



ThorpeWood Quarterly

A Mountain Retreat for Youth

November 2007

ThorpeWood Announces New Partnership with Southwest Baltimore Charter School

In October, ThorpeWood began a new at-risk youth partnership with Southwest Baltimore Charter School. Located on Martin Luther King Boulevard just a few blocks north of the stadia, SBCS serves one of the poorest and least advantaged communities in Baltimore. ThorpeWood is providing family literacy services in the form of an after-school *Boys' Reading Club*. Every Tuesday afternoon male members of the ThorpeWood program staff travel to SBCS and run an after-school session with twelve second and third grade boys with underdeveloped reading skills. Every fourth Saturday the boys travel to ThorpeWood for enrichment activities based on the stories they read that month – if they read books about horses, for instance, they might then groom and ride our horses.

This partnership has two features which are vital for the literacy development of these boys – the opportunity for the boys to identify with



Ed Parlaman and a SBCS student pick hooves.

the stories they are reading and the opportunity for their caregivers to learn how to read to and with them. Research has suggested that young children learn to read most easily when they read not for skill development but instead to relate the characters and plots of the stories to their own experiences. They invest more in the stories, they read for meaning instead of vocabulary or structural purposes, and they learn to take ownership of the reading process – they read for themselves, not for the teacher or parent or a test.

The second feature of this partnership – the modeling for caregivers – is based on the premise that many of the adults in these boys' lives may be uncomfortable reading to and with them at home. To address that missing link in the boys' literacy development, the caregivers who enroll their boys in this program agree to attend one after-school session each month and one ThorpeWood Saturday session each season. They observe appropriate shared reading techniques, participate in the crafts and games that follow the stories, and are invited to share in the boys' reading of their homework stories. The goal is to increase the amount of time that the caregivers spend reading to and with the boys in the *Boys' Reading Club* – further enriching both the boys' learning and the love of reading in their homes.



Stephen Dotson and SBCS students and teachers share a book about horses.

ThorpeWood Quarterly

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ThorpeWood is a mountain retreat for at-risk youth. We are situated in a secluded hollow of Catoctin Mountain, a beautiful setting that includes forests, mountain meadows, pastures, wetlands, and native trout streams. Our mission is to provide year-round, exceptional customized programs that are intended to help change the lives of the young people we serve.



A Southwest Baltimore Charter School 2nd grader meets his first Appaloosa.

A Note from our President

Many have asked the question, “How does ThorpeWood fund its programs?” Funding comes from three sources: grants, income from rental fees for corporate meetings and social events, and donations. Foundations, corporations and individuals have donated unselfishly and generously to ThorpeWood. ThorpeWood is quickly becoming known as a “destination venue” without having to board a plane for both social events and corporate meetings. Grants received come from a variety of sources, private foundations and from county, state, or federal agencies.

We at ThorpeWood have chosen a unique program model that delivers lessons to 150 youth annually, from second grade through high school. Our typical model requires each child have at least 24 ThorpeWood experiences over two years. This differs from most other youth programs that move hundreds and even thousands of children through their programs. The ThorpeWood program model is based on creating meaningful relationships with each child and documenting their individual growth and development over two years. ThorpeWood is NOT a field trip destination nor are we a summer camp.

We are pleased to share our latest video on our website; it further demonstrates how we are making a difference in the lives of young people. The video is located on our home page, www.thorpewood.org, under “What’s Hot.” You’ll learn more about our exciting partnership with the Washington Jesuit Academy, and hear directly from the boys themselves about their individual ThorpeWood experiences.

Greatest of thanks to those of you who have contributed to ThorpeWood. Your generosity has gone directly to support our youth programs, and we are seeing wonderful benefits to these young people.

Thank you, in advance, for your continued support, so crucial to the future of these youths. Please consider making a donation today. If you donate by December 31, 2007, ThorpeWood will receive a generous match of two dollars from private foundations for every dollar received. In essence, your gift of \$100 could provide \$300 worth of much-needed support for ThorpeWood’s programs!

Sincerely,

Sam Castleman
President
ThorpeWood, Inc.

ThorpeWood E-News - Coming Soon!

In response to requests for electronic news updates, ThorpeWood will begin to provide brief newsletters via email in the coming months. (*Our printed quarterly newsletter will continue to arrive by snail mail.*)

If you would like to receive ThorpeWood E-News, please send your email address to info@thorpewood.org, subject: “E-News”. Your address and information will remain absolutely private and will not be distributed to any outside organizations. You may unsubscribe at any time.

