



PTA

Let It Snow!

Volume 9
1/23/09

THE EAGLE'S EYE Center Grove School PTA

Upcoming Programs/Events

CG Datebook

PTA Meeting	Jan. 29, 9:15am
Donate a Dollar	Through Jan. 30
Illustrator/Author Visit	Feb. 5*
Kindergarten Science Day	Feb. 6
Kindergarten Registration	Feb. 9 – 12
SCHOOL CLOSED	Feb. 13 – 16
1st Grade Science Day	Feb. 20
3rd Grade Science Day	Feb. 27

*AM Kindergarteners may attend the assembly with parents from 1:08pm-1:55pm.

CG Kindergarten Registration

CG Kindergarten registration week is February 9 – February 12. Registration will be held in the Administration Building directly behind Center Grove School. Registration packets are available on the Randolph Township Schools website (www.rtnj.org), as well as at the Administration Building. Packets will NOT be available at CG.

You must call Mrs. Lopez, CG School Nurse, to make an appointment to register your kindergartener. Her phone number is 973-361-7835 x206. You MUST have an appointment in order to complete the registration process! During your appointment, you will meet with Linda Gordon, our District Registrar, as well as Mrs. Lopez.

You must bring the following documents with you to your registration appointment: your child's original birth certificate, proof of residency, the completed Randolph Health Assessment form with an assessment date that is within 365 calendar days of our September 3, 2009 entrance date, and a copy of your child's immunization record.

Please feel free to call Mrs. Lopez with any questions. We look forward to meeting with all of our new and returning families!

Help Wanted

3rd Grade Science Day Volunteers

The 3rd grade has BubbleMania! The 3rd Grade Science Day is Friday, February 27, and the theme is BUBBLES. There will be five different bubble stations which include: Bubble Pools, Bubble Colors and Shapes, Bubble Technology and Foam, Bubble Measurement, and Bubble Windows.

We need many volunteers to help with this fun and special event. Keep your eyes open for BubbleMania notices – we will send home more information shortly in the 3rd grade backpacks.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Stacey Pinilis at pinilis@optonline.net or Linda Smith at lbsmithree@optonline.net.

Illustrator/Author Visit

We welcome illustrator/author, Michael Dooling, to Center Grove on Thursday, February 5. During his visit, he will take students through the process of illustrating a picture book, mixing both art and history lessons. There will be no organized book sale for his books. If you have any questions, please e-mail Tracy Coyle at tracycoyle@yahoo.com.

UPDATE: Donate a Dollar, Save a Life

Thanks to everyone who contributed toward our Heifer International "Donate a Dollar, Save a Life" project. During our first week, we collected \$96 from very generous CG students. If you haven't already done so, please consider contributing \$1 to this very worthwhile cause. We'll collect donations during lunch until Friday, January 30, and our goal is \$500. (Or you can send in \$1 in an envelope marked "CG Donates a Cow.") Thank you so much for helping to end poverty and save a life in need!!

President's Message

By Heather Sheehan, PTA President

I know I am in the minority as I cheer on Jack Frost (skiing, anyone?!), but I am truly enjoying this winter. This January in particular strikes me as a fresh start in so many ways: a new year, new snow, a new president. Politics aside, I believe we can all rally around his call to come together and serve our communities. Now more than ever, we at the CG PTA are working hard to support and enrich our children's educational experience, and we appreciate each and every volunteer. Thanks to each of you who have worked the front desk, helped out at the library, unloaded Market Day boxes, stuffed Friday Folders, hung art in the hallways or worked in any of our programs. I invite all parents to join us and help out in the coming months, especially during the grade level science days. These are a few short hours of working directly with the kids in a fun learning environment.

At CG, our fresh start includes a Facilities Committee focused on improving our school's physical environment. So far, we are making great progress in improving the general cleanliness and appearance of the bathrooms, classrooms and library. Heating issues are being addressed, and additional work is scheduled and/or being explored for improved lighting. Please forward any comments (yours or your child's) to me.

Please join us for a PTA meeting Thursday, January 29, 9:15am-10:45am, as we finalize our ACTION PLANS for the CG situation analysis. So many of you worked on the first two meetings in which we identified and prioritized opportunities for improvement. This final meeting will assign specific action plans to teachers, administrators, and parents, so that we can move forward together.

The PTA Council Fundraiser invitation is included in this Friday Folder. Friday, March 6, is the Casino Night and Basket Raffle, and it promises to be a fabulous night out for couples, singles, groups of friends and teachers. Please consider joining us and supporting this fundraiser. Last year, the PTA Council awarded six scholarships, 15 teacher grants, \$6,000 to Project Graduation, and \$15,000 to the Randolph Middle School for SMART boards.

Stay warm, enjoy the hot cocoa, and let it snow!

District News: Stuff You Should Know...

