

Dad's Day at Woodlawn

By Bob Lothian

Wesley Johnson sat in the principal's chair at Woodlawn School. On one side stood his son, Wesley, Jr., and on the other, his daughter, Joy Monique. They posed for a family photo snapped by Woodlawn teacher Jerry Jeli.

Friday was Dad's Day at Woodlawn, "one of the happiest days of the year," said principal Pam Shelly. It's the day when kids get to show their dads what they do at school all day, and to show them off to their friends.

About 140 dads responded this year, "which is really unusual," said Jeli, who organized the event. "I think the pictures were a big draw," he said.



Wesley Johnson junior and senior pause for a moment to share a newspaper. Mrs. Sander's 5th grade



Rev. Nathan Barnett visits daughter Tamara - Mrs. Ranck's pre-K "I Love You Daddy" theme of classroom



Dan Brewster visiting daughter Danise in Mrs. Rix's Kindergarten (other students Alexander Clay and DeMarcus Jenkins)



Bobby Bennet visits stepdaughter Netia Miles in Fran Vorberg's 3rd grade

As dads and kids filed through the principal's office to have their pictures taken, Jeli and Shelly snuck bites from the lunch that day of fish and chips.

Contrary to media stereotypes that "fathers don't care about their kids," Woodlawn's Dad's Day was "a real demonstration of support for the kids from their fathers," Shelly said. "These men are real important in their children's lives."

As she talked, 2nd grader Anthony Branch, Jr. climbed onto his father's lap for a picture. "Usually we're problem-solving when he's sitting in my chair," Shelly said.

Earlier, the dads were treated to a talent show featuring folk dancing, school awards, "The Three Bears"



Samuel Shepard visits son Donnie Shepard

performed by the kindergarten and singing of, "We Are the World." There was time for room visits, lunch and chocolate cake baked by Woodlawn teacher Sarah Lofthouse.

Her husband, Doug Lofthouse, was there with their fifth grade son, Kevin.

Meanwhile, Wesley Johnson read a poem, "Father to Son."

"I'm having a pretty nice time," said Johnson, who described himself as more active than most parents. He chaperones the school's award-winning African Dance Team, of which two of his daughters are members, and he assists with field trips and classroom presentations.

Johnson, who has served three years on the Desegregation Monitoring Committee, described principal Pam Shelly as "a model of leadership." Woodlawn is "at the top of the list" in multi-cultural awareness and community involvement, Johnson said. "I'm really proud that my children are attending here," he said. "And don't forget Mom's Day, too," Johnson added.

Woodlawn also sponsors a popular Grandparent's Day, according to Shelly.

In addition, the school encourages community and parent involvement when presenting new curriculum, and with parenting classes, she said.

"We get so much more accomplished when we support each other," Shelly said. She urged parents to attend Woodlawn's multi-cultural fine arts festival April 29 - May 2, with an open house May 1.

Candidate's Fair at King

The Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods and the Rainbow Coalition will be co-sponsoring a Candidate's Fair at the King School Cafeteria on Saturday, April 26, 1986, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

All candidates for major offices, both city and statewide, have been invited, in addition to those running for local North and Inner Northeast seats in the state legislature and the Metropolitan Service District.

The event will feature candidates in informal settings, able to talk one-on-one with citizens, as well as offer the opportunity for all candidates to be introduced and say a few words to the audience.

For further information please contact the Northeast Coalition Office at 248-4575.

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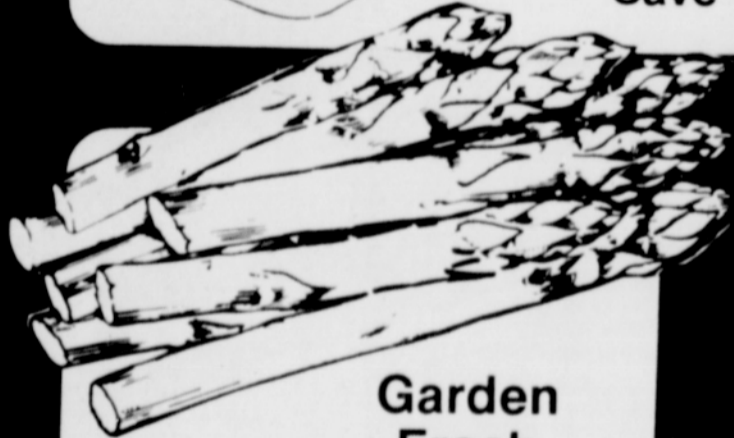
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