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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

BURKE CONNECTION EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC
703-778-9414 OR SOUTH@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



“Lion,” by Kai Wang, age 10, of Burke, Grade 4 in Mr. Muntain’s class at Westminster School.



“Still Life — Fruits in Basket,” by Isabella Snow, Grade 5, Fairview Elementary.

Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Burke Connection turns over its pages to the youth and students.

We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children’s Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We’d also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2017 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year’s Children’s Connection.

Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children’s issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Connection welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly school pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to south@connectionnewspapers.com, but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9414 with any questions.

EDITOR KEMAL KURSPAHC



Lukas J. Grade 5, Cherry Run Elementary, Burke.



By Sarayu Kalarickal, age 5, Mrs. Druggan’s Kindergarten Class at Accotink Academy Preschool in Springfield.



By Kai Wheeler, Grade 6, Orange Hunt Elementary.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Families Are Like Presents

By sixth graders in Mrs. String's class at Cherry Run Elementary, Burke

Families are like presents. Presents can surprise you, and families can too. When I found out my mom was going to have a baby, I was shocked. But I was so happy when I first saw my new brother. It was an awesome surprise. Another example of how families are like presents is that they are both fun. I have fun going places with my grandpa. One of our favorite places is Hidden Pond. Finally, presents show that someone cares. My grandma helps me study. This is how she's there for me. My whole family is kind and a great present every day.

—ANDRE COUSSA, 11,
BURKE

Families are like presents. One way they are alike is that presents can be surprising, and families can surprise you, too. One surprising day, my dad was supposed to go to work at the Pentagon, but since he did so much the day before, he got to stay home with us an extra day. Another example of how families are like presents is that they are both fun. I have fun playing golf and watching football with my dad, and also going to the mall with my grandparents and fishing with my grandpa. I like to go to the aquarium in the Outer Banks with my family, too. Presents show that someone cares. One way my mom shows she cares is by making hot chocolate and cookies on a cold day. This is why my family is a present to me.

—GRAYSON TAYLOR, 11, BURKE



Biking, by Elizabeth Dai, age 6, Grade 1, Navy Elementary School of Fairfax County, Miss Michaela Venator's class.



Gary Arnold, of Burke, kindergartener, at Burgundy Farm Country Day School, an independent school in Alexandria.

Families are like presents. For example, presents can be surprising, and so can families. Even though I had always wanted a dog, my family had only talked about getting one, so it was a total surprise when my parents told us that we were going to go look at a dog and see if she would like us and find out what we needed to take care of her. Another way families are like presents is that they are both fun. Every summer my family goes to Myrtle Beach. We boogie board and jump over waves. We have fun just walking on the beach together. Presents also show that someone cares. My mom cares about me because she makes us dinner every day. One of my favorite things that she makes is potato soup. My family is the best present ever!

—TYLER KIMBLE, 11, BURKE



Playing, by Hannah Dai, age 9, Grade 3, Navy Elementary School of Fairfax County, Miss Amanda Henderson's class.

KINGS GLEN ELEMENTARY POETRY CORNER

Writings by the students in Mrs. Kelly's Class.

I'm Ready

I'm ready to swing my baseball bat.
I'm ready to be struck out at that.
I'm ready to pitch the ball into the glove.
I'm ready for it to go high, high above.
I'm ready to hit the ball.
But I'm not ready to be the best at baseball.

—BY AIDEN CAZA, 9, SPRINGFIELD

Getting a Dog

I woke up at 7 a.m. to go to school. I had breakfast, math, reading, lunch, recess, writing, music, and PE. At the end of the day, I went home on Bus 1. My mom and grandpa went to Maryland that day to go to an animal shelter to look at dogs. But, I did not know that, so when I got home, I saw a puppy! I asked, "Is it mine?" and my mom said, "yes." My mom was recording me because my dad is stationed in Qatar. That night, we had to go buy a doggie bed, brush, food and choose a name. We named him Milo and I can still not believe he is mine.

—ANNABELLA VASQUEZ, 9, BURKE

I'm Sorry

I'm sorry for eating the cake
I'm sorry for taking a break
I'm sorry for not going to school
I'm sorry for being such a fool
I'm sorry for pulling your hair
I'm sorry for sitting in your chair
But I'm definitely not sorry for being your daughter.
(Dedicated: To Mom)

—BRIANNA ALCAZAR, 9, BURKE

I'm Sorry

I'm sorry I hit your head
I'm sorry I broke your bed
I'm sorry I hit Mr. Ted
I'm sorry I broke Ned the fly.

