

THE PONY EXPRESS

A publication of West University Elementary School

Texas Education Agency Exemplary School

Texas Business and Education Coalition Honor Roll School

Just For The Kids Higher Performing Schools in Texas

Houston Independent School District



John T. Threet, Principal
Fall Edition

<http://es.houstonisd.org/westuniversity/>

Tracey L. Wyatt, Magnet Coordinator
September 21, 2009

DEAR PARENTS.

As a reminder, we have a school holiday next Monday, September 28. The school will be closed that day.

This Saturday is West U Day at Rice Stadium as the Rice Owls football team takes on Vanderbilt. Please see the flyer in today's Monday Folder for more information and to purchase discount tickets. Mayor Bob Kelly will be the Guest Coach this week as Rice recognizes our great community. There will also be a special recognition on the scoreboard for West U Elementary School.

On September 1, 2009 the Texas Child Occupant Restraint law changed. SB 61 requires that any child younger than eight years old be secured in an approved child safety seat system when riding in a passenger vehicle, unless the child is taller than four feet, nine inches. Law enforcement officers may only enforce the new changes in the law with written or verbal warnings until June 1, 2010. However beginning June 1, 2010 officers may then arrest or issue a citation/notice to appear to a person committing the offense. The new requirement will affect children in grades K-3rd. It is extremely important for parents to be aware to the new law. I talked to WUPD Chief Ken Walker and he informed me that his officers will issue warnings until next summer.

Speaking of safety, please set a good example for your child by wearing a bicycle helmet when you bike ride. If your child sees you not wearing a helmet then at some point they will think it is OK for them to not wear a helmet. We want all of our students and our parents to be safe.

With the prediction of rain this week, please be reminded that students may report to the cafeteria to wait until the first bell rings during inclement weather. On these days, we also need to ask parents to not wait in the cafeteria with their children. With our large student enrollment, we don't have room in the Cafeteria for all of our children plus their parents. There is adult supervision in the cafeteria each morning.

Speaking of rainy days, please work with us on rainy days at dismissal time. Again, due to our large student enrollment, traffic can be a mess on those days. We usually keep the students inside the hallways and call for them as their rides pull up to the carpool lines. We need your cooperation on those days to make it work.

Speaking of inclement weather, with the hopeful approach of cooler weather, please label your child's sweaters and jackets with their first and last name. Each year we give many quality outerwear items to Goodwill because we can't identify the owners.

Please also check the weather forecast during the cooler months to make sure your child is dressed appropriately for school. As long as it is not wet outside, we will go out for recess and PE unless it is bitterly cold. Students wearing shorts and t-shirts have a rough time when the temperature is in the forties if they don't have a jacket.

Field Day will be here before you know it. **HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR VIPS???** Please see the blurb that has run each week in the *Pony Express*, or talk to the office staff if you need assistance registering for VIPS. Don't assume anything. We don't want you to miss out on any school activity because you didn't properly register for VIPS.

Have a notable week!

JOHN THREET, PRINCIPAL



PTO NEWS

CARNIVAL INFO

This year's theme of "Our children are our greatest legacy" rings true in so many ways. The carnival, October 17, Saturday, 11AM – 3PM, bazaar opens at 10AM, will be a "green" carnival. Our carnival will reduce, reuse and recycle materials as we leave our children a cleaner planet for the future.

Our hope is that as a family you will enjoy this day of fun! Enjoy your time to just play and explore the carnival grounds. At the carnival will have a shopping bazaar, inflatable rides, bake shop, games of skill, and games of chance.

The food court will have the pizza and Bar-B-Que. We welcome one of new sponsors Chick-fil-A to the food court area.

The carnival team is hard at work setting up for the big day, October 17, Saturday. The team work involves you, our parents. I encourage you to help take just one shift in your classroom's assignment. The help we give to the children of the school is not just financial, but in your service as volunteers. Without you, our parents, we cannot operate these events.

If you have any questions, please contact: Laura Mireles: lbmireles@mac.com or Michelle Lopez Varma lopezvarma@sbcglobal.net.

AUCTION NEWS

The auction team is working diligently as they prepare for auction gala, CODE NAME: LEGACY. This year's auction will be at Westin Galleria main ballroom, November 21, Saturday, 7 PM - 12 midnight.

