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# Westfield PTSA Minority Achievement Committee Newsletter

# THE MAC

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9th Edition June 2007

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## MAC BBQ June 7 You Don't Want to Miss It!

The Westfield High School Minority Achievement Committee (MAC) in conjunction with the PTSA and the Principal's Cabinet will host its first annual end-of-year Barbeque on Thursday, June 7, from 5:00–8:30 p.m. We will have plenty of your favorite barbeque specials, including barbeque ribs, smoked chicken, fried fish, hot dogs and hamburgers and plenty of sides. To sign up (RSVP), please go to the URL site below. Bring your favorite barbeque dish. Music and contests are also on the menu. For more information, please contact Mark Richardson or Tim Thomas

<http://www.evite.com/pages/invite/viewInvite.jsp?inviteId=COQFUMBXEYVAXKIEUAKX&li=iq&src=em>

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### **The Chairman's Corner** **Mark Richardson, MAC CHAIR** **In Honor of Our Beloved Westfield Family**

The Minority Achievement Committee mourns the loss of two of our beloved school alumni who were victims of the horrific shooting at Virginia Tech College this spring. Our sincere deepest sympathy goes out to the families of Erin Peterson and Reema Samaha. Multiple memorial funds have been established in memory of Reema and Erin and the first two scholarships named in memory of Erin Peterson will be awarded this year. I personally want to thank all of the volunteers who have responded to the call in such a short time to make these awards possible. If you would like to make donations to either fund, please check the school PTSA website for more information. You may also contact me at [maramr@cox.net](mailto:maramr@cox.net).

**Senior  
Graduation  
June 18<sup>th</sup>  
Last Day of  
School  
June 15<sup>th</sup>**

Thank each of you also for the wonderful assistance and commitment you have provided in support of the Minority Achievement Committee. Through continued partnership between school, parents, students and community, we are making a difference at Westfield High School.

### **End of School Year Message** **Tim Thomas, PRINCIPAL**

Dear Bulldogs,

It does not seem possible that this school year, my first as a high school principal, could possibly be over so soon. There have been many reasons to celebrate -- as well as times of sadness -- to reflect upon. Either way it has been an unforgettable year for the school and I feel honored to have been a part of the myriad experiences.

I am proud to be a Bulldog! I am proud of the manner in which our school, students, faculty, and community have united into a family. I continue to be amazed by the ability of our students to shine, to excel, to go beyond what some adults would ever believe possible from a teenager.

Our plans for next year include a renewed focus on literacy at Westfield High School. In addition, we will continue to investigate and research methods to create and maintain more

meaningful relationships between students and students as well as between students and staff members. We must continue to recognize the worth and importance of each and every individual in this building, be it student or adult. We are dependent upon one another, now more than ever. We are Westfield!

The Principal's Cabinet, the M&Ms Club, and a variety of other after-school interventions have been effective in addressing some of the needs of our minority students. We hope to finalize the collection of data soon which will support my suspicion that these initiatives have helped to close the achievement gap at Westfield High School. As always, the support of our parents and the efforts of the Minority Achievement Committee are much appreciated in extending the connection between home and school.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mark Richardson and Celeste Peterson for their efforts with MAC as well as all of the students, parents and faculty who have contributed to our efforts.

It has been an extraordinary year!  
Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

## Fairfax County Public Schools Summer Reading Lists

Students are encouraged to read over the summer, so they won't lose the skills they learned at school. All students entering 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade are required by the county to read at least one book over the summer. Here's a tip; take some notes after or while each book is read! Some kind of assignment will undoubtedly be due the first week of school in September. Go to

<http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/readlist/index.htm> for more information about reading lists for each grade level.

### Westfield Remembers: Reema Samaha and Erin Peterson

On April 16, 2007 in the VT morning French class two angels were called back home to heaven, Reema and Erin. They were inspirations and shining lights to their family, friends and WHS family. We grieve our lost, celebrate their lives. The following are tributes to them:

My favorite times with Reema were simple, yet so memorable. Whether Reema, Randa and I were practicing flips at the pool, making cookies, or going on tubing and rafting adventures with our families, we always had fun times filled with smiles and laughter that I will cherish forever.

Kristen Flanagan

Reema was <sup>3</sup>Daughter #3. She would dress up as a <sup>3</sup>babushka<sup>2</sup>, sneak up behind me and moan, <sup>CE</sup>Lu Ahnnn, <sup>LU</sup>AHHNNN<sup>2</sup>. I told her that when she won an Oscar, I would be in the audience. And that she had to buy me a house in Hollywood. No more.

