Dear Parents,

The tools of technology are essential to the life of today’s learners. Island Creek Elementary and Fairfax County Public Schools are fortunate to enjoy state of the art technology. As standard equipment, each of our classrooms is equipped with at least four computers, but we also offer much more to students, teachers and families. Teachers and specialists use Smart Boards daily; our computer lab is equipped with 30 computers, allowing each student individual computer access for lessons; and teachers have access to two mobile computer stations allowing students access to laptops right in their classrooms.

We are also proud to take technology use one step further. I encourage you to visit the Blackboard e-learning communication site (named FCPS 24-7). There are some impressive sites developed by our teachers, specialists and our preschool program. This is an online resource that allows teachers and specialists to post an array of classroom or program information, homework assignments, class activities, enrichment activities, and more! Take a minute and go to http://fcps.blackboard.com with your child and practice logging on. You and your child share a username and password. If you have questions contact our School Based Technology Specialist, Mr. Moran, at mark.moran@fcps.edu.

Island Creek teachers can also take advantage of other instructional technology. One tool teachers use is United Streaming which brings real images to the classroom and transports classes across the globe. It is a digital video-based learning service that contains over 4,000 videos and 40,000 clips that are correlated to Virginia education standards. Island Creek piloted this service for Cluster V when it was first introduced to FCPS in 2004 and we continue to serve as a model service provider for the county.

Our newest learning resource can be explored at www.renzullilearning.com. Once your child has registered for Renzulli Learning at school, you will have access to your child’s profile and enrichment activities at home. Your child’s username is their student ID number and the Password is ices6. Again, Mr. Moran can be contacted if you have questions. This is a tool for providing academic challenge; it allows students to learn more about their own interests and talents. This is a portal resource which searches through thousands of pre-screened resources on the web and within the Renzulli Learning database to find opportunities for students based on their specific levels, areas of interest, and choice. About 30 students are registered at this time, with more logging in each week.

Preparing today’s students for the technological world in which they will live requires us to increase their awareness and familiarity with all these resources and learning tools. Thank you for your support of our school, and of your child. We are better because of your involvement.

We wish you a very happy holiday season and enjoy your time with friends and family.

Thank you for being our partner in education,

Susan Z. Owner
Principal
# December 2006

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**STUDENT HOLIDAYS**

**STUDENT WINTER HOLIDAYS**

- Chanukah Dec. 16-23
- Christmas Dec. 25th
- Kwanzaa Dec. 26-Jan 1

- SCA COAT AND HAT & MITTEN DRIVE

- FLE 5th & 6th Graders
Kate Dreisbach is a new fourth grade special education teacher at Island Creek. She comes to Island Creek after working for five years at Rose Hill Elementary school in Fairfax County. She has taught fourth grade as a general education teacher and she has served as a building-wide reading teacher. She graduated in 2000 with a degree in general and special education from the University of Delaware and from the University of Virginia with a reading degree in 2004. Ms. Dreisbach is a veracious reader of children’s literature and she loves teaching Virginia history. She celebrated the first birthday of her daughter, Grace Elizabeth, in September. Ms. Dreisbach is excited to be part of this community and looks forward to a great year.

Brad Stillions is one of our new third grade teachers at Island Creek Elementary School. He is excited to be working with a new and wonderful group of students and their family members. Brad Stillions grew up as a military dependent in the northern Virginia area. He earned his teaching degree from George Mason University. Mr. Stillions has taught third grade within Fairfax County for the past eight years. When he is not teaching, he enjoys running and visiting area historic destinations. He looks forward to many enjoyable years working for the community of Island Creek.
Parent Liaison ~ A link between home and school

What is the Parent Liaison?

The Parent Liaison works to bridge communication between home and school. Also, A Parent Liaison can help parents to gain information and support that they need to ensure their child’s academic and social success in school.

Who is your Parent Liaison at Island Creek?

