

Alma Intermediate School Thanksgiving News



Fifth grade US Flag assembly



Chromebooks!



Coffee with Class

November, 2014

Student Mission Statement: *As students our mission is to learn what we need to know for successful living. We are responsible, life-long learners, using our knowledge and skills to help others right here, right now!*

Upcoming Events

Nov. 26-28: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 8: 6:00 p.m. Honor Choir Christmas at the PAC

Dec. 10: Honor Choir to State Capitol and Children's Hospital

Dec. 12: School-Wide Spelling Bee at 9:00 a.m. in the library

Dec. 12: Yearbook order deadline

Dec. 18-19: Dismiss at 2:15 p.m.

Dec. 20-Jan. 5: Christmas Break

Jan. 6: Second semester begins

From the Principal...

Some of my favorite memories revolve around Thanksgiving. I can still picture my grandfather as he looked up from a meal, patted his stomach, and said, "Best meal I ever had." My mother recounts her resolve to become a better cook because of the constant praise and encouragement from her father-in-law. Whether a cool drink of water or a Christmas gift made by a grandchild, he always said a heart-felt thank you.

When I was a junior in high school my work and school schedule caused me to be at home for Thanksgiving while the rest of the family was out of town. I was to have Thanksgiving dinner with my grandfather in the nursing home. I visited him often but was not excited about having dinner there.

He had very limited speech because of a stroke, but as we sat quietly eating our Thanksgiving meal I began to think of all the gifts this great man had given me. He had taken me on long walks, shown me where old family historic places were, told me hunting stories, and taught me the names of plants and trees. I was overcome with a sense of thankfulness for his life and his influence. This quiet meal with my grandfather has become one of my favorite Thanksgiving memories.

Today I am thankful for my family and friends. I'm thankful for having meaningful work and great people to work with. I'm thankful for the children whose lives we can touch and make a positive difference. I hope this Thanksgiving will be a time of reflection and joy as we give thanks and make new memories.



My grandfather, mother, and me having a meal together.

Grade-Level Spelling Bee Finalists

Third grade: Madison Downs, Phallyn Roberts, Holly Smith, Blaiken Kelly, and Mattie Davis, alternate

Fourth grade: Emberlin Caldwell, Brant Peppas, Sarah Banks, Colton Reather, and Sophie Hebert, alternate

Fifth grade: Samantha Baker, Annabeth Sanderson, Madeline Williams, Nykollus Dyke, and Dylan Mormile, alternate

Emergency Notification and Website

A number of resources are available at almasd.net. You'll find the Intermediate School under "Schools." Under the AIS "News" you'll find the Student Handbook, recent newsletters, calendars, and upcoming events. You may also request **emergency notifications for weather** and other purposes. Links to learning resources are available on the lower left side of the AIS homepage.

Alma Dads Make Difference on Students' Lives

By Scott Smith
Fort Smith Times Record

ALMA — Each day, Alma Intermediate School is a safer place for students, thanks to the soft-spoken, positive presence of 30 area volunteers.

Similar to the popular Watch D.O.G.S. program, the school's Dads on Duty program has fathers and other volunteers serve as a positive, often-educational influence on the school's 680 students, said Jim Warnock, AIS principal. Program participants not only spend time with their own children during the school's lunch and recess periods, but also often act as a source of inspiration for other students, he said.

"When they see Billy and the other Dads on Duty, the kids just gather around them," Warnock said. "The kids are so excited to see Billy and the others here at school."

Implemented at AIS a few years ago, the Dads on Duty program started to decline in participants a couple years ago, he said. Some of the Dads on Duty volunteers "moved on" with their student children as they grew and enrolled in upper-grade schools, leaving a metaphorical hole in the program, Warnock said.

"We're thankful that Billy Howard has come along and taken on the role of acting as coordinator for the program now," he said. "Billy really is serving as a great inspiration for other fathers to come forward and help."

Howard, who works as senior pastor for Alma Heights Missionary Baptist Church, initially saw a need to get behind the Dads on Duty program.

"It kind of started when my daughter, Anna, kept asking me, 'Dad, when are you going to have lunch with me here at school?'" said Howard, who also has two other children, fifth-grader Daniel and elementary student Emma. "I then saw that I needed to help and be a part of this program, and I'm going to be here, probably, three days a week to support the program."

In addition to spending time with Anna and Daniel at school, Howard makes time for his children's classmates. He often shoots basketball with them during recess, greeting each and every question from the students with a smile.

"It's great because you get to talk to the kids, bond with them and answer their questions," Howard said. "It's a mentoring-type thing, and that's great for the school."

In many ways, the interaction between students and Dads on Duty volunteers serves as an ongoing educational experience for students, Warnock said.

"One of our volunteers, E7 Master Sgt. Charles Smith from the Air Force, wears his military uniform when he comes here, and the students always ask him about the uniform," he said. "The students are learning about these parents and volunteers and what they do."

"And it's helping give the students a way to gain self-confidence and grow," Warnock added.

Howard said he thought the Dads on Duty program was a much-needed element to add to the "already great work" being done by Warnock and his staff.

Warnock immediately agreed the Dads on Duty volunteers are making a difference.

"We haven't had any incidents regarding safety at the school, thankfully, but it is nice to have the Dads on Duty program in place here," he said. "We have put it out there in our community that at any given time, there are at least two Dads on Duty volunteers here at our school every day. It's a way to keep the children and staff safe. It's good for everybody."

Although the majority of Dads on Duty volunteers are fathers of students, the program also is open to grandfathers and mothers, Warnock said.

"We have one great-grandfather who comes here once a week, and it's a great thing for him and for the students," he said. "It's good that we're getting fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers involved, and we can always use more volunteers."

Those interested in participating can email Howard at billyhoward@gmail.com.

"One of the best things about this program is, it's flexible; people can just sign up so we'll know who is participating, and they can come to the school and check in at any time to be a Dad on Duty," Warnock said. "The program fluctuates with what people's schedules are each day. Someone who works in construction can, when it rains, come into the school and volunteer as a Dad on Duty. It's a perfect program."



Jim Warnock, Principal

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Web link: Alma Intermediate School