

Air Force Brass Visit Imagine Andrews and Teach a Class

In December, students and teachers at Imagine Andrews were treated to two very special visits by some very important people. On December 19, Major General Darren McDew, Commander of the Air Force District of Washington, DC, and his wife, stopped by Imagine Andrews to address several student groups. Gen. McDew spoke to second graders about the importance of attending and excelling in school and getting a great education. Ms. McDew read to the Kindergarten students and discussed the holiday season and the value of being grateful.

Earlier in the month, on December 12, Colonel Jacqueline D. Van Ovest, 89th Airlift Wing Commander, and Colonel Kenneth Rizer, 11th Wing/Joint Base Andrews Commander, spoke with the students in Grades 3 and 4 about character, leadership, work ethic, and

decision-making. Both engagements are part of the school's ongoing effort to support the character development program.

As commander of the Air Force District of Washington, Gen. McDew helps organize, train, and equip combat forces for the aerospace expeditionary forces, homeland operations, civil support, national special security events, and ceremonial events. Col. Van Ovest is responsible for worldwide special air mission airlift, logistics, aerial port and communications support for U.S. senior military and elected leaders. Col. Rizer leads the 11th Wing and Joint Base Andrews, providing security, personnel, contracting, finance and infrastructure support for six Wings, two Headquarters and over 50 tenant organizations, as well as 60,000 airmen and families in the national capital region and around the world.



Major General Darren McDew spoke to second graders about the importance of excelling in school and getting a great education.



Judges and committee members for Imagine Discovery's inaugural PTA Reflections contest included (from left) Jennifer Brumbalow, Charles Sydnor III, Rachel J. Barrett-Dolcine, Sadie Flick, Tim Watts, Twanya Sellers, Lil Black, and Debbie Douglass.

Imagine Discovery Launches Inaugural PTA Reflections Contest

By Charles Sydnor III

On December 20, Imagine Discovery's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) hosted its inaugural PTA Reflections contest. The National PTA Reflections Program, which has been in existence since 1969, encourages students across the nation to explore their artistic talents by creating works of art for fun and recognition. Each year a new theme is selected for the program, and the theme for the 2011-2012 program is "Diversity Means..."

Fourteen Imagine Discovery students, from Kindergarten through Grade 7, participated in the contest, creating original works of art in six areas: dance choreography, film/videography, literature, musical composition, photography, and visual arts.

The Imagine Discovery Reflections program featured a number of local

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Letters From the Directors

There's Something About Character

Positive character development. It's one of our key Measures of Excellence and is, by rights, an integral part of what we strive to do every day at the Imagine Maryland schools. Yet I often wonder, do we really understand what character means or how valuable it is in the development of our students and staff?



At Imagine Schools, we believe that a school must cultivate a culture of character in order to be a successful learning community. But what is character? Is it simply good behavior — i.e., doing the right thing because it is the right thing — or is it more than that?

Whenever I visit our Imagine Maryland schools, I am often reminded that character can take on many shapes and sizes and present itself in unexpected ways, every day. It's not hard to find; you just need to look around.

Take this issue of *ImagiNation*, which is full of examples of the ways that character development can impact the lives of the

Imagine family. For instance, in December some high-ranking members of the Air Force, including Major General Darren McDew, Commander of the Air Force District of Washington, DC, Colonel Jacqueline D. Van Ovest, 89th Airlift Wing Commander,

and Colonel Kenneth Rizer, 11th Wing/Joint Base Andrews Commander, visited Imagine Andrews to take tours and to address several groups of children. In addition to espousing the value of staying in school and getting a good education, all three VIPs emphasized the importance of hard work, leadership, and decision-making skills — all key qualities for building good character.

The notion of character development dominates the “Campus Kiosk” section, as well. From the winter concerts at Imagine Lincoln, which showcased the variety of skills and talents of the student body, to the students at Imagine Foundations who performed in the same assembly as the President's own Marine Corps string quintet, to the children who volunteered to form a new Student Council at Imagine Andrews: All of these seemingly minor acts take major amounts of courage, passion, and determination — vital ingredients for developing good character.