I am Badria Alshereif, your new Parent Liaison and I am happy to be working at this school. You can reach me during my office hours from 11-2pm each Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Fridays 11-3 pm. You can reach me by phone at 571-642-6325 or email me Badria.Alshereif.Ahmed@fcps.edu

Hayfield Elementary Satellite Office
Mondays 9:00 – 4:00
Tuesdays 1:00 – 4:00
Thursdays 1:00 – 4:00
or call for an appointment
Elaine Waldron
Parent Resource Center Liaison
703-924-4512

Seasons’ Greetings

The Island Creek Elementary School Office will be closed during winter break.

Hayfield’s Second Annual Cafeteria Carnival!

Monday, December 11th, 2006

Time: 5PM – 8PM

Location: Hayfield Secondary High School Cafeteria

Entrance Fee: $5 or Free with One New Toy for Toys for Tots

Includes Games, Crafts, Prizes and a Fun Time for all Elementary school kids!!!
KINDNESS

Kindness is the character quality for the months of December and January.

Kindness is defined as being thoughtful about the feelings and needs of others. It includes being friendly and accepting and helping others. Kindness is being unselfish and considerate.

Concern for the feelings of others is a fundamental trait of a compassionate individual. Once it was thought that young children were too egocentric to look beyond their own feelings and comprehend the feelings of others; we now know better. Even very young children love to give pleasure and enjoyment to others, as when a little child offers to feed a parent. Little children also will attempt to care for others whom they perceive to be in distress, as when a toddler offers her blanket to an upset parent. Empathy and nurturance seem to be innate human capacities. But, these capacities only reach their fullest expression when cultivated and encouraged. For children to understand how to care for others, they need to experience being cared for and to see caring behavior over and over again.

At Island Creek, we help children learn caring in many ways: by creating a respectful, nurturing classroom environment; by modeling caring behavior; by honoring children as individuals and as members of the school community; and by expecting and reinforcing considerate and kind behavior. We teach and use language that relates to feelings, and we help children learn to communicate about feelings.

We also recognize that caring is not only emotional, but also cognitive, requiring sophisticated understanding of differing points of view. To see out of someone else’s eye represents a leap of intellectual understanding. At school, we have many opportunities every day to help children comprehend that people have different perceptions and feelings, even in response to the same event: “Jasmine likes this noisy game, but it’s too loud for Keith.”

The success of character education depends on reinforcement of these lessons at home.

Your partners in character education,
Angela Harrison
Steff Shelesky
Virginia Hulke
School Counselors
Island Creek News Network (ICNN)

ICNN hosts a daily, student-run news show consisting of fifth and sixth grade students. The sponsors for the news show are Mrs. Woodall and Mr. Moran. Crewmembers, usually four per show, report to the library as soon as they arrive at school. They are trained to work in front and behind the camera. The news show updates students and staff on the lunch menu, birthdays, announcements, etc. The Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence are also a part of the news show. On Mondays, Dr. Owner and Mr. Macrina are our guest anchors. Special activities that are going on throughout the school are also showcased.

COMING SOON!!

Island Creek Elementary
Literacy Is For Everyone Reading Incentive Program

Island Creek is sponsoring our second reading incentive campaign. This program promotes literacy and reinforces the value of reading with children both at home and in school. The proceeds from this fundraising campaign are used to support the instructional needs of our school. Last year we purchased Smart Boards (interactive visual aids that enhance students’ learning experiences) for each grade. More information will be forthcoming!

Thank you to everyone who visited and helped at our fourth annual Book Fair. It was a success because of you!!

6th Grade Book Club

Join us on December 21st at 7:30am for the 6th Grade Book Club. We are reading “Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery” by John Feinstein. All sixth grade students are welcome. New members are encouraged to attend!

You can access the library catalog from home: http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhthbin/cgisirsi/x/0/057/49?user_id=429WEB

December 2006

Library Staff:
Jill Woodall, Librarian
Debi Poole, Library Asst.

