



West Norwalk Assoc. - Autumn Newsletter

West Norwalk Association

Letter from the Board

Dear West Norwalk Residents,

The West Norwalk Association would like to wish all our residents, both new and old, a very warm welcome.

The Association was formed in 1947 with the mission to foster and preserve the residential character and quality of life in our Neighborhood. Thanks to many involved and caring residents, the association has been able to fulfill its pledge over the past 71 years even as the city of Norwalk has grown in leaps and bounds.

When we talk to our fellow neighbors about the association, we frequently get asked "what does the association do?"

As board members, we represent West Norwalk at the CNNA (Coalition Of Norwalk Neighborhoods), we are involved with the local political parties, we have a member of the Ponus PTSO, we have members on both The Ponus and the McMahon School Governance Council as well as the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee and we attend monthly Oak Hills Park board meetings.

Over the last year, the WNA has addressed many quality of life issues within West Norwalk such as speeding, car burglaries, wild Coyotes, abandoned houses, conditions at the schools, river flooding and even fireworks.

We also have been able to get all new trees planted around the border of Fox Run School (including a copper Beech Tree on the grounds). We maintain 2 adopt a spots (intersection of Fox Run Road and Fillow, and the triangle of Hunters lane and Fillow St). We cut the grass on the corner of Scribner and Richards (DPW only does it 2 times all summer). We coordinate a spring clean up at Fox Run and run a food drive at the annual meeting and holiday party.

In addition to the above, we also make a donation each year to Fox Run and Fund the West Norwalk Association Scholarship.

The West Norwalk Association is viewed by many as one of the most active associations in the city. There are



October 2015

Board Members

- Anthony Carrano: President
- Ken D'Arinzo: Vice-President
- Brian Forschino: Treasurer
- Isabelle: Hargrove: Member

Let's Get Connected !



Unfortunately we are only able to send out one newsletter a year. It costs over \$1,200 per mailing and we cannot afford to send more. We now have a webmaster who attends all our meetings and continually updates our social media.

We maintain a website www.westnorwalk.org that contains events, contacts, bylaws, photographs, and upcoming events.

Like us on FaceBook at **West Norwalk Association**. We maintain our page and are continually updating it with pertinent information. It is also a great place to post any messages you may have that you want other West Norwalk Residents to see ie: lost animals, tag sales, wild animal sightings, items for sale, or even yard sales.

Email us at **Board@westnorwalk.org** and ask to be put on our mailing list. We have begun to send informational emails to our fellow residents as we are notified. This year we had notifications about our meetings, our cleanup, our holiday party, car burglaries, wild coyotes, and five mile river concerns.

If you believe we have your email, and you have not received any from us, please send us an updated email.

25 registered neighborhood associations in Norwalk but only about 5 are represented at the Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhoods; West Norwalk being one of them.

Another thing that we often hear from neighbors is that "they are not a member". Just to clarify, all residents of West Norwalk are members. You do not have to pay dues to be a member, just own a home here.

In fact, for this coming year, we are working to leverage the strength of our 1,400 members for discounts for garbage collection, grass cutting, septic pumping, snow removal, tree removal and many more goods and service. Stay tuned and contact us if you know of a business which would be interested in participating.

Being involved in protecting our wonderful neighborhood is an enriching and rewarding experience as well as a sound investment. We welcome your help. In order to continue being an active organization, we need you. What is important to you as a West Norwalk resident? What projects or causes are you willing to be a part of? Let us know.

Please become active in making our community a better place. Attend our functions and our monthly meetings held at Fox Run School on the first Monday of each month. Maybe even consider being on the board. We look forward to hearing from you.



Please join us at Fox Run for the West Norwalk Association Annual Meeting. Come on out and meet your board members as well your neighbors. We have also invited all the local candidates to speak briefly and answer a few questions.

Date: Thursday, October 29th

Time: 7-9 PM

Location: Fox Run Cafeteria

Our Town

McMahon Senior Receives WNA Scholarship



For the fourth year, the West Norwalk Association presented a scholarship to an accomplished BMHS scholar who also made considerable community contributions. A \$1,000 award was presented to Lauren Rainone.

