Dear parents, families and friends,

Christmas is approaching fast and with the festivities now very much upon us, the weather seems to be doing its best to dampen our spirits! It has, however, been an eventful year at Wargrave House, right from the start. From the snow in January, to the completion of Lakeside College in the summer term, a whole raft of exciting learning opportunities has continued throughout the year to ensure that your children are the centre of all that we do.

This term has been no exception. The School Disco in October was very well attended by students of all ages. The fantastic turnout and your feedback were very valuable, particularly the wonderful comments from residential students’ parents for Sue Dykes, who will be retiring in December. Sue will be very much missed by all, and not easy to replace. She has given more than twenty years of her career to developing Wargrave House Residential Department and to supporting our young people and their families, but I hope she will come back and visit us in years to come! On behalf of all our staff, parents, governors and trustees, I would like to wish Sue a very happy, healthy and prosperous retirement and thank her for her endless contribution towards the success of the school.

We did not recruit a new Head of Residential Services last May, but have reorganised our senior management structure to ensure continuity of service. This is working well at the moment, and we hope to re-advertise the position early in the New Year.

The impact of the Government’s cost-cutting agenda has created enormous uncertainty around funding. As a school and registered Charity, we always strive to ensure best value for money for the local authorities who place your children with us. This has created some ambiguity about funding for our proposed new adult services. We are still in the process of registering these services with the Care Quality Commission and Young People’s Learning Agency, and anticipate a response in early 2011 (around March to April). As soon as we have further information, I will update you.

Continued on Page 2
Fundraising

This term has been another busy one for fundraising. The good causes we have supported include Jeans for Genes (which we celebrated on 1st October) and two weeks after that, Go Pink Day - Breakthrough Breast Cancer (15th October).

As always the students and staff were enthusiastic about supporting these events and truly got into the spirit of the day. Not only do the charities benefit from events such as these but so do our students.

Increasing awareness of helping others and being a part of the wider national and worldwide community brings with it a whole host of learning opportunities and a real sense of Citizenship.

Jeans for Genes aims to support services that make children’s day to day lives easier and more enjoyable. In the long term, it is hoped investment in research will increase understanding about the causes of these conditions, help to establish standards of care and eventually find ways of curing disorders which can seriously affect children’s lives. Find out more: www.jeansforgenes.com

By Going Pink for Breakthrough Breast Cancer one helps the 46,000 women and 300 men who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the UK. The money raised helps to fund world class research at Europe’s only research centre dedicated to breast cancer research, plus research units and campaigning and education work. This helps to fund a future free from the fear of breast cancer. Find out more: www.breakthrough.org.uk

Total amounts raised were:

Jeans for Genes: £93.00
Go Pink: £59.00

Fantastic results again, thank you for your continued support!

Carole Austin
2nd Deputy Head of Education

Texting Service

All the bad rather recently has highlighted the need to be able to get in touch with staff, parents, taxi drivers and escorts as quickly as possible.

Hopefully all parents and staff are aware of the texting service the school operates: ‘teachers2parents’.

This service enables us to contact multiple groups of people at once with one single text message. Some of you may remember receiving messages via this service last January.

For this service to be effective it is of course necessary to ensure we have all current mobile phone numbers so if, for instance, you receive a new mobile from Santa this year, please do not forget to inform the school. A quick phone call on your new mobile or a message in the home/school book is all it takes.

Remember! Let’s keep in touch.

Introduction & Welcome (continued)

We are really pleased that our referrals for the Extended Schools Services continue to increase. Following demand for ESS, we have been recruiting new staff to this service, with a view to increasing short term break provision in early 2011 (Friday overnight short-term break provision). If you want to find out more or to book these limited places, please get in touch with Steve Bentley, Family Liaison Officer, on 01925 224899.

There will also be vacancies for Saturday, Holiday and Tea time sessions from September. Young people attending the ESS have access to a range of exciting activities and visits in and around school, as well as continuing educational programmes to support their learning and skills for independence. Funding can sometimes be an issue for parents

and takes time to acquire, so although September seems to be a long way off, please express your interest early to avoid disappointment.

So, once again, a huge thank you to all our staff, students, parents and friends who make Wargrave House such a special place. I wish you all a happy and safe Christmas break and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.
Residential Music Workshop

For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Sarah Young. I work in the residential department and I am part of the Extended School Services team.

During 2009 I approached Helen, Sue and Sheila with an idea to have a music workshop in school. Unfortunately there was no available funding in school so, not wishing to let my idea go I had a rethink.

