

The Swanson Anchor

February 2014



From the Principal's Desk

The month of February represents the first full month of the third quarter, a time in which our students' performance and focus can lag. Students have been in school for five months by this point. They know the rules, recognize the hard work and consistent focus that is required for them to be successful in their classes, and March 28, the end of the third quarter, can seem just too far away. Their endurance flags and they can become stressed and snappish. Parents and staff, too, can fall into this trap of the third quarter. We forget that e-mail can be a clumsy vehicle to express concern or disagreement. We sometimes hold students to expectations that they can't meet. We can become frustrated and inconsiderate with one another. With these realities in mind, I'd like to share with you an essay written by Dr. Catherine Battaglia, principal of City Honors School in Buffalo, New York. Her words are an apt reminder that everything we do affects someone else, so we would do well to keep kindness and consideration uppermost in our minds.

Everything Counts

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

—Edward Everett Hale

"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it."

—Mahatma Gandhi

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA

The second marking period has ended, and with it the first half of this school year. I hope your students have been enjoying this year at Swanson and have found their academic and social groove.

Important Upcoming Event Dates

It's time to begin thinking about the 2014-15 school year (already!). Parent Scheduling Night will take place on February 12 at Swanson. Be SURE to save the date! More information will be forthcoming from John Barnes, Swanson Director of Counseling.

(Continued on page 2)

February 2014

- 6 & 20 Challenging Racism
7:00 pm
School Board Meeting
7:30 pm
- 8-9 Swanson Musical
Performance
1:30 pm and 7:30 pm (Sat.)
1:30 (Sun)
- 11 PTA Meeting
- 17 Holiday
(No School for Students)
- 22 Supporting Whole Child
Conference
8:30 am (Washington-Lee
High School)
- 24-28 7th Grade Outdoor Lab
Field Trips

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

For me, one of the most difficult things about education is not the long hours, the endless work or the preparation, but the enormous amount of human relations we do day-to-day. Let's face it, we're in the "people business," and forging relationships is the glue that holds us together. In an average day we have hundreds of contacts. We act, react, and interact regularly with a variety of players. It can be exhausting.

Perhaps the most precarious feature is that we can never be certain what our actions may yield in the long run. Certainly, the overt things we do create immediate responses. For example, I find out pretty quickly how students or staff feel about a new policy or a change in schedule. You don't have to be a wizard to notice that kind of "buzz." But the subtle things are more difficult to discern, and that's what makes our jobs so darn tough. Relationships can be so fragile. They can sometimes be singled by a whimsical comment made in jest, a raised eyebrow, or downward glance. Sometimes, without even knowing, a deep sigh or furrowed brow—inadvertently and unconsciously executed—communicates volumes. Even long-standing relationships can tarnish quickly without our noticing.

From my side, I think about the idea that I may never realize the result of counsel given to a colleague or parent or the long-range effect of my words on a student in need of assurance. I don't really know if saying "hello" and calling someone by name makes anyone's day, or if not doing so hurts someone's feelings in a way that will be remembered. When I stoop to pick up trash in the hallways, send a birthday greeting, or open a door for the person behind me, does it really matter? Does it really count? Does anyone notice?

Well, I think it all matters. Everything I do matters. The good, the bad, and the ugly. Everything I do or neglect to do . . . it all impacts somewhere on someone or something. I read once that the beating of a butterfly's wings will alter the weather miles and miles away. This seemingly diminutive action creates a subtle shift, no more, no less than a smile.

I think if I could have only two rules in life, two principles to guide me each and every day, they would be as follows: Everyone counts, and Everything counts. Maybe it is that easy. If we live our lives and educate our children to

understand that everything we do has an effect . . . sometimes small and sometimes grand . . . it just might create a subtle shift and change the climate of our homes and our schools. It certainly can't hurt. If one butterfly's wings can alter the winds, just imagine what could happen when a whole community of butterflies joins in. It has the potential to turn the insignificant into the sublime.

—Bridget Loft, Principal

From the PTA *(Continued from page 1)*

With much acclaim, I am pleased to announce that the February PTA meeting (on Tuesday, February 11) will feature Dr. Melissa Deichmann's presentation on executive functioning in adolescents. The March and April PTA meetings will include presentations on safety and capacity planning by Officer Treacle and Assistant Principal Scott McKeown, respectively.