Seasons of Growth Update

S *Seasons of Growth* is up and running! Many of you have expressed interest in and support for the gender-responsive programs co-authored and presented by ThorpeWood and DJS (the Department of Juvenile Services – Frederick). These original programs for local teenaged girls who have been arrested or otherwise referred to DJS are co-led by our own Gail Webber and Megan Swindro, Family Therapist at DJS. Groups meet once a week for two months at ThorpeWood, and include a hot meal for all the girls as a part of each session. The groups are small, only seven to ten girls per program, so that there's a lot of personal contact and the curricula can be tailored to individual needs. Our goals include helping these young women see more options for success in their lives and giving them tools to make good decisions along the way.

The first of six intervention programs, "It's My Life," ran this summer. This program dealt with recognizing and redefining life patterns and learning to meet needs in healthier ways. The girls used drama, discussion, and

worked with the horses to examine the role of needs-fulfillment in choices we all make. They worked to identify both positive and negative patterns in their own lives and decide what changes they wanted to make in order to improve their future prospects.

"...helping these young women see more options for success in their lives and giving them tools to make good decisions along the way."

The second program, "Winter Ways," began in September with ten young ladies ranging in age from 12 to 17. The focus of this program is resiliency, developing skills to survive and grow through the difficult times in life that we all face. Examples from nature, as animals and plants prepare to weather the hardships of winter, served as metaphors for skills and perspectives the girls can develop. Each girl used photography, sketching, painting, and writing to illustrate each of the skills presented and to demonstrate what she learned.

Thanks to all of you who have helped support these programs. Be sure to check our next newsletter for a report on "Winter Ways" and perhaps some of the girls' artwork.

Washington Jesuit Academy ThorpeWood "Manhood and Leadership" Retreat a Success

The last week in July twenty-four seventh grade boys from the Washington Jesuit Academy participated in a Manhood and Leadership retreat at ThorpeWood. The boys enjoyed traditional outdoor activities including camping, hiking, and working with our horses, but the foci of the week were the programs that built upon the "Habits of Acting" the boys learn at the school. The topics addressed included:

- identifying and validating our feelings,
- handling negative emotions in positive ways,
- focusing on the characteristics we want to define us as men,
- learning that leadership is often about making decisions that are not only the "right" decision but will also allow others to see their inherent rightness and follow,
- avoiding "chains of mistakes" that result in life-altering consequences,
- and recognizing ways we can lead now, even when we are still boys.

As part of our two-year commitment to these boys, they returned for a follow-up retreat in early November and will come again next April – hopefully we will still have snow for them then!



Washington Jesuit Academy's 7th Grade Class at ThorpeWood.

Events and Activities

To register for an event below, please call 301.271.2823 or send an email to info@thorpewood.org.

Holiday Open House:

Friday, December 7th, 5:00pm – 9:00pm

Saturday, December 8th, 3:00pm-7:00pm

Please be our guest as we celebrate the 2007 Holiday Season! Enjoy light refreshments, a warm fire, seasonal music, and our spruce tree, decorated with over 3,000 lights and many homemade decorations. **Free**

Evergreen Walk

Saturday, December 15th

2:00pm-4:00pm

In the wintertime some trees go to sleep while others are still lush and vibrant. Our walk will focus on our hardy evergreens and include tips on how to identify trees without leaves. Then make your own Christmas wreath to bring home and decorate! Be sure to dress warm. **Registration required. Cost \$8.**

Storytime at ThorpeWood!

December 20th

11:00am - 12:30pm

Join us for a morning of stories, crafts and activities for pre-schoolers. Spaces are limited: **Registration required. Cost \$2.**

The Great Bear and the Hunter

Friday, January 4th (Raindate: Jan. 5)

6:00pm - 9:00pm

It may be cold but the skies are crystal clear, the cider is warm, and the campfire is blazing. Come enjoy an evening of stargazing and learn the stories of our ancestors' starry skies. James Heilman, a retired planetarium director and astrophotographer, will be here to take us on a tour of the night sky! **Registration required. Cost \$10.**

House Concert at ThorpeWood with Cliff Eberhardt

Sunday, January 20th

2:00pm

This event will be the first of its kind at ThorpeWood. Enjoy light refreshments, great music and a wonderful venue! We are very excited to host this concert and hope to offer others in the future. If you are interested in receiving an invitation, please contact us. **Cost \$20 per person, BYOB.**

Staying Warm in the Winter

Saturday, February 16th

11:00am-2:00pm

What do you do if you are lost in the woods? What should you carry on every hike? This program will focus on the most important things you should know as a hiker and could help save your life. We will spend some time outside and it'll be a cold morning in the mountains, so be sure to come prepared!