Previous to my employment at Wargrave House I did voluntary work including organising a local music festival which attracted thousands of people. Through this I gained experience in successfully applying for local and national grants. I decided that this was therefore the best way forward and got to work researching and applying for grants in particular the National Lottery.

Finally the application was completed and I submitted it for scrutiny. I fortunately didn’t have to wait too long and was delighted when I received a response from Awards for All Big Lottery Fund informing me that Wargrave House School had been successful in securing £9,959.

Within the application I had stipulated that the funds were to be used for: percussion items, multicultural instruments, a Soundbeam, soundbox and the employment of two qualified professional and experienced workshop leaders.

This was to all culminate in an external performance to promote social interaction, inclusion and an evening to celebrate the achievements of the students.

The two workshop leaders are Steve and Tim and together they form ‘Bach to the Future’. Steve and Tim are very experienced musicians having worked in a variety of settings, teaching and promoting the importance and benefits of music. They have worked weekly with residential students including those who attend the Saturday and Holiday Clubs, providing opportunities for each person to excel in their talent, discover hidden talents and to participate regardless. Both Steve and Tim have been exceptional in their approach making the definition of the word ‘dedication’ even more poignant.

During the Spring we held a competition for residential students to design a logo for the workshop to be used on all promotional material. The winning logo was used on programmes, posters and T-shirts worn on the big night. We had many entries and Steve and Tim had a tough job choosing the winner. After long deliberation Claire Duncan’s original design was chosen.

I would like to thank everyone who worked hard to support this project including staff, students and Steve and Tim and a big thank you to all who attended the performance. Thank you also to the St. Helens Ladies Gospel choir who also performed on the evening.

There has been mention of a school band - so watch this space!

Children’s Law

The Children’s Legal Centre (CLC) is a unique, independent national charity staffed with experts on law and policy which relate to children and young people. Founded in 1981, The Children’s Legal Centre has 29 years of experience in providing legal advice and representation to children, their carers and professionals throughout the UK.

The Child Law Advice Line (CLAL) 08088 020 008

This freephone line offers advice for parents, professionals and young people on a wide range of legal issues. They help 10,000 callers each year with problems including parental responsibility, contact, adoption and housing.

The CLC also runs the education advice service on the Community Legal Advice helpline (0845 345 4345). Their specialist advisors help more than 1,000 callers each year on issues including school admission appeals, attendance and bullying.

Lawstuff.org.uk

This specially designed website was created to fill the gap in information available to children and young people who want to find out how the law affects them, and what their legal rights are. The topics covered on the website include education, healthcare, leaving home, and crime.

www.childrenslegalcentre.com www.lawstuff.org.uk
Media Theme Week by Lucinda Duffy, Deputy Head

WOW!! Having just seen and heard about all the amazing events and opportunities that the students have experienced this week in our end of week celebration assembly I am once again reminded what wonderful, talented and hardworking staff and students we have here at Wargrave House School and Lakeside.

The week was jam-packed with visits out to the Liverpool Empire, the Science Museum and Granada Studios and an end of week whole school visit to watch Megamind at the cinema (a very funny film according to lots of our students).

There were also special sessions with Rachel (our dance teacher), David (Music Therapy), LIPA (Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts) and pod cast, adverts and a hotly contested photography competition (well done to our winners, Emily H, Kyle and Claire D!)

Some of the students have shared their views about the week with me:

"The ghost tour was the best.”
(Jack C)

"I had a good time with my friends!” (Nathan)

"The tour was good at the Theatre.” (Thomas P)

"I liked watching a black and white DVD at the Manchester Museum. It was about trains”. (Jack S)

"I enjoyed Megamind, it was really funny” (Nicky C)

"GREAT!” (Jennifer)

"I give the week two thumbs up!” (Matthew C)

“Going to the museum was great fun.” (Maya)

“I enjoyed media week and the trip to Granada Studios as I met the stars of Coronation Street.” (David)

“Brilliant fun! There was lots of paperwork, but it was worth it. It was surreal seeing me and my friend reporting the weather from the Granada Studios set. I prefer snowball fights to weather reporting though - I'm a warrior not a war correspondent!”
(Claire D)

So to sum up, this fun-filled week was (in the words of Jack H) “the best week ever!"
School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan for 2010-11 has just been approved by the Governing Body. The Whole School Targets we are working towards are:

- All students post-16 will make at least 65% progress in achievement of individual learning outcomes in one year.
- Enhance Extended Services provision by offering one overnight stay per month on a Friday and/or three overnight stays during school holidays 2010-11.
- To ensure that 70% of students will achieve at least one step progress with ‘asking for help/seeking clarification’.
- 100% of students to have a personal Sensory diet.
- 100% of students will engage in an improved personalised and relevant curriculum at Key Stage 4 by July 2011.
- To sustain whole school pupil attendance at 96%.

