



# Robious Express

**March  
2009**

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## Upcoming Events

- **March 12<sup>th</sup>**— Caboose Camp Ends
- **March 14<sup>th</sup>**— Whistlestart 5K & Fun Run
- **March 18<sup>th</sup>**— Three Hour Early Release
- **March 26<sup>th</sup>**— Chick Fil A Night
- **March 27<sup>th</sup>**— Whistlestop Tickets go on sale
- **April 2<sup>nd</sup>**— End of the Third Nine Weeks
- **April 2<sup>nd</sup>**— 2nd Grade Musical

## Robious Elementary School Fundraiser Raised \$25,000 “Kisses for Kids Auction”

The Robious Engineers pulled out all the stops on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> with the very first *Kisses for Kids* Auction Fundraiser. The evening event, held at Salisbury Country Club, raised more than \$25,000 for the PTA and its programs.

A special thank you goes out to the parents and faculty who attended the semi-formal event. More than 40 parent volunteers pitched in to help create a spectacular evening featuring hors d'oeuvres, a D.J. and dancing.

This is the first year the PTA has offered the event in the evening. Previously, RES hosted a silent and live auction in conjunction with their biennial Whistlestop Outdoor Carnival and family day. The Whistlestop Carnival will be held this spring, but as a separate event.

The live auction rose over \$10,000.00 with the help of Boyd Allison of Bexhill Auction Group. Topping the list of offerings was a seven-day trip to Disney World. Other prizes included a week's vacation in Indian Rocks Beach, Florida; Grade Level Art projects; romantic hotel escapes, Hall of Fame Footballs autographed by

ketball autographed by Anthony Grant; and several portrait sessions.

Silent Auction prizes included everything from portrait sessions to gymnastics and sports camps, to tool sets and golf get-aways, to catered barbecues and jewelry. Special thanks go to the teachers, who offered donations of their time. Students at each grade level contributed baskets of goodies and other items.

We were thrilled at the turnout, and beyond amazed at the generosity of our parents and donors. The Robious PTA would like to thank all those who so graciously donated to this cause. There are far too many to name, but we couldn't have done this without them.



Warren Moon, Marcus Allen and Eric Dickerson; an autographed Virginia Tech Football and Helmet by Frank Beamer, a stay at a 4-Star Washington Hotel with a tour of the White House; a VCU Basketball package with VIP tickets to a game and bas-

**Robin Hogge  
Lorene Whitehouse  
Auction Co-Chairs**

## Family Focus on Writing

*A note from Principal Anne O'Toole*

*Note: This is an adaptation of an article provided by the Office of Language Arts for Chesterfield County Public Schools.*

In early March all fifth graders in Virginia will take the two-part SOL Writing Test., which includes a multiple choice section on the first day and a direct writing, assigned topic on the second day. Later in March, our fourth graders will have a “practice” SOL Writing Test with the same two parts. But writing instruction begins when children are in Kindergarten and continues every year through college.

### TOP 10 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A BETTER WRITER

- Provide a suitable place for writing.
- Provide a variety of writing materials.
- Share examples of good writing.
- Be a good writing model.
- Provide opportunities for your child to write for real purposes.
- Write together.
- Encourage your child’s writing efforts.
- Open your child’s eyes to the wonderful world of words.
- Celebrate your child as a writer by reading his/her stories aloud.
- Read! Read! Read!



### WRITING ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

- **REAL WRITING** – Your child needs to write for real purposes. Encourage your child to write thank-you letters, phone messages, and reminder notes.
- **GENERATE LISTS** – Help your child to become more organized by making lists of his/her CD’s, books, school assignments, etc.
- **JOURNAL WRITING** – This is an excellent writing practice, as well as a good outlet for expressing feelings.
- **CREATE A FAMILY SCRAPBOOK** – Help your child assemble photo albums and write captions or short stories for the photos.
- **CREATE A FAMILY NEWSLETTER OR WEBSITE** – This is a great way for your child to stay in touch with out-of-town relatives and friends.
- **READ! READ! READ!** – Reading to your child exposes him/her to good models of writing. It also helps to spark imagination and provides ideas to stimulate writing.