Registration required. Cost \$20.



SAVE THE DATE!

2nd Annual Seasons of Growth Fundraising Dinner at ThorpeWood

Saturday, March 29th

More details to come, but please let us know if you would like to reserve a spot.

Support ThorpeWood's Reading Program

December 9th - December 12th

Please support ThorpeWood's *Boys' Reading Club* partnership with Southwest Baltimore Charter School by participating in our Book Fair this December. At the Frederick and Baltimore Inner Harbor *Barnes and Noble* locations from December 9th through the 12th, a percentage of sales of both books and Starbucks products will be placed in a fund to be used to buy books for the *Boys' Reading Club* next year. In addition, volunteers from ThorpeWood and Southwest Baltimore Charter School will staff gift-wrapping booths at each store and all of the proceeds from those booths will go towards the purchase of books for the kids. If you plan to purchase books, games, music, coffee, or sweets as part of your holiday shopping, please do so as a part of this fundraiser...the kids will really appreciate it!

How to participate:

- Shop at the Frederick or Baltimore Inner Harbor *Barnes and Noble* beginning December 9th - December 12th
- At checkout, tell the cashier you are participating in the ThorpeWood Book Fair (*or just present the certificate on the other side of this page*)
- Then, if you'd like, take your purchases to the gift-wrapping booth, have them wrapped for you, and make a donation as a "thank you!"

It's that easy!

Support Our Organization.

Barnes & Noble Welcomes

Thorpewood &

Southwest Baltimore Charter School

Sunday, December 9 – Wednesday, December 12

Barnes & Noble Frederick

Francis Scott Key Mall, Frederick, MD 21703

Barnes & Noble Power Plant

601 E. Pratt St, Baltimore, MD 21202



Detach here and bring to the Bookfair.

Barnes & Noble Bookfair Voucher Supporting

Thorpewood &
Southwest Baltimore
Charter School

Sun, 12/9 – Wed, 12/12

Barnes & Noble – Frederick
&
Barnes & Noble – Power Plant

Please present this voucher prior
to making your purchase.

A percentage of the net sale will be
donated to your organization.*

BOOKFAIR ID #: 159038

* THE PURCHASE OF GIFT CARDS AND MEMBERSHIP CARDS ARE
NOT INCLUDED IN BOOKFAIR TOTALS. OUR DISCOUNT PURCHASING
PROGRAM MAY NOT BE APPLIED TO BOOKFAIR PURCHASES.



Restoring an American Treasure

by Kate Heilman

In 1999, ThorpeWood planted its first generation of Chestnut trees, taking part in a scientific endeavour of the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF) to restore the American Chestnut. Over the past few years, thanks to the hard work of ACF Restoration Biologist Robert Strasser and hundreds of volunteers, our chestnut orchard has produced a great bounty of nuts, bred to produce an American Chestnut that has stronger resistance from the blight that came close to eliminating this beloved tree. This past harvest alone collected over 500 nuts from ThorpeWood!

In 2008, the ThorpeWood Orchard will be the first in Maryland to be replanted after a generation of trees has grown. The new plantings will yield trees that are up to 96% American Chestnut (4% Chinese), among the highest percentage American trees currently ready for planting!

Get your work gloves out! We are looking forward to seeing you this spring to help with this exciting step to restore an American treasure.

Rain Barrel Workshops

by Jen Willoughby, ICPRB

The rain barrel project was a great success with 175 barrels sold this year. ThorpeWood provides space for these workshops, barrel storage and the opportunity for participants to learn about our programs and mission as well as rain barrels. Many of the 160 participants were unfamiliar with the Bay-friendly landscaping practices presented in the workshops. These practices include rain gardens, riparian buffer enhancement and native plant landscaping. Workshops like these help us carry the message “beyond the choir.” If you missed out this time, be sure to join us for the rain barrel workshops next year!

Friends and Family Day 2007!



Face Painting with Hannah.
“Let’s see...how about a spider?”



Robert Strasser molds his pottery in the TCYA Shed where other artists shared their talents.



Friends enjoy a wonderful lunch under the willow by the pond.



The mule-drawn wagon was a hit!

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