The Second Annual Swanson Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Show will be held on Saturday, March 15. Response to requests for quality artisans has been disappointing, but the committee remains undaunted and determined to put together a great event! If you or someone you know is interested in being part of the Spring Fling, please contact event chair Becky O'Neil at becky@beckyspetcare.com ASAP.

Thank you to the many Swanson families who have supported recent PTA activities, including the athletic banquet and Reflections program. There are plenty of opportunities in the coming months to get involved, and I encourage you to keep an eye out for announcements in the Swanson weekly PTA e-mail and through APS School Talk. You can sign up for the PTA e-mail on the Swanson website at <http://www.apsva.us/swanson/site/default.asp>.

The Swanson PTA soon will be working to fill officer and committee chair positions for the 2014-15 school year. If you are interested in serving on the PTA board, or know someone who will be new to Swanson next year and would be a good candidate, please contact me at 3jernigans@verizon.net. Our effectiveness as a group that advocates for our children and their teachers depends on our volunteer leadership. We simply can't do it without you! Until next time, may a warm February be yours!

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

Spring Student-Led Conferences

Our spring conference season is quickly approaching. Conferences will be on the evening of Thursday March 6, 2014 and during school hours on Friday March 7, 2014. Students will lead meetings between parents/guardians and STAR teachers to share thoughts about the year thus far. Information regarding present academic growth will be incorporated within the conversations surrounding the student's school day and interests. Students will also discuss aspirations for the 2014-15 school year, including course selections and transition concerns as they prepare to move onto the next grade level.



Parent/guardian attendance is vital, as these conferences play an important role in supporting students in becoming active participants in their education. We view this as an extremely positive opportunity for students to emphasize their strengths, acknowledge their weaknesses, and, with you in attendance, reflect upon and assess their academic goals set this year.

Conferences will usually last about 15-20 minutes. STAR teachers will send home appointment letters later this month. We look forward to seeing you!

—Renee Harber, Assistant Principal

Families Needed to Host French Students March 31 - April 10, 2014

The fifth annual Arlington-Reims sister city middle school visit is scheduled for spring 2014. Eighth grade students from the Robert Schuman Middle School in Reims, France will arrive in Arlington March 31 and depart April 10. They will attend Arlington middle schools for three days with their host siblings and spend the remainder of the time sightseeing the Washington, DC metropolitan area with their chaperones. All six Arlington middle schools will be participating, with four to five students attending each school.

Please contact Melissa Cabocel mcabocel@cbanet.org for more information and an application form. Deadline for applications is February 15.

—Melissa Cabocel

SOL News

Swanson's 8th grade students will be taking the Writing SOL (Standards of Learning) March 27-28. This test is scheduled for the first three Mods of the day. However, it is untimed and students may test as long as necessary.

On Testing Day

- See that your child is rested and eats breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time and is relaxed.
- Encourage your child to do the best work possible.
- Do not send your child to school if illness is apparent.
- Do not remove your child from school on test days for appointments.

All Swanson students will take the non-writing Virginia SOLs from May 27 - June 12. Specific grade level test dates will be available in February.

The SOLs establish minimum expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade or course in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science. The Virginia Department of Education website offers information and resources regarding the SOLs. It can be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/index.shtml>.

For additional information specific to Swanson and the SOLs, please e-mail or call John Barnes at john.barnes@apsva.us, (703-228-5535), or Swanson's Testing Coordinator, Sara Daidy, at sara.daidy@apsva.us, (703-228-5521).

—Sara Daidy, Testing Coordinator

ELL Students to Take ACCESS Test

Swanson's ELL students will be taking the ACCESS for ELLs test, an English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners. It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. The test assesses the language domains of Listening, Reading, and Writing and will be administered on February 19 and 21 during Mods 1 and 2. The fourth domain, Speaking, is administered individually. The date for that test has not been set.

Students should arrive on time and be well rested those days. Students missing the test will take a makeup test on February 24.

