

# School News



Where success is measured one student at a time

September 11, 2009

R-325

## Stone staff captures students' hearts each day

Thomas Stone High School staff agree on an important factor of working in education. "The look on a student's face when they have an epiphany, when they 'get it'. That is what makes this profession worthwhile. This helps confirm why we are here each day," Stone Vice Principal Michael Meiser said during a staff training session held Monday, Aug. 17, for the Capturing Kids' Hearts program, a voluntary effort entering its fourth year at Stone to help staff and students better connect with one another.



**Thomas Stone High School math teacher Cazie Pitts, right, and Vice Principal Michael Meiser, left, participate in voluntary Capturing Kids' Hearts training held Aug. 17. Stone implemented the program in 2006.**

Capturing Kids' Hearts, developed by the Flippen Group, is a voluntary program that focuses on developing safe, trusting and self-managing classrooms. Goals of the program include improving classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance, decreasing delinquent behavior, and developing students' empathy for diverse

cultures and background. Staff training focuses on applying the EXCEL model within a school climate to create a positive environment. The EXCEL model is broken down into its five letters. The first E is for engage, which includes shaking hands with a student or staff member, or simply saying "hello." The X is for explore, which focuses on listening skills, student needs and creating a safe learning environment. The C stands for communication, which expands on content and dialogue. The E stands for empower, and emphasizes the need to use and develop skills to provide encouragement. The L stands for launch, and focuses on committing to the program and demonstrating this commitment within the school climate.

A majority of staff at Stone, including  
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## County expands athletic training, unified sports programs

Charles County Public Schools athletes have two additional reasons to demonstrate school spirit: the expanded Athletic Training Program and the Special Olympics Unified Track and Field sports program.

The training program provides each high school with an athletic trainer from the Southern Maryland based Orthopedic & Sports Physical Therapy group. Athletic trainers are health care professionals that work with physicians to prevent, diagnose and monitor physical conditions and injuries in athletes. Each trainer works at least 30 hours a week at

their assigned school and are available during home games, team practices, and work with coaches as part of a care and prevention course. Additionally, all trainers travel with their assigned school's varsity football team during the regular season and post-season games.

Last school year, there were three trainers on staff who split their time between six high schools. According to Jan Johnson, specialist in athletics for Charles County Public Schools, with the expansion of the program, trainers are

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### *Schools closed for students*

Schools will be closed for students only on Friday, Sept. 18, and county in-service training will be held for teachers.

### *SECAC meeting*

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) will hold its first meeting of the 2009-10 school year at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 16, in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

### *MAC meeting*

The first Minority Achievement Committee (MAC) meeting of the 2009-10 school year is Wednesday, Sept. 16, in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. It begins at 4:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

### *Board work session*

The Board of Education is holding a joint work session with the Charles County Commissioners to discuss plans for the new high school on Monday, Sept. 28, 6 p.m. in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. The meeting will be aired live on Comcast Channel 96 and broadcast live on the school system Web site at [www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/](http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/).

### *MetLife seminar*

MetLife is conducting a seminar for current and prospective 403(b) plan participants on Wednesday, Sept. 30, from 3 - 4 p.m., at North Point High School in the staff development room. The seminar will cover functions and navigations of the MetLife 403(b) plan Web site, and an overview of the quarterly statement.



## Notebook

### ***New teacher reception***

The new teacher reception is 4 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 23 at Middleton Hall in Waldorf. Call 301-392-7580 for more information.

### ***Want to be in the know?***

Subscribe to the CCPS press releases subscriber list to receive the latest student and staff accomplishments, and school system information, including inclement weather alerts, directly to your e-mail account. All posts are delivered within minutes. Visit [www.ccboe.com/pr](http://www.ccboe.com/pr) to sign up.

### ***Direct deposit available***

Charles County Public Schools encourages employees to use direct deposit for pay checks. Use of direct deposit eliminates concerns about receiving checks in a timely manner on snow days or during the summer. To sign up for direct deposit, fill out the authorization agreement for automatic deposits, which is available on the school system Web site, under the staff services page.

Attach a voided check to the form and forward to the payroll department. Allow one payroll cycle for information verification. Checks will be deposited on the second payroll cycle, pending bank approval of your information.

### ***On the cover***

Pictured on the front cover are employees from the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center. Pictured, from left, are: James Lipiano, graphic design teacher; Beverly Rubain, middle school mathematics teacher; Sue Heath, secretary to the principal; and Tony Chase, building service manager.

## School programs aid in student suspension decrease

Charles County Public Schools student suspensions decreased for the fifth consecutive year, according to a recent report sent to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Suspensions dropped from 5,490 in the 2007-08 school year to 4,598 in 2008-09.

Superintendent James E. Richmond said the goal is to reduce suspensions by putting programs in place that help students change behaviors that lead to suspension. Richmond attributes the continued decline in suspensions to programs such as the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program used in 30 schools and Capturing Kids' Hearts, a program at many high schools. "Charles County Public Schools results show how a well-implemented, well supported PBIS program can help reduce suspensions and keep students in school where they can learn," Richmond said.

