

...From the Executive Director

A few weeks ago on the way to Vermont, Linda and I sallied off to Stockbridge, Massachusetts to find the Norman Rockwell Museum. I had wanted to do this for some time as I remember the many Saturday Evening Post covers that arrived at our house while growing up. I was particularly anxious to review the 332 magazine covers that spanned a period of decades starting in 1910.

One may wonder why Mr. Rockwell's illustrations and artistry should be introduced in our Character Talk newsletter which is dedicated to "promoting strong character in all of our citizens."

After reviewing all the works, I made the comment to the person in charge that it would be nice to circulate these paintings once again as reminders of who we are---or should be. The curator replied in agreement.

"He portrayed Americans as they chose to see themselves. His work is remarkable because he sustained through half a century the values that he espoused....."

I purchased prints of the Four Freedoms. Its fun to imagine how he would illustrate our six pillars of character: *Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.*

Richard T. Allen

Character Counts Is Back To School For A Banner Year!

New Coaches, New Projects, New Energy

Character Counts Mid Shore has become as much a part of back to school time as fresh packs of loose leaf paper and bright new sneakers.

All over the five county region, Character Coaches are getting ready, schools are putting up banners, and teachers are learning new ways to make good character a part of every lesson plan.

In Dorchester, the Character Counts Book Club has been initiated to encourage students to improve their reading skills, as well as learn important life lessons offered in a variety of literature.

Students read a set number of books per month related to the Pillar of the month, then write a summary log. At the end of the year, they receive a certificate from Character Counts.

Also in Dorchester, Winners Walk Tall has become an excellent project where students help each other. Piloted at Warwick Elementary School in 2003, there are now nine student coaches who work with younger students. See the WWT article inside this issue.



North Dorchester Middle School proudly displays the Six Pillars of Character on banners in the Commons. The banners were furnished through a generous grant from The Nathan Foundation. Mr. Dana Goodman, (center) ND's new principal, shares the moment with four students who serve as character coaches at Warwick Elementary. From left, Amanda Lowe, Emily Nossick, Mr. Goodman, Sadie Lockhart and Gabi Rathell.

We have also adopted the National Anthem Project in our region. A recent study found that an alarming number of Americans are unfamiliar with the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner, and the history behind it.. This project is designed to help.

The "Practicing the Pillars" essay contest for 5th graders has also expanded.

We have again provided trainings to new teachers to share effective character building strategies they can use.

Other initiatives are underway in all of our communities. To learn more and see how you can help, contact your local coordinator.

Character Coaches' On-Line Forum!

Need ideas? Have a great idea to share? Join the on-line discussion forum at www.winnerswalktall.org



Debra Ebersole, right, is greeted by Susan Luby of Character Counts Midshore and Brent White, manager of Staples at "Teacher Appreciation Day". Ms. Ebersole teaches kindergarten at Centreville Elementary in Queen Anne's County.

Staples and CCMS Host Back to School Night

Teachers from all over the mid shore region were welcomed at the Easton Staples store with treats, discounts and helpful information as the office supply company hosted its annual "Teachers Appreciation Day" recently.

Character Counts Midshore, Inc. joined Staples for the event, designed to welcome teachers back for the new school year.

Brent White, manager of the Easton Staples store greeted teachers from Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Kent and Talbot Counties.

Staples is also an active business partner of Character Counts Midshore, a community based non-profit that assists the schools in all five counties with their character development projects.

Susan Luby, CCMS coordinator for Talbot County, and Laura Weldon, coordinator for Dorchester were on hand at Staples to provide teachers with resource materials and ideas that will help them combine character development with reading, writing and arithmetic.

The packet handed out included a number of easily implemented strategies that teachers can use to improve the learning environment in the classroom. The strategies are organized by the Six Pillars of Character.

Staples also provided a \$150 gift package that was won by Becky Morean of Federalsburg Elementary.

For more information about Staples rewards program, contact Mr. White at 410-770-3839.