Work is already well underway to achieving these goals. I will keep you informed of our progress through the year.

Gennie Hyde
Head of Education

Staff Hello

Two new Residential Care Workers have joined us so far this academic year. Karene Trendel (right) and Bernadette Doherty (below).

As usual I am sure you will join me in welcoming both Karene and Bernadette to our school.

Staff Goodbye

As I am sure you have read on the front page we have just one staff member leaving us today. Sue Dykes, Head of Residential Services, retires today after 20 years with the school.

Sue, although a fully qualified hairdresser, has worked in the field of care for most of her life. She joined the school in April 1990 when the school consisted of just three classrooms and a small residential department. From those small beginnings Sue went on to head the department and achieve countless highly successful Care Inspections. She has always been there to help families in whatever way she could, even putting her previous skills to use providing children with free haircuts.

On Friday 3 December the school held a surprise themed party for Sue at a local club - ‘Check Shirt & Jeans’ night. Despite the weather it was very well attended by staff past and present and Sue’s family and friends. When Sue arrived the club went into darkness and as the lights flashed on it’s fair to say that she was totally surprised!

As you can see by the photos a great night was had by all and it was a fantastic ending to a glittering career at Wargrave House.
Mini Bus Fundraising

Our fundraising efforts this coming year, 2011, will be centered around the acquisition of a new minibus. We are very fortunate at Wargrave House to be the proud owners of five minibuses which may seem excessive however the minibuses form a vital part of the students' education. Our minibuses are in continual use throughout the school day and night within the residential department. They are used by the Extended School Services at weekends and during the school holidays. They could be described as the 'work horses' of the 24 hour curriculum. From shopping at the local Tesco to more extensive use on the FE residential trips the school would frankly be lost without them. Education outside the classroom allows the students to interact with the community increasing their opportunities for social interaction, communication and independent living skills.

The school purchased its first ever minibus in 1973 at a cost of £1,100 however since then the cost of a new minibus has risen slightly! Over the years we have received help from the Variety Club who have donated monies towards the purchase of new minibuses and this year they have generously offered to 'match fund' the purchase of a new minibus. Our oldest minibus is coming up to 15 years old and has seen better days, getting going on a cold winter's morning is becoming increasingly harder!

The Governing Body and Trustees have therefore agreed that our fundraising this coming year will be aimed at raising £9,000 which will be matched by the Variety Club to purchase a brand spanking new minibus.

So, thinking caps at the ready, let's all pull together and I am sure by 2012 we will have our new minibus. If you have any ideas or contacts on how to raise these valuable funds please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Staff Training, by Gennie Hyde

Staff, as well as students, have been taking part in a wide variety of learning opportunities this year as we all strive to ‘be the best that we can be!’

The year started with a school based training day in September in two areas - behaviour support and music therapy. Carole Austin and Helen Slavin ran a Team-Teach workshop to ensure staff are fully up-to-date with their behaviour support strategies. This will continue to be rolled out into the New Year alongside further training in recording procedures and electronic tracking of incidents. David Robinson, our resident music therapy student from the Nordoff Robbins Charity led a very interesting workshop on the background and purpose of music therapy to give an overview of the objectives of his work. Additional entertainment was provided during the demonstration - Sheila Jaeger as his ‘guinea pig’ student!

Following the Ofsted inspection in July last year, we have already acted upon the advice given regarding the National Minimum Care Standard in respect of First Aid support. All staff (day & residential) have now completed basic First Aid awareness training and additional qualifications in ‘designated person for first aid’ is also planned for the New Year.

Individuals and teams of staff have undertaken further training in other areas working towards individual learning goals and whole school developments. These include:

- Residential staff update on asthma through the St Helens school nurse team
- Emma Rixon (SaLT) Michael Palin Stammering course
- Andrea Jenkinson (OT) Sensory Integration (parts 1&2)
- Carole Austin (2nd Deputy) ‘Autism, A Hands on Approach’
- Michelle Heneghan (Teacher, KS4) OCR Functional Skills Entry Level

Many congratulations must go to Chris Powell (Deputy Head of Residential Services) who has just successfully completed her NVQ4 in Leadership and Management in Care. Well done Chris!