Recently, MSDE honored 29 schools for their PBIS programs. PBIS focuses on creating safe and more effective schools by developing and implementing research-based, schoolwide classroom discipline systems, reinforcing desirable behaviors and using clear and consistent responses to behavioral violations.

Additionally, Thomas Stone High School was named a 2009 Maryland School of Character by the Maryland Center for

Character Education (MCCE) and the Character Education Partnership. The awards program recognizes schools that demonstrate outstanding character education programs that yield positive results in student behavior and academic performance.

Keith Grier, director of student services, said the PBIS program was introduced in 1999 and has grown in the county. Grier also attributes the suspension decline to quality classroom instruction, better-trained and qualified teachers and more intense and competent supervision, which leads to reduced incidents of school disruption as well as a reduced number of school dropouts.

Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, for example, has significantly reduced suspensions over the past four years, a trend Principal Sue DelaCruz credits to a strong PBIS program. Suspensions this year dropped to 230, down from 329 the previous year and from 504 in 2006. PBIS, DelaCruz said, has helped students and staff to work on relationships, establish a school family and create a school culture where positive behavior is celebrated.

Charles County Public Schools posts its suspension data on the Web site, [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com), as part of its ongoing efforts to address and monitor suspension rates in schools.

### **Hearts**

Principal Larry Martin, vice principals, teachers, secretaries, building service workers and other support staff, have participated in at least one training session and more than 55 staff members attended the training session Aug. 17, a day before 10-month staff were to return to the school. Meiser said this speaks to the level of commitment staff has in maintaining this program within the school setting. "Students and staff are more on a level of mutual respect. The 'Golden Rule' of treat others as you would want to be treated is emphasized in classrooms," Meiser said.

Additionally, Meiser said the program has helped students feel safe in the classroom because they know they will be respected by their teachers and their classmates. Karen Bowles, a trainer affiliated with the Flippen Group, said the training also focuses on adults making better connections with one another because in a school setting, they are the role models. During the training session, Bowles

asked staff to participate in round table discussions to discuss aspects of their personal life, such as something they are passionate about and a positive aspect of their job. Bowles said this activity is helpful in training because it provides participants with ways to connect with one another and with ideas to connect with students.

Another component of the program includes a social contract, which each student completes and signs that affirms their dedication to the program and to maintaining an environment devoted to learning. "The social contract holds all kids accountable for their own actions," Bowles said.

Martin was among the first at Stone to participate in training for the program in 2006, and believes that if you have a child's heart, you have their head. Since then, Martin has provided the opportunity for his staff to attend training sessions and hopes that all faculty members will one day be able to participate.

### **Continued from page 1**

## Teachers travel to Mars, Moon in a Charles County classroom

This summer, more than 80 Charles County Public Schools teachers traveled to Mars, to the international space station, launched rockets or built robots for use in space. Their experiences came without a shuttle launch, astronaut training or loss of gravity. They were all part of the Space Discovery Institute, a series of six science-based sessions offered to county teachers through the school system's partnership with the Space Foundation.

The six week-long sessions held at North Point High School from July 20 to Aug. 7, offered teachers a cost-free opportunity to learn about rocketry, the biology of living in space, astronomy principles for use in a classroom, space technologies and robotics, the history and geology of Earth, and the effects of long term space travel. Participants were also eligible for graduate or continuing education credits.

This year, two new courses were offered to participants: Space Technologies in the Classroom and Lunar/Mars Exploration and Base Construction. The more than 18 participants in the Lunar Mars course learned how to construct a crew exploration vehicle out of household goods, such as plastic bottles and straws, and how to plan and develop a sustainable base on Mars.

J.P. Ryon Elementary School science teacher Kimberly Stillwell, a third-year participant in the Institute, said the most interesting, yet challenging, aspect of the Lunar Mars course was constructing a realistic base in one week.

"As a team, we had to construct a base that would sustain life. The realization that life in space will be a real challenge for the astronauts was something I learned quickly," Stillwell said. She plans to incorporate the base construction lesson into curriculum for her students. "My students will learn hands on the challenges as I

did a month ago of space exploration. I can't wait! It is one of the most interesting topics I teach," she added.

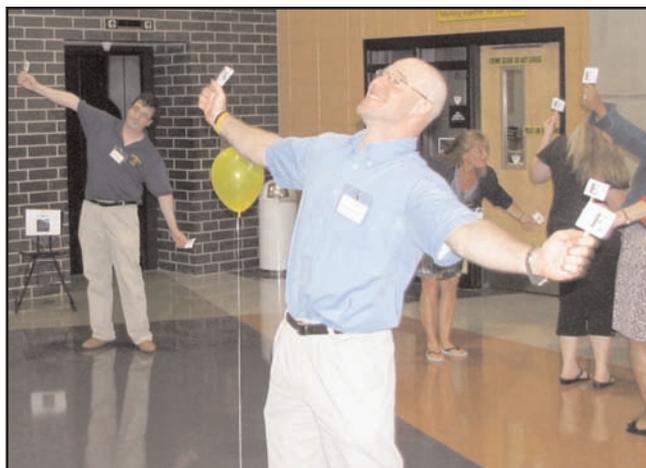
Science teachers, such as Stillwell, are not the only teachers in the county interested in the Space Discovery Institute. Each year, the sessions are offered to teachers across all subject areas. Matthew Henson Middle School language arts teacher Deborah Holder said she signed up for the Lunar Mars course because she is always looking for ways to integrate other subjects into her classroom.

