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Weekly Refresher

It is easier to build
strong children than
to repair broken
men.

- Frederick Douglass

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Guilford Gazette

Hammond High Principal: Distinguished Educational Leader



Hammond High principal, Marcia Leonard, won the Washington Post's Distinguished Educational Leadership Award. The Guilford Gazette met with her at work to discuss her vision and plans.

Two weeks ago the Guilford Gazette was the first to report that Hammond High School principal Marcia Leonard was granted The Distinguished Educational Leadership Award by the Washington Post. She was nominated by those inside and outside the school, vetted by the school system's Central Office, and then selected by the Post as the top principal in Howard County. We sat down with her recently to discuss her award, her vision, and her tenure at Hammond.

Regarding the award, Ms. Leonard said that it was "very, very, humbling. A lot

of people wrote letters of commendation. The award was the icing on the cake. The award was overwhelming." Ms. Leonard said that she also received congratulatory calls from Wilde Lake High parents and students. She received a call from a student that she taught many years ago. She taught at Wilde Lake several years ago. We asked Ms. Leonard about her feelings toward the student body and those connected to it. She responded, "I have very much enjoyed the students because they really appreciate what you do for them." She fol-

lowed up with her thoughts on the parents. "The parents are really energetic, she said." She commended them on their follow through when they are asked to volunteer. Regarding her employees, she said "staff goes above and beyond for students every day."

When asked about her vision for Hammond Ms. Leonard said, "Everybody inside and outside knows how amazing this school is." However, she stressed that folks internally know in greater detail about the greatness of Hammond. Her push is to get the word to

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Featured Schools

- ⇒ Hammond HS
- ⇒ Patuxent MS
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- ⇒ Guilford ES

The Publisher's Notes

Anyone remotely familiar with the Howard County School System is aware of the concept of the "Achievement Gap" - a term that describes the discrepancy in academic performance among student groups in the county.

This phenomenon is not distinct to this county alone – it is part of a trend, nation-wide. According to the data some racial and economic groups perform better academically and get into less behavioral trouble than other groups. The data is statistical and in no way suggests that by virtue of being part of a particular group that an individual is destined to perform better or worse than any other student.

In so many cases, you will find that there are significant numbers of children achieving superior results on tests despite the fact that they are in a declining group. In the reverse side of this issue, you can find poorly performing students who belong to the high achieving groups.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the achievement gap can be closed over time, but the chord has not yet been struck in Howard County that would indicate such a reality here. Every four years, men and women run for one of the three open slots on the county school board. Almost always, the achievement gap is a primary issue that is addressed by most candidates and then fades into the background with the assortment of pressing issues facing the board.

With the general election only months away, it may be time to make the gap a major issue. In time, Howard County may lose its standing as the top education county if this issue is not directly addressed and resoundingly solved.

Ricardo L. Whitaker

Around the County

HCPSS Attendance Area Committee Seeks Participants by May 2nd deadline to join the redistricting committee to help shape potential elementary redistricting plans for the 2013-2014 school year. Members are chosen by the superintendent. To apply, submit letter and resume to HCPSS Office of School Planning, 10910 Clarkesville Pike, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042. For more information: call 410-313-1554 or email jennifer_bubenko@hcpss.org.

School Board—Coffee and Conversation on May 5th, 9:30—11am, Day Oaks Elementary, 4691 Ten Oaks Road, Dayton, Maryland.

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Principal from Page 1

folks on the outside about all the wonderful things happening at the school. She said, "I want the perception to match the reality."

"We want to ensure that our successes are communicated. We make sure that the central office is aware of what we accomplish," she said. "We give students opportunities to interact on the outside through volunteerism. Our students are our best ambassadors."

Our conversation switched to the achievement gap, a dilemma that haunts many school systems around the country. HCPSS has indicated for some time that it wants to eradicate the aca-

ademic disparity that exists among differing groups of students. Ms. Leonard agreed that there is a student achievement gap. The test scores and discipline data confirm that the gap is real, she indicated. "We are clear on our expectations for all students. We are trying to be clear with [students] what is necessary to be college and career ready. Where needed, we provide support."

Ms. Leonard pointed to several proposals that she is attempting to get through that addresses the achievement gap. She is presently working on getting a \$100,000 grant to support an after-school program called 21st Century Learning Community Grant for students..

She is applying to the Maryland State Department of Education with help from the HCPSS Central Office.

Another program on her list is College Summit, a national non-profit association that works with schools, providing 9th through 12th grade curriculum to help students set and reach goals. The association has a liaison that comes to the school.

The program integrates with other programs in its effort to create student success. Ms. Leonard wrapped up the interview with a reminder that the school "motto has been since 1977, 'Where people are important'. The school lives that motto every day." She said, "My hope and my vi-

sion is that students have a community where they feel safe, including academically. If students have a safe network to take those academic challenges, then they will be ready for whatever comes at them in the post-secondary world and career."