I'm sorry for eating your cake
I'm sorry for messing up the lake
I'm sorry for taking your tool
I'm sorry for being such a fool.

—BREEANNA HEYUNGS, 9, BURKE

My Garden

My garden is grassy green
My garden has pinto beans
My garden is nice
My garden has peppers and spice
My garden bursts with beautiful flowers
My garden showers with red, white, blue flowers
My garden has bunnies
My garden is sunny
My garden has a swing
My garden and me sing
My garden has a pond
My garden has a nature song.

—CATHERINE MENDOZA LOZANO, 9, BURKE

SEE POETRY, PAGE 12

LAUREL RIDGE ELEMENTARY



**Kairos Woods, grade 2 —
Lamb**

My Dream Job

My dream job is to be a veterinarian. I like to work with animals. Animals are sooo cute. When I am a vet I will go to Africa, Asia, Australia and maybe South America. When I travel I will help and learn about other animals. I can't wait to be a vet!

— ANNETTE McGRATH,
GRADE 2

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Vocal musicians from 12 Fairfax County public schools have been named to the Virginia Honors Choir for 2016. This select choir is open only to the top 125 singers from around the Commonwealth of Virginia, and is the highest honor a choir student can attain during his or her high school career. Thirty-one Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students were selected for the choir, and five students were named as alternates. The choir will perform at the Virginia Music Educators Association (VMEA) convention to be held at the Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Nov. 17-19. FCPS students named to the 2016 Virginia Honors Choir include the following students from our area schools: **Woodson High School:** Megan Humes, Caroline Grass, Jacob Lamb, Lucas Valdes, and Marc Manaloto and **Hayfield Secondary School:** Jessica Pressley.

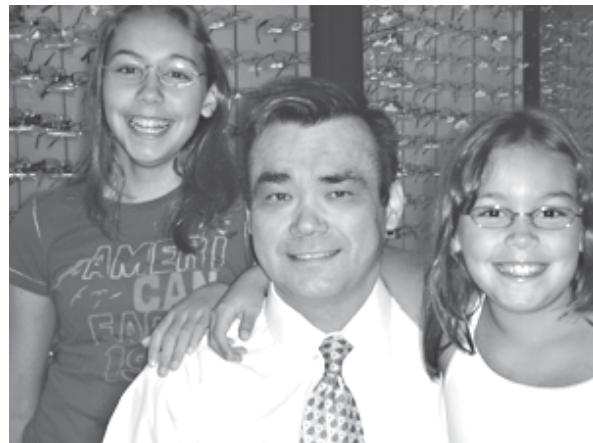
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CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

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Cole C. Grade 2.



Ryan A. Grade 2.



Emily B. Grade 6



Lydia R. Grade 5.



Lukas J. Grade 5.



Makena F. Grade 2.



Haley I. Grade 4.



Alexis J, Kindergarten.



Zachary S. Grade 2.



Shannon J. Grade 5,



Lindsay K. Grade 5.



Holden W. Grade 4.

The Most Important Thing

By students in Catherine Fernandez-Martell's 5th grade class at Kings Glen Elementary.

Ethan S

The important thing about Ethan is that he is awesome. He is a big brother and feels responsible because he's the oldest. When he grows up, Ethan wants to become an engineer.

He has a lot of family members on his dad's side. They got together last summer. it was a blast.

Ethan has a younger brother, Owen whom he loves dearly...as long as Owen is not being rough.

Pho is Ethan's favorite food. He enjoys eating it at different restaurants.

Rock music is his favorite genre of music to listen to and most of his music videos he watches on YouTube.

Ethan has five blankets which keep him cozy. The different blankets are a treasure for him.

He enjoys building Legos and making music with his instruments.

But the important thing about Ethan is that he is awesome.



