

# The Swanson Anchor

March 2014



## From the Principal's Desk

March brings the second half of the third quarter and an opportunity to learn more from your child about his or her progress during student led conferences. They will be held the evening of Thursday, March 6 and the morning of Friday, March 7. Your child and his or her STAR teacher will share progress updates on academic growth as well as how he or she has internalized the other components of Swanson's motto – service and spirit. Students will also discuss their aspirations for the 2014–15 school year, including course selections and transition concerns as they prepare to move onto the next grade level.

Parent or guardian participation in these conferences is vital, as you play an important role in supporting your child in becoming an active participant in his or her education. Thank you in advance for making the spring conference a priority.

The third quarter, with its long (and mostly uninterrupted) march toward spring break, can often present difficulties for students in maintaining focus on their school-work. I often think of third quarter as an exercise in endurance, and I encourage our students during these next several weeks to hone the good study skills they built during the first half of the year. You can help your child keep his or her eyes on the prize of academic success by checking that they regularly note homework and long-term due dates in their assignment notebooks; ensuring that they have a quiet place at home to work on their assignments, free from the distractions presented by cell phones, email, social networks and other electronic interruptions; and talking with them about what they are learning in school. Your involvement in their academic lives

*(Continued on page 2)*

## From the PTA

This time of year is always a busy one, with almost two-thirds of the school year behind us and much activity ahead, including District Band and Orchestra Assessments, swim practices, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Continental Math League, Multicultural Night National Latin Exam, Spring Break and the Swanson Spring Fling Craft Fair. (Stop. Take a deep, cleansing breath!)

The Swanson PTA needs your support as we seek new officers and chairpersons for the 2014–15 school year. If you can share your time and talents through PTA board service, or know of a person who will be new to Swanson next year who would be a good candidate, please email me at [3jernigans@verizon.net](mailto:3jernigans@verizon.net). There's much to be done, and we need fresh minds to join a solid PTA team! We've asked current committee chairs about their intent to return next year, and a list of open officer and chair positions follow:

*(Continued on page 2)*

### March 2014

#### March

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 3–5   | 7th Grade Outdoor Lab Field Trips                          |
| 7     | Parent Teacher Conferences (No School for Students)        |
| 11    | PTA Meeting 7:00 pm  |
| 15    | Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Show 10:00 am – 5:00 pm         |
| 20    | Challenging Racism 7:00 pm<br>School Board Meeting 7:30 pm |
| 27–28 | 8th Grade Writing SOLs                                     |
| 28    | End of the Grading Period                                  |

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**E-groups:**

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

## From the PTA (Continued from page 1)

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President	Grocery Receipts
Vice President	First-Day Packets
Secretary	Educational Grants
Anchor Editor	Science Fair Dinner
Anchor Distribution	Reflections
Nominating Committee	Community Service
Odyssey of the Mind	Science Fair
Teacher Lounge Restocking	Social Activities
In-Service Breakfasts	Spirit Sales
8th Grade Promotion Dance Party	Sports Banquets
8th Grade Promotion Reception	Staff Appreciation
Volunteer Coordinator	Welcome Reception
County Council PTA Liaison	

Please give serious consideration to supporting the Swanson community by volunteering for one of these positions. We have both large and small PTA tasks that require parental support, and the PTA is a great way to stay connected to your children during the middle school years.

The March PTA meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 11, where we plan to have Dr. Melissa Deichmann speak about executive functioning. We hope to see you there!

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

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

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sends the message that you care about their progress and are there to support them with their successes and challenges. Our teachers, counselors and administrators appreciate your support of your children. It really does take a village.

Looking ahead on our academic calendar, please note that the 8th grade Writing SOL test will take place on Thursday, March 27 and Friday, March 28. The third quarter ends the same Friday, and students will attend school on Monday, March 31. This day was originally slated as a holiday for students and a grade preparation day for teachers, but it's now a makeup day for the snow day on February 14.

During this busy time, please keep in touch with me via email at [bridget.loft@apsva.us](mailto:bridget.loft@apsva.us) or 703-228-5501. I enjoy hearing from you and value your suggestions and observations. Onward!

— Bridget Loft, Principal

## Families Still Needed To Host French Students!

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**Dates: March 31–April 10, 2014**

Please consider hosting an eighth grader from our French sister school this spring!

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 be arriving in Arlington March 31 and departing April 10.