By Jeanne Stifelman, CG BOE Liaison

The January 12 PTA meeting included a presentation by Chris Carey, Board of Ed (BOE) Vice President and Chair of the Finance, Facilities and Transportation (FFT) Committee, to explain the budget process. Key points shared by Chris include:

- The school budget's fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends June 30. **Randolph residents may vote on the tax levy portion of the budget on April 21.**
- **If there is a "NO" vote on the budget, it will result in additional cuts to the budget, decided by the Town Council.**
- **80% of the current school budget comes from the tax levy** and 19% comes from the state.
- **State aid has remained flat** over the years while Randolph's population has increased. This year there most likely will be a DECREASE in state aid.
- The state mandated cap on the tax levy is 4% from year to year. A proposed budget that asks for a 4% increase is called a "full cap budget."
- District fixed costs increase more than 4% from year to year, resulting in a decrease in the amount spent per pupil in the District. **Randolph spends less than most other schools in the county.**
- Budget priorities traditionally have been (in order of importance): state mandated priorities, education issues, class size limits (all grades), and extra-curricular activities.
- There will be budget cuts for the 09/10 school year. The short term vs. long term implications will be weighed (for example, if something can be cut one year and easily returned to the budget the next). **Class size is definitely on the table.**

Please note that the FFT Committee will meet several times over the next two months to prepare the budget to propose to the BOE on February 20. The BOE will pass the budget following that presentation. At the last FFT meeting, it was clear that even before we factor in the probable decrease in state aid, we will have to cut about \$1 million from the budget for next year. If you want to know more or to get involved, join me at the next FFT Committee meeting on January 27 at 7:30pm in the Administration Building. If you have any questions or concerns – or if you would like a copy of Chris Carey's presentation – please contact me at jstife@optonline.net.

Upcoming Board of Ed Meetings

Policy Committee Meeting: 2/2 at 9am, Admin. Bldg.

Education Committee Meeting: 2/4 at 8pm, RHS Library

FFT Committee Meetings: 1/27, 2/3, 2/4, 2/9, 2/12, 2/17, 2/19 at 7:30pm, Admin. Bldg.

Meeting dates/times subject to change. Be sure to check www.rtnj.org for updated information.

Meet Mrs. Ruth Contreras

Position: Kindergarten Teacher

Years at CG: 16 years

What famous person would you like to have dinner with? This is very corny but I would pick Fred Rogers because he was such a loving and caring human being. He made everyone young and old feel loved and special. I remember seeing him on TV once speaking at the Emmy's and he had everyone in the audience mesmerized with a tear in their eye. So, for some peace of mind and comforting of the soul I would choose him.

Favorite author: John Irving

Favorite game: *Trivial Pursuit*

Favorite line from a movie: From the movie *Phenomenon*, starring John Travolta and Kyra Sedgwick. Kyra Sedgwick is trying not to fall in love with John Travolta's character. Toward the end of the movie he is in the hospital with an inoperable brain tumor. He tells her he is sorry and asks her to love him for the rest of his short life. She replies, "No, I'll love you for the rest of mine."

Describe a good day: Relaxing on the beach with a good book, good friends, and someone else making a good dinner.

Favorite vacation spot: Long Beach Island, NJ

What was your favorite subject in school? Social Studies

What did you want to be when you grew up? A teacher

Most memorable CG moment: When I was teaching 2nd grade, the janitor was fixing the doorknob on my classroom door. She removed the doorknob, left and did not inform me *not* to shut the door. It was getting noisy in the hallway and I asked a student to shut the door so we could recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Well, 9:08am arrived and it was time to change classes. The door would not open and the janitor had left the building. So for one hour we were all locked in the classroom! It was a little nerve wracking – especially when a couple of students said they had to use the bathroom!

SPOTLIGHT on Kindergarten

K CLASSROOMS CARE

By Mrs. Ruth Contreras and Mrs. Nadine Johnson,
Kindergarten Teachers

Mrs. Johnson's and Mrs. Contreras's 2008-2009 Kindergarten Service Learning Project was to participate in the "Classrooms Care" program sponsored by Scholastic Book Club. For reading 100 books by December 19, 2008 (whether it was reading aloud by the student, reading at home, or reading in school), Scholastic Book Club agreed to donate 100 books to children in need. The students were asked to write the name and author of each book on the tracking poster. The classes chose to have books donated to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

The kindergartners are very proud of themselves. By becoming involved with this program the students have shared their love of reading and have learned how to make a difference in the world. The classes received a certificate and are listed in the "Hall of Fame" on the Scholastic website. Yeah for Kindergarten!!!

CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND MORE

By Mrs. Joanne Kesten, Kindergarten Teacher

We recently celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday in a number of ways. On the first day I tossed a beanbag around to only one set of children. I stopped when an astute child realized I was being "unfair." I changed my group and again one of the children told me that I needed to be fair to everyone. We read a story and talked about how this was Dr. King's goal, as well. The next day we compared an egg with a brown shell to one with a white shell. Through observation, prediction, and discussion, we realized that the only thing different about the eggs was "the skin." They had the same shape and weight. After the lesson, we compared tastes with batches of scrambled eggs made from each type of egg. As we discussed, there was no taste difference. We learned the lesson that, while we may be different on the outside, what lies inside is what really counts.

Additionally, we have a Service Learning activity planned. Service learning occurs when there is "a balance between learning goals and service outcomes." Even our youngest students can combine what they have learned in the classroom with a meaningful community-based experience. The children in our class will have that opportunity in the spring. As a culmination to a Science Unit pertaining to plants and flowers, we will be potting plants and flowers and delivering them to senior citizens in our area. We hope to spread a little bit of sunshine with a little bit of entertainment to our local citizens. In the meantime, we want the children to recognize that we learn things inside the classroom so we can use them outside the classroom. If the children's attitude is any indication, this project is sure to reinforce their excitement about learning!

Student Achievements

The 2009 State Youth Art Exhibit will be held from March 14 through March 20 in Trenton. The CG Art Department has submitted artwork from the following students for display:

- Kindergarten—**Marina Dorizas**
- 1st grade—**Jack Louro**
- 2nd grade—**Julia Miao**
- 4th grade—**Nicole Urban and Taylor Scoopo**
- 5th grade—**Jake Southern, Rachel Kral, Scott Waters, Jenna Patel, Arianna Graham, Katherine Miao**

Remember to Buy Gift Cards!

Just because the holidays are over, don't forget about buying gift cards! Use them for everyday shopping needs (gas, grocery store, favorite shops, office supplies, etc.) and keep some extras around for those last minute gifts. This is a NO COST FUNDRAISER, please try it! Here's how:

1. Go to www.shopwithscrip.com.
2. Register to create a family account.
3. Use enrollment code 6F3ALLF51554L for CG.
4. Choose your gift cards, and place your order.
5. Send in your check to CG PTA in an envelope marked "Gift Card Order" with a copy of your order.

Orders are due by Monday, January 26. Pickup is on Friday, January 30, from 2pm to 3pm at the front desk. Any questions? Please e-mail Coleen Barbieri at cbarbiere113@yahoo.com.

NEXT ISSUE: Friday, February 6. Please e-mail your submissions to Karen Pierro at mkpiero@optonline.net.

Articles MUST be received by 10pm on the Tuesday prior to Friday's distribution.

In an effort to conserve paper, we reserve the right to edit all information.

Newsletter Team: Trish Coyne, Trish Marciano, Karen Pierro, Katie Bergen-McLagan, Diana Higgins, Claire Keller

Meet Mrs. Joanne Kesten

Position: Kindergarten Teacher

Years at CG: 10 years

What famous person would you like to have dinner with? I would like to have met Tim Russert because he was smart, dedicated, hardworking, knowledgeable, trustworthy, and so politically savvy. He made sense out of difficult topics. I would also like to have met Annie Sullivan. As a teacher, and a parent, it amazes me the way she kept coming up with new ways to teach Helen Keller to communicate.

Favorite book or author: One of my favorite children's books is *The Spooky Old Tree*. When my son was little, I must have read that book 100 times – to his delight! As an adult, I love Phillipa Gregory. Her story *The Other Boleyn Girl* was one of my favorite stories.

Favorite game: This year it is *Candyland*.

Favorite line from a song: "...someday we'll look back on this and it will all seem funny..." Bruce Springsteen

Describe a good day: A good day in school is one where I get done at least half of what I have planned, and the kids leave at the end of the day with smiles on their faces. A good day outside of CG involves my husband, my sons, a beach, and a great book!

Favorite vacation spot: Hawaii or Ocean City, MD

What was your favorite subject in school? Math

What did you want to be when you were growing up? I have always wanted to be a teacher.

Most memorable CG moment: I think my most memorable CG moment was right after 9/11. One afternoon, American flags were placed outside our classroom doors, and patriotic music was piped through the hallways. When *I'm Proud to be an American* was played, there was so much emotion. It was incredible to be part of something so personal and yet so big at the same time.

Heather Sheehan, President, sheehanfamily4@aol.com;

Dee Pokorny, VP Student Life, dee27@optonline.net; Andria Stampone, VP Student Life, avonandria@aol.com;

Stacy Gellert, VP Programs, sgellert@optonline.net; Allyson Louro, VP Programs, alouro@optonline.net;

Coleen Barbieri, VP Fundraising, cbarbiere113@yahoo.com;

Trish Coyne, VP Community Relations, trishacoyne@aol.com; Trish Marciano, VP Community Relations, pmarciano@msn.com;

Kim Ryan, VP Administration, kdryan@optonline.net; Sheryll Penny, Treasurer, sheryllPPenney@aol.com