Eric Reisman, the Work Study Coordinator and Transition Specialist at Hammond, summed up his experience with Ms. Leonard. He said, "Her success is simple. She asks questions, discusses, and then acts on our proposals. She is by far the best principal I have ev-

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Sunday Around Guilford

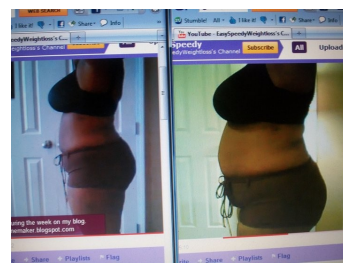


On Sunday, folks around the area were out doing what comes naturally on a day off. William Matthews of Jessup and Bill Hiatt of Guilford-Savage retreated to their oasis at the McDonald's restaurant at Columbia Junction. The perfect pair, Mr. Matthews (left) listened passively, while Mr. Hiatt talked about his many experiences over the years. Both men are retired and apparently enjoying life. At Guilford Park some local guys mixed it up, with some from Baltimore, in a game of basketball. Left to right: Steven Days (Laurel), Jon Ramseur (Baltimore), Nate Whitaker (Guilford), Kevin Guzman (Guilford), Carlton, Ramseur, Jr.(Baltimore), and Carlton Ramseur, Sr. (Baltimore).



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Apparently, some creative, safety conscious resident made a quite noble effort at warning passersby that the tree pictured above in the 9400 block of Ridgeview Drive in Guilford is dangerous. The sign, presumably homemade, was constructed by someone not yet known to the Guilford Gazette. We asked a neighbor walking a dog if he knew who this Samaritan was, but alas he did not know. Upon examination of the tree, the reporter discovered significant rot at the base. With no experts at the Gazette, our best guess is that the deed doer is correct. The tree is dangerous. It looks as though the next storm might take down the tree. The Gazette is checking with the county government to see what can be done. We will update you in the next issue.



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April Scholarship Deadlines Approaching

Schwallie Family Scholarship (administered by the Organization for Autism Research)

This program awards three scholarships of \$3000 each to support individuals with Autism or Asperger Syndrome who are living in the US and are pursuing post-secondary education. Students can apply online at www.researchautism.org/news/otherevents/scholarship.asp. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2012.

Robert H Gross Memorial Scholarship

These three scholarships are in honor and memory of former Hammond High School alumni and teacher Mr. Robert H. Gross, and they were created to recognize areas that Mr. Gross was passionate about: Theatre, Dance, and Special Education. If you are interested in applying, applications are available with Ms. Tobiason, Ms. Kuhl, Mr. Hawkins, or in the counseling center. Only seniors can apply and applications are due on April 30, 2012.

The Angie M. Houtz Memorial Fund

This \$300 scholarship was established to honor Angie's devotion to and enthusiasm for education and community service. Applicants must be enrolled in or planning to attend a public college or university in Maryland, have an un-weighted GPA of 3.0, and be committed to community service. Applications can be downloaded from www.theangiefund.com and are due by April 30, 2012.

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Director of Music Position

Valley Brook Community Church is seeking a part-time Director of Music. We are located in Columbia, Maryland with our offices in Burtonsville. We are a non-denominational church and strive to have a diverse worship set each week to include genres from hymns and spirituals, contemporary praise and worship selections, and gospel. The Director of Music will work closely with the pastor, worship leaders and staff in planning for each Sunday's set. The Director of Music will be responsible for the leadership, development and growth of our praise team through weekly Wednesday night rehearsals as well as the day to day management of music related administrative duties.

The qualified candidate must have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. A degree in music is preferred but not required. Previous experience in directing choirs or ensembles is a must. The Director of Music must be able to play piano, read music, play by ear, sing when needed and transcribe vocal parts off of recordings as well as possess a basic knowledge of Word and Excel for administrative aspects of the job. This is an hourly position for now (approx. 20 hours per week) with the possibility for more as experience and circumstances warrant.

Resumes can be mailed to Valley Brook Community Church, Attn: Mary Wierick, 3333 Spencerville Rd, Burtonsville, MD 20866 or emailed to maryvbcc@verizon.net.

Newspaper Carrier Wanted

The Guilford Gazette is looking for someone, at least 16 years old, to deliver newspapers once weekly in one or more of the following areas: Guilford, Savage, Jessup, Kings Contrivance & Owen Brown. Car preferred, but not a requirement. We pay \$5.25 to start and reimburse mileage for those with their own transportation. Call 410-777-8467 or email news@GuilfordGazette.com to apply.

Hammond News

Hammond Sends Rep to Board

Cole Rosenberg, a junior was elected to the Howard County Board of Education as its only student member. Cole is the eighth student to serve, but the first from Hammond. Cole will hold office from July through June 2013.

Hammond Teacher Wins Award

Ms. Myla Korn, a Hammond teacher was awarded Instructional Assistant of the Year by the superintendent. Ms. Korn is a classroom science assistant at Hammond.

Classifieds Continued

Baby Sitter Wanted

We're looking for a sitter to watch our 4-yr-old daughter in our home; stay-at-home mom needs some time away! Likely schedule would be afternoons, probably 2-6 hours per week total (such as 2:30 - 4:30 2/3 times per week). Ideal for a high school student who'd like to work a couple hours after school and throughout the summer...we can be flexible around your school commitments and summer plans.

Offering \$8 per hour. We're located very close to Guilford Elementary and in the Hammond High district - we can drive you to/from your home if you aren't too far. Our 'perfect' match would be a high school girl in Columbia with references who enjoys outdoor play, painting, 'fun' cooking (cookie decorating, for example), and other non-TV activities. CPR/First Aid certification would be a plus!

Please respond by email to: jenmichael79@gmail.com with your age, if you're in Columbia (and if you'd need transportation), baby-sitting experience, and references. PARENTS, you're welcome to contact us/arrange a visit to ensure the safety of your teen :-)