They will attend Arlington Middle Schools for three days with their host sibling and spend the remainder of the time sightseeing the Washington, DC metropolitan area with their chaperons. All six Arlington Middle Schools will be participating, with 4-5 students attending each school. Please contact Melissa Cabocel as soon as possible at [mcabocel@cbanet.org](mailto:mcabocel@cbanet.org) if you are interested.

We are particularly in need of more hosts for boys!

## Swanson Reaps Art Awards

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The National Scholastic Art Award is the oldest Visual Arts Competition, dating back to 1923. Swanson received 31 awards for 2014!

The following students won Gold Key:

**Kelly Gaudian**

**Johanna Gonzalez**

**Angela Gormley**

**Danila Konoplev**

**Helene Koumans (2)**

**Skyler Lee**

**Kerry Meade (2)**

**Jasmine Mondshine**

**Liam O'Casey**

**Eva Smith-Perry**

**Olivia Springberg (2)**

The following students won Silver Key:

**Frances Freeman**

**Anna Sophia Nix**

**Eva Smith-Perry**

**Abigail Ziegler**

The following students won Honorable Mention:

**Ryan Bone**

**Fiona Cronin**

**Kathleen Dodds**

**Sebria Kelley**

**Ulda Maldonado**

**Katherine Mercado**

**Kevin Meruvia**

**Zykia Nibbins**

**Adam Packard**

**Katherine Sanz**

**Julia Som**

**Lydia Troup**

**Sophie Wheelock**

The Awards Ceremony will be at Washington Lee High School on Monday, March 10 at 6 pm. (Inclement weather date will be Monday, March 17 at 6 pm.)

– Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher

## Fourth Continental Math League Contest a Real Challenge!

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The fourth Continental Math League contest was held in early February and proved to be very challenging! Just five students achieved a perfect score of six. Those students were 7th graders **Calder Lowenthal**, **Philip Suskin** and **Hanna Xu**, and 8th graders **Kyle Gerner** and **Jack Lacey**.

Swanson's team scores are very close among the grades. The 6th and 8th grades have 132 cumulative points, and the 7th grade has 131 cumulative points.

After four contests, the following students have a cumulative score of 20 or higher (out a maximum score of 24):

### Combined score of 20

6th graders

**Robert Crotts**

**Michael Curran**

**Zach Luzius**

7th graders

**Calder Lowenthal**

**Jasmine Mondshine**

8th grader

**Ben McCracken**

### Combined score of 21

6th grader

**Christina Sheckler**

7th graders

**Claire Cofield**

**Tom Dickson**

**Philip Suskin**

**Cate Whitehouse**

8th grader

**Sarkis Ter Martirosyan**

### Combined score of 22

6th grader

**Brendan Rindfus**

8th grader

**Kyle Gerner**

**Combined score of 23**

8th grader

**Derek Martin**

**Perfect Scores of 24**

7th grader

**Hanna Xu**

The final contest will be held in early March.

– *Laura Partridge, Math Coach*

## A Busy Year for MathCounts

The MathCounts team had a busy year. The club is open to any student interested in math problem solving. The first event that Swanson participated in was the Carderock Math Contest held at the NAVSEA Warfare Center in Bethesda, Maryland in January. Eight students competed in the math competition, and 8th grader **Kyle Gerner** qualified to participate in the countdown round. In February, 10 students represented Swanson at the regional MathCounts competition. Swanson earned a very respectable 6th place in the event. The students who participated in the MathCounts regional event were 8th graders **Kyle Gerner, Nikolai Long, Derek Martin, Ben McCracken, and Sarkis Ter Martirosyan**, 7th graders **Natalie Chin, Claire Cofield, Isabella Frymoyer**, and **Hanna Xu**, and 6th grader **Henry Erwin**.

The following students attended five or more MathCounts practices this year:

8th Graders

**Konrad Bledowski**

**Kyle Gerner**

**Jack Horton**

**Nikolai Long**

**Derek Martin**

**Ben McCracken**

**Sarkis Ter Martirosyan**

**Theo Vargas**

7th Graders

**Raka Banerjee**

**Natalie Chin**

**Claire Cofield**

**Isabella Frymoyer**

**Danila Konoplev**

**Calder Lowenthal**

**Wesley Stone**

**Philip Suskin**

**Hanna Xu**

6th Graders

**Henry Erwin**

**Michael Kyrychenko**

**Anna Reiner**

**Melba Tariq**

A special thanks to Ms. White, whose room we regularly use for practices!