Remember, becoming a good writer is a lifelong process. Good writers do a great deal of thinking. Be patient and allow your child time to think!

**Anne S. O’Toole**



# Green Team News



It's hard to believe spring is right around the corner, and it can't come a moment too soon (in my opinion, at least)! In the month of February, we have recycled over 400 pounds in our classrooms, bringing our year to date diversion total to over 2,500 pounds. If you ask your kids, they'll tell you that's well over a ton! They may also tell you that they've recycled *almost* half of the waste they generated in the classroom this year. I hope they are bringing their recycling savvy home, and that you've seen your residential recycling volumes going up, too!

At the end of February, I had the pleasure of visiting with the third graders to learn even more about why recycling is important. If you haven't already heard all about it, be sure to find a third grader and ask him or her about the importance of the recycling program at Robious Elementary. We learned from our recycling contractor ([www.tfcrecycling.com](http://www.tfcrecycling.com)) that they collect more than 100,000 tons of recycling each year, and this reduces the waste going to the landfill, prolongs the life of the landfill, saves natural resources (like trees!), saves energy (in manufacturing of new products), and reduces pollution (from the manufacturing of new products and from the landfills, themselves). We discovered that after the ~1 ton we've contributed, the TFC drivers still have 99,000 tons to collect! The students had such wonderful questions, like, "what would happen if we didn't recycle", "what happens to things that go into landfills", and "how many times can paper or glass or aluminum be recycled". We even had a question on why we don't

recycle all types of plastic, which resulted in a quick chemistry lesson! I enjoyed sharing with the students how much waste they've diverted as a school and as a grade level this year – they were as impressed as I with their numbers. We had questions and comments about the viability of waste-to-energy conversion (incineration) and sending our trash to outer space (the students concluded that was a BAD idea!). When I showed them my graphs, I was impressed with their knowledge of data collection and graphing (they knew what a pie chart was, what a bar chart was, and even what a 3D stacked bar chart was!). Based on their copious note taking when I was reading off the stats, I expect some of them to generate their own unique charts about the success of this recycling program.

Looking forward, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Earth Day is just around the corner, on April 22. You'll hear more about it in the April newsletter, but I wanted to get your wheels turning now. In honor of Earth Day, the PTA is going to encourage a variety of earth-friendly activities. One of those is encouraging the formation of a "Walking Bus" for any neighborhoods that are close enough to walk to school. This phenomenon has grown so wildly around the globe that there is even a Wikipedia entry for it! Check out [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking\\_bus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking_bus) to learn more. If you Google "walking bus", you'll also get a number of hits. If you do start a walking bus, please keep a few things in mind: the children's safety is of utmost importance, so please make sure adequate adult supervision is provided; please make sure to

plan your route in advance (and even practice it) to ensure you allow sufficient time to arrive at school on time; and if you find that you might need to cross private property as part of your route, please obtain permission in advance! Oh, and if you do form a walking bus, please let me know, so I can keep track of how many walking buses we have.

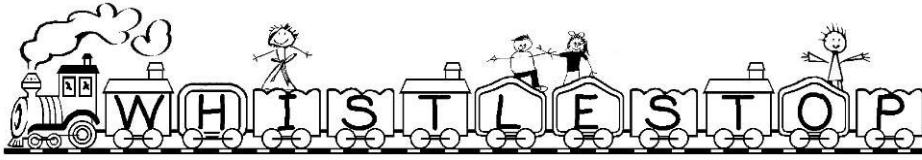
I'd also like to encourage you to consider helping your child enter an essay contest that could win Robious Elementary School their own yellow hybrid bus! According to [AmericasGreenest-School.com](http://AmericasGreenest-School.com), one full school bus is equivalent to taking 36 cars off the road. Just imagine if that big yellow bus is a hybrid bus – how many cars would that be equivalent to? I don't know, but I do know that our eco-heroes know all about going green, and the winning essay not only wins a bus for the school, but also wins \$3,000 in school supplies and is entered to win a \$5,000 scholarship check! Let me know if your child enters!

