

# Pinewood Counseling Connections

## September Issue



A Monthly Newsletter from Pinewood's Counseling Department



### Pinewood's Counseling Staff:

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### Resources – Books about Starting School:

First Day Jitters: A Story With a Twist by Julie Danneberg

I Don't Want to Go Back to School by Marisabina Russo.

No Copycats Allowed by Bonnie Graves.

### Counseling Corner:

Welcome to our new families and welcome back to our families who we have been fortunate to already have had as part of our Pinewood community. We are excited to work with your children and look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with you on further developing your children's emotional and academic progress. Please feel free to contact us should you require any information or assistance.

### Bucket Program – A School Wide Program on Respect & Kindness

Pinewood is starting a school wide program based on the book, "Have you filled a Bucket Today?" by Carol McCloud. The book presents a simple message with a big meaning. Everyone has an invisible bucket that you can either fill or dip into. When you are a "bucket filler" you spread good, caring feelings to others, which makes everyone feel good! When you are a "bucket dipper" you take good feelings away from someone and you empty their bucket and your own bucket, too. Students will be introduced to the program by the School Counselor during the month of September and presented with a classroom bucket, a classroom copy of the book and coupons to recognize others who fill their bucket. Students, teachers, and staff members will all be participating. All coupons will be displayed and random coupons will be picked throughout the year, recognizing bucket fillers and all the good they bring to Pinewood.

### New Student Program

Welcome to all the new Pinewood families! Students that started on the first day of school and those that enroll at Pinewood throughout the year will be meeting with the School Counselor for a "New Student" lunch group. At this time students, will have the opportunity to learn more about Pinewood, share concerns, ask questions, and do an activity. Again, welcome, we are very fortunate to have your child(ren) here at Pinewood!

### **Banana Splits:**

Banana Splits is a program for students who have experienced a parental separation or divorce within the last three years. Students participate in six group sessions facilitated by the School Social Worker, Elizabeth Haynesworth, and the Options for Kids Counselor, Kim Martin. Sessions encourage students to talk about and work through feelings associated with loss, living in two homes, step-parenting, etc. Sessions are held during the school day, typically at lunch. To facilitate your child's participation in this program, please sign the consent below and return it with your child by September 28, 2009.

I, the undersigned, authorize my son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, grade, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in the Banana Splits program.

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

### **Collaboration with HAVEN**

Collaborations with community based agencies expand on the school's counseling services and facilitate access to the agencies' expertise. Over the last few years, the School Social Worker, Mrs. Haynesworth, has developed and maintained a partnership with HAVEN, a grief and loss community based counseling agency. This partnership has offered students who have experienced the recent loss of a family member or friend the opportunity to participate in an eight week on-site grief & loss group facilitated by a bereavement specialist, Ann Simpson-McDowell. Students work through their feelings of loss through group discussion and the arts. Participation is possible with parental consent. If you would like your son/daughter to participate, please sign the consent below and return it with your child by September 28, 2009.

I, the undersigned, authorize my son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, grade \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in HAVEN's grief & loss group.

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

### **Parenting Tips:**

Many children experience some level of anxiety about returning to school. The hurried pace of the morning routine, homework, and the changes caused by a new school year (new teacher, new classmates, etc.) all contribute to increased stress. To assist your child with this transition, you may:

1. Prepare – Organize school materials beforehand, set up a study area, & establish a nightly and morning routine.
2. Acknowledge the problem – Discuss your child's fears and identify three most significant sources of worry.
3. Highlight positives – Discuss three things that your child is most excited about school.
4. Role play – Discuss examples of anxiety provoking situations and role play strategies for responding to them.
5. Maintain the lines of communication open – Let your child know that you are always available to talk about their feelings and experiences. You can also set up a special time to talk to your child, either in the car, on a walk or at bedtime,
6. Understand the value of tears – Crying provides a release of bad feelings and tension and serves as a stress reliever.
7. Resist the urge to fix everything – It's important to recognize the things that truly require your intervention and those with which you simply need to help your child cope.

Source: Relieve School Anxiety by Terri Mauro