

## FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Top Teachers Worthy of Recognition



Of all the duties associated with the superintendent's job, one of the most enjoyable is recognizing our *Agnes Meyer Teacher of the Year* nominees. This year, five teachers were nominated for the award given by the

*Washington Post*, which recognizes outstanding teachers in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

It gives me great pleasure to announce this year's nominees:

- **Joel Block** - Mathematics Teacher, George Mason High School
- **Susan Johnson** - Second Grade Teacher, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School

- **Denise O'Neil** - Speech & Language Pathologist/Teacher, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School
- **Janet Weber** - Mathematics Teacher and CIRT, George Mason High School
- **Nick Werkman** - 7th Grade Special Education Teacher and CIRT, Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School

This year's nominations will be screened by a four-person review committee consisting of two former school board members, one central office staff member and one PTA officer. The winning teacher will receive a cash award from the *Washington Post*, and the winner and nominees will be recognized by the school board at a reception in the spring.

*"The mediocre teacher tells.*

*The good teacher explains.*

*The superior teacher demonstrates.*

*The great teacher inspires."*

- William  
Arthur Ward

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### The Agnes Meyer Award Nominees and Quotes From Those Who Nominated Them



Joel Block  
GMHS

*"If more teachers cared as much as Mr. Block cared, academics wouldn't be a problem, because he truly wants achievement out of his students and he takes pride in what he does."*

- Elyse  
Krachman,  
GMHS Student



Susan Johnson, TJ

*"She cares unconditionally. Her spirit and energy are boundless. She always is one of the last to leave school."*

-Holly Shaffie,  
TJ Teacher



Denise O'Neil, TJ

*"She is a person of integrity, she is wise, she is kind, she is incredibly skilled in her profession, and she is always a voice for her students."*

-Lisa Morse,  
Parent



Janet Weber  
GMHS

*"She is a consummate educator and teacher leader, one who is never reluctant to share her passion, wisdom, humor and commitment."*

-Gloria Guba  
Assistant  
Superintendent



Nick Werkman  
MEHMS

*"Mr. Werkman is one of my favorite teachers because he is nice and makes learning fun. He will tell stories that relate to school. Sometimes I forget I'm learning."*

-Lily  
MEHMS Student

## Resiliency Expert Returns to the FCCPS

*Expert leads discussion on student substance use*

You may remember Nan Henderson's presentation on building "bounce back" kids in troubled times. The resiliency expert returned to the FCCPS in January to share ideas on how to reduce substance use among the city's high school students.

Division leaders asked her to conduct the workshop after a recent survey of George Mason High School students indicated their tobacco and marijuana use is above the national average, and their alcohol use is just below the national average. Henderson facilitated a conversation to explore ways the community can work together to bring down the numbers. Options discussed ranged from drug and alcohol-free pledges from students and parents to a city ordinance fining parents for allowing alcohol and drug use at student parties in their homes. The community group plans to meet again in the near future.

The survey was also given to Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School students in grades 6 and 7. The results indicated tobacco, drug and alcohol use well below the national average for that age group.



*Resiliency expert Nan Henderson talks with school and community leaders about teen substance abuse.*

## News to Use

### "Invest" in Your Co-Workers

Surprise your co-workers and invest in better relationships using these friendship builders:

1) **Clear the way.** Everyone wants their questions, ideas, and concerns heard. When a co-worker is trying to make a point at a meeting, call attention so others will listen (Example: "Hey everyone, Susan has something to say.")

2) **Throw a lifeline.** Support a co-worker when roadblocks are encountered or mistakes are made in front of others. Avoid a rush to judgment. Instead, recognize the co-worker's effort or positive intent. (Example: "Jim, I appreciate what you were trying to accomplish, even though things didn't work out.")

3) **Pin a medal.** Praise a co-worker's accomplishment in front of others without waiting for someone else to do it first.

For more information call Courtney Atkins-Miller of New Millennium Employee Assistance Services (703) 863-6680

## Employee News

### Welcome New Staff

Bus driver **Sherry Hamilton** may be new to the FCCPS transportation department, but she's no rookie. Sherry brings with her many years of experience in Fairfax County as a dispatcher, a regular bus driver and a lead bus driver. Welcome Sherry!

### On the Mend

Keep a good thought for **Peter Rose**. The MEHMS 5th grade teacher recently underwent major surgery and is recovering at home.



### Baby News



*Ethan James Van Gorder*

Congratulations to former Mount Daniel teacher Heather Van Gorder on the birth of her son. Ethan James Van Gorder weighed in at 7 lbs., 15.4 ounces. Both mom and baby are doing well.