"I enrolled in the class because my students read some of Ray Bradbury's short stories. One deals with a family who comes from Earth to live on Mars. I thought it would be interesting for my students to have a real life, scientific perspective on space travel for the future and the possibility of living on Mars. If you can connect what the children are reading to real life, then they will enjoy reading and will get excited about it," Holder said.

Stillwell has participated in the Space Discovery Institute for the past three years, and has applied for educational credit. "I always look forward to returning each summer. The most thrilling part for me is knowing that in a classroom today, students are learning about Mars and the moon and will one day carry out the mission. Sparking that dream as an educator is what motivates me," she said.

This is the third consecutive year that CCPS offered the Space Discovery Institute, in conjunction with the Space Foundation, to teachers. Each year, the sessions are offered free of charge and are open to all subject and grade-level teachers.

CCPS developed the partnership with the Space Foundation to further develop the STEM programs in the school system.



**Richard Ivanac, an art teacher at Milton M. Somers Middle School, center, participates in an activity during the Astronomy Principles for the Classroom session offered as part of the summer Space Discovery Institute.**

## Sports

now better able to provide all student athletes with equal opportunities to access training. In addition to monitoring athletes, trainers also provide athlete and parent education, coordinate coverage with emergency service providers, provide physician referrals, and track injury and referral data.

The Special Olympics Unified Sports program was introduced in Charles County more than 15 years ago at the elementary-school level. The program combines an equal number of Special Olympics Athletes, students with cognitive disabilities, and students without disabilities on one sports team. Last school year, the track and field program was expanded to the high school level. Each high school formed a unified track and field team, amounting to participation from more than 125 students.

All teams competed in two county level track meets this spring, and at the state level, where Charles County was the only county

with participation from all high schools.

The track and field program is supported with grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education and Special Olympics Maryland, and only three counties in Maryland – Charles, Prince George's, and Baltimore City – have been awarded funds for a unified track and field program. David Bradshaw, the unified track and field coach at Maurice J. McDonough High School, said "this is one of the most positive experiences in sports I have had in all my years of coaching." Johnson said the school system's goal is to continue the leadership of Charles County's unified track and field program. "We hope that other counties in Maryland can follow our lead. We hope to work with Special Olympics Maryland to expand the program into more counties," Johnson said. Additionally, Special Olympics Maryland is working on expanding the unified sports program at the middle-school level.

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## Personnel

Apply for positions at [www.ccboe.com/hur](http://www.ccboe.com/hur), or in writing to the personnel office. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

### Job openings

**Building Service Worker** – North Point High School, 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 11.

**Secretary to the Director of Technology** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 11.

**Special Education Instructional Assistant** – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Sept. 11.

**Secretary in Instruction** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 16.

**Secretary** – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10.5 month position. Apply by Sept. 22.

**In-School Retention Instructional Assistant** – Indian Head Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Sept. 22.

**Food Service Substitutes** – Openings at all schools. Apply by Sept. 22.

**High School English Resource Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and five years of teaching experience required. Apply by Sept. 11.

**Middle School Language Arts Resource Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and five years of teaching experience required. Apply by Sept. 11.

**High School Instructional Resource Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and five years of teaching experience required. Apply by Sept. 11.

**Special Education Teacher for Science** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

**Special Education Teacher for Reading/Language Arts** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

**Special Education Resource Teacher, Elementary** – Elementary school level, 10-month, two-year position to support students with disabilities.

**Special Education Resource Teacher, Middle** – Middle school level, 10-month, two-year position to support students with disabilities.

**Science Teacher** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

**Reading Recovery Teacher** – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

**Library and Media Specialist** – Elementary school level, 10-month position.

**Reading Resource Teachers** – Future openings at all levels, 11-month positions.

**Gifted Education Resource Teachers** – Future openings at all levels, 10-month position.

**Physics Teacher** – High school level, 10-month position.

### Extra pay positions

**Maurice J. McDonough High School** has the following openings:

- Assistant boys' basketball coach
- Junior varsity softball coach
- Assistant softball coach

Contact Principal Jervie Petty, 301-753-1755, to apply.

### Staff notes

#### Identification badges

All employees are required to wear school system identification badges at all times during the school day. Not only does the badge identify you as an employee, it also allows you to enter school and athletic events free-of-charge. Call 301-934-7255 if you have lost your badge to make an appointment to have a new one made. The cost is \$5 per replacement.

#### Stethem teacher recognized

The Charles County Commissioners honored Patricia Clatterbuck, a teacher at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, on Sept. 2 for her service to students in the printing program at Stethem. Clatterbuck oversees student production, design and sale of printed products to the community.

**School News** is published by  
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*The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.*