Character manifests itself in other, more “grown-up” ways, too. For instance, every staffer on the list of “Fun-Makers” at Imagine Foundations II demonstrates that, with a little resourcefulness and energy you can get things done, especially the things that no one wants to — or is even asked — to do.

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How Would You Define ‘Parent Involvement’?

I hope that this edition of *ImagiNation* finds you doing exceptionally well. As many of you are aware, parent involvement is an essential component in successfully educating our students. Particularly, because we believe that the primary responsibility for the education of the child is the parents. Our role as Imagine educators is to partner with our families to create meaningful home and school collaborative opportunities.

“Parent involvement” is both a broad and often misunderstood term that lends itself to all kinds of random interpretations. Project Appleseed (www.projectappleseed.org/) has conducted solid research on this topic and has concluded that the most effective

parent involvement programs have six key components: **1) Volunteering:**

actively assisting students and teachers at the school with tasks that the school needs to accomplish; **2) Parenting:**

the school provides workshops to parents on best parental practices; **3) Communicating:**

regularly scheduled conferences

held with every child and parent to review academic progress/concerns;

4) Learning at home: information provided to families regularly on the skills that the student needs to acquire and how parents can support their child's efforts at home; **5) Decision-making:**

active participation in the PTA/PTO and student advisory councils; and **6) Collaborating with**



the community: information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

The above descriptions are not exhaustive. Instead, they provide just enough information for you to begin to think critically about

this topic. We hope that you will engage in honest dialogue with your colleagues about how well your campus interacts with parents and how each individual team member can enhance parental involvement. In the coming weeks, I will be forming a Regional Task Force on this topic, specifically to create a “Parental

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Campus Kiosk: Brief Notices from the Imagine Maryland Public Charter Schools

Academic Achievement

Imagine Foundations: On December 2, we celebrated Honor Roll and Principal's List students with our first Honor Breakfast. It was a huge success. We had 34 students on Principal's List (straight A's in every area on the report card) and 62 students on Honor Rolls (only A's and B's on the report card). We invited two family members per child, and the band and chorus performed. Students were presented with certificates, and Principal's List students also received a "Principal's Award" medallion.

Character Development

Imagine Andrews: To promote student leadership and character development, Imagine Andrews established its first Student Council. Council members, who will engage in school-wide activities and make decisions that benefit the school and its students, include: Jaydis Franklin (4th), president; Kris Urbina (4th), vice president; Zion Yamashita (3rd), vice president; Nia Bishop (3rd), secretary; Mia Aston (4th), historian; Haylee Huhmann (4th); Demetrius Grier (3rd); Kayla Long (3rd); Kamira Bradshaw (2nd); Justin Onyenyeeonwu (2nd); Jaylin Radford (2nd); and Elijah Simpson (2nd). While learning about leadership, democracy, and citizenship, members will share students' interests and ideas with faculty and school leaders on ways to improve their learning environment using Imagine's Shared Values as a guide. The Imagine Andrews Student Council is excited and ready to serve its school and community.



Imagine Foundations: Our monthly character assembly featured "President's Own," the Marine Corps string quartet that performs for President Obama. During the assembly, which was held in honor of the character trait "Caring," students also gave various performances.

Imagine Lincoln: Winter concerts, held on December 14-15, showcased our students' many talents. The Drama Club, under the direction of Fifth Grade teacher Jenna Parker, created a holiday play entitled "Where's Rudolph?" The cast consisted of students in Grades 5-8. Choral presentations featured students from various grades under the direction of Latasha Perry. Musically inclined students in the beginner and advanced bands and orchestra were able to demonstrate their instrumental skills by performing various holiday musical selections, thanks to Rachel Israel, Instrumental Music Instructor.