Lauren started her own non-profit charity called Caps for Courage. She knitted over 40 hats for cancer patients. Lauren was a member of the National Honor Society and earned High Honors for all four high school years. She also volunteered at Saint Matthew's Church and Build On. Lauren will be attending East Carolina University.

If you wish to make a donation to the WNA scholarship, please contact Isabelle Hargrove at ihargrove@westnorwalk.org or 203-856-5238. Applications for the 2016 scholarship will be accepted next April 2016, we encourage all West Norwalk high school seniors to apply.

5th Taxing District Trash Collection Survey by Councilman David McCarthy

What does your connection to the sewer have to do with having your trash picked up? If you're like me, your answer is, "not much". Unfortunately for many West Norwalk residents, the answer is just the opposite...if you are not connected to the city's sewer system, you don't receive garbage pick-up from the city.

I set out to change this at the beginning of this council term. I was met with a few issues. First, the owners of the private haulers let it be known that they would fight this action, even if they were allowed to compete for it. Second, the existing routes had been established over a long period of time and were hunky bumpy and needed coordination. Third, the public call for this was very small, so many responsible councilmen made it known that they would find it difficult to support the change.

I need your help to make a change. Please go to www.5thdistrict.info and reply to the survey to give me feedback that this is the right way for the city to go.

I thank you for your time and will continue to fight for this much needed service.

Oak Hills Chairman's Report By Ernie DesRochers

Fiscal Year End 2015 was a watershed year for Oak Hills. The Oak Hills Park Authority accomplished much during the year and will continue to do so in the coming months.

Oak Hills Park Golf course is in the best shape it has been in over a decade or if ever. Park users are happy and our youth and adult golf camps are full. Tennis had a great year too with strong usage from players of all ages.

Some stats and thoughts that we want to share with you:

Total rounds for our FYE were 38,248 up 6.2% from the 36,028 we achieved in FYE 2014. Based on our long term round seasonality index and assuming no bad weather we should have close to 37,000 revenue rounds for the calendar year – which is a 2.5% increase over 2014. Total Revenue for the year is up \$40,000 to \$1,569,250.

Income from operations is up \$33,500 year over year and EBITDA is \$270,000 up \$43,000 for the same period.

The implementation of the master plan is in full force. We will be making our first acquisition shortly for an equipment wash station and pad. A contract for our architect Robert MacNeil should be executed by the end of the month. Robert and his team have visited Oak Hills and have met with staff and Authority members and with OHPNAC, all in regard to our master plan and its implementation. We are hopeful by our September meeting we will have a conceptual by him and his colleagues regarding their thoughts about the redevelopment of Oak Hills.

The RFP for the Golf School was issued in the third week of August for bid with responses due back September 3rd. That study should be in full force by mid- September with a report due back to the City within 60 days of the award date. We figure the report will be delivered in early November for consideration by the city.

Home Security By Lt. Terry Blake

Earlier this summer, there were a series of car break ins around West Norwalk Road. We invited Lt. Terry Blake to attend one of our monthly meetings and speak to the residents. We also asked him to write something for our newsletter about security.

- The key factor is opportunity, if they can't get at it, they can't take it.
- Use a timer or photo electric cell that automatically turns a living room light on at dusk.
- Leave a radio/TV on with the volume turned low
- ALWAYS close and lock garage doors
- Secure automatic garage door transmitter in glove box of car
- Secure all obvious points of entry.
- Lock up all ladders, ropes, tools that could help a burglar gain entry
- Keep shrubbery trimmed near your doors/windows
- Brightly illuminate all entrances, preferably with vandal-proof fixtures
- Keep grass cut, leaves raked, etc.
- Empty mailbox, pick up newspapers
- Install new locks when moving into an apartment or previously owned home
- Keep extra keys out of sight, never hide a key outside
- Avoid displaying valuable items near windows with open drapes/shades
- Never leave doors unlocked when leaving
- Use buddy system with your neighbor in order to watch other's homes

Leaving for several days?