More information regarding the test can be found at <http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/>.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Swanson's HILT department or Sara Daidy, Swanson's Testing Coordinator at 703-228-5521 or sara.daidy@apsva.us

—Sara Daidy, Testing Coordinator

Los estudiantes que hablan Inglés como segundo idioma tomarán el examen de ACCESS, una evaluación para determinar el dominio del idioma Inglés de los estudiantes que han sido identificados como que el Inglés es su segundo idioma. Esta evaluación se le hace a estos estudiantes desde "Kinder" hasta el último año de secundaria. La evaluación se hace anualmente para determinar el progreso del estudiante en aprender el Inglés académico. El "ACCESS" evalúa el dominio del Inglés en las siguientes áreas, estas son: Escuchar, Leer, y Escribir y Hablar. Los estudiantes tomarán esta evaluación el 19 y 21 de Febrero durante los periodos de clase 1 y 2. La cuarta area, la de Hablar la tomarán individualmente. Los días para esta no han sido determinados.

Los estudiantes deben llegar a tiempo a la escuela en estos días y deben haber descansado bien. Los estudiantes que no puedan tomar la evaluación en estos días deberán tomarlo el 24 de Febrero.

Para más información sobre esta evaluación puede ir a <http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/>

Si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación, por favor comuníquese con el Departamento de "HILT" de Swanson o con la Sra. Sara Daidy, la Coordinadora de Evaluaciones de Swanson al 703-228- 5521 o sara.daidy@apsva.us

—Sara Daidy, Testing Coordinator

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Report cards were distributed on January 30. As you use Parentvue and Blackboard to help support your student's achievement, please keep in mind the APS promotion policy:

4 The Swanson Anchor February 2014

"To be promoted to grade nine from grade eight, a student must successfully complete four of the required seven courses; (specifically) eighth grade Mathematics, English, Science, and World Geography." (School Board Policy 20-1).

Academic Planning

Each year, every student works in groups and individually with their counselor to create and refine their six-year academic plan based on personal and career interests, diploma options and high school graduation requirements. The Academic Plan is a working document, subject to change, based on the student's academic and career goals. Students now can use both Virginia View and Naviance, the web-based career and college information systems, as they plan for their futures, at <http://connection.naviance.com/swanson>. A copy of the Academic Plan will be sent home this Spring.

During February, the counselors continue the process of academic planning and scheduling classes for the 2014-2015 school year. Counselors go into the students' classrooms to educate them about courses offered next year as well as high school graduation requirements.

We encourage you to discuss the Program of Studies with your student as they fill out the Course Request Form (CRF), because students are committed to the courses selected.

Rising 7th and 8th grade parents will have the opportunity to attend an evening meeting presented by their child's counselor on Wednesday, February 12 at 7 pm.

Please remember that all World Languages offered in 7th and 8th grade, Algebra, Geometry and World Geography (the 8th grade Social Studies course) are high school credit courses and that the grades earned in these classes are part of a student's high school transcript.

Swanson Scheduling Information Night for Parents of Rising 6 - 8th Graders

February 12, 7:00 pm

- 5th graders (Rising 6th grade): Auditorium
- 6th graders (Rising 7th grade): Cafeteria
- 7th graders (Rising 8th grade): Library

Character Education

In February, we will focus on the pillar of citizenship.

Citizenship is...

- Civic responsibility – being socially responsible
- Making our democracy work by voicing your opinions, voting, and participating in the decision making process
- Performing community service
- Helping to take care of the environment
- Obeying the laws
- Doing your part for the common good

Help your student be a good citizen through modeling:

- Model a clear sense of right and wrong by obeying laws and making thoughtful decisions.
- Show children you care about people by modeling friendship with others, lending a hand to neighbors, or working with charitable organizations. Ask your child about the Random Acts of Kindness recognition project and the Donate Your Shoes service projects.
- Practice recycling at home. It demonstrates wise use of Earth's resources.

Summer is Coming!

Although teachers will be making summer school recommendations in early March when the summer school booklets become available, Arlington will hold its annual Summer Activities Fair on Friday, February 21 from 6 – 8 pm in the Thomas Jefferson Middle School Gym. Be sure your child doesn't need remediation this summer before you commit to a camp!

The Northern Virginia Camp and Summer Fun Expo will take place Saturday, February 22 (10 am – 4 pm) and Sunday, February 23 (11 am – 4 pm) at Dulles Town Center.

Summer Jobs, Volunteering and Work Permits

Just a reminder that the Child Labor laws have changed and counselors are no longer permitted to issue work permits. See the January Anchor for more details. Be sure to check out these articles from Familyeducation.com:

<http://life.familyeducation.com/teen/jobs-and-chores/36446.html>

<http://life.familyeducation.com/slideshow/teen/57083.html>

<http://life.familyeducation.com/volunteer-work/community-life/36334.html>

<http://life.familyeducation.com/slideshow/volunteer-work/29594.html>

Save the Date: Supporting Your Child Conference: February 22

The Supporting your Whole Child Conference will take place on Saturday, February 22 at Washington-Lee High School from 8:30 am - 12:15 pm. The conference is for parents with children in 8th-12th grade to learn and collaborate about adolescent topics.

