

August 4, 2008

Hello CCES students,

Welcome back to school! I may not have admitted it when I was a kid, but I always looked forward to the beginning of a new school year. While my friends were groaning about having to wake up early and having to do homework, I was busy organizing my school supplies and wondering about my new teachers. I was a little nervous, too, but this had more to do with the social part of school than with the assignments. Homework and the tests didn't scare me (much), but I was very shy with new people and with performing in front of a large group. Just take my word for it — oral reports and book talks were torture for me!

I think the main reason I liked school was because I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. I loved reading, science, math and being with kids, and wanted to pass on my love of these subjects. (Believe it or not, it never occurred to me to be a principal. Playing school was just something some of us enjoyed doing when we were very little.) After I graduated from high school, I decided to study science and education at college in order to become an elementary or high school teacher.

I didn't know it at the time, but studying to become a scientist actually helped prepare me to become a teacher. For an entire year, I was a student teacher in a third grade class and a middle school science class. I read all the time. And for my thesis (this is a very long research paper students have to write during their last year of college), I wrote about ways that science and math teachers could use children's literature in their classroom. After reading so many books by dozens of authors, I got a good idea about the types of books that appealed to students about difficult science and math topics, and the kinds of stories that I thought kids might like to read. This gave me confidence to begin planning lessons using books to introduce challenging science or math topics. Students who feared math or science began to try things they might have been afraid to try before hearing the story.

Family is extremely important. We would like you to share how special your family is. Enclosed is a sheet of paper. Please draw, take a picture, or find your favorite family picture and place it in the big square. Then, tell us what makes your family special. Remember, don't forget those pets! You may create your family portrait on the computer or craft paper as long as you keep it the same size as the example. Bring it on the first day of school. This project will be a part of a team building activity in your classroom. Be creative and use the Six Traits of Writing skills you have been taught.

As a child, I used to picture myself all grown up, in the middle of a classroom doing totally awesome activities with my students. But guess what? Being a principal makes me feel like a different kind of teacher. True, I'm not in front of a class every day. But I'm lucky enough to be able to share my love of school with all the dedicated CCES students — and this makes for a much bigger class than I ever could have dreamed of!

Wishing you a wonderful school year,

Mrs. Jody I. Smith, Principal

Chevy Chase Elementary School

P.S. So that you can get to know me better, here are a few of my favorite things. If you have fun reading this, why don't you and a good friend ask each other some of the same questions? You'll probably laugh a lot at some of your answers, and I'll bet that you even learn something new about each other. Enjoy!

My favorite...

Time of day: Around 6:30 p.m. when the day is winding down, I cross the Frederick County line and I know I am almost home.

Day of the Week: Friday, when I have the whole weekend in front of me and I can watch my sons play lacrosse.

Season: Summer – warm, sunny and always swimming and gardening.

Holiday: Christmas – the Season of Giving to others and beautiful carols.

Way to waste time: Watching television especially a comedy that makes me laugh.

Dog breed: I love my Pomeranian and Brittany Spaniels.

Dog name: Definitely Smitty!

Cat name: When my sister was little, she had a cat named Smokey.

Hobby: Antiquing.

State: South Carolina.

Board game: When I was growing up it was Monopoly. I hardly ever play board games now except Mancala (but I want to learn how to play Chess).

Composer: George Gershwin. I love "Rhapsody in Blue."

Seat on an airplane: The aisle.

Vacation ever taken: A cruise to the Bahamas

Vacation spot: Any beach!

Gift ever received: The gifts that mean the most to me are things that once belonged to my ancestors. Over the years, my relatives have passed down to me, among other things, my grandmother's wedding ring, my dad's high school ring, my husband's Eagle medal and a tea set from Nana.

Gift ever given: The gift of time... to my family, friends and staff.

Flower: Yellow rose.

Childhood memory: Going to Folly Beach in South Carolina for the entire summer.

Vegetable: Snap Peas, especially the ones I grow in our vegetable garden.

Disney movie: The Sound of Music.

Television show: Grey's Anatomy.

Television show as a child: The Brady Bunch.

Celebrity I'd like to meet: Ellen DeGeneres.

Fast food item: A Big Mac.

Junk food item: Kettlecorn.

Healthiest food item: Tomatoes.

Grade in school: 6th grade with Mr. Lui and being a patrol.

Kind of party: A Christmas party where we play a fun exchange funny gifts game.

Way to travel: By plane – with no delays!

Winter Olympics event: Snowboarding and the X games.

Summer Olympics event: Gymnastics.

College memory: Taking a road trip to Sanibel Island in Florida with several of my sorority sisters.

Magazine: Time.

Movie of all time: To Kill a Mockingbird.

Book recently read: *The Cobra Event* by Richard Preston

Author now: Nicholas Sparks

Book as a child: It's impossible to choose because I read so much. But my favorite genre was light fantasy.

Author as a child: Light fantasy authors such as L. Frank Baum, P. L. Travers, Hugh Lofting, and Roald Dahl, plus Marguerite Henry, who wrote books about horses.

Store to shop at: Any antique shop.

Way to shop: Internet – I don't have time to go to a mall.

Way to dress up: Black dress, silver shoes, Nana's silver shawl.

Way to dress down: Jeans, turtlenecks, clogs.

Ice cream flavor: Cookies and Cream

Color: Teal

Cookie: White chocolate chip with macadamia nuts.

Dessert: Strawberry Shortcake

Fun snack: Rotel cheese dip and tortilla chips

Breakfast: Cheese grits

Lunch: A great chef salad with blue cheese dressing

Dinner: Steak and baked potato

Nickname: My husband calls me "Blondie"

School subject: Science and Math

Thing to do with my dog: I love our daily walks with my husband and his dog, Reggie.