– *Laura Partridge, Math Coach*

## Swanson Students Participate in Rigorous American Math Competition

In February, four Swanson students participated in the American Math Competition (AMC) 10 held at a Fairfax middle school. This math contest is open to students in grades 10 and under. The Swanson students were invited to participate in the high school level contest based on their scores from the AMC 8 math contest held at Swanson in November. The AMC 8 and 10 are well known national math competitions and are extremely difficult.

The students who participated in the AMC 10 contest included 7th grader **Hanna Xu**, and 8th graders **Nathaniel Klein**, **Ben McCracken** and **Sarkis Ter Martirosyan**.

Congratulations to all of these students for rising to the challenge and participating in this rigorous math competition!

– *Laura Partridge, Math Coach*

## Special Education Corner

Arlington Public Schools provides a continuum of services for students with disabilities, preschool through high school, found eligible to receive special education services. The steps to identifying a student as eligible is a carefully managed process guided by State and Federal regulations. Evaluations required to make this determination are completed only with parent permission. You can read about the policies and procedures governing special education services in Arlington Public Schools Special Education Policies and Procedures.

School-based student study committees review available information regarding students who are experiencing problems that adversely affect their education performance. Students suspected of having a disability are referred for evaluation. An eligibility committee at the student's school reviews assessment data to determine if the student has a disability that requires special education services. When a student is found eligible, school staff, parents and the student (when appropriate) develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a statement of the special education and related services that the student will receive. It is updated at least annually during a student's eligibility for special education.

Please look for highlights of topics related to special education services in future issues of *The Anchor*. 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*

## Academic Planning

Each year, students work in groups and individually with their counselors to create and refine their four- to six-year academic plans. The plan is based on personal and career interests, diploma options and high school graduation requirements. Sixth graders focus on understanding the Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas and their requirements for high school graduation. Charts describing the classes, credits and verified credits (passed SOL tests) are in the yellow Middle School Program of Studies (pages 61 and 62). Students use the Academic Plan on page 63 in classroom guidance sessions in 7th and 8th grade as a working document, based on the student's academic and career goals. It will go home before the end of the school year. The Middle School Program of Studies also contains important information about high school options (page 56) and the sequence of math courses (pages 57-58).

For rising 9th graders, the blue high school Program of Studies lists the two diploma options (pages 6-7). You can find the math sequence on page 64; the IB sequence is explained on pages 102-104.

Students are also being exposed to the US Department of Education's 16 Career Clusters currently used to organize occupations. Take time to talk with your child about their interests and ever-changing future plans! Students now can use both Virginia View and Naviance, web-based career and college information systems, as they plan for their futures ([http://connection.naviance.com/swanson\\_and\\_www.vaview.vt.edu](http://connection.naviance.com/swanson_and_www.vaview.vt.edu)). Other good resources include *The Occupational Outlook Handbook* [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco), *Kids.gov* [www.kids.usa.gov/teens](http://www.kids.usa.gov/teens) and *Careership* [www.mappingyourfuture.org](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org).

Be sure and check out APS' newest resource – the Academic Planning Roadmap. It, along with student companion documents, is available to assist students and families with academic planning. The roadmap has essential information that will help students and families

when planning for coursework now and in the future. Please use the following links to access these academic planning resources on the APS website:

<http://www.apsva.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2202> and <http://www.apsva.us/Page/22703>.

### **A reminder about the International Baccalaureate program at Washington-Lee:**

Rising 8th grade students should be enrolled in the second year of a World Language (and Algebra next year as a prerequisite for applying to this program.\* Rising 7th and 8th grade parents should attend the IB information night next year. You can get a taste of this year's presentation by going on the W-L website and looking for the IB tab on the left side. A PowerPoint presentation is available for you to review.

\*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. Grades earned in these classes are part of a student's high school transcript.

### **SOL Writing Tests**

This is a reminder for 8th grade parents and students that the SOL Writing Tests will be given on **March 27 and 28**. The tests are given during the morning and are untimed. Please mark your calendars and make every effort to have your child well rested and in school on those days.

### **Summer Plans**

It's not too early to begin making plans for this summer. Many quality summer camps and enrichment activities have deadlines and limited enrollment. Summer school information booklets are already available. Registration begins March 6. Check with your child's teacher to see if summer school is recommended.

As you use Parentvue and attend March parent conferences on Thursday night, March 6 and Friday morning, March 7, please keep in mind the APS promotion policy: "To be promoted to Grade 9 from Grade 8, a student must have successfully completed four of the required seven courses; 8th grade mathematics, English, science, and World Geography." (School Board Policy 20-1.)