Cole H

The important thing about Cole is that he loves his family. He has a dog, cat and fish and his mom and dad. Cole's mom and dad both work for the government. His dad is a police officer and his mom works in DC. When Cole has free time you can find him playing with his army men, in the woods, or practicing basketball. Cole loves to travel. He has gone to many states and one country. Since he travels so much he's been on many planes so he's used to them. Cole's interest is reading about the Vietnam War and playing cowboys and army men. Cole is a mountain man; he loves the outdoors.

He likes to go hunting and horseback riding. Cole really likes cowboys. He watches western movies and likes to pretend he's a cowboy.

Cole plays soccer and basketball. He also does swim team. His best time for going across the pool and back is 39 seconds.

But the important thing about Cole is that he loves his family.



Tina T

The important thing about Tina is that she loves to play soccer. She has a brother who she fights with all the time. Her favorite subject is math. She is in advanced math. She loves to go on walks. She is willing to walk anywhere.

Her favorite thing to do when she is bored is to watch youtube videos. She really enjoys laughing at some of the funny clips people put online.

When she is at her cousin's house she loves to play badminton. They play in the driveway.

Tina also loves to listen to music. Her favorite genre is pop. She loves to pet dogs one day she hopes to own a dog.

She also likes to play minecraft. The best part is that she can play with her friends.

But the important thing about Tina is that she loves to play soccer.



SEE MOST IMPORTANT. PAGE 8

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

The Most Important Thing

FROM PAGE 7

Patrick G

The important thing about Patrick is that he is an amazing kid. He likes legos. He once built the Assault on Hoth.

Fifi is Patrick's cat. Patrick definitely is a cat lover. He had four other cats, but they have since died.

Patrick is a boy scout. In fact, he is on pack 1965.

He is good at math. He likes to challenge himself by trying to figure out difficult problems.

Patrick likes Star Wars. He has seen almost all the movies because he only saw part of Attack of the Clones.

He is a good swimmer. He is not on a swim team, but he does swim on Sundays.

Patrick can sometimes be found watching tv. Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney XD are his favorite channels.

Garfield is an all-time favorite graphic novel that Patrick likes to read. The important thing about Patrick is that he is an amazing kid.



Spencer G

The important thing about Spencer is that he likes to make people laugh. He has a soft spot for dogs and pandas too. He feels that he could get lost in a good book. He loves to fence with his trusty sword, named sting. He is a lego fanatic and loves to build a complex structures out of legos.

Spencer also loves crazy roller-coasters that twirl and go upside down.

Star Wars is his all time favorite movie. He also likes to play cool video games.

He likes to have nerf wars in his backyard. And lastly, his sister means the world to him!

But the important thing about Spencer is that he likes to make people laugh.



Madison M

The important thing about Madison Miller is that she loves her family.

She likes to play instruments like the violin and the flute and she wants to try to play the ukulele.

She likes to do gymnastics. Her favorite events are bar and floor.

She likes to hangout with her family and friends. Taking adventure trips with them is awesome.

Minecraft and Roblox are her favorite video games.

She used to play them daily, until her laptop broke.

She likes to cook and make treats. She has become a cookie making expert.

Madison also likes to play with her brother Grant. They can be found playing in the pool together throughout the summer.

The beach is Maddison's vacation spot. She's pretty crafty at building sandcastles. Basically you could say that Madison loves to live life. But the important thing about Madison is that she loves her family.



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- lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way.
2. not appreciated or understood.
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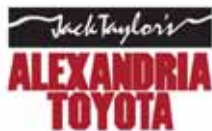
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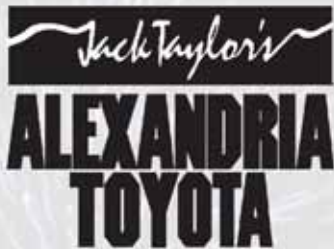
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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
 -Werner Heisenberg



Michael painting.



Maria painting.

Creating Artwork at Forestdale Elementary

Students at Forestdale Elementary school created artwork using using shaving cream and water color paint.



Michael's artwork.



Maria's art.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

"My Life in Pictures" by Rachel Jeong, Greenbriar East Elementary.



Dad

BY CHRIS KERNAN, SENIOR
WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

As a young boy I always had a sense of childlike wonder. I questioned everything, from "why the microwave beeped," to "why birds fly," but the one person I asked the most questions towards was my Dad.

As he would leave for work every morning, I would stand on top of the stairs and ask, "Where are you going?" or, "When are you coming back?"