Last year's topics included:

- Assisting Students with Attention and Organization Concerns as they Transition
- Financial Aid 101
- Help! My Teen is Dating
- Organization and Study Skills for Success
- Inside the Mind of Your Adolescent: Amazing Changes Ahead
- Academic Planning

Stay tuned to the announcements and listserv for updates on this important opportunity!

Another Great Summer Opportunity!

The Building Leaders for Advancing Science and Technology (BLAST) program will offer an exciting, on-campus, summer experience designed to increase student interest and curiosity in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). BLAST will provide a residential opportunity to current 8th and 9th grade students in the summer of 2014 at no cost to selected students. Faculty members will lead hands-on activities and demonstrations that will seek to motivate and inspire students for STEM studies and careers. The program is a partnership between the Virginia Space Grant Consortium, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Deadline to apply: February 1, 2014 at www.blast.space-grant.org.

Eligibility requirements:

- High school students who are currently in 8th or 9th grade
- Must have at least a B to C+ grade average
- Be a Virginia resident and a U.S. Citizen
- STEM curiosity a plus
- Acceptance to BLAST is based on grades, teacher recommendation and essay

Multi-Cultural Night Set for March 19

Swanson will hold its annual Multi-Cultural Night on Wednesday, March 19. This night is for all Swanson families. It will include a potluck buffet dinner, student performances and music from the Swanson Jazz Ensemble. Please mark your calendar now and be on the lookout for more details in early March. Everyone is welcome and we hope to see you there.

—Trevor Holland, Colleen Dykema, Sharen Humann, Sarah Epling, Daphne Veale, Jessie Homburg, Paul Norris, and the Swanson Staff

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go! Swanson Track Logistics

It's February and track season will soon be upon us. Starting in March, students interested in track should check the track board (it's in the hallway near the large gym) every day on the way to lunch. That's where we'll post important announcements and information.

As track is a no-tryout sport, many students tend to participate. It is up to each student to pay attention during practice and read the track board to find out about forms, practices, meets, etc.

Here is a summary of important information:

- Students interested in track should sign up when sign-ups are posted in early March.
- Students need to have a current physical on file. A notation will be made by each name on the sign up sheet indicating whether or not we have a current

physical on file. Students should not assume they are all set – they need to check the track board. Students or their parents should follow up promptly if the track board indicates that their physical is not up to date or is not on file.

- Students need to get all required paperwork signed and turned in during March.
- Practices start Monday, March 24. Students need all paperwork in and a current physical on file to fully participate.
- Track practice is from 2:30 - 4:10. We generally practice every day, but there may be some practices that are specified only for a certain group of athletes (for example, a certain grade, gender or event). Excused absences due to doctor's appointments, academic conflicts, other commitments, etc. are permitted but should be communicated beforehand.
- Students may be on both the swim and track teams. In order to compete in the swim and track meets, athletes need to attend practices regularly. This involves careful planning and communication for dual athletes. If practices conflict, athletes should determine, with the help of their coaches, which practice they should attend based on their needs and the meet schedules.
- Track members are student athletes. The student part comes first – therefore, all members are expected to be in good academic standing. In addition, track members should attend any required or needed after school academic session with their teachers. Students can then come to track practice late after the academic session is over.
- There are only four regular meets and a limited number of spots in each event. If students participate appropriately, they will be given the opportunity to compete in at least one meet. Students who are open to trying different events are more likely to have the chance to compete in multiple meets. Students need to check the track board and initial by their name or sign up when they are able to compete in a meet.
- The regular season ends in late April.
- There is a county meet in mid-May. In order to compete in it, students need to have competed in the event in a regular meet.

—Laura Partridge, Track Coach

The Latest from Latin

On Saturday January 11, three Latin teams competed at the Flint Hill certamen, pitting their classical wits against teams from all over DC and Northern VA. One Latin I team came home with a 5th place trophy, behind teams from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Basis DC, and Classical Cottage. Our second Latin I team was not far behind. Latin 2 did not make enough points to get into the trophy ranks, but its members were very positive about their experience. They learned a lot and enjoyed the fact that they won one of their three rounds.