And, finally, we'll also be launching our crayon recycling drive in April... so all those old broken crayons you've been saving since the winter holiday will have a place to go to be recycled into new crayons. Just hang onto them for one more month...

Thank you for all you do to encourage your child's eco-consciousness. As always, please let me know if you have any other ideas of how we can make Robious Elementary School a greener place to be.

Bryna Dunn  
PTA Recycling Coordinator  
[brynadunn@comcast.net](mailto:brynadunn@comcast.net)

# A Message from the Conductors



ALL ABOARD!!!! Our biennial Whistlestop Carnival is rolling in on Saturday, May 2nd from 12pm-4pm. The afternoon will be filled with games, inflatables, DJ music, food, pony rides, a petting zoo and more! Past favorites such as the dunk tank, cake walk, book fair and toy walk are returning! Wristbands will be sold again this year to allow unlimited passage to the new Obstacle Course Slide Combo, the 32' Rock Climbing Wall, moon bounces and other inflatable's. Bring younger siblings to enjoy a special toddler area and kiddie land.

Tickets will go on sale with PRE-EVENT DISCOUNT PRICING beginning March 27th through April

24th. Order forms will come home in Friday folders on March 27th. Look for great savings on the new "Fun Pack" wrist band/ticket combination.

Calling all Volunteers!!! We need lots of help to make this day a success! Please consider donating an hour or two your time to help with games, clean - up or set - up. Volunteer forms will come home in the Whistlestop Newsletter on Friday, March 13. Please use this form or contact Cindy Hermanns at [chermanns@verizon.net](mailto:chermanns@verizon.net) or Pam Kobza at [pam\\_kobza@verizon.net](mailto:pam_kobza@verizon.net) to help out. Better yet - go to [respta.org](http://respta.org) and sign up on PTO Manager!

DONATIONS NEEDED!!!! Please consider donating your generators, canopies and power cords for the day. Make sure to label with your last name. Contact Drew Tomencheck at [drewmina@pol.net](mailto:drewmina@pol.net) or Mark Bergin at [markbergin@hotmail.com](mailto:markbergin@hotmail.com) if you would like to donate.

TOY WALK and BOOK SALE...as you are beginning to spring clean, please consider donating any gently used children's and/or adult books as well as gently used stuffed animals. There are boxes in front of the library for collections.

**Kim Mayes 794-2402**

**Nina McCord 794-7984**



The Ukrop's Golden Gift program is back! Each time you use your Ukrop's Valued Customer Card from March 2 through March 28, your purchases will be electronically recorded in your Valued Customer Account. You will earn one

Golden Gift point for every \$1 spent. Then in May you will receive by mail your Golden Certificate with the details of your household points. We'll collect the certificates at that time and submit them for our share of Ukrop's \$200,000 payout!

## Parent Coffee

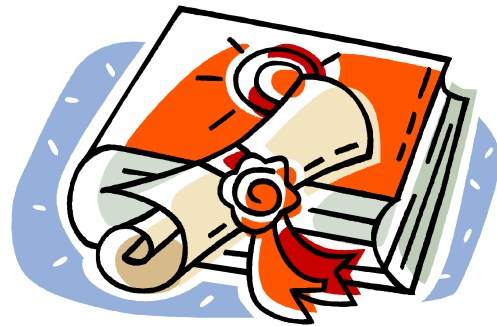


PTA presents:  
 A Parent Coffee  
 Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup>,  
 9:30-10:30  
 "Internet Safety"  
 What Parents need to  
 be aware of with their  
 children using the  
 internet!

## Are You Updated?

If your email has changed or is no longer active please take a moment and go to [www.robious elementary.PTOManager.com](http://www.robious elementary.PTOManager.com) and update your information. While you're there, please take a look at the volunteer events that are listed through the end of the year and add your name to any that interest you. Specifically, we'll need lots of volunteers to help with the Whistles-top carnival and Field Day. If you have any questions or problems contact Mary Beth McCabe [mccabeva@yahoo.com](mailto:mccabeva@yahoo.com)

Thank you for your yearbook orders and parent ads. The yearbook has been completed and will look great. We look forward to distributing them in June.



