

"It is Our Nature to Nurture"

The Clare Woods Academy Voice

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Principal's Forum

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Greetings,

Second semester is always a very busy time of year at Clare Woods Academy. This year is no exception. Teachers and students are busy finalizing portfolios for alternate assessment, preparing for the ISAT tests in March and the 8th grade students are busy preparing for the constitution test. The seniors are preparing for graduation and transitioning to the next phase of life.

Plans and preparation for the annual spring play are now underway. The performances will be April 26th and April 27th. The theme for this year's performance will be based on our character education program.

This is also a busy time for the capital campaign. Under the leadership of Richard Francis, campaign chair, the campaign is moving forward. The final filming for the DVD was completed on February 2nd. Final editing will be February 16th with a final cut available by the end of February. Thank you to all of you who agreed to be interviewed and to appear on camera. A great deal of work is being done behind the scenes by the publications/events committee, the facilities task force, the speakers' bureau and the Board of Directors. Much more information regarding the campaign and how you can help will be available in the upcoming months. It has been exciting to see the progress being made and the positive actions being taken to ensure the future of Clare Woods Academy.

I look forward to seeing you at the PTO Chili supper on February 15th at 6:00 pm.

Happy Valentines Day

Anne M. Craig
Executive Director

Please fill out the enclosed survey.

We are looking at the format and content of the newsletter.

You can return the survey to us in the envelope provided.

Thank you.

Editors: Moissette, Terri and Bruce

Our “Hug Machine” by Sheila

The Squeeze Machine

“From as far back as I can remember, I always hated to be hugged. I wanted to experience the good feeling of being hugged, but it was just too overwhelming.”

– Temple Grandin

Temple Grandin is one of the world’s most well known individuals on the autism spectrum. She is an author and an expert in designing livestock handling facilities.

Temple Grandin designed something called The Squeeze Machine (“hug machine”). This machine applies deep pressure to an individual which in turn produces a calming effect on the nervous system.

Many children on the autism spectrum crave this pressure but cannot tolerate being touched by a person unless they initiate it. At Clare Woods we are fortunate enough to have a Squeeze Machine. Through the fund raising efforts of many families and students, we were able to purchase this invaluable piece of equipment.

The Squeeze machine is located in the Occupational Therapy room. Over the years we have had great success using this to calm and relax students with sensory processing problems.



Valentine Wrappings

Valentine's Day is traditionally celebrated on February 14th. Stores quickly sell out of cards, flowers, candy and all those one-of-kind gifts that make the day special for the gift giver and the gift receiver.

But here at Clare Woods Academy, Valentine's Day is celebrated every day and we *never* run out of those special one-of-kind expressions of care and love. These "ribbons and bows" of our daily activities add special touches that create a strong bond between students and staff.

We are always looking for that "extra something" to add to a student's schedule to help ease the stress of communication, help them stay focused and aid in transitioning from activity to activity.

Students are encouraged to communicate using verbal and non-verbal methods. Staff are constantly creating picture books and boards, social stories, and picture schedules to help their students understand and convey their needs. Alphasmarts and hand held PCs are part of many students' communication devices. Stickers and various point charts visually reward our students for their hard work. After a week of good behavior, a trip to the School Store is the ultimate reward.

Nice things come in little packages - and our O.T. department is always ready with that "little something special" for our students. Fidgets like chewing gum, putty, rubber balls and chew tubes are given to help bring out the best in our students who need help to focus.

Special events like swimming at the Bartlett Community Center, participation in Special Olympics and field trips are extra special sharing times – when students and staff are out of the school setting and having fun together.

Special attention is always given to individual needs. Staff patiently supervise students arriving in the morning by checking backpacks, encouraging personal grooming, reminding them to change for gym or listening to stories/complaints of what happened last night, or in the morning. Morning visits to our social workers or Occupational Therapy help the students calm down in order to transition to the beginning of classroom activities. There is always time for encouraging words, a "high five" or a pat on the back when a task is completed.

Many times the staff are on the receiving end of these Valentine Wrappings - an unexpected smile from a student who is always so serious, a "hi" from a student who seldom talks, a "thank you" from a student who never asks for anything.

These "ribbons and bows" gently wrap around our school, carefully drawing us all together in a special bond of love, caring and nurturing.