Lu Ann Maciulla McNabb

I did not know Reema very well, but anyone who knew her at all knew what an extraordinary person she was. From the first time I met her, I looked up to her for her beauty, talent, and kindness. I will always remember her for that.

Sarah Dueweke  
Westfield Class of 2005  
Virginia Tech Class of 2009

Reema and I sat in the front together of French 3 at Westfield. As I goofed off, Reema gently reminding me to pay attention. I never did, and she was always so helpful when I would call her panicking before every quiz and test.

Leandra Jacobson

My son, Malik Reed, was one of the many little brothers of Erin's. Those two used to share their lunch money with each other. When one was short handed for breakfast or lunch, because of what extra's they may have wanted, they covered each other. Malik said he had several friends he was able to call his big sister, but Erin was 'The Big Sister' that he never had in his daily life. Though I didn't know her, if she was 'That Big Sister' to Malik, then she was definitely part of me! *She Will Always Be In Our Hearts!*

Eternal Love and Blessings,  
Malikah Reed (Malik's Mom)

Erin, you were a beautiful person and we will miss you deeply!! You brightened up every room you entered and your spirit will live on.

Melanie Wadden

Erin, If you've taught me anything, it's that life is fragile, but worth embracing fully. You lived everyday with your whole heart and with a huge smile on your face! I will think of you every time I step onto the court. I love you, continue to watch over us, you've brought our team closer and we'll never be without you. Love,

DMill

### Peterson and Samaha Foundations

Many of our Westfield High School parents, students, staff, and alumni have asked how they can contribute to funds to memorialize Erin Peterson and Reema Samaha, Westfield Class of 2006 graduates, who were victims of the Virginia Tech tragedy last month. We promised that we would communicate information as it became available.

The Peterson and Samaha families now have set up foundations that will distribute scholarships and awards in memory of Erin and Reema to future Westfield High School graduates. These foundations are 501(c) 3 corporations and are eligible for tax-

deductible contributions under IRS guidelines. Both foundations have websites and will eventually have a process for online contributions.

The Erin Peterson Fund plans to recognize a minimum of two seniors annually for leadership in athletics and a commitment to excel in academics. The mission of the scholarships is to inspire future generations of Westfield students to emulate Erin's strong sense of duty, love of school, and compassion for all who were in need. In addition the Peterson Foundation will look to broaden its scope by reaching out to members of the community who need help and support. For more information, visit the foundation's website at

[www.erinpetersonfund.org](http://www.erinpetersonfund.org)

Mail contributions to:  
*The Erin Peterson Fund*  
5309 Braddock Ridge Dr.  
Centreville, VA 20120  
*Checks should be made payable to:  
Erin Peterson Fund*

The Reema J. Samaha Memorial Scholarship Fund is dedicated to recognizing Westfield students who exemplify the many wonderful attributes of Reema Samaha, including love for the performing arts, academic excellence, and openness of mind, exceptional character, and respect for diversity. The fund will support scholarships for Westfield seniors. The Reema Samaha website (currently under construction) is at [www.reemasamaha.org](http://www.reemasamaha.org)

Mail contributions to:  
*The Reema J. Samaha Memorial  
Scholarship Fund*  
5205 Glen Meadow Rd.  
Centreville, VA 20120  
*Checks should be made payable to:  
NVCF/Reema J. Samaha Memorial  
Scholarship Fund.*

Now that the families' foundations have been established, Westfield High School and its various booster clubs are no longer accepting donations in Erin Peterson's or Reema Samaha's names; instead the school community is working with the Peterson and Samaha families to consolidate contributions and to memorialize Erin

and Reema in a thoughtful, responsible, and respectful manner.

Thank you for your continued support, and for being an important part of our Bulldog community.

Tim Thomas  
Principal  
Westfield High School

## **Losing a Loved One and Gaining a New Perspective:**

*A Message from Erin Peterson  
Defining Moment Assignment  
11/14/06*

Over the past eighteen years, there is only one moment in my life that I consider to be a defining moment. As sad as it may be, my defining moment occurred on the day of my great-grandmother's death. She was without a doubt the strongest person that I have ever met, and on the day she died, she only continued to confirm this fact. The week prior to her death, everyone in my family knew she was starting to slip away. The day she died I came to visit and, unfortunately, say goodbye. When I entered the room, I instantly began to cry hysterically. I knelt down by her bed, and she grabbed my hand and looked me dead in my eyes and said, "Everything is going to be okay." In that moment I knew that she was right, and in a way I became a stronger person.