Upcoming Events:
✓ 6th Grade Book Club
✓ R.E.A.C.H. Week
✓ VA Readers Choice
ISLAND CREEK GOES NATIONWIDE

Dr. Owner was interviewed on Sally Jesse Raphael daily radio talk show last week. The producer picked up the story from the Washington Post article last week featuring Math Night at Island Creek that promoted parents’ support in developing math skills. The live interview covered a range of topics including the importance of family involvement in education, the balance of homework in families busy lives and the academic achievement in the U.S. compared to world-wide student achievement. It was a lively thoughtful discussion and gave Island Creek a bit a national recognition.

Island Creek Elementary School sixth grade classes recently visited the Challenger Learning Center of Greater Washington. One of the things classes did in preparation for this trip was to create a mission patch.

This year Challenger Learning Center decided to display a school’s mission patch on their annual holiday card. This card is sent out to about 200 of their customers (other schools, school boards, vendors, etc.).

Congratulations to Mr. Vaughan’s class who’s mission patch was chosen to be displayed on this year's card!
A Parent’s Guide to Reading with Children

1. **Create Reading Rituals** – Read together every day, starting when your child is a baby. Set aside a special time and place to read together. Let your child know that reading is important to you, and that he can expect to enjoy this time and place with you on a regular basis.

2. **Get Close** – When you cuddle with your child while reading a story, he or she will begin to associate reading with a sense of security. Children learn better when they feel safe.

3. **Provide Sound Effects** – Use silly voices and sounds to keep your child interested in the story. Hearing different sounds also helps your child develop critical listening skills. Try singing, too!

4. **Make Connections (1)** – Help your child connect the words you are reading and the words he is hearing. Follow along with your finger as you read to show how print moves from left to right. Point out the pictures in the book and talk about what you see.

5. **Make Connections (2)** – We’re surrounded by letters and words. Children need experience with all kinds of print — from shopping lists to the Internet to street signs. Point out letters and words around you. Connect the letter symbol to the name of the letter.

6. **Talk About It** – When reading or telling a story, pause to talk to your child about it. Ask open-ended questions, like “What do you think will happen next?” or “What would you do?” Put things in your own words to help make the story clearer.

7. **Read It Again** – Children need to hear favorite stories over and over. This helps them recognize and remember words. It also helps them learn how to predict what’s coming next. Most importantly, as kids become familiar with a story, they gain confidence about reading and improve their comprehension and background knowledge.

8. **Keep It Active** – Let your child touch and hold the book. Ask her to help you turn the pages. And you don’t always have to sit when you read or listen to a story. Try clapping out a fun rhyme or dancing to a silly poem.

9. **Be Creative** – Too tired to hold a book? Tell a story that you know, or make one up together. Making up a story with your child stimulates creativity. It’s also a nice change.

10. **Follow Your Child’s Pace** – Don’t push your child to read beyond her ability. Choose books suited to her age and development, and let her choose books that she finds interesting. Encourage your child to read, and congratulate her when she learns a new word or masters a new skill.

Written by the National Center for Family Literacy
Building Responsibility

Responsibility, school success tied

Kids who learn to be responsible do better in school. They get along better with teachers and peers. They make better decisions. They’re more apt to try, follow through and succeed. To teach your child responsibility:

- **Practice what you preach.** Be a role model for your child. If you want him to speak respectfully, for instance, talk to him with respect, too.
- **Discuss consequences.** Ask questions like, “How do you think Jose felt when you said that?” “When someone insults you, how do you feel?”
- **Enforce key rules.** Be clear about what will happen when your child does certain things. Then follow through.
- **Learn from the past.** For example, “Remember when Shelly pushed you? We talked about walking away. Later, you told her how you felt.”
- **Allow freedom.** Let your child take minor risks as you guide his experiences and ensure his safety.
- **Develop understanding.** Pose questions that help your child think. “What did you do?” “Why do you think that happened?” “Are you happy with your decision?”


Talking and listening

Encourage your child’s ‘big’ dreams

With today’s busy lives, it’s tough to stay on top of the basics. Does your child have math homework? Is she going to Cindy’s birthday party? Does she have a soccer game?