- Don't cancel your paper or mail, have a buddy pick them up
- Leave a key with a friend, ask them to check on the house
- Have drapes periodically opened and closed and different lights turned on and off
- Store all valuables
- Ask police to conduct house checks
- Have a friend or relative house sit
- Leave car in the driveway

OHPNAC By Elsa Obuchowski

Most West Norwalk residents know about Oak Hills Park, but did you know about the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee (OHPNAC)? This committee was formed in January 2015 to focus on the natural areas of the park, including not only the woods where the nature trail is located but also planned restoration of the "fountain garden" and "great lawn" areas adjoining the restaurant parking lot, and possible additional recreational space near the tennis courts on Fillow Street.

As Oak Hills Park prepares to use the \$1.5 million state grant to implement improvements to the park, the Nature Advisory Committee has been busy discussing and describing our vision for making these areas more accessible, beautiful, and enjoyable for the general public. We anticipate more durable markings on the nature trail, creation of lawns where weeds currently reign, removal of invasives and plantings of pollinator and native species, and a few kiosks to display informative material about the plants and wildlife one may expect to see on a nature walk at Oak Hills Park.

The Nature Advisory Committee meets once a month at City Hall.

Our Schools



Fox Run Elementary By James Martinez Principal

There were an unprecedented number of programs in operation at Fox Run this summer – five in total. Our Curriculum and Instruction Site Director, Mrs. Goss, ran the districts new Literacy Summer School Program. Parks and Recreation, CAMP ELLI (Early Literacy Learning Initiative) - Stepping Stones Museum, and ESY (Extended School Year) were also among the programs that were in operation. Additionally, our custodial staff worked around these programs tirelessly polishing up the school and making it look brand new for the opening of the 2015-2016 school year.

While more information will be forthcoming to our community, we are in the process of assembling a Library Renovation Project committee that will comprise volunteer parent members and community partners. With the support from our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and staff, we are striving to create a place that is conducive to the demands of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and a technologically advanced 21st century learning environment. Leaders in educational research agree that students need to be knowledge builders and develop transferrable skills to ensure their success in becoming contributing members of society. Transitioning our school library and technology lab into Learning Commons will help us create a “hub” for the school where social interaction, educational research design and technology can come together to create a place of learning for students, staff and the entire community. Some of these interactions and learning will take place in areas designated for media space tables, and maker space activities (with a focus on STEM), small and large group instruction areas, as well as areas for independent reading and research. Our PTO has been working diligently on fundraising opportunities and reaching out to private funders to help provide financial support for this important and necessary project. A Learning Commons at Fox Run School will cost in excess of \$150,000.

Mrs. Goss and I have continued to seek ways to exceed the quality and level of instruction at Fox Run School. We continue to collaborate with community and corporate funders who have expressed a commitment to support us as best they can. The United Way of Fairfield Coastal County has adopted us again as a School of Hope for a fifth straight year. Being identified as a School of Hope financially supports our efforts in early literacy grades K to 3 in funding resources and programs like our AM and Fluency Academies. We are also entering the second pilot year of the Connecticut K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK3LI). This [study](#), funded by the CT State Department of Education, is working in schools to develop a comprehensive school-wide reading plan and to build internal expertise and capacity. In addition, students at risk for reading difficulties have been identified and provided with small group intervention.

Finally, Fox Run 3rd and 4th grade student's exceeded district and state benchmark averages on last years' Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Common Core State Standards standardized test in its' first year of administration. We are very proud of our staff and students. We feel very fortunate to also have the support of community partners such as the West Norwalk Association. Together we truly can accomplish anything!

Ponus Ridge Middle School By Dr Damon Lewis Principal



Hello and welcome to the 2015-2016 school year at Ponus Ridge Middle School in Norwalk, CT. Ponus got off to an amazing start to the year last week with our first annual PBIS day. PRMS was named a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) Banner School by SERC. Our PBIS efforts were recently covered in The Norwalk Hour on Saturday, September 5. Also, PRMS was covered by The Hour on the first day of school on August 31.

PRMS, thanks to our very supportive PTSO, made changes to the entrance of the building by installing large screen TV monitors that project daily announcements, schedules, updates, and staff information. Additionally, the front lobby is adorned with “Panther Paws” that direct visitors directly to the main office. The parking lot is adorned with new signs that assist with the traffic flow in the morning and afternoon. Our goal at Ponus is to “inspire students to aspire”. We believe that EVERY child can be successful, and the staff members work toward that end. It is collaborative effort that is needed from all stakeholders to ensure the success of Ponus Ridge Middle School. Go Panthers!!!!

