

NORTHRIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MARCH, 2010

Thoughts from Dr. Goodman

Homework 911

Let's face it: Homework can be almost as frustrating for parents as it is for kids. Getting kids to do their homework can be a challenge, and when they do sit down to study, a host of other problems can emerge. But your child's study sessions don't have to stress out the whole family. Doing homework may not be as fun as playing video games or chatting with friends, but it shouldn't be something that kids dread. "Homework should inspire students rather than bore them," says Sharon Marshall Lockett, author of *Home Sweet Homework*. Your child's assignments should not be busywork, she says, but should help him build a skill, test a skill, or learn something new.

You can help by being a homework monitor, stepping in to answer questions or offer encouragement, but not doing your daughter's assignments for her. Supervising your child's homework gives you a chance to see what she's learning and how well she's grasping the material. It helps you understand her learning style and shows you care about her education. Many kids resist studying by asking why they have to learn things they'll never use in real life. If your son shows little interest in his assignments, you can make them seem more relevant by pointing out ways you use the math and language arts skills he's studying in daily life.

Parents who feel that their kids are overloaded can be vocal, but they're in the minority, says Harris Cooper, a professor of education, psychology, and neuroscience at Duke University and a longtime researcher on homework. He points to a 2007 MetLife survey in which about 15 percent of parents said their kids had too much homework. About 60 percent said the homework load was just right, and 25 percent thought their children had too little homework. If you think your child takes too long to finish homework, try to determine whether the problem lies in having too much work or managing time poorly. "One of the things homework is supposed to do is to teach time management and self-discipline," Cooper says.

Make Homework More Fun

If your child complains of boredom while doing homework, consider shaking up the routine a little to make study sessions more fun. Lockett suggests these approaches to keep kids engaged.

Get help from friends: If your child is struggling with an assignment, let him call a friend for help or invite a friend over to work on it with him. You might also invite neighborhood kids over and let them do homework together. Have them sit around the dining room table and help each other.

Incorporate physical activity: Set mini goals for homework and allow time for stretching, jumping jacks, or a snack after each goal is completed. For a kid who can't sit still, find active ways to study, such as tossing a football while calling out the multiplication tables or fidgeting with small toys while memorizing facts.

Turn the tables: Let your child teach you a lesson. Let her give you a quiz and a grade.

Divide and conquer: Instead of spending equal time on every topic, encourage your child to hone in on what he doesn't know and skim the content he has already learned.

Talk it through: Encourage your child to study out loud. By tapping his sense of hearing, your child will be more likely to remember the concept without spending additional energy.

Optimist Oratorical Contest

The Optimist Oratorical Contest was held on February 16, 2010. The contest is open to all boys and girls under 16 years old. This year the topic was “Cyber Communication—Progress or Problem?” Evan Rothi was the winner for the boys; and Alexandra Hochstetler (from the high school) won for the girls. Jennifer Fry took second place for the girls.

The two winners will compete March 14 at regional contest. Winners of this contest go on to the zone where a scholarship of \$1,500 is given to the winners.

This contest helps students with confidence, presentation, speaking skills, and showing the many positive qualities of our young people today. Congratulations to our winners and good luck on March 14.

6th grade February students of the month:

Sabers

Austin Beckler
Mackenzie Kauffman

Raptors

Ellie Lengacher

T-Rex

Kady Burden

Names have been omitted due to “denial to publish” requests

3rd Quarter VIP Luncheon

The VIP program at Northridge Middle School recognizes good citizenship qualities. Ten students are selected from each grade level. Each quarter, VIPs will be honored with a Middlebury Dairy Queen luncheon with a speaker from the community. They also receive a bumper sticker provided by American Legion Post #210 in Middlebury.

The criteria considered for selecting these students are: they help and care for others, take care of school responsibilities (grades, detentions, over due books etc.) in a positive way, display leadership, actively involved in school, has good attendance, pleasant personality, respects authority and other students’ rights and property,

The featured speaker for the third quarter was Matt Stoffel of Middlebury. The luncheon was held March 9, 2010 in the Family and Consumer Science room. The students selected for the third quarter were:

6th grade: Seth Cripe, Tyler Doutlick, Sydney Fogle, Joel Hendricks, Eva Hochstetler, Shelby Joslin, Bailey O’Dell, Jordan Ruggles, and Zach Serikow.

7th grade: Taylor Brandenberger, Trent Brickner, McKayla Friskney, Emily Hughes, Austin Miller, Grant Miller, J.T. Plavchak, Carolyn Saylor, Alexa Taylor and Brianna White.

8th grade: Katie Barkow, Molly Bontrager, Brianne O'Dell, Taylor Ross, Sehar Singh, Carly Spirito, Macauley Wieland, Joan Yoder and Mickenzie Yoder.

Congratulations to these students!

Names have been omitted due to "denial to publish" requests

Library Lowdown

The "Battle" has begun. Do you know in which Young Hoosier book a boy throws dead termites under a desk and two kids are part of a parachute drop, literally? Which Young Hoosier has the quotes, "You know dear, grandpa always said take care of your tools and they'll take care of you," and "if we were suppose to be out in the dark, we would have been born with night-vision goggles on our head." These are some of the questions our 52 teams of students will be asked during the "Battle of the Books" contest. The teams battle for 10 minutes, receiving 3 points for each correct title and 1 point for each correct author. This is a double elimination tournament, so the students who lose have another chance to win the grand prize by battling in the second-chancers' competition. All our winners and competitors will attend an awards party at the end of April where the champions will be awarded their prizes. We're very excited to have such great participation this year, and students have until the middle of April to earn prizes for reading 10 of the Young Hoosier Books. Special awards will be presented to those students who have also read all 20 of the Young Hoosiers.

We are currently holding another fun contest in our library. Do you know which Young Hoosier books go with the following Mad Gab titles: Tub Bull Lie Dent It Tea, Won and Dead Cat Ditch, Law Win Boy We? Each week a new Mad Gab is featured in the library and all students have a chance to win prizes by guessing the correct Young Hoosier title. For a list of these book titles, stop in the NMS Library or Middlebury Community Public Library.

Our March book clubs coming up will feature Confessions from the Principal's Chair by Anna Myers. This humorous book is about a middle school girl who, after participating in a cruel prank on a classmate, is forced to move with her mom to a small Oklahoma town where she is mistaken for a substitute principal and receives a new perspective on bullying. We have some fun activities planned and everyone is invited to attend during their lunchtime on March 31st. We will also be holding another book club on March 17th as a special request by sixth graders on a popular ghost story, Deep, Dark, and Dangerous by Mary Downing Hahn.

Our spring book fair is just around the corner, April 19-26, so mark your calendars to stop in the library to pick up some great books for your summer reads.



Lightning Thief Book Club