It is even harder for parents to stay in touch with what goes on inside a child’s mind. But you can’t help your child achieve her dreams if you don’t know what she’s dreaming about.

Ask what she loves to do and why she loves it so much. She’ll be thrilled to tell you. And while you’re listening, you may learn some things you never knew.

Meanwhile, share what you love to do also. Tell her stories about people who overcome obstacles to reach their dreams. Show confidence that your child will succeed in reaching her goals.


Discipline

You can deal with defiance

“I’m not putting away my laundry! I’m watching TV!” There are times when even the most mild-mannered child talks back. Instead of overreacting:

- **Stay calm.** In an even voice, state the facts. “You have to finish your chores.” The calmer you are, the better.
- **Use consequences.** Remember, these can be positive. “When you’re done, we can watch your favorite video.”
- **Save it for later.** You might say, “I’m upset with your disrespectful behavior, but we will wait to talk about it until after dinner.”


Reinforcing learning

Add numbers to daily life

Kids need to be comfortable with numbers. Talk about useful numbers and what they mean, such as prices, speed limits and sports scores. The more time your child spends with numbers, the less anxious she’ll be around them.


Homework

Routines help with work

When your child was little, you probably developed a ritual to get him to sleep. (“Two books, then good night.”) It may be time to do the same thing with homework. (“After dinner, it’s time to hit the books. No TV until you’re finished.”) This can prevent procrastination and promote good grades.

Approach teachers about problems

Q: I'm afraid to talk with the teacher about a problem my child is having in class. How can I get over this?

A: Having a problem with the teacher can put you in an uneasy situation. You want to resolve the issue, but you don't want to offend her. Parents often make a mistake, says Gifted and Talented Teacher Lisa Dean. They discuss concerns with other parents or the principal rather than the teacher. Instead, when you have a complaint:

- **Prepare.** For example, if you don't understand a grade, gather the papers in question. If it's a discipline issue, know the facts. If the problem is something your child brought up, make sure you understand her perspective.

- **Meet.** Write a note or email requesting a short parent-teacher conference. Chances are, things will be resolved easily. You and the teacher might not agree, but you'll understand each other better and likely reach a compromise.

- **Follow up.** Meet with the principal if you still are not satisfied. Otherwise, keep in touch with the teacher. If everyone stays focused on what's best for your child, things should move in the right direction.

Source: Lisa Dean, Cleburne Elementary, 501 South Jackson, Edmond, OK. 73034; 405/414-6476; lisa_dean@edmond.k12.ok.us.

**Parent Quiz**

Is your child responsible about money?

Kids who are responsible about money are often responsible about other things. Answer the following questions: yes or no to see if you're teaching about money management:

1. **Do you talk** about good money habits?
2. **Do you give** your child an allowance (that isn't linked to chores)?
3. **Do you have** allowance rules, such as "no loans"?
4. **Do you help** your child make saving and spending plans?
5. **Are you a** good money role model?

**How did you do?** Each yes answer shows that your child is learning about money management. For each no answer, try to change your answer to yes.

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**Building Character**

Caring starts at home

Many community service lessons—such as those about responsibility and caring—are learned at home. Help your child tune in to relatives. What are their feelings and needs? How can help them? If a sibling has a hard day, for example, your child might do something special to cheer him up.


**Encouraging Reading**

Read for meaning together

Children often can read all the words on a page without understanding what was said. Asking questions can help:

- **Who** was the story about?
- **What** happened in the story?
- **When** did the story take place?
- **Where** did the story take place?
- **How** was a problem solved?

Talk about the answers with your child. As she gets used to asking herself questions, reading will become more meaningful.

**When you need help**

Solve boredom problems

It's a big step when kids learn to manage—and enjoy—free time. To encourage your child to do this:

- **Limit** use of TV and other electronics.
- **Make** a box of emergency "boredom supplies."
- **Say,** "I know you can think of something fun to do."
- **Supervise** to make sure he's safe.