James Bond would be proud to be seen at this event as you enter the Casino Royale theme ballroom. Come join in the fun, food and drinks. Enjoy listening to our live band; and, after the auction at 10 PM; enjoy dancing and playing casino games till midnight.

Here is your opportunity to purchase sociables for your children, classroom projects, grade level baskets, silent auction, big board, and our LIVE auction. Holiday shopping for all ages will be at your finger tips. Surprises await!

New this year is our wine pull and high roller's room. The wine pull is a random drawing of wine for \$30. Your wine will be a minimum value of \$30 to perhaps over \$100+. Special bottles will have bonus items attached. (SURPRISE)

The High Roller's Room is a raffle limited to a minimum of 24 tickets to a maximum of 40 tickets. Your raffle ticket gives you entry into our private area to play in a Texas Hold'em tournament from 10PM – midnight. Tickets are \$250. The values for the trips start at \$7260+. Only 40 spots are available.

You do not need to be present to win. Due to Texas law we cannot award the winner of the tournament the trip. This is the reason for the raffle system.

Here are some of your choices to the winner of the raffle: Details on the trip can be found on the PTO website: www.westupto.org

1. Hawaii Grand Hyatt & Hyatt Regency Resort & Spas Choice 4-Night Package with Airfare for (2)
2. Choose Your Championship: Major Sporting Event Upper Level Seats 3-Night Package for (2)
3. Best of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts 4-Night Junior Suite Package with Airfare for (2)

Don't forget about your brick or art tile dedications. Quantities are limited on these special bricks and art tiles that will be used in Phase II of the outdoor library reading sanctuary. For more details: go to: www.westupto.org. Quantities are limited, hurry before these tiles sale out. You may also contact the chairs: Suzanne Rose: suzannekrose1@gmail.com, or Kathy Kehn: kehn@sbcglobal.net.

Thank you everyone for making this a wonderful start to the new school. Please continue to support our children and the school with your presences.

Andy Chan, PTO President

YEARBOOK

Today's Monday Folder includes envelopes with your Yearbook Ordering Forms.

If you lose the form, please go to smart-pay.com to purchase your yearbook.

All yearbooks must be purchased through Smart-Pay (on-line, by phone 1-800-853-1337, or by mail). Next week, look for information in the Pony Express on ordering a personal ad/dedication in honor of your child/children.

ORDER YOUR MINI-DIRECTORY TODAY!

Mini directories are a smaller version of the student directory. They are great for keeping in your car, purse or backpack - anywhere you might need addresses and phone numbers at your fingertips. You can order as many mini directories as you want. The cost is \$5 per mini directory and checks should be made payable to WUES PTO. To order your mini directory, go to the West U PTO website (www.westupto.org) and click the PTO Order Form link which is on the home page. Print and complete this form and deliver along with your check to the VP Fundraising Box at the front office of the school. If you do not have internet access, there are blank PTO Order forms located in the hanging rack next to the fish tank in the front office of the school.

For those who have already joined the PTO at the \$1,000 level, then you will receive 2 mini directories as part of your membership. If you joined the PTO at the \$100, \$250, \$500 or \$750 level, then you will receive 1 mini directory as part of your membership. For anyone who has not joined the PTO or who wants additional copies, please make sure to complete the order form as this is the only way to get the mini directories. The print house will only run the number of directories that are pre-ordered so there will not be any extras available for purchase after the deadline.

Orders should be submitted no later than Friday, October 2nd. Any questions should be directed to sherriarbour@gmail.com.



Library News

Calling all Library Volunteers:

Are you detailed oriented? Do you like to work in a quiet environment? Do you love books? Do you have about an hour a week to dedicate to the new West University School Library? Well then come and join us as a Library Volunteer. Volunteers commit to the Library and not to their child's ancillary schedule. You can shelve books on a weekly or every other week basis. We will have a mandatory training class for all new shelvees on Wednesday, October 7th at 10:00 am in the Library. You must be VIPS approved to work in the Library. If you have any questions or to RSVP for the training, please contact Moria Cullins at mcullins1@sbcglobal.net.

