



## From the Principal's Desk

Ms. Neela Thakur

At the October 10, 2013 PTO Meeting, I shared some results data from the March 2013 CMT, and I also shared some basic information about the CMT vs. the SBAC (please see those notes below). The specific questions and concerns raised by parents in attendance were excellent ones, and are actually the very same questions that teachers and administrators across the district are grappling with presently. The intentions behind the SBAC testing are fabulous. We do need to amp up the rigor in both our instruction as well as our standardized assessments. We need to teach our students to be deeply analytic thinkers and problem solvers, not just rote memorizers with only basic skills. Mastery of basic skills is still very important, but more important are the ways in which students are then able to put those basic skills to use. The SBAC testing and the Common Core State Standards do provide guidance for teachers on how best to steer students in the right direction. Teachers are very supportive of the curricular changes brought about by the Common Core State Standards. They are appreciative of the way it has changed their teaching and the way it is already impacting student learning.

However, there are some very important questions about the actual SBAC testing that have yet to be answered. I enjoyed discussing these things with you during our PTO Meeting. One very obvious question pertains to the keyboarding skills of all our students, especially those in the younger grades. Since the SBAC testing will be entirely computer-based, will this test actually be measuring knowledge, skills, and applications, or will it more likely be a measure of the students' keyboarding skills? We have been told that SBAC results may not be released until the following fall (perhaps in September or October). How will this late release of test scores affect the way in which teachers use the data to inform their instruction right from the get-go? Administration of the SBAC will likely span over a three month window, in order to give all students time to cycle into the computer lab to take the test. How will the variation in test administration dates affect students' scores? Students will likely be able to take the test on a variety of different internet accessible devices (i.e., desktop computer, laptop, Ipad, Chromebook, etc.) How will the variations in the device used affect students' scores?

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# From the Principal's Desk *(Continued...)*

Ms. Neela Thakur

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The SBAC test will likely be dynamic in nature; if students answer certain questions correctly, it will lead them to a bank of more rigorous questions. If they answer certain questions incorrectly, then the program will drop them down to an easier bank of questions. How will this all work, and how will the testing process be standardized for all students. We have just recently begun the switchover from the standard curriculum to the CCSS. Because of this, students who have not been immersed in the CCSS for their entire academic lives may be at a disadvantage to those students in future generations who will have been exposed to nothing other than CCSS. How will their lack of knowledge, skills, and years of CCSS practice affect their self-esteem and motivation to do well, if the test in front of them is too difficult?

All of these questions are excellent ones, and the answers are unclear and will need to be analyzed closely in the weeks, months, and years to come. As adults, we need to continue to have these excellent conversations with each other about standards and assessments. We also need to be unified and unwavering in our positive messaging to our students about both the curriculum as well as the assessments. Our children (my own as well!) are embarking on a new era of measuring student learning, and we need to psych them up for this. While not all students have masterful keyboarding skills, most students will still prefer to take the test on the computer instead of with paper and pencil. We need to get them psychologically pumped up for this. Teachers are preparing students to do well on the test. We need to remind students of how much awesome potential they have inside of them and remind them to always do their very best work on all assessments. We need to be their cheerleaders and their biggest supporters. I will continue to keep you all updated and posted regarding the Spring 2014 assessments, and I look forward to having these ongoing conversations with you.

Regards,

Ms. Neela Thakur, Principal

## **Creative Arts Council**

The Wethersfield Creative Arts Council is proud to present Keith Deltano's Labels Lie program on November 13 at 8:45 AM. Grades 4-6 will be attending and the program will also run at the middle school. Labels Lie is about acceptance, making new friends by reaching out, and encouraging the audience to stop judging one another by outward appearance, speech, or economic status. Keith will inspire those that have been bullied and force the bullies to take a harsh look at why they do what they do. The students that have "caught it" because they learn differently or struggle academically and socially will come away especially inspired! Physical, verbal, and online bullying are all discussed.