To which he'd always reply softly, and with confidence, "I'm going to work buddy, see you before dinner." His confidence gave me confidence that he would always come back. I mean, why would he not? He was my dad after all.

Years passed and I grew up. Through the tough breakups and bad grades he would always be by my side, like a loyal fan, cheering me on until the finish line. Whenever I had a question, as silly or serious as it may have been, he had the answers. Soon I lost that sense of childlike wonder, but he never stopped being there for me. However now, as I sit next to him on his death bed years later, I feel that sense of childlike wonder coming back, this time with a bitter taste to it.

I ask him with a tear gently cascading down my cheek, "Where are you going now, Dad?"

He looks at me with sorrow in his eyes, I can see the tears forming. "I don't know," he says plainly, but I can tell he's holding back.

For once in my life, he didn't have all the answers, nor did I feel the confidence I once felt as a child. As I watch him pass, I start to realize that my loyal fan is leaving the stands.

Still to this day, as I walk up the stairs, I turn my back to the door and imagine my father walking out into the morning sunlight. Though I know he won't step through the door again, I can still hear him cheering me on from above.

The Thread

The thread is on
the button is on
the jacket is on
the boy is on
the bedspread is on
the bed is on
the floor is on
the ground is on
the planet Earth

—YASMIN PADILLA SARAVIA, 9, BURKE

Morning Rush Warm and cozy in my bed

My father rushing out of bed
Hurry hurry out the door
He won't be late for work any more
Alarm clocks buzzing loud and clear
Buzz buzz buzz you're sure to hear
And it's like this the whole year
As I lift my drowsy head
I say I'm late instead

—JASMINE VAN, 10, SPRINGFIELD,
TEACHER: STEPHANIE MCCRONE

I'm Happy

I'm happy I got a phone,
I'm happy I didn't break a bone.
I'm happy that we have to write,
I think I have to wear glasses because I play video games without any light.

I'm happy that I ran a mile,
I'm happy that I read about a fantasy potion called Bile.
I'm happy that I'm great at video games,
I'm happy that I remember a lot of names.

I'm happy that it's almost Christmas time,
I'm unhappy that I'm running out of words to rhyme.
I'm unhappy that I'm not made of fire,
I'm unhappy that I'm not wire.

I like to wonder the pros and cons of being immortal,
I wish to go through a dimensional portal.
I'm happy that I'm almost done,
I hope that you're having fun.

I'm unhappy that I can't hop over the moon,
But I'm also unhappy to broom my room.
I'm happy that when it comes to video games, I'm unstoppable.
But I'm very unhappy to be done.

—ELIJAH DUKES, 9, BURKE

I'm Sorry...But I'm Not

I'm sorry for breaking your new vase
But I'm not sorry for dropping your doll case.
I'm sorry for eating all your beans
But I'm not sorry for eating your ice cream.

I'm sorry for jumping on your bed
But I'm not sorry for almost hitting your head.
I'm sorry for breaking your bike
Just kidding, I'm not, SIKE!

—ETHAN NGUYEN, 10, BURKE

My Messy Room

The pencil is on
the clipboard is on
the red folder is on
the green folder is on
the notebook is on
the loose papers are on
the blue binder is on
the rainbow binder is on
the book is on
the shelf is on
the desk is on
the carpet is on
the floor is on
the Earth is in
Space.

—RILEY MILLER, 9, SPRINGFIELD

The Time My Baby Sister Was in the Hospital

My baby sister was in the hospital, because of her heart defect. She was in the hospital for one year and was hard because I knew that someone I love is at risk. Recently, my baby sister was diagnosed with pneumonia. This is an infection of the lungs, and that is why she was coughing so much. It's just hard to be happy when your sister is sick.

—YONUS HUSSEN, 9, BURKE

If You Can Give a Gift That Doesn't Cost Money ...

"I would give my mom love.
I would give my dad hugs and kisses."

—CAROLINE BOUMA,
WEST SPRINGFIELD
ELEMENTARY, GRADE 1.

"I would get my family a heart that I made. It said, 'I love you more than you can imagine and I care about you so much!' Because they do everything to make me happy."

—ELNATHAN YOHANNES,
WEST SPRINGFIELD
ELEMENTARY, GRADE 1.