I chose this experience as my defining moment because not only did I become a mentally stronger person, but my faith in God became exponentially stronger as well. All my life my family has told me to trust in God and believe that He had a plan for all of us, but it was not until that day did I actually believe it. That day, I had to trust in God to take care of the most precious person in my life. On that day, I had to let her go and believe that she was going to a place where she would not feel any pain. It is almost as if, when she died, she left some of her strength with me.

After that day my whole perspective on life changed. I no longer looked at the world as a place where chance and luck controlled the pattern of events. The world became a place where God

prevailed, and everything I wanted was in my grasp as long as I worked hard for it.

The death of my great grandmother helped me also to realize how important my family is to me. In actuality, the death of my great grandmother is my re-defining moment because her death truly changed me for the better. The strength I received from her is the attribute that I am most proud of. Even to this day, when I am in a difficult situation, I always ask myself. "What would she want me to do in this situation?"

Basically her death reshaped the way I approach life's obstacles. Before she died, I was a very nervous kid who never wanted to try anything new. After she died, I began to question how I went about things in my life. I questioned my anxiety about experiencing new things. Her death made me rethink my life; it made me want to live life to the fullest. Even though she died at an old age, her death made me realize that life truly is too short. This experience has made me appreciate every moment I get to spend with the people I love.

The whole situation is actually kind of ironic because in most families, after the death of a family member, they usually feel like they lost a piece of themselves, but for me, it was like I gained an angel. I feel like I have someone looking out for me and helping me make the decisions that will serve to be the most beneficial in the long run. My defining moment was not about a competition or a struggle; my defining moment was about losing yet gaining at the same time. It was a moment that brought me full-circle on the emotional spectrum.

### **Reflections and Looking Ahead By Jennifer Campbell, WHS PTSA President**

It is hard to believe that we've come to the end of the year so soon. We've learned and accomplished a lot, but have also suffered and continue to grieve some terrible losses. It's been a year filled with rewards, yet also

with challenges. Hopefully, we can learn from what we have done and experienced, maintaining and growing Westfield as a positive place in our children's lives.

We've worked this year toward the goals of increasing parent awareness about issues in school, improving communication, enhancing student success and continuing to narrow the achievement gap. Thank you to Mark Richardson for his leadership with MAC, as well as Carol Jasper and Bill Bernstein for their coordination of the BITS tutoring program. I extend my very heartfelt thanks to Celeste Peterson for continuing to edit and produce this MAC newsletter this year, in spite of her daughter Erin's WHS graduation in 2006. Far more at this time, I extend my heart and hand to her following Erin's untimely and tragic death at Virginia Tech; Celeste's long-standing commitment to helping kids and others in narrowing the achievement gap is unsurpassed...

If we have gained any perspective through the challenges recently experienced at Westfield, it is hopefully a realization of the gift of time. Please appreciate the time we have had together - in whatever amount - to learn, to support each other and to overcome our differences. It is a blessing to receive, to give and even to observe the random acts of kindness that have been evident as our school continues to grieve. Reach out to others who might be struggling with any number of things. Erin Peterson and Reema Samaha had this quality - they were rays of sunshine to many and people are realizing this exceptional quality more as they ponder the exceptional lives of these two young women.

Whether your kids are in still in high school or going off to college, continue to intervene in their lives. Find out what they are doing, who their friends are and how they spend their time. Kids still need a moral compass and need to be exposed to some of your parental values even after they've moved out.

Congratulations to the Class of 2007! Hopefully your time spent at

Westfield has prepared you for the path you have chosen. We wish you success and satisfaction in obtaining your goals. Good luck in the next chapter of your life!

Hope to see you at the upcoming MAC BBQ on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the summer, and we'll look forward to also seeing you at the Bulldog BBQ on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

## AP and Honors Summer Institute

Students taking an honors or AP course for the first time are asked to register for both the skills sessions, which will be held September 11 and 13 from 6:30-8:30, and the Course Specific Sessions which will be held on September 18 and 20th from 6:30-8:30. If a student is not enrolled in an AP or Honors course for the 2007-08 school year they are welcome to participate in the skills session which are on September 11 and 13 from 6:30 - 8:30. For more information please contact: Dawn Dickerson, Guidance Counselor KOL-MAR 703-488-6373 Office

## Erin

How could he take you?

We needed you.

You were a great person, achieving great things.

Yet he took you so viciously.

You felt no pain yet the rest of us feel grief for you everyday

Why you out of the thousands of people

Why did it have to be you?

We miss you so much.

You were loved so much and a great asset to our community.

I guess your purpose in life had been fulfilled.

He took you for a reason

We don't understand why when we needed you so much

You are missed everyday

We will never forget you

Your legacy will continue and be remembered forever.