Light Center Visit *by Room 110A*

Ron:

We went to visit the Light Center for the past five Fridays. We did many fun things there. I saw all kinds of animals like rabbits, cats, horses, donkeys, goat, ducks, chickens, geese, and sheep. I gave the horse medicine. My shoes got all covered in mud and got dirty. I enjoyed watching all the animals, talking with the ladies that worked there, and receiving gifts from the barn arena.



It was fun. I want to go again. On March 9th I want to go back. I am the medicator.

Peter:

The first visit, we met the animals. There were miniature horses, donkeys, rabbits, cats, hens, roosters, large horses, goats, sheep, and geese. We led the horses into the barn. The horses' hoofs keep slipping on the floor. I want to thank the people at the Light Center for showing and helping us with the animals.



J J:

The first day we got there, we met all the new people and it was fun! After, we went outside and met all the donkeys. The donkey I had was named Toto. When I walked up to him, he let me put the rein on his face and walk him into the barn. When we got him inside, we walked him around the barn so he could get used to us so he would not get scared and kicks us.

The second time we went we got to see the sheep and goats. Then after the sheep, we brought out the rabbits and cleaned them. The third time we went there it was right before Christmas and we had cleaned all the animals and after that we received presents. One was for some one that was in our family and the other one was for us. The fourth time we went there we did some stuff with the horses. We went to a barn to meet a horse named Foxy who stayed in the barn so she can be warm and have her leg can get better. While we were there we were playing with a big green, and Foxy was scared, but Rhett was not. It was fun when he was playing with us.

Alicia:

For the past Friday, we went to the Light Center. We got to have our own horse. My horse was named Rose. She was stubborn. She is just like me she is so pretty. We got to groom them. My favorite horse was Daisy. It was hard to comb her hair because she is so stubborn. She was the horse that made me smile the most. She is the best horse ever. I love it when she hugged me. She hugged me by resting her head on my back. It's as if she knows I needed a hug. I will miss The Light Center



Casey:

What I did at the Light Center was help take care of the horses. What we did was brush the horses. We built a 2-D house. I ran with Rally the horse. I also helped with the bunnies, pet the bunnies and groomed. A funny thing happened at the farm. A goat tried to eat my coat. I really enjoyed going to the Light Center.

Valentine Editorial *by Bruce*

Greetings on this wonderful day.

This is the last *CWA Voice* in this somewhat familiar format. Great things are planned for a quarterly version that concentrates on collecting informative articles, facts, trends, resources, and the like, that can benefit you and your family. But what comes to mind is how we often cut valentines by folding the paper in half: when we do that we make two sides out of one model. Perhaps we can think of that same thing happening with the *Voice* – one good idea will foster two benefits. The plan is to allow each homeroom to have their own short newsletter, and fill it with reports, student projects, pictures, and information that parents, teachers and students need to stay in touch and grow closer. Growing closer is a theme of the upcoming quarterly too: education is a partnership between school, home and community; and intelligent, purposeful, and clearly communicated information and framing of issues is an essential requirement for us to partner together in the education, nurturing and training of the students we all hold so dear.

So, this Valentine issue of the *CWA Voice* is not a goodbye, but just a double “hello.”

Featured are ways we at CWA “hug” our students – read on to see what this is about. Please read the story of one of the most remarkable pieces of “co-curricular” equipment, that has proven to play an integral part in our school. And notice particularly the news of how as school, supporters and community we are moving forward along the path of building for a new school.

Finally, let me thank all the people who have given to this format with their spontaneity, willingness, insights, and graciousness.

By the Students
and Staff of
Clare Woods Academy

A definition of Love: Treating others
as you want others to treat you.

Clare Woods Academy
801 West Bartlett Road
Bartlett Illinois 60103
Phone: 630-289-4221
Fax: 630-289-4390

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on the CWA
website yet?

www.blcinc.org



2007 Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 19th	Presidents Day—No Classes
March 2nd	Institute Day—No Classes
March 23rd	3:00 p.m. Spring Break Begins
April 2nd	Classes Resume
April 6th	Spring Holiday—No Classes
April 9th	Spring Holiday—No Classes
April 26th & 27th	CWA Spring Play
May 4th	School Improvement Day—No Classes
May 28th	Memorial Day Observance—No Classes
June 6th	Last Day of School Early Dismissal—1:00 p.m.
	Graduation Ceremony--
June 14th	BLC Charity Golf Invitational