Imagine Foundations: In November, students in Kindergarten and Grades 1 - 3 and 6 made Thanksgiving placemats as welcome-home gifts for an Army Unit returning to Fort Meade. As a thank you, the troops attended an assembly at the school in December to honor the students for the placemats. Members of the unit played musical instruments and answered students' questions.

Imagine Foundations: On December 14, our first-ever Girls Basketball team hosted their first home game. Go Eagles!

Parent Choice

Imagine Andrews: On December 14, the Imagine Andrews PTO hosted its first Family Reading Night. Students, parents, and faculty members enjoyed and participated in this fun-filled event celebrating the love and importance of reading. Highlights included read-alouds, arts and crafts, and edible treats symbolizing popular children books, such as chocolate covered pretzel sticks (i.e., Harry Potter magic wands) and cotton candy (i.e., *The Snowy Day* snowballs).

Imagine Foundations: Our PTO completed its Angel Tree community service project in December. We sponsored 14 families in all, with each class supporting one family each and donating gifts for each of its members. The PTO also sponsored a Coat Drive for families during the month of December, collecting and donating winter clothing to families in need.

Imagine Lincoln: We salute our PTO for their continued support and fundraising efforts with the Joe Corbi Fundraiser as well as the Aluminum Can drive. The proceeds will support our STEM Program.

Shared Values

Imagine Foundations: Many classrooms had holiday celebrations on Wednesday, Dec. 21, but Stephen Sereda's fifth grade class held the biggest. There was so much food, in fact, that they were able to invite other classes that didn't have food during their festivities to join in.



It's Show Time!

Staff from all four Prince George's Imagine Schools attended the Specialty Programs, Public Charter Schools, and Career & Technical Education Programs Showcase held on January 17 at Charles H. Flowers High School in Springdale, Md. Principals and staff from Imagine Andrews, Imagine Foundations (I & II), and Imagine Lincoln, along with members of the Imagine Maryland Regional staff, were on hand to meet and greet prospective parents, students, and others who wanted information about charter schools and other education options within the county public school system. Approximately 1,000 people attended the annual event, sponsored by the Prince George's County Public Schools.





Imagine Schools Co-Founder Visits Foundations II

Eileen Bakke, vice president of education and co-founder of Imagine Schools, visited Imagine Foundations II on January 18. Bakke, who says she likes to stop by each of the schools in the region once a year, toured the newly renovated school building, interacted with students, and met with new staff members.

Faculty Spotlight

Vivian Giang, a reporter for *Business Insider*, will feature Bobby Edenfield, a Grade 1 Math & Science teacher at



Edenfield

Imagine Foundations II, in an upcoming article. The pictorial slide-show, entitled "A Day in the Life of a Teach for America Teacher," will follow the daily routines of the classroom and the rigorous daily work the students do.

An update and link to the article will be provided once it is posted online.

Imagine Lincoln would like to welcome several new teachers and other staff who have recently joined the family:

- Marcus Johnson: Grade 2 Reading/ Language Arts
- Elizabeth Constantine: Vocal Music Teacher
- Aleesha Moore, Verna Blake, Nossie Robinson, and Dionna Billingsley: Dedicated Aides

Hope McGuire, principal at Imagine Foundations II, would like to give a shout-out to the "Fun-Makers":

- Michelle Zitofsky, for deciding on a Parent Workshop Presenter
- Bobby Edenfield and Edward Cupaioli for planning our STEM Fair on February 15 and working with all Math & Science teachers to prepare lessons
- Alexis Lassus for sparking a high "time on task" schedule adjustment
- Nichol Carter for deciding how to streamline procedures and processes in the front office



Zitofsky



Cupaioli



Lassus

Muffins with Mom: A Sweet Success!

by Devita Porter

The annual "Muffins with Moms" event, held in the early morning at Imagine Discovery Public Charter School on November 10, was a sweet success. Set up in the Imaginarium, the school's multi-purpose room, the popular event featured plenty of the eponymous breakfast food, along with drinks, for all to enjoy. A slideshow presentation of the Imagine students with their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, and special female figures in their lives, added a personal touch and highlighted the love of family.

