sanderson** – Clippers Reading teacher  
**Charlane Scott** – Communications Program assistant  
**Joi Taylor** – Lunchroom attendant  
**Shelley Zerbe** – Administrative assistant

Please visit our school often and stay involved in all aspects of your child's education. We are here to work with you. There are several opportunities to visit Swanson that occur in September. Check out the calendar for these important dates.

Communication is essential for success. We have a great network of voicemail, email, report cards, progress reports and backpack mail. This newsletter, *The Swanson Anchor*, is also an excellent way to stay connected with Swanson. In addition, the Swanson website, [www.apsva.us/swanson](http://www.apsva.us/swanson), includes current information on events, activities and homework assignments. We encourage you to use these resources to stay informed of your child's progress during the coming year.

The Swanson Statement illustrates our motto, **“Service-Spirit-Scholarship”**:

*We are Swanson Admirals.*

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

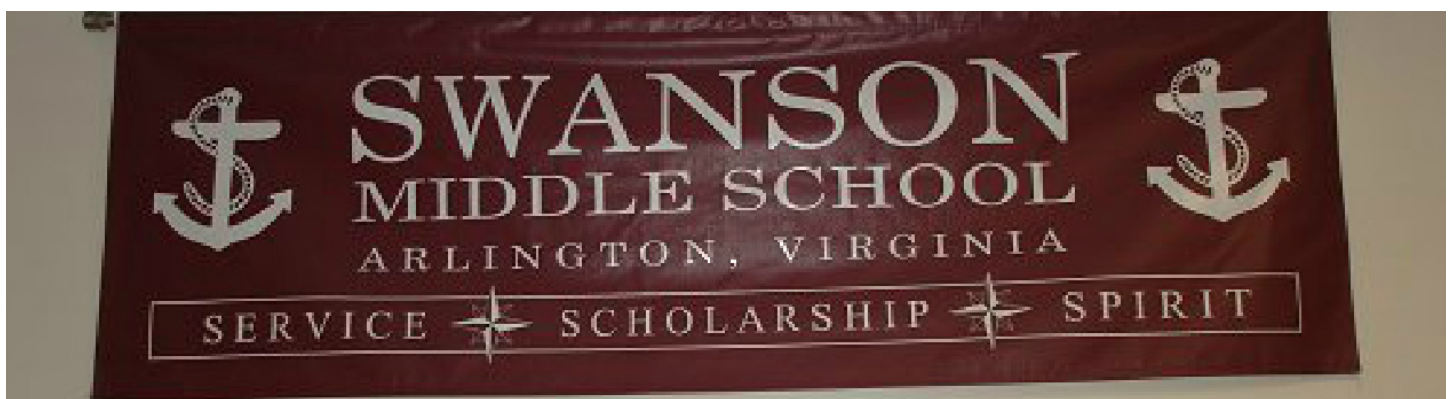
*We are Service, connecting to one another,  
our community, and the world.*

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

*We are Swanson Admirals.*

Students and staff affirm the Swanson Statement daily. We have a long tradition of academic excellence and high standards. We are proud of all of our accomplishments in academics, the arts, sports and service. There is a place for everyone here; we invite you to join us as we build on these successes. Welcome aboard and have a great year!

– Bridget Loft, Principal



## From the PTA *(Continued from page 1)*

and contributing to the newsletter. You'll find volunteer opportunities in your first-day packet and on the PTA page of the Swanson website.

If you haven't done so, join the PTA listserv to keep current on the goings-on at Swanson and within Arlington Public Schools. Send an email to [swanson-pta-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:swanson-pta-subscribe@yahoo.com) from your preferred email account. You can leave the subject and message blank. An email confirmation will provide instructions on completing the registration. Respond to that email and you'll be added to the list. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Witeck at [kswiteck@gmail.com](mailto:kswiteck@gmail.com).

PTA meeting attendance is another way to keep up with school happenings and meet other parents. The meetings include regular PTA business and reports from Principal Loft and a teacher liaison to the PTA. We've scheduled meetings for this year on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm on the following dates:

September 10

October 8

November 13

December 10

January 14

February 11

March 11

April 9

May 14

Be sure to make the Swanson Middle School website a "favorite" on your computer. It contains the school calendar, sporting event dates, a staff directory, and the PTA page. The PTA page includes forms, committee lists, meeting minutes, and the monthly PTA online newsletter, the Anchor. Find the Swanson website at:

[www.apsva.us/swanson](http://www.apsva.us/swanson).

The Swanson PTA is only as strong as the support of its parents. I look forward to working with you to support all things Swanson this year. Thanks in advance for your support!

— Julie R. Jernigan, 2013-14 Swanson PTA President

## We Are Swanson Admirals!

Welcome to Swanson! We're looking forward to an exciting year. We look to embody our Swanson Statement in all we do.

### **We Are Scholarship~ striving to think deeply and open our minds...**

The best way for students to succeed right off the bat is to develop and maintain good study habits. Encourage your children to use their Swanson agenda on a regular basis. This tool is designed to allow students to record assignments, upcoming quizzes and tests, as well as to inform them (and you!) of important dates and events at Swanson. It is an ideal venue for you to help your child learn to keep track of his or her academic responsibilities.

### **We Are Service~ connecting to one another, our community, and to the world...**

Swanson students have many opportunities to give back to their communities. Keep an ear tuned for information about our STAR sponsored activities, as well as other annual service projects.

### **We Are Spirit~ celebrating our successes, ourselves, and our school...**

The Code of Conduct in the student/parent handbook articulates the following expectations of your student. They should:

- Be prompt, prepared, and participate actively in their classes,
- Respect themselves, their peers, and all adults in the building,
- Use appropriate language,
- Dress for respect and for success,
- Practice academic and social integrity,
- Be respectful of school materials and appropriate use of school equipment, and
- Work cooperatively with their peers and Swanson staff members in an effective and efficient manner.

***We ask that your child NOT bring electronic devices to school, as the school is not responsible for devices damaged, lost or stolen. (Students may bring cell phones, but they must be turned off and out of sight during the school day.)***

Thank you in advance for supporting your child as the new school year begins. Together, we can make our Swanson Statement a daily reality.

— *Shannan Ellis, Reneé Harber and Scott McKeown,*  
*Assistant Principals*



## Dress Code Tips

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As summer weather lingers into fall, September is a good time to review appropriate dress for school. We are proud that the majority of our Swanson students dress and behave in a respectful manner. It is important to remember, though, that the school does not permit any clothing considered inappropriate or disruptive. This includes hats, halter or short crop tops and any clothing that suggests or advertises alcohol, smoking, drugs, inappropriate behavior, language, or innuendoes.

Here are some guidelines to clarify the rules for parents and students:

- Avoid clothing that is too tight, revealing or too baggy, exposing undergarments. This includes shorts and skirts.
- Skirts and shorts should be longer than where students' fingertips fall to their thighs when standing.
- Girls may wear leggings under their shorts. However, the shorts should still be longer than where students' fingertips fall to their thighs when standing.
- Avoid tops that expose too much skin.
- Boxer shorts or undergarments should not be visible.
- Bra or spaghetti straps should not be exposed.
- Midriffs should not be exposed at any time while standing or sitting.
- Hats and bandanas are not to be worn inside the school building.

Teachers and administrators will have the final determination on what is deemed appropriate school dress. Students may be asked to change into their PE uniform or request that their parents bring a change of clothing to school. In addition, please store your backpacks in lockers and don't carry them from class to class.

Thanks for your support!

— *Shannan Ellis, Reneé Harber and Scott McKeown,*  
*Assistant Principals*