

## Monday Focus

October 15, 2007

**“I Was Grow Up”** There are days that I can forget what this work is all about. I was having one of those days a week ago when **Kathy Zimbaldi** walked into my room and asked for 5 minutes. Though I wasn't in the best of moods, Kathy is impossible to deny, so in she came. “I need you to listen,” she said. She then took on the voice of Qichen Xu, an ESL student of hers. She went on to read a poem that he had written for her class addressing a good choice he had made in his life. I've included a copy in your box today. I encourage you to read it to yourself out loud. Qichens are in all of our classes. Some of them are ESL-immigrant students. Some of them are GT students of wealthy parents. All of them are living in times much more complicated than those of my youth. In Qichen's poem, I invite you to listen for the strength and hope of our students.

**Westside Fine Arts is Showcased** Two of our programs are going to be profiled in the coming weeks. First, the Choral Program will be performing for the US Olympic Committee here in Houston this Friday. They have been selected to sing for an awards ceremony here in town. Congratulations to our Choir Director, **Jason Carson**. The Inertia Dance Company has also been asked to perform with the Houston Symphony at the Miller Outdoor Theater on October 27. That should be a show-stopping performance. It is a free concert, so load up friends and family for the event, since you are all invited to attend. Congratulations to **Sharon Roberts** and **Rodrigo Leal!**

**Clarification on Lesson Plans** Some have asked, so here's the answer. Since teachers have to post their lessons on line, no other turn-ins are necessary—to directors, deans, or me.

**Super Ronn to the Rescue** I was stopped in the main office last week by a parent, which is usually not a good thing. The parent said, “Mr. Castro, I just have to talk to you.” Though I was on the way to visit classrooms, I figured I would save myself time by handling the complaint at that time. “I just had to tell you about one of your teachers that my son has. The other night, **Mr. Andrusco** called my house at nine o'clock at night. After talking to me for a while, I told him that my son was struggling with Algebra II and it was the first time he had ever struggled with math and it was hurting him. He asked for my son and he worked with him through an hour's worth of work on the phone. I would never expect a teacher to do that, but since he did, I wanted to acknowledge his effort.” She went on to say that though her son is still struggling, he now knows that Ronn is there for him and is not afraid to ask for help during class. Nice job, Ronn.

**Homecoming Queen** Kudos to **Mary Hansen** for her work in making sure that homecoming was as regal as it should be. Between arranging for subs and handing out bus stickers, Mary arranged for the homecoming sashes for the court. Though this may seem like a small thing to some, it is a very tedious and meticulous task and Mary does this work every year without fanfare or recognition. I just wanted to say, thanks for your service, Mary.

**Achievement Gap** Educational Activist Pedro Noguera has this to say, “The achievement gap is a manifestation of the inequalities in our society.”

**Quick Facts** There are 2.2 million people in jail today. *Children who have dinner with their family five times a week are three times less likely to be involved with drugs or alcohol.* One in twelve 12-15 year olds will be a victim of violent crime. *Teens 16-19 are 350% more likely to be victims of a sexual crime than the general population.* 7 hours, 12 minutes: The amount of time a TV is on in the average US home. *One in three births is to a single mother.* Teens now consume one-fourth of all alcohol in the US. *There are more Cialis and Viagra commercials during one NFL game than I want to watch in my lifetime.* 10% of Houston's children under 14 years of age have asthma. *18 of the 29 teen suicides in Houston last year were white males.* From 1990 to 2003, the number of economically disadvantaged students in Houston grew 108%. *There are 10 sites in Harris County on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites.* 36% of HISD students are above the 85% of Body Mass Index.

## Calendar of Events

- Mon Oct 15**     **Book Fair, Library, 8 AM – 3 PM**  
Continues through Friday
- Jazz Ensemble Concert, Mini Theater, 7 PM**
- Tue Oct 16**     **JV/Fr Volleyball vs. Madison, WHS Gym, 5 PM**
- Choir Concert, Auditorium, 7 PM**
- Wed Oct 17**     **PSAT Testing**  
Refer to Test Packet handed out by Beth Bogan  
Seniors report at 10:50 AM
- Varsity Volleyball vs. Madison, Butler, 5:15 PM**
- Thu Oct 18**     **Late Start Thursday**  
Department Mtgs. 7:45 – 8:15 AM  
Curriculum Team Mtgs. 8:30 – 9:15 AM
- Fr Football vs. Bellaire, WHS Field, 4:30 PM**
- WHS Theater Production, *Rumors*, Black Box, 7:30 PM**
- Fri Oct 19**     **Fr/JV Volleyball vs. Lamar, WHS, 5 PM**
- Varsity Volleyball vs. Lamar, Butler, 6:30 PM**
- Varsity Football vs. Bellaire, Butler, 7:30 PM**
- WHS Theater Production, *Rumors*, Black Box, 7:30 PM**