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Helping Children Learn®

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La responsabilidad y el éxito escolar están vinculados

Los niños que aprenden a ser responsables salen mejor en la escuela. Se llevan mejor con los maestros y los compañeros. Toman mejores decisiones. Son más propensos a intentar cosas, llevarlas a cabo y trunfar. Para enseñar responsabilidad a su niño:

- **Practique lo que predica.** Sea un modelo de conducta para su niño. Si quiere que hable respetuosamente, por ejemplo, háblele con respeto, también.

- **Hable de las consecuencias.** Haga preguntas como, "¿Cómo piensas que se sintió José cuando dijiste eso?" "¿Cuándo alguien te insulta, ¿cómo te sientes?"

- **Haga que se respeten las reglas claves.** Sea claro respecto a lo que ocurrirá cuando su niño haga determinadas cosas. Luego llévelo a cabo.

- **Aprenda del pasado.** Por ejemplo, "Recuerdas cuando Shelly te empujó? Hablamos de alejarnos. Después le dijiste cómo te sentías."

- **De libertad.** Permita que su niño tome riesgos menores al mismo tiempo que guía sus experiencias y garantiza su seguridad.

- **Fomente el entendimiento.** Plantee preguntas que ayuden a pensar a su niño. "¿Qué hiciste?" "¿Por qué piensas que eso ocurrió?" "¿Estás contento con tu decisión?"


Aliente los ‘grandes’ sueños de su estudiante

Con las vidas ajeadas de hoy, es difícil mantenerse ambas de lo básico. ¿Tiene tarea de matemáticas su niño? ¿Va a ir a la Fiesta de cumpleaños de Cindy? ¿Tiene un partido de fútbol? Es todavía más difícil para los padres mantenerse en contacto con lo que sucede dentro de la mente de un niño. Pero usted no puede ayudar a su niño a lograr sus sueños si no sabe en qué está soñando.

Pregúntele qué le gusta hacer y porqué le gusta tanto. Estará encantado de decirlo. Y mientras esté escuchando, usted podría aprender algunas cosas que nunca sabía.

Por mientes, comparta lo que a usted le gusta hacer, también. Relátale cuentos sobre las personas que han superado obstáculos para lograr sus sueños. ¡Muestra confianza en que su niño tendrá éxito en lograr sus metas!


Usted puede lidiar con la rebeldía de los niños

"¡No voy a guardar mi ropa! Estoy viendo televisión!" Hay momentos en que aún el niño más agradable puede actuar con insolencia. En lugar de reaccionar de forma exagerada:

- **Manténgase tranquilo.** Con voz apacible, exponga los hechos. "Tienes que terminar tus tareas." Recuerde mantener la calma.

- **Use las consecuencias.** Recuerde que estas pueden ser positivas. "Cuando hayas terminado, podemos ver tu video favorito."

- **Resérvelo para después.** Used podría decir, "Estoy disgustado por tu comportamiento irrespetuoso, pero esperaremos para hablar al respecto hasta después de la cena."

La discipina


AGREGUE NÚMEROS A LA VIDA DIARIA

Los niños necesitan sentirse cómodos con los números. Hable de los números claves y de lo que significan, como precios, límites de velocidad y puntuaciones de deportes. Mientras más tiempo pase su niño con los números, menos asustado estará en su entorno.


La tarea

Cuando su niño era pequeño, usted probablemente desarrolló un ritual para hacerlo dormir. ("Dos libros, después buenas noches.") Puede ser el momento de hacer lo mismo con la tarea. ("Después de la cena, es hora de dedicarse a los libros. No televisión hasta que hayas terminado.") Esto puede evitar la demora y fomentar las buenas calificaciones.
Aborde a los maestros para hablar de los problemas

P: Tengo miedo de hablar con el maestro con respecto a un problema que mi niño está teniendo en la clase. ¿Cómo puedo superar esto?