Brien McMahon High School By Suzanne Brown Koroshetz



There are many exciting things happening at Brien McMahon High School. Important work this year includes: finalizing the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (NEASC) self-study, continuing the important planning involved with becoming an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, and maintaining focus on student centered learning, engagement, and agency.

NEASC is the organization that gives deserving New England high schools and colleges accreditation. They have very explicit standards that schools are required to reach. There is work that must be completed for NEASC almost every year and once every ten years a visiting team made up of teachers, administrators, and NEASC staff complete a three-day site visit. Prior to the visit, BMHS must complete a comprehensive self-study, following guidelines from NEASC. The final push is on in preparation for the May 2016 visit.

BMHS is extremely pleased that the work they have done resulted in the acceptance of their application for the Diploma Programme. Brien McMahon High School is now a candidate school for the Diploma Programme. They are pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy – commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that BMHS believes is important for their students.

At BMHS they are meeting the challenge to prepare every student for college and career by implementing student centered approaches to learning based on best practices and research. Their goal is to ensure that every student develops the critical thinking, problem solving, and 21st century skills required to contribute to our community and succeed in college and at work.

Please visit BMHS's beautiful campus for any and all of the many events this year. The incredible marching band hosts Celebration of Sound on Saturday, September 19th, and all fall sports teams are in action by mid- September.



www.Westnorwalk.org

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A Summer of Golf for the Kids By: Brian Forshino

This summer the Oak Hills Park Golf Club fielded a PGA Junior League Team for the first time in 46 years. The PGA Junior Golf League was started in 2011 to introduce girls and boys ages 13 and under to the game of golf. What started as a pilot program in four select cities has grown to more than 9,000 participants competing on more than 740 teams all across the United States.

In 2015, Paul Alexander, the Director of Instruction for the Oak Hills Golf Club, added Norwalk and Oak Hills to the ever growing list of cities that fielded PGA Junior League Teams. The initial response was remarkable with 17 youngsters (both boys and girls) joining the team. The team competed in scramble format competitions of 6 or 9 holes that allowed the kids to play together as a team and to learn to work together and help each other. The key was to teach the fundamentals and etiquette of the game, but most of all the program's goal was to let the kids have fun playing against teams from golf clubs in surrounding towns. The ultimate goal is to continue to expand the Oak Hills PGA Junior League program to include teams of older golfers and soon to field an all girls team and all girls golf clinics.

As a father of one of this year's junior golfers, I cannot speak highly enough about the program Paul has started at Oak Hills. Team members were given lessons in a team clinic format and were given the opportunity to actually practice on the course. Surrounded by supportive teammates and family members, the kids proudly carried their own clubs around a golf course they will hopefully be playing for years to come while learning how much fun it can be to get out and play a round of golf with good friends.

According to Paul, "My goal was to do for them what a great pro (Jim McLean) did for me. Jim gave me great instruction and introduced me to competitive golf in a friendly, fun, and team atmosphere where we had the opportunity to play on an Interclub team and play some of the best golf and country clubs in the United States. Obviously, it made a big impact on my brother and I as well as a few other friends. Golf has been so good to me and my family. If I can do the same and make a difference in the lives of other junior golfers, like Jim did for me, I will feel very fulfilled!"

The 2015 Junior PGA League National Championship, consisting of eight regional championships from around the country, will be held from November 5th - 8th at a PGA course that has yet to be decided. With the continued dedication of Paul, the League Parents and particularly the children, let's hope we get to see Team Norwalk playing for a championship soon.



Holiday Party

**Friday December 4th
6PM to 9PM
Dolce Center**

All West Norwalk residents are cordially invited to attend our annual Holiday Party to celebrate the holiday season with our neighbors. We will provide a selection of delicious appetizers, desserts, and a cash bar. It is the signature event of our association and is set in the festive atmosphere of the lovely Dolce Center.

In order to continue using this venue with this quantity of food and drink, as there was last year, there will be a charge of \$10 per person for the party. Children under 10 will be admitted free.

So come out and meet your neighbors for a wonderful local night out!