By Arielle Jasper

## Minority Seniors College Acceptances

On behalf of the MSA committee, we would like to recognize and congratulate the following seniors who will be graduating this year. The following seniors have notified their counselor of their acceptance to a two or four year university.

Bryson Paul Hershey	Air Force
Steven Anthony Hall	Aviation Institute
Johanna Chung Lee	Carnegie Mellon
Ahra Cho	Case Western
Deborah Arom Kim	Case Western
Elizabeth Hsing-Tzu Walker	Cornell
Alfonso Tovas Canas	Davis Center
Jay-Alfonso Castillo	
Gonzaga	Davis Center
Antoinette Nanfizail Hudson	ECPI College
Helen Erika Schmidt	Full Sail
Achintya Rana	GMU
Hamna Riaz	GMU
Jacqueline Michele Zenarosa Tanada	GMU
Jasmine Rene Lynch	GMU
Jessica Deguzman Fisher	GMU
Joo Young Kim	GMU
Lillybeth Diaz	GMU
Ovi Jafar	GMU
Peter Fangzhou Rao	GMU
Puneetinder Kaur Mann	GMU
Roop-Kamal Singh Sandhu	GMU
Shashank Vijay Sampat	GMU
Si Bong Song	GMU
SM Ehsan Bin Qaium	GMU
Swetcha Lankapalli	GMU
Veronica Lucile Jablonski	GMU
Jessica Victoria Fayne	Hampton
Tara Jessica Rayford	Hampton
Ama Quayeba Arkorful	High Point
Carol Cleofe Vera	JMU
Jeremy Mandel Dudley	JMU
Megha Prakash Trivedi	JMU
Niem Tu Tran	JMU
Susy Moon	JMU
Wendy Michelle Hou	JMU
Kaprishia Pearl Covington	
Ahmad Ayyub Abdullah	Johnson & Wales
Anthony Patricio Gonzalez	Lynchburg College
Arielle Kristine Jasper	
Joohee Lee	Marines
Halie Fayme Ebbay Griffin	Marshall University
	Mary Washington
	Marymount
	Manhattan College
	Marymount University
Marium Adnan	
David Kim	New York University
Katlen Jay Kim	New York University
Meena Sareen	New York University
Sara Anne Irene Nichols	Northeastern University
	Northampton Comm College
Leon Wright	NOVA
Alejandro Jimenez	
Alexis Aaron Molina	
Nicoll	NOVA
Ana Maria Rodriguez	NOVA
Angela Del Carmen Villegas	NOVA

Ashley Christina Laitano	NOVA
Beteliem Kidus Asfaw	NOVA
Connie Shin-Yi Hwang	NOVA
Daniel Waissman	NOVA
Diana Patricia Rojas	NOVA
Farhad Majid Ghafoori	NOVA
Fernando Andres Riloz	NOVA
Harpreet Singh	NOVA
Hector Antonio Flores	NOVA
Hena Ghaznavi	NOVA
Jennifer Katherine Paz	NOVA
Ji Min Choi	NOVA
Joseph Francis Ugarte	NOVA
Kanin Kumdoug	NOVA
Lasheka Lashawn Bushrod	NOVA
Laura Marie Barreda	NOVA
Luis Antonio Zarate	NOVA
Mariano Ricardo Granda	NOVA
Marquis Cortes Waller	NOVA
Michael Ryan Hovland	NOVA
Nardos Hailu Megersa	NOVA
Natasha Villeda Campos	NOVA
Navpuneet Kaur Gill	NOVA
Oliver Wright	NOVA
Rafael Martin Ramos Castro	NOVA
Ramin D Ghodoumpour	NOVA
Samantha Lynn Wade	NOVA
Samuel Pablo Zeballos Garcia	NOVA
Sobia Ali	NOVA
Sofia Margarita Penate Castro	NOVA
Sosena Shiferaw Tesfaye	NOVA
Stephanie Marie Kennaugh	NOVA
Thanh-Sandy Kieu Nguyen	NOVA
Vanessa Elizabeth Flores	NOVA
Xavier Guerra	NOVA
Yasmeen Renee Washington	NOVA
Karl Joseph L Cabadin	NOVA
Dominique Thaibinh Nguyen	ODU
Jessica Leora Caesar	ODU
Michel Kersaint	ODU
	Pennsylvania Culinary Institute
Gretchen Myra Hebron	Radford University
An Hong Le	Radford University
Jenny Wong	Radford University
	Sarah Lawrence College
Michael Hune Paik	
Malika Vibha Hunasikatti	Smith College
Abhinav Ramani	Stanford University
Bruce Alexander Green	Syracuse University
	The Art Institute of Washington
Ashley Monet Harris	
Daniel Alexander Acosta	The Art Institute of Washington
	The Art Institute of Washington
Mona Robert Fetterolf	UNC Greensboro
Roxana Navai	University of Alaska
Dustin Levi Post	
Liduina Ngwenyi Ngundam	University of British Columbia
	University of Maryland
Jivón Iniko Simmons	University of Mass
Mahati Gollamudi	University of Nevada
In Bum Baek	University of VA at Wise
Apurv Nilesh Parikh	