# From the Principal's Desk *(Continued...)*

Ms. Neela Thakur

## CMT

- Connecticut Mastery Test
- Administered to all students in Grades **3 – 8**.
- Reading, Writing, Math
- Grades 5 and 8 take Science as well.
- **Advanced - 5**
- **Goal - 4**
- **Proficient - 3**
- **Basic - 2**
- **Below Basic - 1**
- For purposes of both School and District Goals, we look at % of students who reach **Goal and Advanced**, vs. those students who are Below Goal in all areas.
- Most students take the test using **paper and pencil in a timed setting**.
- Some students (some Special Education students, some English Language Learners, some Section 504 students) take the test on the computer, in an untimed setting.
- There is availability of a modified (lower level) version of the CMT for some Special Education students. It is called **MAS (Modified Assessment System)**.
- One month window to administer all of the sub-tests (typically March 5 – 30).
- This school year (March 2014) is the very last year that the CMT will be administered in the state.

## SBAC

- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
- It has not yet been determined which assessment our students in Wethersfield will be taking this Spring.
- Possibility: Students may take the CMT as they always have in March, with some or all students taking Pilot Testing for the SBAC in the Spring as well.
- Or, students may possibly take just the SBAC Pilot testing. **This is very likely.**
- SBAC testing covers Reading, Writing, **Listening**, and Math.
- Because SBAC does not yet have a Science component, all 5<sup>th</sup> graders will continue to take the Grade 5 Science CMT each year until SBAC eventually develops a Science test.
- SBAC is entirely computer-based for all students.
- For the Pilot Testing last year, it was an untimed test for all students.
- There is no modified version of this test for Special Education students.
- This test measures the CCSS Curriculum, which is more rigorous, and involves more analysis and complex problem-solving on the part of the students.
- There may be a three-month window to administer all of the subtests.

# From the Presidents

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Greetings EW Families,

As I am sure you are now aware, the Playground was finally opened for use shortly after our last newsletter went out. If you haven't seen some of the pictures of the actual day it opened, please visit the PTO Facebook page. Some of the expressions of the children (and staff) are priceless. The PTO is grateful to all the wonderful Thank You cards we have received from the children expressing their gratitude for the playscape. We all (Parents and PTO) did a lot of hard work over the last 4 years to get this, and we all deserve to be proud. At the end of the day, the children is what it was all about, and we are happy it is complete and is really getting used before, during, and after school!

National Walk-to-School day was held in town on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and enjoyed a wonderful turnout throughout town including our students at Emerson-Williams. The WSPC plans on another event in the Spring, and hope that participation will be just as large.

We had another large turnout at this months PTO meeting, and would love to see that continue. Many things were discussed about some of the upcoming events. Below are some of the upcoming events:

Parent Conferences will be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Wethersfield Creative Arts Council is proud to present Keith Deltano's Labels Lie program on November 13 at 8:45 AM at Emerson-Williams

Holiday Store will be held on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30pm.

Currently, our Holiday Store committee is looking for rolls of wrapping paper that can be donated to the event. Please contact Lauren Barbara, Andrea Ginter, or Amber Kiniry if you have rolls you are willing to donate.

In closing, we are still looking for volunteers to sign up for committees. You can find a complete list of the committees on [www.ewpto.com](http://www.ewpto.com), under the General Info/Forms tab. You can also use the 2 Hour Pledge to indicate your willingness to fill holes that we may have which can also be found on the EW PTO webpage. We are seeing some nice activity now on our Facebook page as well, so please continue to check the page for any up to date posts that we may have. It is the quickest and most effective way for us to inform our Emerson Williams family important information and reminders.