Kent Welcomes New Coordinator

Kent County's efforts to fully implement Character Counts are gaining momentum this year with the establishment of a community advisory board, and the naming of Madhu Sidhu as the new coordinator for CCMS.

Mrs. Sidhu has long been involved in the education community. A former teacher in Kent County, she also is an active member of the PTSA at Kent County High School, and a member of the Maryland state PTA board.

She is a native of Bombay, India, and earned a second BA in Information Science and Library Science at Richard Stockton College in New Jersey, which she attended as a non-traditional student.

To get involved in Character Counts in Kent County, contact Madhu at 410-778-6684.



Madhu Sidhu

Talbot United Fund Supports CCMS



local giving • local needs

The United Fund of Talbot County held its annual campaign kick off. The UF supports CCMS and its efforts in Talbot County. With their support, CCMS held a business training for Konyl Pharmaceutical. Employees learned about Workplace Ethics and how to infuse the Six Pillars of Character into their daily work.

This is the eighth year that the United Fund has named CCMS as an agency. We thank the fund for their continuing support.

Character Counts Literacy Corner Set To Debut at Easton Elementary-Moton

Easton – Recently the Easton Elementary-Moton Media Center, the Moton PTO, and Character Counts Mid-Shore introduced the "Character Counts Literacy Corner."

The Literacy Corner consists of a computer station that provides parents with access to the Parent Connect system of Talbot County Public Schools, as well as access to web-based reading resources.

The computer station is supplemented by a selection of books from the Media Center collection that feature strong, positive character messages. The Media Center will also offer activities to encourage students to use the Literacy Corner.

In studies conducted by the Maryland State Department of

Education, Character Counts has been shown to have a statistically significant impact on improving overall academics, but impact on literacy and reading scores was flat.

This pilot project is designed specifically to address that. A study will be conducted throughout this school year to determine its success, and if gains are made, the Literacy Corner project will be expanded to other schools and public libraries throughout the mid-shore.

The project is funded in part by the Verizon Foundation, and other community donors.

Thanks go to Susan Devilio and Linda DePrima for pulling this together, and presenting the orienta-

Winners Walk Tall Continues to Grow, and Make a Difference!

A Character Coaches Kick Off Coffee was held in Easton to welcome new Talbot County Character Coaches – Miss Caroline Fox-a Senior at Easton High; Easton Chief of Police Ben Blue and Major David Spencer; Betsy Willey; Venita Southworth; Graham Lee and his wife Brenda; Suzann Mason; Shim Graham; Susan Deerin; Sarah Davis and Greg Frankos. Returning coaches also attended to celebrate a new school year and received new ideas and other support materials. Winners Walk Tall has expanded to White Marsh Elementary Kindergarten classes and St. Michaels 7th grades.

At North Dorchester Middle School, Amanda Lowe, Gabi Rathell, Sadie Lockhart and Emily Nossick return to Warwick once a week. Cambridge South Dorchester High students

Amanda Robinson, Ben Parks, Lindsay Morris, Jasmine Rogers and Kristin Fitzhugh are helping out at neighboring Maple Elementary. Dorchester also welcomes new coaches Jim Marquette and Brad Broadwell, who is the new Economic Development Director for Dorchester.

In Queen Anne's, On September 23rd, we held our 2nd "Gathering of Coaches." Mrs. Jacki Carter, co-chair of the Character Counts! Advisory Council, character coach and professional trainer facilitated this meeting.



Dave Jennings of WWT

Held at the Grasonville Senior Center, over 25 coaches came to learn and share ideas with each other. Many new and creative ideas came from the discussions and we hope to continue with other future trainings. Recently, CCMS partnered with national executive director of Winners Walk Tall, Dave Jennings to present the program to representatives of every school system in Maryland.

Our schools will be visited by systems interested in the program to see demonstrations and to discuss the effectiveness of the project.