## Reflections Wrap-Up & 2009-2010 News

The Reflections contest was a great success for Robious Elementary, with over 45 entries in categories including literature, visual arts, photography and even musical composition. At the reception held for participants on January 22, parents and grandparents were on hand to share in the fun as Mrs. O'Toole recognized each participant individually.

After our school reception, the Robious Elementary school winners in each category were invited to the county-wide Reflections ceremony, which was held at LC Bird High School on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Once again, all participants were recognized

individually. And to add extra excitement, two of our Robious Elementary winners received special recognition at the county-wide ceremony: **Caitlin Dunn** received an Honorable Mention for her Visual Arts entry in the k



– 2<sup>nd</sup> age group, and **Sarah Morgan** received 2<sup>nd</sup> place for her Visual Arts entry in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> age group!!

Congratulations once again to our winners, and to all of our participants! Everyone did an absolutely fantastic job!!

And for those of you who can't wait for next year's contest, you won't have to: the 2009-2010 theme has been announced. So for those of you looking for a summer time project for your elementary students, the theme for next year is: **Beauty Is....** Entries may be submitted between 09/08/09 and 10/23/09. For complete rules and entry forms, please visit the Virginia state PTA website, [www.vapta.org](http://www.vapta.org), and select State Committees, Arts in Education. Good luck!!





- WHAT:** 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Whistlestart 5K Race & Fun Run benefiting Robious Elementary PTA
- WHEN:** **Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup> 2009**
- PLACE:** Race starts and finishes at Robious Elementary School
- TIME:** 5K: 9:00 am                      1/4 mile: 10:00 am                      1 mile: 10:20 am
- COURSE:** Mostly flat course through the surrounding neighborhoods.  
1 mile course runs across soccer fields. 1/4 mile course is on the track.
- RACE FEE:** **On or before March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Individual: \$15.00 Adult/child(<18yrs old) team \$20:00. After March 6<sup>th</sup>, Individual: \$20, Adult/child team \$20.00.** Registration on race day begins at 7:45 a.m. Shirts available to first 200 5K entries. Fun Runs (1 mile and 1/4 mile) are free. Kids shirts available on race day for \$8.00
- AWARDS:** Prizes to top three male and female winners; top 3 adult/child teams (11 and under, and 12-17) in the 5K .... and more. Participant ribbons for all in 1/4 and 1mile race. **Drawings for gifts after the 5K. Must be present to win.**

**REGISTRATION:**

- 1) Online at [www.rrrc.org](http://www.rrrc.org).
- 2) at **Runner Bills**, Midlothian, Fri 3/13, 5:00-7:00 pm.
- 3) Pick up application at Robious Elementary School
- 4) Race day registration 7:45-8:45 am.

Applications can be mailed to: Whistlestart Fun Run, 2801 Robious Crossing Drive, Midlothian VA 23113, or dropped off at Robious Elementary School. Please make checks payable to:  
**Robious Elementary School PTA.**

**PACKET PICKUP:** Pick up packet at **Runner Bills** on Fri March 13<sup>th</sup> (5:00-7:00 pm) or on race day.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** or to volunteer: please contact Mike or Sharon Baum at 794-6712 or [baumhokies@comcast.net](mailto:baumhokies@comcast.net).

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*Get off your Caboose: Runners, Walkers & Volunteers Wanted!*

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# Inhalants: The Invisible Danger



Did you know that middle school students are more likely to use inhalants than older students? And that inhalant use can start in elementary school?

Do you know the telltale signs of inhalant use?

Prevention of inhalant abuse needs to begin in the elementary school years. All you need is knowledge and a dose of common sense.

On Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. in the Bettie Weaver cafeteria, the BWE PTA will be sponsoring an interactive inhalant abuse prevention workshop for Weaver, Robious, Greenfield and Watkins Elementary parents. SAFE (Substance Abuse Free Environment, Inc.) will teach parents:

- What inhalants are
- How they are used
- The damage they can do
- Signs of use
- How to talk to your kids about them

Is an hour of your time worth potentially saving a child from the effects of inhalant abuse? The time to begin protecting your child is now. Please, no children at this event.