Carlette Flowers, Imagine's PTA President, commented that the event was "well organized and well planned [and] went above and beyond."

"'Muffins with Mom' is simply a small token of appreciation for the ladies," stated Angela White, PTA Chairperson. "Hopefully, it warmed the hearts of many."



"Muffins with Mom" attendees Leslie White, a sixth grader at Imagine Discovery (left), with her grandmother, Frances Cuffia, and mother, Angela White, PTA Chairperson.

Imagine Foundations II Eagles: Soaring to Success in 2011

Although they opened their doors more than half way through the year, 2011 was a busy and productive period for members of the Imagine Foundations II community.

In August, the school embarked on an amazing journey, which included renovating an old building, hiring a new staff, and creating a safe and inviting learning environment for 260 children and their families. Nothing could have been accomplished without the cooperation and hard work of the faculty, staff, parents, and students, says Principal Hope McGuire.

“Each challenge was met with strong resolve and an earnest commitment by every member of the Imagine Foundations II learning community to succeed,” she stated.

The following are some of the highlights and activities that McGuire says contributed to a successful year so far:



Building Good Characters

Each month we send home a character development newsletter to make families aware of the monthly character trait and to inspire conversations about good character at home, as well as in school. There is also space at the bottom of each newsletter for a child to be a “character detective” to investigate and record what each character trait means to their family. Teachers also make morning announcements and read quotes that pertain to the character trait of the month.

We also host a monthly “Caught Being a Good Character” program. The purpose is to recognize students who display the character trait of the month. Each child who gets “caught” displaying that trait will be recognized in the morning announcements and on a bulletin board in the hallway. At the end of the month, all students recognized for good character will get to sign their names in the “Book of Good Character,” which is displayed in the front office.



Shaping Future Authors and Illustrators

As part of their writing skills development, our students have been learning to compose stories coupled with meaningful and colorful illustrations. First grade students from Cielo Deocares’s and Traci Wallace’s classes have already published their own books, entitled *Outside My Door*, that showcased their retelling and summarizing skills, along with their ability to use narrative language to describe characters, settings and events in proper sequence. Bobby Edenfield’s Math classes also have written their own books, entitled *My Life with Numbers*. Other classes have worked to produce stories that demonstrate their expertise in writing.

The second half of the 2011-2012 school year promises to be just as busy and exciting for the staff and students of

Imagine Foundations II, says McGuire. Upcoming events include:

STEM Science Fair

The Science Team has announced that all classrooms will be participating in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math — or STEM — Fair on February 15th. Each classroom will complete a science project to be judged by a team of professionals. This is an amazing opportunity for our students to explore the scientific process and continue their exposure to inquiry-based learning. Preparation for the event will begin in mid January.

Read to Succeed Program

After the holiday break, we began the “Read to Succeed” program. Students who read for six hours will be able to earn a free ticket to Six Flags. Every teacher who has students participating will also receive a free ticket. Parents received letters with teacher directions and the reading log, which must be signed by the parents and turned in by February 16th.

Shooting for the Stars!

Each day at Imagine Foundations II we are shooting for the stars and striving for quality learning in every way. Take a short trip into our hallways and you will be dazzled by the colorful and creative bulletin boards in front of each classroom that showcase the magnificent classwork of our diverse group of students. Each bulletin board describes the standards and objectives of our students’ work. Rubrics and comments from the teachers are also included in the display. Each grade team works hand in hand, rigorously teaching academic subjects and developing skills, to accommodate the needs of our students.



Imagine the possibilities

Kudos & Commendations

Congratulations to Laurin Massengale, a Kindergarten teacher at Imagine Foundations II, on her recent engagement!