Regards,

John Kiniry, 2nd Year Co-President

Paul LaPerriere, 1st Year Co-President

***“Children are our most valuable natural resource!”***

2013-2014 PTO Meeting Schedule – 7:00pm (Upper Media Center)

November 14 • December 12 • January 9 • February 13 • March 13 • April 10

May 8 • June 12

Dear Emerson-Williams Community,

I need to send out a big “Thank You” to Jacob Slater and his family for a most generous donation of a brand new, unabridged edition of audio books on CDs for the entire Harry Potter series. What an exciting and most-welcome gift for the kiddos to enjoy. Presently, we have no books on tape/CD to lend out to the students so this makes for a pretty exciting start. Going forward, I would like to purchase the CDs for the #1 and #2 Nutmeg Book Award winners for last year, this year, and subsequent years in an effort to establish an audio option in our library for our interested students.

My other “Thank You” must go out to the PTO for their generosity in book giving to the library. I was quite greedy in my wish list this year at the book fair (sometimes it’s just so hard making a decision on just a few books when there are sooooo many to choose from). Lo and behold, my wish was granted and Mrs. Jara delivered my books to me on Friday morning. Not much can make me speechless, but that did. Wow! What a treat.

Again, thank you Jacob Slater and family and the E-W PTO for their generous donations. It is very much appreciated.  
With the warmest thanks and best regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Doreen A. Corsair  
Media Center

Looking for information? Check [www.ewpto.com](http://www.ewpto.com) for links to school and PTO forms, events, fundraisers, Tiger Topics, lunch menus and the digital backpack (online copies of the school-wide notices that come home with your child each week).

Please check us out and “LIKE US” on Facebook!



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

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- Spirit Day: October 31<sup>st</sup> is PUMPKIN DAY - Wear Orange and Black!
- **Picture Retake Day: Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>**
- **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Picture Retake Day: Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>**
- *Anti-Bullying Assembly: November 13<sup>th</sup> at 8:45 AM (Grades 4-6)*
- Wethersfield High School Class of 1983 Reunion: Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>
- Holiday Store, Thursday November 21<sup>st</sup>!
- Wednesday, April 2, 2014 – Gr. 5 and Gr. 6 Parent Info Night, 6-7 pm, Upper Media Center
- Wednesday, April 23, 2014 – Friday, April 25 – Grade 6 to Camp Woodstock (3 days)
- Monday, April 28, 2014 – Friday, May 2 – Grade 5 to Camp Woodstock (5 days)

## Box Tops for Education

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Box Tops for Education has helped America’s schools earn over \$400 million since 1996. You can earn cash for Emerson-Williams by clipping Box Tops coupons from hundreds of participating products. Box Tops also offers online ways to earn even more cash for Emerson-Williams.

Check out [www.btfе.com](http://www.btfе.com) for a list of participating products, as well as online earning opportunities.

### Advice

from EW teachers to our students on how to have a successful school year:

**Show up on time, and be prepared.**

**Play outdoors!**

**Keep a positive attitude.**

**Be kind to everyone.**

*Look for more advice in future issues of Tiger Topics!*

### Board of Education

You can find information about the Board of Education’s members, policies, minutes and schedule for upcoming meetings by visiting their website:

<http://www.wethersfield.k12.ct.us/pa ge.cfm?p=1643>

# Target: Help Us Help Our School

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There's an easy way to help us raise money for our school –for books, reading programs and anything else that can use extra funding. It's called Take Charge of Education, and it's helping our school right now. It's great for you too! REDcard holders receive a 5% discount on purchases, and free shipping on Target.com orders. Visit [Target.com/tcoe](http://Target.com/tcoe) or call 1-800-316-6142 to designate our school, then use your REDcard whenever you shop. When you use your REDcardSM (Target® Visa® Credit Card, Target Credit Card® or Target Check Card®), Target will donate up to 1% of your purchases to the eligible K–12 school of your choice. Don't have a REDcard? Apply in person at any Target store or go to [Target.com/redcard](http://Target.com/redcard). Grandparents, alumni, friends and neighbors are all welcome to participate in the program. The more people we involve, the harder the program works for our school. If you're already participating, thank you! Check out our school's progress anytime at [Target.com/tcoe](http://Target.com/tcoe).