—Melanie Stowell, Latin Teacher



Latin I students, Gus Grobman, Claire Cofield, Natalie Chin and Ben McCracken, showing off their trophy (and Latin Ts) at the Flint Hill certamen.

Swanson's First Art Reception A Hit!

On Wednesday, January 15, Swanson Middle School Art Department held its first Art Reception for 7th and 8th Grade Visual Arts Students in the cafeteria. The artwork was displayed individually on black display boards, and over sixty students participated. The artwork included oil pastels, watercolor, charcoal, graphite, color pencil, wire, papier-mâché masks and sculptures, tempera and acrylic painting, printmaking, clay ceramics, collage, and junk art (mixed media). Each student chose their favorite works to be displayed on the boards. A wide variety of subject matter was presented.

The Art Department plans to make this a bi-annual event for the students, families and friends in December/January and April/May. Thank you for all who helped make this event a great success!

—Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher



Professional Caricaturist Visits Swanson

Mike Jenkins visited the 7th and 8th Grade Visual Art classes on Thursday, January 16. Mr. Jenkins, a caricature artist, drew at least four students per mod and talked about his career as a political cartoon artist and now a caricature artist. The Visual Art students were thrilled to receive their caricature and watch him demonstrate.

Mr. Jenkins shared many stories as a professional artist and his accomplishments.

Thank you so much for visiting and demonstrating your great skills at Swanson Middle School!

—Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher



Reflections Program a Success!

The Reflections program was a grand success, with about 27 students from all grades participating in all six categories. Swanson students won awards in four categories at the county level, and the Film entry will go to the state level!

A reception was held January 8 in the school library to recognize participants and reward the top three winners in each level. Assistant Principal Mr. Scott McKeown distributed the awards and the certificates.

And the winners are...

Swanson School Level Reflections Results

Dance

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme:
Annabelle Bowman

Literature

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme:
Shambhavi A. Ramaswamy
Award of Excellence : **Sofie Dalton**
Award of Merit : **Ariah Tucci**

Visual Arts

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme:
Dominick Coccozza
Award of Excellence: **Adam Carter**
Award of Merit: **Danila Konoplev**

Music

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme: **Karuna Sinha**

Film

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme: **Karuna Sinha**

Photography

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme: **Sam Carlson**
Award of Excellence: **Sarah Superata**
Award of Merit: **Shambhavi A. Ramaswamy**

County Level Reflections Results

Dance

Award of Excellence: **Annabelle Bowman**

Literature

Award of Excellence: **Shambhavi A. Ramaswamy**

Music

Award of Excellence: **Karuna Sinha**

Film

Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme: **Karuna Sinha**

Photography

Award of Merit: **Sam Carlson**

—Rams Ramaswami

There's No Deadline on Making Your Life Better

With the New Year, many of us are making New Year's resolutions to improve ourselves. We need look no further than our own staff for inspiration.

Continuing an education really makes a difference for both a student and her mother. Our very own Mrs. Martinez, the Principal's Administrative Assistant, graduated high school as a mother to a one year old. She then started college at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) but had to stop going to school due to family obligations. Now, 13 years later, she has returned to school and is taking classes at NOVA with her daughter, Natalie. Natalie was a student at Swanson seven years ago. She graduated from Washington-Lee High School and now attends NOVA and is looking to transfer to the University of Texas, where she plans to obtain a Bachelor's in Education.

What do you think it would feel like going to college with your mother? According to Natalie, "My mother is my best friend and we get along great. It's actually fun to have classes together." Mrs. Martinez says, "I don't think there are many people that have a closer relationship with their child." They are committed to each other's success. Natalie says, "We decided it would be cool to take classes together and support each other through homework and studying. Now that we have, it has improved my grades and my GPA because we keep each other focused and are determined to finish our degrees."

There's no deadline on going back to school and making your life better. Mrs. Martinez and her daughter are an inspiration to all of us. They are supporting each other and fulfilling their dreams.

—*Federicka AlGarme and Jackie Perdomo,*
Swanson 8th Graders

Continental Math League Contest

The third Continental Math League contest was held in early January. The 7th graders had a very strong showing, with 25 students earning a perfect score. However, the 6th graders continue to lead team scoring with 102 points, followed closely by the 8th graders with 100 points, and then the 7th graders with 98 points.