All new staff and volunteers in school continue to benefit from the school's extensive induction programme including safeguarding, TEACCH, ASD & Communication. The
Harvest Festival

We supported the charity Operation Christmas Child as part of our Harvest celebrations this year, which you can read more about below. The students worked very hard both in class and at home to fill the shoeboxes which will be sent to needy children around the world. A big thank you to everyone who helped, as we collected 60 shoeboxes this year which will put a big smile on lots faces this Christmas Day.

Claire Thompson
Class Teacher

Operation Christmas Child

The Monday afternoon Community Project group at Lakeside helps the school and local community, but perhaps some of the most valuable work the group does focuses on helping those in the wider global community. It gives me great pleasure to report on the students' hard work and dedication which resulted in 60 Christmas Shoe Boxes being sent to some of the world's neediest children.

In September, Community Project team turned their thoughts to Christmas and Operation Christmas Child. Last year Lakeside were very pleased to collect 32 boxes, however we felt that if we gave the 'love in box' scheme a higher profile and worked with main school we could double this total.

The Community Project students took ownership of the project and together planned a whole school assembly to heighten awareness of Operation Christmas Child. Claire Duncan (FE1) wrote a play which was performed by herself and other members of Community Project. The group chose the song Run by Snow Patrol as their theme tune and along with emotive images of children receiving their gifts the spirit of the project was captured.

It was a tremendous achievement to almost double last year's total and collect an amazing 60 boxes! Those boxes have been sent to children in some of the most poverty stricken parts of the world Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Children like Sasha who has spent all her short life in an orphanage have been given a reason to smile. A huge thank you to all of you who helped their children make a box or sent goods in to put in boxes.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from Community Project.

Carol Woodward, Teacher

Old Mobiles

Just a quick reminder, once again, to send any old mobile phones into school. We are working alongside Fonebank to recycle them and in the process raise money for playtime games for the students. Any phone will do - working or not it's worth money.
Dear parents,

I was reading the latest edition of the NAS Communication magazine which includes some seasonal tips that may prove useful for some families. These included highlighting the Christmas period on the calendar, defining both the school holidays and Christmas day itself separately. Also including your youngster in the preparations such as shopping for the tree and putting the decorations up. This will help your child become familiar with what is about to happen. The NAS also suggests limiting the number of presents a child receives otherwise he or she may become overwhelmed resulting in sensory overload.

A couple of websites in a recent Contact a Family magazine may be worth researching.

Firstly Whizz-Kids Ambassador Network provides a variety of sports and leisure activities, the opportunity to meet new friends and sessions available on media training, public speaking and preparing a CV etc.

Contact a Family has published two

free guides themselves, 'Preparing for Adult Life' and Transition and 'Money at 16'. These and advice generally are available free by calling 0808 808 3555.

I hope you all enjoy Christmas and good luck for the New Year.

Best Wishes
Steve.

Date for your diary.
The Parents Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Will take place on Thursday 20 January 2011 at 6.30 p.m.

Parents' Consultation Evening, by Gennie Hyde

Once again it was a pleasure to welcome you all to the first parents' consultation evening of the new academic year. There was an excellent turn out and it was lovely to see many familiar faces and also to meet the parents of our new students too.

There was also an air of sadness as many of the parents of residential students met with Sue Dykes for the last time before her retirement. Their positive feedback is a testament to her hard work and dedication:

"Wonderful, we will miss Sue Dykes - irreplaceable"

"Excellent as always. We cannot thank you enough for the support we receive and the benefit to K"

"I am pleased with all the help and support the staff have given and continue to give K to help him achieve goals in school and in his social life"

Many thanks to you all for your feedback which is invaluable in ensuring we continue to maintain our status as a centre of excellence.

The Poppy Appeal ran in school this year and raised a fantastic £66.83. The Royal British Legion have now added the school to their list of collectors and will deliver poppies to school annually.

"E has only been at school for four weeks but we are very pleased with her progress so far"

"Carry on with the good work!"

There was also a variety of demonstrations of the work she is doing which is having a huge impact on a number of our young people.

Page 8
At the last Governing Body meeting in November a new Chairperson was elected, Billy Duncan who already serves as a Parent Governor was elected as Chairperson and Kathryn Duckett, Community Governor as Vice-chair.

Since the last newsletter we also have a new member on the Governing Body. Alan Robinson joined us this year as a Sponsor Governor. Alan is a local business man, father and grandfather he is also a member of the Newton-le-Willows Rotary Club.

For several years now the Rotary Club has sponsored the school, in particular sponsoring the Young Achievers Award which is presented to one student every year, usually at the End of Year Assembly. Those of you who attended the last assembly in July may remember seeing Alan presenting last year’s award.