## Donate Your Unused Coupons

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Wethersfield High School student Joseph Sottile is collecting expired and unused manufacturers' coupons to donate to U.S. military families in other countries. Military commissaries overseas accept expired coupons. Last year Joseph received the Board of Education's CABE award and a Youth in Action award for this project. Please drop off your coupon circulars or clipped coupons in the donation box at school, or to Joseph Sottile, in the bin on the front porch at 131 Cider Brook Drive.

## Holiday Store

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It's that time of year again! The Emerson-Williams Holiday Store will be held Thursday, November 21, 2013. If you are interested in participating in either event please contact:

Holiday Store Co-Chairs:

Lauren Barbara  
[snl0617@att.net](mailto:snl0617@att.net)  
860-665-9448

Amber Kiniry  
[amberstark76@aol.com](mailto:amberstark76@aol.com)  
860-424-2144

***Holiday Store is in need of wrapping paper, gift bags and tape.  
We appreciate any donations!***



# Attention United Way Donors!

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If you donate to the United Way through your workplace, did you know that you can designate Emerson-Williams PTO as the beneficiary of your donation? If you have any questions or need help, please contact John Kiniry for more information.



## Volunteer

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**If you are interested in heading up one of our PTO committees OR simply want to join a committee to find a way to get involved, please contact John Kiniry or Paul LaPerriere as soon as possible. At the November PTO meeting, we will be assessing the committees that do not have chairs in order to determine if those activities/events will be eliminated. It's so important that we hear from you to make sure the events that your kids love continue to take place. Please go to [www.ewpto.com](http://www.ewpto.com) and check out the committee list to see if anything matches your interests.**

## Babysitters Needed

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Calling all E-W families that have High Schoolers: If your students need to pick up some community service time, we have an opportunity for them! Every month we need three babysitters for our PTO meetings. Responsibilities include monitoring school aged children during the meeting and ensuring that the classroom that is used gets left exactly as we found it! To get put on the schedule, please contact John Kiniry at [jtk038@aol.com](mailto:jtk038@aol.com) or 860-424-2143.

## Labels for Education

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Labels for Education allows our school to earn free merchandise such as athletic, art, music and academic equipment. Just clip and save Labels for Education bar codes from products you use every day, then drop them in the Labels for Education box outside the main office. Labels for Education products include Post, Pepperidge Farm, Campbell's, Dannon, Emerald, Pop Secret and Glad. Check out [Labelsforeducation.com](http://Labelsforeducation.com) for a comprehensive list of participating products. If you have any questions, please contact Sharon Koziol ([skoziol2011@hotmail.com](mailto:skoziol2011@hotmail.com) or 860-529-3562).



# Wethersfield Public Library Events

## Huge Fall Book Sale!

### At the Library

**Saturday, November 2, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, November 3, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Hundreds of books in different categories. On Sunday only buy a bag for \$5.00 and fill it!  
Presented by the Friends of the Library. All proceeds go to the Library.

### **October 19<sup>th</sup>**

*10:30am: PUMPKIN JUDGING CONTEST AND PARADE: all ages*

Come dressed in your Halloween costume with a pumpkin decorated or carved to look like your favorite book character. Receive tricks or treats as you parade around the library.

### **October 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM**

MOVIE NIGHT: MONSTERS UNIVERSITY

"Take a trip back in time when star Monsters, Inc. Employees Mike Wazowski (voice of Billy Crystal) and James P. "Sulley" Sullivan (voice of John Goodman) were just two promising young students at Monsters University in this frightfully fun Disney/Pixar prequel."

### **October 22<sup>nd</sup>, November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>**

*6:30pm: PIZZA & PAGES: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> graders*

Nutmeg Award Book Discussion Series with a light supper.