Student Spotlights

Imagine Andrews is proud to announce that Haylee Huhmann is its nominee for the Carson Scholars Fund, which awards college scholarships to students in Grades 4 -11. As a diligent, enthusiastic fourth grader, Haylee exemplifies the character and academic excellence of a scholar. She is an Honor Roll student who enjoys attending school and learning, and loves playing sports, especially baseball and soccer. As a member of the Student Council, Haylee hopes to make a difference in her school and community.

The Imagine Foundations II Students of the Month for December included: Aa’Niyah Hines-Brutley, Tionne Thames, Maya Yansen, Khalfani Cooper, D’Angelo Scott, Brea Stewart-Newman, Jordan Wilkins, Josephat Kusansuka, Asha Shorts, Danielle Young, Dulce Vasquez, Kayla Davis.

Imagine Discovery Launches Contest

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“celebrity” judges who reviewed the submissions. The panel included Lil Black, a 92Q radio personality; Sadie Flick, a local jazz musician; Debbie Douglass, the *Woodlawn Villager* newspaper editor-in-chief; Anthony McFarlane, Pan in the Community/St. Veronica’s Youth Steel Pan Orchestra President; and Tim Watts, a 95.9 radio personality.

While all of the scholars and their families who supported this inaugural program should be congratulated, the following students were selected by the judges to represent Imagine Discovery at the Baltimore County PTA Council level for county-wide judging: Goldie Watts (Middle), dance choreography; Stacy Uwansc (Middle), literature; Erin Lee (Intermediate), photography; Jordan Cammack (Primary), Jasmine Martin-Wilson

(Intermediate), and Adam Martin (Middle), visual arts.

The Reflections volunteer committee was truly representative of the entire PTA, consisting of parents and teachers. The committee was chaired by Rachel J. Barrett-Dolcine and supported by parents Carlette Flowers (Imagine Discovery’s PTA President) and Charles Sydnor III, as well as Imagine Discovery’s teachers and staff members Brittaney Armstead, Jennifer Brumbalow, Virginia Ellis, and Twayna Sellers.

“We truly have some amazingly talented, thoughtful and ‘deep’ scholars!” commented Barrett-Dolcine, who expressed a “heartfelt thanks” to the committee members and judges. A celebratory event at Imagine Discovery is planned for mid to late February.

There’s Something About Character

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As we like to say, positive character development at Imagine schools is not a nicety or an add-on to the curriculum — it is a crucial aspect of a quality school. Yet much of our character development efforts focus on the basics — ensuring students behave appropriately in school, develop sound relationships among peers and staff, and learn good habits. The real work begins, however, when we focus beyond behavior and discipline and teach our students core character traits, like courage, service, and leadership, that will lead to success in life.

I hope these thoughts will inspire you the next time you are planning a lesson around developing positive character traits. Keep up the great work!

Pat Crain
Maryland Regional Director

Parent Involvement

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Engagement Regional Best Practices Guide” for teachers and school leaders. This guide will offer practical tools with descriptors for implementation that will assist each of our campuses and colleagues with improving our practice in this area.

As always, I salute you for your work and commitment to our students and families, and thank you for your continued support.

William Hill
Executive Director,
PG County Imagine Schools



Imagine the possibilities

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- 17 Public Charter Schools and Career & Technical Education Fair, Charles H. Flowers High School, Free Admission
- 23 Teacher Planning Day — Schools Closed
- 23-27 “No Name Calling Week” at Imagine Foundations II
- 26 “State of the School” Address, Imagine Foundations II, 6 pm

FEBRUARY

- 2 Open House, Imagine Foundations II
- 9 Open House, Imagine Andrews
- 21 Open House, Imagine Foundations II
- 23 Open House, Imagine Andrews

MARCH

- 8 Open House, Imagine Andrews
- 19 Open House, Imagine Foundations II



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ImagiNation, published monthly by the Imagine Maryland Regional Office, offers facts and features about our faculty and staff, and shares information about our schools and organization. Each edition is sent via email to all staff of Imagine Andrews, Imagine Discovery, Imagine Foundations and Imagine Foundations II, and Imagine Lincoln.

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