### **Work Permits Reminder: Online Only!**

Just a reminder that the Child Labor laws have changed and counselors are no longer permitted to issue work permits. Virginia law requires students aged 14 and 15 to obtain a work permit prior to beginning a job. Parents can now electronically access, complete, and download the required forms.

The application requires submission of two documents: a Permission for Employment form and an Employer Intent to Employ form. These need to be submitted to the Virginia Labor and Employment Law Division.

- **The Permission for Employment form** must be completed by the youth's parent, guardian or custodian and signed before a Notary Public. A notary is required by law to affix a seal or stamp on every document he or she notarizes. The stamp or seal needs to be sharp, legible, permanent and photo-graphically reproducible. Many banks provide notary public services.
- **The Intent to Employ form** must be completed by the employer. The youth must furnish a copy of an acceptable evidence of age document. The employer must retain and certify to the Labor and Employment Law Division the legal age for employment.

The Code of Virginia §40.1-94 establishes the following as legal evidence of age documents:

- A birth certificate
- An attested transcript issued by a registrar of vital statistics or other officer charged with the duty of recording births
- A baptismal record or duly certified transcript thereof showing the date of birth and place of baptism of the child
- Other documentary proof of age specified by the Commissioner, which includes any government-issued identification card such as a passport, DMV identification card or military identification card.
- Only complete forms can be accepted for processing. Faxed documents cannot be accepted. Original forms must be submitted by U.S. mail.

After completion by the appropriate parties, mail the forms to:

Department of Labor & Industry  
Child Labor Unit  
1570 E. Parham Rd.  
Richmond, VA 23228-2360

No child may begin employment until the employment certificate is issued. Upon approval, it will be mailed directly to the employer. Please allow seven to ten business days processing time. Incomplete forms will cause a delay, so double check them before you put them in the mail.

For more information and to access the documents needed for a work permit, please go to [www.doli.virginia.gov](http://www.doli.virginia.gov).

## A New Tool to Report Bullying

At Swanson, we take bullying seriously. Students should feel safe, comfortable and respected as they travel to and from school or navigate the school day. With that in mind, we are pleased to roll out another tool to help us combat bullying in Swanson Middle School. Visitors to the Swanson web page ([www.apsva.us/swanson](http://www.apsva.us/swanson)) will now see a “report bullying” link under Site Shortcuts. Through it, students, parents and staff can report incidents of bullying in the Swanson community, with the option of remaining anonymous. This information will be forwarded to the appropriate administrator and, if appropriate, the School Resource Officer, in order to address the needs of both the victim and the bully.

Any member of the Swanson community may use the link. This does not replace our previous practices to account for student safety; students are always encouraged to seek out a trusted adult whenever they find themselves in an uncomfortable or unsafe situation.

—Scott McKeown, Assistant Principal

## Pitch in for Swanson’s Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Show!

The Second Annual Swanson Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Show will be held on Saturday, March 15. This fundraising event is an ever evolving work-in-progress, and we hope that it eventually will become a major fundraiser to support the many Swanson-related activities that we and our children enjoy. If you or someone you know is interested in being part of the Spring Fling, see below on one or more of the many ways you can help. Please contact event chair Becky O’Neil at [becky@beckyspetcare.com](mailto:becky@beckyspetcare.com) ASAP. Thank you!

1. Hang fliers all over the neighborhood starting this week. All you need is a staple gun or tape, and maybe a willing student to help you out.
2. Get out printed postcards to local businesses. (5-10 volunteers needed.)
3. Put out yard signs on the night of March 8 and the morning of March 9. Another good activity for students. (4-5 volunteers needed.)
4. Plan the vendor layout. (3 volunteers needed.)
  - Plan vendor location
  - Make vendor signs
  - Make loading signs
5. Tape off 10x10 spaces on Friday, March 14 right after school. It needs to be completed by 6 pm when the vendors begin to arrive. (4-5 volunteers needed.)
6. Assist with vendor setup Friday, March 14 from 6 pm – 8 pm and Saturday, March 15 from 7:30 am – 9:30 am. This isn’t hard – it just means being on site to help people find where they are going and perhaps helping carry supplies. (3-4 volunteers needed.)

Lastly, we ask that the Swanson school community, parents, teachers, administrators and students attend the event Saturday, March 15, 10 am – 5 pm in the large gym. This is a fundraiser for the school. We need support from our entire community!