Andrew Hoang Vo	UVA
Derrick Shaihung Hui	UVA
Ellen Landicho Lumagui	UVA
Heung Seok Yoo	UVA
Hye Sue Kim	UVA
Irene Chiang	UVA
Ishraga Abdelhadi	
Eltahir	UVA
Kevin Jia	UVA
Manojkumar Hemnath	
Kunthu	UVA
Meg Shawn Dzung	UVA
Natalie Jennifer Choi	UVA
Paulinder Kaur Mann	UVA
Pragna Vanapala	UVA
Rana Yasir Bann	
Elamin	UVA
Razan Ahmed Osman	UVA
Sean Sanjay	
Jayachandran	UVA
Shannon Marie Page	UVA
Tajinder Paul Singh	
Mann	UVA
Yoon Ah Jo	UVA
Isaac Constantine	
Spragg	Valley Forge
Alia Zohra Hassan	VCU
Arvachi Pankajbhai	
Patel	VCU
Christopher Chul-Eiu	
Kim	VCU
Dominic Gregory	
Higginson	VCU
Haroon Haider	VCU
Michelle Marie Little	VCU
Semira Gebretsadkhan	VCU
Sofyan Saory Bey	VCU
Taylor Alfonso Russell	VCU
Victoria Elizabeth Smith	VCU
Woon Chong Yoo	VCU
Andrew Thomas Garcia	Villanova
Alexandra Nicole Ong	Virginia Tech
Ashlina Chin	Virginia Tech
Byung Yoon Kim	Virginia Tech
Candice Nicole	
Gutierrez	Virginia Tech
Fariyah Saleem	Virginia Tech
Jee Sun Huh	Virginia Tech
Ji Young Cho	Virginia Tech
Lan-Anh Thi Tran	Virginia Tech
Melanie Elizabeth Knoth	Virginia Tech
Peter Tailanga Velz	Virginia Tech
Whitney Ann Braxton	Virginia Tech
Adam Thomas Dahms	Virginia Wesleyan
Cassandre Sarah	
Durocher	Virginia Wesleyan
Elogien Ismail Ali	William and Mary
Maitreyi Nagarkar	William and Mary
Soo-Jin Ock	William and Mary
Nechelle LaShae	Winston-Salem
Wilkins	State
Eric Nathaniel	Worcester
Sheppard	Polytechnic Inst

## BITS

BITS will be having their Annual Banquet on Saturday, June 9, 9a.m. at WHS for students, tutors and their family. See you there!



## MAC Fact

**Definition: a historical insight about a person of color or an event concerning persons of color designed to help shape and uplift pride in the heritage of our minority youth**

## May Asian Pacific American Heritage Month



May is Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month—a celebration of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

### Yuan T. Lee



#### *Chemist*

**Born: 11/29/1936**

**Birthplace: Hsinchu, Taiwan**

Yuan T. Lee was one of three who shared the 1986 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Although Lee's childhood in Taiwan was interrupted by World War II, once it resumed he led a full school life that included being second baseman on the baseball team, a member of the little league national championship ping-pong team, and trombone player in the band—all while getting top grades. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Taiwan and then moved to the U.S. and Berkeley to work on a Ph.D. It was at Berkeley where he became interested in the study concerning the dynamics of chemical elementary processes that would lead to his Nobel Prize. He has taught at the University of Chicago and Berkeley and has received the

National Medal of Science and the U.S. Department of Energy's Ernest O. Lawrence Award. He renounced his U.S. citizenship in 1994 to take a post in Taiwan where he has become politically active.

## IT'S THE MAC ATTACK

- Have you talked to your child about their goals and how going to college will help them to obtain these goals?
- When was the last time you sat down and talked to your child about the importance of education and its value?

**Be pro-active  
THINK ABOUT IT!**

Do you have a question, or an issue you would like us to write about? Would you like to submit an article? We want to hear from you; contact;

- MAC Chair: Mark Richardson  
703 793-4947
- MAC Editor: Celeste Peterson  
703 830-3795
- BITS Coordinator: Carol Jasper  
703 830-3865