October Title: *Mike Stellar, Nerves of Steel* by K.A. Holt

November Title: *Saving Arm Pit* by Natalie Hyde

December Title: *Wildfire Run* by Dee Garretson

*Registration is required*

### **November 5<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*7:00pm: MOTHER DAUGHTER BOOK CLUB: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> graders*

Discuss great books with other moms & daughters

October Title: *No Talking* by Andrew Clements

November Title: *Year of the Dog* by Grace Lin

December Title: *11 Birthdays* by Wendy Mass

# EMERSON~WILLIAMS 2013-2014 PTO MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

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Please support the Emerson-Williams PTO by donating \$7.00 per child or \$10.00 per family. All parents and teachers are welcome and encouraged to attend our monthly PTO meetings to share their thoughts and ideas. Many topics are discussed, including up-coming events and concerns. Becoming a member does not obligate you to attend monthly meetings, but you are always welcome to come listen and share your ideas.

Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center.

Our Success cannot continue without your support!  
Thank you for your anticipated support of our PTO!

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Please return the form below to your child's teacher. Checks can be made payable to:

EMERSON~WILLIAMS PTO  
Child(ren) Name (s)

---

Grade(s)

---

Teacher(s)

---

Parent/Guardian Name

---

Child \$7.00

---

Family \$10.00

---

Additional/Other  
Donation\_\_\_\_\_

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The **WINNER** of the Emerson-Williams PTO  
Facebook Page



“Like Us” Competition is  
**Sheryl McDonough**



Thank you to all that Liked Us! Please keep  
checking our Facebook page for future contests!

Also visit our Emerson-Williams PTO Website at  
[www.ewpto.com](http://www.ewpto.com)



Hello Parents!

October is **National Bullying Awareness Month**. This is a time to raise awareness about the seriousness of bullying and more importantly, what we can do to prevent it. Within our schools and within our communities there are misconceptions about what bullying is and questions about how bullying should be addressed. We are working hard at Emerson Williams to correct any misinformation about bullying, to proactively address issues of bullying and to teach our students what they can do to be a part of the solution.

Mrs. Duffy and Mrs. DeBiase are both spending time in classrooms teaching students what bullying is and how to deal with it, as well as educating our students about the steps we are taking to prevent and address bullying in school. Teachers are reinforcing these messages with their students in countless ways throughout the school day. Teachers are always working to create a positive atmosphere in their classrooms and to promptly address any student conflicts. We are working together to teach our students the foundational skills of emotion management, conflict resolution, and empathy in order to create a more positive climate in our classrooms and give students the tools they need to prevent bullying.

To have real success though, we must form a partnership with families to open lines of communication and spread these messages outside of the school as well. To that end, we would like to share some information on bullying. We hope you find this information helpful and that you can reinforce these messages with your children at home. Please contact Emily DeBiase, School Psychologist or Maureen Duffy, School Social Worker with any questions. Thank you!

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying can be verbal (to include online communication), non-verbal (social), or physical

It may include behaviors such as spreading rumors and gossiping, excluding others, name calling or put-downs, teasing, threatening or “blackmailing”, obscene or offensive gestures, sending offensive/hurtful messages online, and physical actions such as destroying someone’s property, blocking someone’s path, pushing, shoving, bumping, etc.

Bullying is **REPEATED**

It is **PURPOSEFUL**

There is an **IMBALANCE of POWER** (the bully is either bigger, older, or perceived as having a higher social status than the victim)

## **Bullying VS Conflict: What's the difference?**

Some of the same unkind behaviors (like name calling or even physical contact) may be present in instances of bullying and instances of conflict

The **difference** is that bullying is repeated and involves an imbalance of power.

Isolated instances of unkind behavior or "feuding" classmates are not considered bullying.

## **What can students and parents do?**

Report it! Anyone who witnesses bullying can report it- parents, teachers, or students  
We also encourage students to be allies who look out for one another.

If an ally witnesses bullying he or she should get help from an adult right away.

In safe situations, allies can also stand up for the person being treated unkindly.

They can help, offer a kind word, or even tell the student who is teasing to stop.