On behalf of everyone I would like to officially welcome Alan to Wargrave House School. I hope he enjoys a long and happy relationship with our school.

School Disco, Jackie McCann

DiscoMania hit WHS on the 4th of November! (after the Therapy department had been hounded by students since our last school evening disco).

For weeks in advance there was a marvellous buzz about who was going and what people were going to wear – it certainly gave people something to talk about.

On the night, students arrived in their trendiest clothes and smelling wonderfully fragrant! After posing for photos some headed straight away for the disco whilst others headed to the ‘Juice Bar’ - a place where thirsty dancers could relax with a fruity cocktail! Those in need of a bit of peace and quiet could chill out and play board games with their friends! Small snack items on sale meant that we also provided our young people with an opportunity to make choices and practice their numeracy skills.

The students had made requests in advance for music to be played on the night and this meant that everybody had a chance to boogie on down to their favourite tunes played by our fantastic D.J.s (from Lakeside). Once again we had competitions for ‘Best Dressed Girl/Boy’; ‘Best Dancers’ and ‘Karaoke’. When the final track was played there was much disappointment that the evening had to end and students were already asking when the next Disco would be - phew! You’ll have to watch this space!
Carol Concert

On Thursday 16 December we held our Carol Concert at St John the Baptist Church in Earlestown. We were joined by Derek Paravacini who gave us a wonderful performance on the piano and accompanied all the traditional carols. The staff choir really helped us all to get in the festive spirit with their rendition of ‘We Wish you a Merry Christmas’.

A big thanks to all who attended and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.
Claire Thompson
Teacher

Children in Need

This year for Children in Need the school had a Cinema Afternoon.
After lunch the gym and several classrooms were turned into cinemas with a variety of films showing. Students were able to choose which film they would like to see and buy snacks and drinks.
A great fun afternoon was had by students and staff and altogether the event raised £89.33.

ESS Vacancies

If your interested in obtaining a place please ring
Steve Bentley on 01925 224899
Cinderella, Jackie McCann

Christmas really did come early for the students (staff and parents) at Wargrave this year when we were treated to Lakeside's fabulous panto - 'Cinderella'! In true Wargrave style, this was no 'typical' panto, there were lots of hilarious twists and turns along the way such as having a 'Godfather' (instead of Fairy Godmother), and Cinders travelled to the ball in a super fast red Ferrari (thanks to the wizardry of our technical team), much to the surprise and delight of our audiences at both The Pyramid Arts Centre and here at WHS. Well done to all of the students who took part and to the staff who helped out behind the scenes!

Teaching & Learning under Scrutiny, Gennie Hyde

Every year, as part of the teachers' performance management review process members of the senior management team carry out lesson observations for all teachers. The process is designed to be both supportive and developmental, individual teachers requesting observations in an area of strength, personal development or where they wish to improve their practice. Criteria for the observations has been revised this year in the following areas using the Ofsted levels of Outstanding(1), Good(2), Satisfactory(3) or Unsatisfactory (4):

- First impressions
- Planning
- Teaching methodology
- Pupil response
- ASD specificity

Written and verbal feedback and an average overall score is then shared with the teacher to support their own performance review and to provide for overall school evaluation. I am delighted to report that consistent standards of outstanding teaching and learning are very much in evidence at WHS with over half of lessons observed being outstanding!

I am sure you will join me in thanking our teachers for their continued hard work in ensuring standards are 'Outstanding' at WHS.

Teacher PM Monitoring 2010-2011 (n=14)

- Outstanding 57%
- Good 39%
- Satisfactory 7%
Wargrave House School students have this term been benefiting from expert coaching to enable them to access a completely new sport – Fencing.

Peter Blood, better known as a local Judo Coach with SKK Judo in Earlestown is in every Thursday afternoon to deliver lessons to a cohort of students from FE 3 & 5.

Peter is really pleased with the progress being made by the class and is impressed with many of the skills the students are developing in what is a highly technical sport. All students fence using the classic Foil and are well protected with masks, tunics and gloves.

Fencing is a classic Olympic sport having been one of only 5 sports that has been competed for in every one of the Olympic games.

Currently there are three varieties of fencing activities at the Olympic games, Foil, Epee and Sabre as well as one of the five sports which make up the Modern Pentathlon events.

As per usual at Wargrave House School we are committed to giving students as many experiences as possible in their PE lessons and it is a certainty that given the success of this series of lessons others will benefit from it in the future.