*"He who wished to secure the good of others, has already secured his own."*

*—Confucius*

# Collegial Collaboration

## Professional Staff Shares Expertise with Colleagues



FCCPS professional staff members took part in a variety of professional development workshops on Monday, January 29. **Above:** Teachers enjoy a stop at the city's Cherry Hill Farmhouse during a 3-hour tour of historic Falls Church landmarks. **Upper right:** BIE coordinator Marybeth Connelly teaches staff members how to tap into the business community to create meaningful learning opportunities for students. **Right:** MEHMS teacher Robin Miller (center) shares ideas with colleague Ana Maria Meisenheimer and Mt. Daniel paraprofessional Sue Thackrey (left).



## FCCPS Travelogue

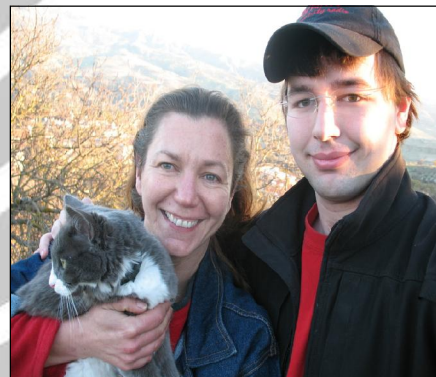
**Employee:** Daniel Olewine, Channel 12 (FCC-TV) Photographer

**Destination:** Cyprus

**Experiences:** "Over the holidays, I took a trip to the small village of Kritou Marottou in the country of Cyprus to visit my mom, Lisa Remick (Former GMMS Teacher). Most of the trip was spent traveling around the area, visiting the small villages like Fyti, Polemi, and Everotu."

**Favorite Sites:** "I really loved seeing all the tiny villages. They were a welcome change to the hustle and bustle of the DC area. The Turkish villages abandoned during the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus were especially interesting. Most of these villages are still exactly as they were left in the 70's."

**Must See Sites:** "Visit the larger cities like Paphos or Nicosia, but to get the full "feel" of the country, I would suggest you stay in the small villages. Immerse yourself in the culture of these quaint, rural communities, and strike up a conversation with a shop or restaurant owner. Most are happy to tell you about the history of their town, and you'll learn a lot about the village culture."



*At left, Daniel Olewine visits with his mom, former GMMS teacher Lisa Remick, near her home in Cyprus.*

*Below, a church in the village of Fyti.*



## Did You Know?



By day, they're teachers at Mount Daniel Elementary School. Come showtime, Karen Bevan and Anne Delehanty can be heard harmonizing with an award-winning chapter of SweetAdelines International.

The preschool and special education teachers are members of the Potomac Harmony *Showtime* Chorus in Arlington, Virginia. The chorus sings four-part, a capella harmony, barbershop style. Members rehearse weekly to put on professional-quality, choreographed performances and to perfect their singing and performing skills. The chorus has been honored for its musical excellence five times as regional champions.

Karen and Anne will be on stage with the group again in October when they compete in International competition in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Good luck, Karen and Anne! We'll be rooting for you!



*Karen Bevan (above), and Anne Delehanty (left), sing in perfect harmony with the award-winning Potomac Harmony Showtime Chorus. The group will compete in an international competition in October in Canada.*

## Community Calendar

**February 5 - 9, School Counselors Appreciation Week.** School counselors provide many services to students, teachers, parents and administrators. Take a moment during School Counselors Appreciation Week to thank those who provide these invaluable services to our schools.

**February 23 - Tinner Hill Foundation Celebrity Basketball.** Join the Falls Church All-Stars as they take on the Harlem Magic Masters for an evening of hardwood hoop action at the Falls Church Community Center. Superintendent **Lois Berlin** and other FCCPS leaders will team up with city celebrities for the evening matchup. Game time is 8:00 p.m. Tickets are free and available through the FCCPS

Business in Education (BIE) office. For more information, contact **Marybeth Connelly** at [connellym@fccps.org](mailto:connellym@fccps.org). The Black History celebration is sponsored by the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation.



### **April 24 - National Teach Children to Save Day.**

Acacia Federal Savings Bank is teaming up with the American Banking Association (ABA) to help teach children the importance of saving money. The event occurs every April, although Acacia bankers are willing to visit the classroom anytime. Lesson plans are also available through the ABA. For more information about this BIE Partnership opportunity, contact Marybeth Connelly at [connellym@fccps.org](mailto:connellym@fccps.org).



### **February 13 - Doctoral Program Open House.**

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Virginia Tech will hold an open house for all educators interested in applying for a new Ed.D. (doctoral degree) in educational leadership. The new three-year program is designed for working professionals and specifically tailored for executive educators who desire knowledge and skills to advance their professional careers. The open house will be held at the Northern Virginia Graduate Education Center on Tuesday, February 13 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in Room 214. For more information, contact **Nancy Van Buren** at (703) 538-8481 or at [nburen@vt.edu](mailto:nburen@vt.edu).