## **Is there anything we can do to prevent bullying from happening to begin with?**

We can be role models for kindness and respectful interactions, even in times of conflict

We can teach children emotion management skills so that they don't lash out when angry

We can teach children conflict resolution skills so that if they are faced with a problem or challenge, they have the skills to handle it in a respectful and effective way

We can educate our children about the seriousness of bullying and its consequences

We can help children develop empathy, which is the ability to be aware of and care about the feelings of others

## **How is bullying addressed at school?**

Once a report of bullying is made to a school staff member, the building administrator is informed and a bullying investigation begins

During the investigation, students are interviewed and once all of the information is gathered, a team of school staff members determine whether the situation meets criteria for bullying, or whether it represents conflict.

If the situation is deemed to be a conflict, students may be referred for mediation or another intervention plan may be established.

If the investigation confirms bullying, the incident is officially recorded as bullying in a log that is sent to the State of Connecticut. Parents are notified and school consequences and/or interventions are implemented.

Remember: Bullying is against the law! Schools must record instances of bullying, have a plan to address it, and must report instances of bullying to the State of Connecticut (including the names of students identified as "bullies").

# ***SAVE THE DATE!!!***



***Emerson-Williams night at the Hartford Wolfpack***

**When: Saturday February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

**Time: 7pm**

**Cost: \$10/ticket – 100 level seats valued at \$20/ticket**

**Scout night – every girl/boy scout will receive a free patch**

**Gymnastics exhibition – entry to the American Gymnastics  
tournament during the day**

**Zamboni ride raffle entry with every ticket purchased**

**Emerson-Williams to be named on the jumbo-tron**

**Checks made payable to EW PTO**

**Questions please contact Lauren Barbara at [\(860\) 665-9448](tel:8606659448)**

**or [snl0617@att.net](mailto:snl0617@att.net)**

**FULL FLYER WITH DETAILS TO COME**

# I can't wait to



## You know that feeling when you just can't wait for tomorrow?

The feeling you get when you're with your friends and you're talking about all the fun things that could happen? We love that feeling! So let's do all the cool stuff you imagined—like exploring the outdoors, creating your own artistic masterpiece, or helping the community with new friends. We'll always be counting down to the next adventure—and the next one, and the next one—together.

**Ready? Start the fun now at [gsocfct.org/join](https://gsocfct.org/join).**

**I can't wait to**  
**Be the one that**  
**makes everybody**  
**giggle**  
**Be the star of**  
**my own story**  
**Be an explorer**  
**on a real-life**  
**adventure**  
**Be a superhero**  
**Be a Girl Scout**

**We're so excited you're excited!**

**Tell us more about yourself:**

Name ..... Grade .....

School .....

**Your three favorite activities:**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**How can we reach you?**

Parent/Caregiver .....

Street .....

City ..... State ..... Zip Code .....

Email .....

( ..... )  
 Phone .....

Girl Scouting is a volunteer organization. May we contact you to discuss volunteering? (Training is available.)  Yes

Thanks! We'll be in touch soon.



**If you love science,**  
**art, sports, or just telling stories,**  
**you're ready for Girl Scouts.**

At Girl Scouts, girls have new experiences that give them that super-excited, jumping, giggling, butterflies-in-the-stomach feeling. Experiences that get you so excited about your future that you can hardly wait.



**A year with us will be filled with:**

- new friends
- tons of fun
- and more "wow" moments than you've ever imagined.

We design activities to teach girls about themselves and their world. A year with us is filled with the kind of moments she just can't wait to tell everyone about.



**Grade levels**

- Kindergarten & Grade 1 ..... Girl Scout Daisy
- Grades 2 & 3 ..... Girl Scout Brownie
- Grades 4 & 5 ..... Girl Scout Junior
- Grades 6, 7, & 8 ..... Girl Scout Cadette
- Grades 9 & 10 ..... Girl Scout Senior
- Grades 11 & 12 ..... Girl Scout Ambassador

**Membership Registration Cost**

\$15.00 Annual Registration Fee plus  
 \$10.00 Council Service Fee  
 Registration aid is available for girls who need financial assistance.  
 Do not send money or check with this form.

**Learn more about all the fun that's waiting for you!**

www.gsofct.org  
 (800) 922-2770  
 general@gsofct.org

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