

West TV PTC Monthly Newsletter

October 2016

Message from the President, Shelli Kime

"You don't get to know each other because there's not time to just really be," says family psychologist Kathleen Kendall-Tackett. "You're just interacting between activities." (www.momsteam.com)

I know I am not the only parent who just read that quote for the first time and was at least momentarily frightened that it might apply to their family. Every year kids seem to have even more amazing opportunities to participate in, and as parents it's easy to get caught up in grabbing at them like \$25 Black Friday iPads. Then throw in your own work life. Oy Vey. We can reminisce the "good ol' days" of our childhood when things came one thing at a time, but that culture is a fading memory.

Three years ago, my oldest daughter was in 3rd grade. She has always been an active and involved child. At this particular time, she was playing soccer and lacrosse during her evenings and weekends and had signed up for a great engineering program called Destination Imagination that involved a team competition, so her team was meeting evenings and some mornings before school. On top of that, she was preparing to go with her OBOB team to the district competition and everything was cumulating all at once. I remember telling her one day that for the next two weeks she just needed to "buckle down" and that she wouldn't have free time "mess around" until it was all over. I thought all these activities were a healthy balance of academic and sport for her. Then one evening when she should have been doing her homework I couldn't find her. I looked all over and finally noticed she had crawled under my desk, pulled the chair back into place, laid her head on the seat and was crying silent crocodile tears that had puddled around her. Alarmed I dropped to my knees and asked what was wrong. She just said, "I'm so stressed mommy. And I'm so tired."

Those moments on the floor with my 8-year-old provided a gut check. I might like to say that after we got through those few weeks we completely stopped the insanity. Or that we made a one-activity-at-a-time policy. But in truth, we didn't. That didn't quite fit either. We didn't stop participating in activities. They are positive experiences and my daughters learn and grow from them. What I did do was read parenting blogs and talk to other busy families. I learned a few tricks and I tried hard to implement them. And honestly, just admitted I wanted to savor my family as much as I could. It seemed at the time like a confession and I was selfish but it gave me the fuel to say no to things I might have said yes to before. Our family still runs in chaos but now it's at least in measured amounts. I have learned our limits and that my kids NEED downtime. I learned to set aside even small amounts of time that are only for family time, with (almost) no exceptions. Earlier this year we took a huge time out and did some extended travels. A few weeks into the trip my daughter said, "Mom, I've held your and dad's and Kiera's hand more in the last two weeks than I have for the last two years." Then she let go of my hand and hugged me. My kids need the time as badly as I do. I've definitely had instances where others have made me feel guilty for putting my family before their activity, but it's proven to always be the right choice for us.

This year I'm feeling "WTV old". I didn't know it was a thing, but it must be. I have almost seen both children through their elementary years now and when I see kindergarten kids in the hall it feels like they are just SO little and that it's been a lifetime since mine were that small. I am positive parents are

smart enough they don't need me to tell them all this, and there are many way more experienced and weathered parents than I. But my WTV old self just feels like offering a reminder that it's easy to get caught up so make sure to keep it in check. Maybe it's a family dinner or a slow walk home from school or just turning the radio off in the car to talk to your kids but find a minute today and connect with them. It's one investment that guarantees a high rate of return.

Appreciation

Thank you to our Volunteer Coordinators, Telia Rusin and Karri Iverson, for helping recruit parent volunteers for various open committee spots and for 3 major events this fall: Track Trot, Staff Appreciation, and Book Fair. Your approachable and friendly demeanors are much appreciated by our school community.

Also, thank you to Paige Dickson and Green Team for their role in Walk-To-School day and for setting up the Halloween party bins, and sincere appreciation for all the parent volunteers who helped make Picture Day, Hearing Screening, Book Fair, Track Trot, and Staff Appreciation run smoothly this past month.

Spotlight

Continent Club

Committee Chair [Julie Le Gassick](#)

My name is Julie Le Gassick. I've been volunteering to help with Continent Check for 6 years, beginning when my oldest daughter Ivy was in 1st grade. My two 2nd graders, Sadie and Stella, love learning about geography, too, and I am happy to help bring maps and exotic locations in to your children's lives.

Continent Club has been a popular program at West TV for many years. It is thanks to many volunteers as well as the teachers, Mrs. Van Kleek, and the front office staff that facilitate the program. Each month, we focus on one continent. This month, our focus is North and Central America, and we are asking the children to learn the locations of 20 preselected countries and states.

On a typical *Check Day*, classrooms are scheduled to come to the cafeteria for 10 minutes between 12:30 and 2:30, where parent volunteers meet each student while they locate the 7 continents and as many preselected countries/states as they can identify. After the Check, students go the "stamp" table and pick out 1-5 stamps (one stamp per group of 4 countries/states) to glue into their passports. In addition, the kids that successfully locate all 20 states and countries may choose to participate in the Challenge. For the Challenge this month, we have chosen 10 National Parks for the children to locate. Other months the Challenge will focus on physical landmarks, rivers of the continent, or UNESCO sites, just to name a few.

All the supporting study documents, including the study map, the blank study maps, the study guide, and the Challenge Study Guide are located as hard copies in the library, or available for download on the PTC website <http://wtvptc.org/continent-club/>

We really want the kids to try to learn what they can, so we ask that you start off with the first 4 countries or states. If your kids are able to learn more than that, then continue on to the rest of the countries. My favorite part of Continent Check is helping my kids study and learning about different parts of the world. Every month we find new locations we want to visit, and have good discussions about how each continent differs. If each child can walk away from Continent Check knowing all 7 continents and learning the location of a few new countries, I feel like it has been a success.

Keep in Touch...

Our goal is to provide as much information and useful resources as possible to our West TV families, so please follow our news on our **website** <http://wtvptc.org/>, get a quick reminder of upcoming events every Monday in your email inbox from our **Monday Minute**, attend our monthly **PTC meeting** (every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7PM,) and get to know our organization more in-depth in this monthly **newsletter** sent via email. It's hard to believe that Halloween is almost here...happy Autumn!

If you have any content suggestions for upcoming newsletters, please contact Jami Keene, PTC Secretary, at jamikeene@hotmail.com.