Special Guests on CONSTITUTION DAY

Students who were scheduled to attend library classes on the morning of Sept. 17th were treated to a special Constitution Day reading sponsored by the Houston Bar Association. The Honorable Judge Pat Kerrigan read a book called The U.S. Constitution by Norman Pearl to Mrs. Daughtery's 4th grade class. The Honorable Judge Kyle Carter repeated the same reading an hour later to Mrs. Bailey's 3rd grade students. These honored guests both indicated how much they appreciated our students' excellent behavior and eager participation in the discussion that followed each reading! We also want to thank the Houston Bar Association for donating this book to our school library.

HISD MILLIONAIRE CLUB CELEBRATION

We will have a celebration for all student participants in the HISD Millionaire Club on Thursday, September 24th, from 2:00-3:00 p.m. in the courtyard closest to the library. Names of the Millionaire Club students will be submitted to their teachers, and all students must have their teacher's permission to arrive early (beginning at 2:00) before school is dismissed on Thursday. We are specifically honoring those students who followed the rules of the contest and turned in their summer reading certificate. Students whose names are on our list will receive a tee-shirt from the library dept. and are asked to wear it to school on Friday, Sept. 25th, which is the day that Houston ISD is recognizing all members of the Millionaire Club in our school district. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and attendance.

HISD Online Resources

The following FREE online resources are available to parents and students at home or at school: Britannica and World Book encyclopedias, ABC-CLIO, EBSCO, NetTrekker, WilsonWeb, Proquest, Thompson Gale, and Teaching Books. All of these resources are accessible without using a login on an HISD campus. However, from home or another remote location, you will need the following user name and password:

1. The 2009-1020 user name is houstonisd (same as last year)
2. The NEW 2009-2010 password is Texans

United Streaming/Discovery requires the above logon both on campus and at home. You can get to these resources at the following websites: http://www.hisdlibraryservices.org/online_resources.htm or <http://tinyurl.com/42bx4k>

Polly Kotarba, Librarian




Last Day to Order Innisbrook Giftwrap

Today is the last day of our Innisbrook sale! If you have not done so, please turn in your money and receipt for your order that was entered online. Friday will be the last day to turn in any late orders. If you need help entering your order online please email Lisa Hardee at lisaHardee@yahoo.com or call at 713-839-7777.

Don't forget to pick up your items at the carnival on October 17th (unless you had your order mailed directly to your home).

Thank you for making our sale such a success!



Clink! Cheers! Here's to a great school year at WUES!
Join WUES parents on Monday, October 5th from 6:30-8:30pm at
The Houston Wine Merchant, 2646 S. Shepherd Drive

Enjoy an evening with appetizers and wine tasting. Toast with old friends, make some new, learn more about wine and help raise money for our school. Purchase a bottle of wine for yourself at 15% off, or even better, purchase a bottle of wine to donate to the Auction Wine Pull at 20% off. Clink! Cheers!

What's the WUES Auction Wine Pull you ask? The PTO will be collecting wine donations valued at \$25 and UP, UP, UP for the WUES Auction. For a \$30 donation, Auction attendees will have the opportunity to purchase a "pull." All wine labels will be covered so your "pull" may result in a good bottle of wine OR a full-bodied, distinguished, reserve variety with great legs!

If you are interested in donating a bottle of wine, but cannot attend the Houston Wine Merchant Party, please contact Autumn Seiler at seiler3@sbcglobal.net.



 **Birthday Book Club Kids** 


The following students are celebrating their birthdays by donating a book to our school library this week:

Joshua Tsai	July 10
Charlotte Harrington	July 16
Noel Madland	August 22
Houston Harris	September 19
Jason Boué	September 21
Hank Harris	September 22
Christopher Lahoti	September 22
Peter Nikonowicz	September 23
Alexander Rico	September 23
Eva Veeningen	September 23
Ellie Bartlett	September 24
Anne-Claire Edwards	September 27

Happy Birthday and thank you for supporting the West U Elementary library!

You may pick up a Birthday Book Club Order form from the PTO Box in the school office, or contact: Janet Childers childersjs@comcast.net, Aleshia Hybarger limabean3@comcast.net, or Beth Murphy bethhuntmurphy@yahoo.com.