Students earning a six on the third contest not included in the lists below are the following:

6th graders

Graham Lazorchak

7th graders

Eva Arnade

Hannah Gagelin

Minh Giang

Gretchen Haga

Calder Lowenthal

Julia Marchese

Maeve Marsh

Gus Nathanson

Ellie Shaker

Sabrina Shuster

Sydney Stropes

Sarah Superata

Liam Thompson

Lydia Troup

Darby Westwater

8th graders

Elliot Anderson

After three contests, the following students have a cumulative score of 15 or higher (out a maximum score of 18):

Combined score of 15:

6th graders

Robert Crotts

Michael Curran

Duncan Griffiths

Zach Luzius

Owen Maupin

Benjamin Nelson

7th graders

Sarah Barringer

Angela Gormley

Jonah Margosis

Sam O'Brien

Philip Suskin

Combined score of 16:

6th graders

Sam Bender-Prouty

Christina Sheckler

Suruchi Sen

Helyn Walther

7th graders

Claire Cofield

Tom Dickson

Ferris Linde

Jasmine Mondshine

Cate Whitehouse

8th graders

Kyle Gerner

Ben McCracken

Sarkis Ter Martirosyan

Combined score of 17:

6th graders

Brendan Rindfus

Perfect Scores of 18:

7th graders

Hanna Xu

8th graders

Derek Martin

The next contest will be held in early February.

—Laura Partridge, Math Coach

Now That's Some Wind Power!

In late December, the Naval fleet entered port and set up to find the fastest wind-powered boat in five Mods of Schooner's Science. The final runs, numbering six in all, followed two days of practice. Kelso Wilkin won with an amazing speed of 2.85 seconds for the 10-foot course that began at a standstill. Kelso's boat accelerated to about 1.22 feet per second per second, culminating in a final speed of about 12.2 feet per second.

Congratulations to the following students who had the top times in the regatta: Chris Golden, Adam Ruff, Meghan Munoz, Henry Ervin, Alexis McIntire, Eric Shellhouse, Jared Wal, Ben Adams, Andrea Ortega and Jenna Shackelford.

—Steven Peters, 6th Grade Science

Iron Chopped Chef!

Seventh grade students enrolled in the Teen Living classes competed in the Iron-Chopped Chef competition in January. Students were given five ingredients for an entrée and five ingredients for a dessert. The entrée ingredients were chicken thighs, carrots, cheddar cheese and gummy bears. The dessert basket included fruity pebbles, frozen corn, chocolate hearts and vanilla yogurt.

The results were AMAZING! Delicious dishes included chicken soup, chicken salads, fried chicken and chicken potpie. For dessert, students created chocolate pudding, cakes, muffins and frozen delights. Mrs. Claudine Adamec, Ms. Williams, Ms. Guerreri and Mrs. Faris Scholl were gracious enough to judge these tasty creations! Winners received their very own "Iron-Chopped Chef Champion" T-shirts thanks to the talents of Mr. DeMarino and the Technology Education classes.

—Chris Taylor, Teen Living



Baby, It's Cold Outside!

Students in Mrs. Klontz's STAR and in Ms. Taylor's FACS classes teamed up to help Arlington women, infants and children stay warm. Mrs. Klontz's STAR organized a donation drive of hats, scarves, mittens and gloves while Ms. Taylor's students knitted infant hats. The three-week drive resulted in a donation of 75 items to the Arlington Department of Health and Human Services.

This service project helped students become more aware of the need to dress warmly, ways to publicize an event and how to use individual talents and effort to do something kind for others.

—Mary-Hannah Klontz, Chorus Teacher

Sharing the Swanson Spirit

During December's cold and snowy days, Ms. Cazan and Ms. Sanderson's sixth grade STARS took time to prepare meals for the Arlington Emergency Shelter. Students gathered the supplies and worked as a team to create 80 meals for the shelter.

Clementine oranges, sandwiches, beverages, sweets and chips filled the two classrooms one Thursday morning during STAR, the week before the holiday break. An e-mail from the shelter's director of volunteer services stressed the need for food during the cold weather and expressed thanks to Swanson students. This small act of service is just one of many generous efforts that filled Swanson during December. Students cannot wait for the next opportunity to serve!

*—Dana Cazan, English Teacher and
Beth Sanderson, Reading Teacher*

