

Date Sun, 9 Jul 2006 3:33 PM
From "FANS" <fans@fastmail.net>
Subject Parade, Rumors and Parent's Night Out

Hello FANS,

If you are new to our mailing list, welcome!

1) FANS Table at the Fourth of July Parade

Fairlington Villages gave us a prime location: under the tent next to the free toys! People were curious and enthusiastic about the group, and signed up to be on our mailing list or to borrow the book Debunking the Middle-Class Myth: Why Diverse Schools are Good for All Kids. If you would like to borrow a copy, please let me know.

2) New FANS flyers

We gave out three new info sheets at the parade: Who We Are, Just Some of the Ways Abingdon is Special, and the Summer Chat with the Superintendent announcement. I have attached them here: feel free to print them out and show them to friends and neighbors.

3) Demystifying Abingdon Rumors

If you hang out on Fairlington's playgrounds, you've probably heard a rumor that goes something like this: "Abingdon isn't a good school anymore, and they have to bus kids in from a rough neighborhood."

First of all, Abingdon IS a good school, and second of all, any kids that are bused to Abingdon are going there because it is their neighborhood school. (Currently, Abingdon's boundaries stretch from South Fairlington up to Columbia Pike, bordered by King Street and Four Mile Run Road (see Elementary Schools map).)

We wondered if this talk had something to do with the recent boundary changes. A demographics specialist at Arlington Public Schools was able to provide me with a map of the old and new Abingdon boundaries (also attached). In 2003, Abingdon lost a large swath of the traditionally African-American neighborhood Nauck, and gained a small portion of the Columbia Pike corridor, which has a largely immigrant population. (To add historical perspective,

today these immigrants are coming from South America, but only 15 years ago they were mainly from Southeast Asia.)

4) Positive Views of Immigrant Kids

This kind of negative stereotyping about Abingdon usually comes from people who have never stepped foot in Abingdon (or did so 10 years ago), otherwise they would feel differently about the bright, curious, friendly and respectful children at Abingdon. The next time someone says something like this, I am going to say that I feel my child will be getting a top-notch education in addition to becoming a broader person by meeting children from other cultures and backgrounds.

Eileen Gale Kugler, author of the Middle-Class Myth book, has recently published an article in Education Week where she talks about some of the resources immigrant students bring to our classrooms. (See attached).

5) Parent's Night Out

How about getting together for a little socializing in August? It might be a good time to connect with other parents about kindergarten jitters, any of the issues raised in this email, or just on how nice it feels to have a conversation without being interrupted 27 times! I was thinking of a Tuesday or Wednesday in the last two weeks of August at around 7:30 or 8 p.m. Please let me know by Monday, July 10 if this time frame would work for you so I can ask the All Fairlington Bulletin to publish the date along with our next article.

Ciao for now!

Amy

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