Reminder: Order forms and payments must be submitted by 2:00 p.m. the TUESDAY BEFORE the WEEK of the child's birthday if you wish for their name to be included in the Pony Express during the week of their birthday. Otherwise, their name will be included the following week.



Lamar Feeder Pattern Back to School Bash
Lamar High School
Monday, October 12
6:00 p.m.
More info to follow in coming weeks




Volunteer Info.


Volunteers are crucial to the continued success of WUES. Whether volunteering with a class party, chaperoning a field trip, participating in field day, or helping with fundraising events, you are important and needed. HISD policy and state law mandate that we must conduct a criminal background check for all volunteers who may be in direct contact with students or who may supervise students. To err on the side of the safety of our children, we require VIPS approval for any school activity that is not a spectator event. For example, parents may attend the 5th Grade Promotion Program as a spectator, but they must complete the VIPS approval process in order to chaperone the 5th Grade Picnic. Examples of activities that require VIPS approval include, but are not limited to, Field Day, Kindergarten Thanksgiving Feast, 4th Grade Texas State Fair, any field trip, etc. This list is obviously not inclusive. Please contact your child's teacher or Magnet Coordinator Tracey Wyatt if you are unsure about a

particular event. **We encourage all parents to complete the VIPS registration process in order to make it possible for all parents to participate in a variety of volunteer roles at our school.** We typically have over 1500 volunteers register for VIPS each year. **PARENTS WHO WERE VIPS APPROVED LAST YEAR WILL ROLL OVER INTO THIS YEAR'S VIPS APPROVED LIST.** More information can be found in our General Parent Information booklet sent on in the First Day Packet on the first day of school (pages 9-11). You may also find this document on our webpage at:
<http://es.houstonisd.org/WestUniversity/Information/info.htm>.

Click on the tab on the right hand side of the page entitled "General Parent Information" to download the document.



SDMC Meeting
Wednesday, September 30
3:15 p.m.
Faculty Lounge



Along With West University, Our Guild Is Blossoming!


Friends of West University Parks Guild broadens its scope to promote community throughout all of West University through a partnership with the Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc., and the Parks & Recreation Department. The guild is now called *West University Friends & Neighbors Guild*.

West U. Elementary Parents - Would you like to support the fundraising activities of Friends by pitching in with small jobs on events or being a part of a play group, bunko group, tennis club, or book club? Would you like to be part of a group that helps shape the activities and programs in our community and gets up-to-date information on what is happening in West U.? Get to know your West U. friends and neighbors through social activities, gatherings and volunteerism. We invite you to be a part of West University Friends & Neighbors Guild!

Please join us for our kick-off meeting and coffee at 9:30AM on Wednesday, September 30th at 4230 Judson Avenue. Guild chair, Adrienne Vanderbloemen, and Parks & Recreation Board vice chair, Janine Schueppert, brainstorm ideas in an effort to discover new ways to meet the needs of West U. residents and families. We need to hear from YOU! Additionally, Janine will provide an update on improvements to Colonial Park and the West University Recreational Center. More information on the changing face of the Friends Guild (now called West University Friends & Neighbors Guild) will be provided. Changes to guild membership and new benefits of being a part of this dynamic organization will be provided. The meeting starts at 9:30 with coffee and visiting and the discussion/program begins at 10:00AM concluding by 11:00 AM.

For more information about this meeting or joining the Guild, please contact Donna LaMond at 713-622-5396, email FriendsGuild@WestUParks.org, or visit www.westuparks.org.

The West University Friends & Neighbors Guild's objective is to support the growth of West U. Parks through volunteer activities and social and recreational opportunities. The Guild meets four times per school year, and the meetings are hosted at private West U. homes. All West University residents are invited to join the West University Friends & Neighbors Guild.



Upcoming Middle School 8th Grade Football See our area teams compete!

WEDNESDAY	9/23/09	WOODSON vs. LANIER	BUTLER, SR.	5:00PM
WEDNESDAY	9/23/09	PIN OAK vs. WELCH	BUTLER, SR.	7:00PM
WEDNESDAY	9/23/09	CULLEN vs. PERSHING	BARNETT, SR.	7:00PM