Citizenship: CCMS Becomes a Part of the National Anthem Project

Character Counts Mid-Shore has joined a nationwide effort to promote the singing and understanding of our National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner."

"One of the Six Pillars of Character we espouse is Citizenship," says CCMS executive director Richard T. Allen. "In this time of natural disasters and trouble overseas, it's important for all of us to reflect on what the National Anthem means, the story behind it, and the timelessness of its message."

Over the summer, our Dorchester Coordinator Laura Weldon sang the Anthem before a Shorebirds baseball game, and more recently, CCMS organized National Anthem performances by students at Easton High School and Cambridge-South Dorchester High before their football games. Other activities are being planned to take place throughout the



Easton Middle School Band Director, Mrs. Donna Ewing, leads her students in the playing and singing of the National Anthem over the PA system on Sept. 14, the anniversary of the "Star Spangled Banner."

year, including the addition of related topics to our Winners Walk Tall program.

The effort is part of a multi-year initiative to re-teach Americans about "The Star Spangled Banner." Mrs. Laura Bush is the honorary chairperson. The project was sparked by a recent Harris poll which found that two out of three Americans don't know the

Character Counts QA Celebrates 5 years

It's time to celebrate in QAC! On October 19, 2005 at Queen Anne's County High School in Centreville, Character Counts! will be celebrating its 5th year anniversary. This will be a time for the entire community to come together to honor and thank all the individuals, agencies, and community organizations that have helped and supported the Character Counts! initiative.

This gathering will be held from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm with a light supper and entertainment. For more information and to RSVP please call Chris Grupenhoff at (410) 758-6677. We welcome all to celebrate our Anniversary!

words to the song, and many are unaware of the historical events that inspired the lyrics. These startling statistics led to "The National Anthem Project." For more information, visit www.thenationalanthemproject.org.

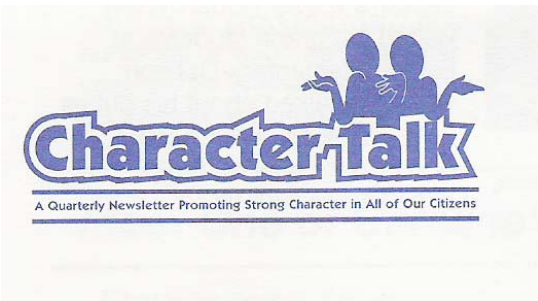
Focus on Caring



Hurricanes Bring Despair, Kids Work To Bring Hope

Easton Elementary-Dobson students have collected \$419 plus supplies for 76 health kits. They collected money and supplies through the month of September. Easton Elementary-Moton are collecting funds for "Noah's Wish" for the animals in need because of the hurricane and the American Red Cross. White Marsh Elementary, Easton Middle School, St. Michaels Elementary and St. Michaels Middle High's National Honor Society are also collecting funds for Katrina victims.

At Warwick Elementary in Secretary, Character Coach Linda Hallinean is leading a book drive to help restore school libraries in Cameron Parish, La. which were badly damaged in Hurricane Rita. Hundreds of books have been collected, along with many donations of cash.



Inside This Edition:

- Regional Back to School Activities
- Winners Walk Tall Presented Statewide
- Literacy Corner Introduced
- National Anthem Project Announced
- Queen Anne's Celebrates 5 years of CC!

Contact Character Counts Mid Shore www.ccmidshore.org

	<i>Talbot County</i>	
Susan Luby		410-819-0386
	<i>Dorchester County</i>	
Laura Weldon		410-228-0030
	<i>Kent County</i>	
Madhu Sidhu		410-778-6684
	<i>Queen Anne's County</i>	
Chris Grupenhoff		410-758-6677
	<i>Caroline County</i>	
Richard Potter		410-479-8120

CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of Character are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, a project of the Josephson Institute of Ethics.
www.charactercounts.org.

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11 S. Washington Street, Ste. A
Easton, MD 21601