

Crittenden Middle School's 21st Century Program

Cougar LIFT Parent Brunch: It's a Family Affair

Aim High!



Cougar LIFT families gather to learn more about how to support their children's academic success.

58 guests representing 28 Cougar LIFT families gathered in Crittenden Middle School's cafeteria on a sunny Saturday morning to learn more about what LIFT has in store to make a lasting impact on the trajectory of their students' lives. After being welcomed by sixth grade administrator, Mrs. Jametha Ruffin, guests were ready to hear all that Cougar LIFT has in store for the 2015-16 school year. Thanks to CMS's community partner, **Bayport Credit Union**, guests were able to enjoy a light brunch, while hearing about the importance of consistent attendance during the Tuesday- Wednesday LIFT academic rotations. In addition, parents were informed about the Thursday enrichment offerings that include culinary arts, robotics, recyclable art,

financial literacy, and mind games- as well as the sessions facilitated by our university partner, Hampton University, which include QUEENS, Book Buddies, and College Ready 101.

After a short question and answer session with Cougar LIFT administrator, Mrs. Adria Merritt, the Parent Brunch keynote speaker, Rev. Vernon Woodard, shared a powerful testimonial that stressed the importance of parents' expectations and relationships with their children. A Newport News native and graduate of Newport News Public school, Rev. Woodard shared the ups and downs he faced as he navigated his way through middle



Parent Brunch speaker, Rev. Vernon Woodard, motivates parents to set high expectations for their children.

and high school- only to realize that his successes were due to the high expectations of his devoted mom, who insisted that he aim high.

Upcoming Events

The Nutcracker @ CNU's Ferguson Center for the Performing Arts **Dec 17**

Writer's Workshop@ Crittenden Middle School **Jan 9 & 23**

Wake-Up and Read! @ Crittenden Middle School **Jan. 16**

The Fed Experience@ The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond **Jan 28**

Writer's Workshop@ Crittenden Middle School **Feb 6 & 20**

To Be a Chemist Competition **March**

Literacy Explosion Competition @Seneca Ridge Middle School **April 9**



Mrs. Jennifer Fortunato receives a donation for the local SPCA from a Cougar LIFT family.

Supporting a Cause

While parents attended informational sessions, Cougar LIFT students and siblings supported a worthy cause, the local SPCA. Sponsored by 8th grade Civics and Economics teacher, Mrs. Jennifer Fortunato, 8th grade students hosted a drive that informed Cougar LIFT families about the needs

of SPCA. Thanks to the support of Cougar LIFT families, Crittenden was able to donate \$41.00, a 11 pet friendly donations, and the highlight of the community service project- a beagle found a new home!

Power Hour for Parents

During the Parent Power Hour, Cougar LIFT families were able to choose from informational sessions designed to lift their awareness of social media, internet tools to use at home, financial literacy, and ways to help their student writers.

Professional school counselors Mrs. Chanique Byrd and Miss Celisa Lovett teamed with school resource officer Mrs. Melissa Gretsinger to present **Social Media Awareness: Do You Know What Your Child is Posting?** During this eye-opening workshop, parents were informed about the importance of friending or following their child on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. The session stressed the importance of parents teaching their children what is appropriate to post. Officer Gretsinger brought the seriousness of social media home by detailing the legal ramifications of inappropriate posts and cyber bullying.

Crittenden's Instructional Technology Coach, Mrs. Bonnie Adams, facilitated **Internet Tools You Can Use at Home.** During her presentation, parents were able to use the Cougar LIFT iPads to test out apps that are more than fun and games. Mrs. Adams shared apps that are sure to lift students' reading, writing, and math skills.

Community partner, Mr. Steve Hagwood, from Kevin Swann Enterprises used his 16 years of experience as a small business lender and financial literacy educator to share the importance of parents helping their children set career and financial goals. During his session, **Money Matters: How to Plan for Your Child's Future**, parents discussed the necessity of evaluating needs vs. wants, understanding credit, and even how credit can impact career goals. Cougar LIFT students can take these concepts further by attending the Money Matters Camp Mr. Hagwood helps organize for

Hampton Roads students each June.

Crittenden's Reading Specialist, Mr. Scott Weisenger, helped parents understand what they can do to help their children grow as writers. During his session, **The Writer's Toolkit: What Your Middle School Writer Needs to Know**, parents were able to visit the VDOE website to tour a released writing test. In addition, he shared the 42 released writing prompts that 8th grade writers will be exposed to this year. Parents left his session with increased awareness of the writing domains and how the writing SOL is scored.

Each of the sessions during the Parent Power Hour lifted our parents ability to help their children aim high!



Officer Gretsinger and Mrs. Chanique Byrd, school counselor, share the importance of monitoring social media posts.



Crittenden's Instructional Technology Coach, Mrs. Bonnie Adams, takes parents on a tour of apps they can use at home with their children



Reading Specialist, Mr. Scott Weisenger, helps parents understand the structure of the writing SOL.



Community partner, Mr. Steve Hagwood, from Kevin Swann Enterprises discusses why money matters.

Cougars Volunteer



Cougar 8th grade students Kajia Bratcher and Brandon Hedgepeth helped make the Power Hour a success by volunteering during the sessions.

Kajia opened the Social Media Awareness workshop by sharing her original poem about cyber bullying, while Brandon helped with registration and worked with Mrs. Adams during the Internet Tools workshop.