R: Tener un problema con el maestro puede colocado en una situación incómoda. Usted quiere resolver el problema, pero no quiere ofenderlo. Los padres a menudo cometen un error, dice la Maestra de Niños Dotados y Talentosos Lisa Dean. Hablan de sus preocupaciones con otros padres o con el director en lugar de hacerlo con el maestro. En lugar de eso, cuando tenga una queja:

- **Prepárese.** Por ejemplo, si no entiende una calificación, junte los papeles en cuestión. Si se trata de un problema de disciplina, conozca los hechos. Si el problema es algo que su niño trajo a colación, asegúrese de entender su perspectiva.

- **Reúñase.** Escriba una nota o un correo electrónico solicitando una junta breve entre padre-maestro. Lo más probable es que las cosas se resuelvan fácilmente. Usted y el maestro podrían estar de acuerdo, pero se entenderán mutuamente y probablemente lleguen a un arreglo.

- **Haga un seguimiento.** Reúñase con el director si aún no está satisfecho. De otra manera, manténgase en contacto con el maestro. Si todo el mundo se mantiene enfocado en lo que es mejor para su niño, las cosas deben avanzar en la dirección correcta.

Fuente: Lisa Dean, Chegem Elementary, 501 South Jackson, Edmond, OK 73034, 405/414-6476; lisa.dean@edmond.k12.ok.us.

### CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES

¿Es responsable su niño con el dinero?

Los niños que son responsables con el dinero a menudo son responsables con otras cosas. Conteste las siguientes preguntas con Sí o No para ver si le está enseñando cómo manejar el dinero.

1. **¿Habla sobre buenos hábitos de dinero?**
2. **¿Le da a su niño una mesada (que no está vinculada con las tareas domésticas)?**
3. **¿Tiene reglas para la mesada, tal como “no préstamos”?**
4. **¿Ayuda a su niño a hacer planes de ahorro y de gasto?**
5. **¿Es usted un buen modelo de conducta respecto al dinero?**

**¿Cómo le fue?** Cada respuesta de sí muestra que su niño está aprendiendo lo relativo al manejo del dinero. Para cada respuesta de no, trate de cambiar su respuesta a sí.

- **Los niños no son los únicos que crecen. Los padres también lo hacen. Así como nosotros observamos lo que hacen nuestros hijos, ellos también están observando lo que nosotros hacemos con las nuestras.**

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**Ayudando a los Niños a Aprender**

Editor: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Director de Traducciones: Michelle Beal-Garcia. Asistente de Redacciones: Pat Carter.
Ilustraciones: Maher & Mignello, Cherry Hill, NJ.
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La atención empeña en casa

Muchas lecciones de servicio comunitario—tales como las relativas a responsabilidad y atención—se aprenden en el hogar. Ayude a su niño a sintonizarse con los familiares. ¿Cuáles son sus sentimientos y necesidades? ¿Cómo puede ayudarlos? Si un hermano tiene un día difícil, por ejemplo, su niño podría hacer algo especial para levantarle el ánimo.


Lean juntos para entender

Los niños menudo pueden leer todas las palabras en una página sin entender lo que se dice. Hacer preguntas puede ayudar:

- **¿De quién?** se trató el cuento?
- **¿Qué?** ocurrió en el cuento?
- **¿Cuándo?** tuvo lugar el cuento?
- **¿Dónde?** tuvo lugar el cuento?
- **¿Cómo?** se resolvió un problema?

Hable acerca de las respuestas con su niño. A medida que se acostumbre a hacerse preguntas el mismo, la lectura vendrá a tener más sentido.

Resuelva los problemas de aburrimiento

Es un gran paso cuando los niños aprenden a manejar—y disfrutar—el tiempo libre. Para alentar a su niño a hacer esto:

- **Limita** el uso de la televisión y otros aparatos electrónicos.
- **Haga** una caja de emergencia de "artículos para el aburrimiento."
- **Diga,** “sé que puedes pensar en algo divertido que hacer.”
- **Supervise** para cerciorarse que esté seguro.


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