

Kennedy PTA



May
2011

Calendar of Events

May:

- 6 - Spirit Day
- 10 - Science Club
- 12 - Lego Club
- 17 - PTA Meeting, 7PM
- 19 - PTA Installation Dinner
- 24 - Science Club
- 26 - Penguins! 1PM
- 26 - Lego Club
- 26 - "Night with the Masters"



June:

- 3 - Spirit Day
- 14 - PTA meeting, 7PM

School Store

The **Early Act™** School Store is open on **Fridays** in the lobby before school starts.

President's Corner

April showers have finally brought May flowers! Spring has sprung and boy, it was worth the wait! I hope everyone enjoyed their spring breaks. Spring brings along our last two months of school and quite a busy schedule!

May also brings my last entry as president of the Kennedy PTA. These last two years have buzzed by. I thought I'd do a "recap" of some accomplishments that have happened these last two years, so here goes...

Let's start with this incredible newsletter! I remember meeting with Anni Mauro (the editor) and showing her an old newsletter from Zane's preschool. It was colorful, fun to read and packed with information. I think it truly is so important to have a pipeline of information from the PTA to our families & Anni has done an ah-MAZING job! Thank you!!

My first position as an officer of the PTA was as Treasurer, which is by far the most difficult position in the PTA. Mary Ann Loreng was the president and I persuaded her to let us try a "no stress" fundraiser. I had heard from many parents that they were tired of selling useless items at the very beginning of school. We ran with it and, as of this year, we as a school have raised over \$12,000! That's pretty impressive! With these funds (and others) we were able to provide over 20 cultural art programs for the children, paid for a smart board, paid for a camera, funded teachers with more than \$6,000 in individual classroom materials and soon a new piano and carting case!

Last year we celebrated 40 years! Mrs. Wallock and I wanted to leave a "legacy" to last another 40 years. We

now have beautiful hand painted tiles from our children and families in our cafeteria. I have been in the cafeteria and seen the pride in the children as they search for their individual tiles! They are beautiful and they were fun to make!

We have new family night activities, such as Family Craft Night! We have done that for two years and hopefully it will continue in the future. I don't know who has more fun, the kids or parents! There have also been changes made in how money is handled to better protect our families and the funds generated. The changes were not easily accepted but now have become our normal way of doing things.

These are just a few of the accomplishments from the past two years. It wouldn't have been possible without all of the incredible volunteers and wonderful families at Kennedy!

I would like to thank everyone that has given their most important asset - THEIR TIME! All the chair people that volunteered for every program and activity that the PTA provides and every person that helped from the smallest jobs to the biggest. As we all know, it takes a village! You are all amazing and I have been blessed with the opportunity these past two years to be the president!

I would also like to thank Mrs. Wallock and the faculty and staff at Kennedy. Everyone has always been thoughtful and gracious with our PTA. Working with you all has been a pleasure!

I wish all the best to the new board. I know they will continue to strive to bring our children, families and staff the best there is to offer!

Always Warm Regards,
Lesa Wracher wracher@optonline.net



The Penguins are Coming!

Thursday May 26 at 1:00pm

Jenkinsons Aquarium will be at Kennedy with their Penguin Pointers Program featuring live Penguins!

AM Kindergarteners are welcomed to attend with their parents.

For more information about Jenkinsons Aquarium, check their website:

<http://www.jenkinsons.com/aquarium>

Don't forget to check their Penguin Cam!

PTA Installation Dinner

Please join us for the PTA Installation dinner for the Installation of Officers for the 2011-2012 school year.

May 19, 2011, 7:00pm
The Black River Barn
Route 10, Succasunna

Cost is \$25.00 per person. Please make checks made payable to: *Kennedy School PTA*

Please RSVP to Kerry Seminara by May 13th
973-584-6966 or kerry4298@yahoo.com



....from the Principal's Desk

How did May get here so fast? Where did the school year go? Is it really worth working harder, or are things set as they will end in June? There are answers to all of those questions. Many days remain ahead for learning, assessing, and performing. It is never time to give up. If students are uncertain as to how they may make improvements, a talk with the teacher can give them clear answers. A plan of action can be created. Success should always be a vision, even on days that are gloomy. The reality is that most students are doing remarkably well. That is the result of a conscientious endeavor to learn and make the best of things.

So many times, when I speak with those who appear to be winners, they simply say they were willing to take chances and do what others may not have had to courage to do. If we do not limit ourselves to simple comfort levels, the sensational feeling of going beyond perceived expectations may be reached. Go for the gold!

We have our ASK standardized tests this month for third and fourth graders. These provide an indication to our school and district of areas that show our strengths as well as areas that may need greater attention. Tests will be used to re-direct education for the benefit of our students. Through extensive conferencing with our supervisors, superintendent, assistant superintendent, director or personnel, and principals we attempt to plan for the future related to the data provided. Together we can make a positive difference in the lives of our students.

With determination to bring an outstanding education to our children,

Mrs. Audrey Wallock





Nurse's Nook

We all know that your children must eat the right foods to grow up healthy and strong. What is not well understood is that children's mental functioning can suffer if they eat the wrong foods at the wrong times.

How does food affect learning?

- 1) Foods are psychoactive, just like drugs they affect how we think, feel and relate to others. Fuel for the brain's work comes almost exclusively from glucose, a sugar manufactured from carbohydrates in the diet.
- 2) Additionally, the brain's neurotransmitters (the vehicles for the chemical messages sent throughout the body) are composed of the same amino acids (their by-products) that are found in food proteins.
- 3) Most recent studies show that some food can enhance problem solving abilities, increase alertness and improve mood and behavior. New research has also shown that the wrong foods can impair learning and behavior.

So...in anticipation of the upcoming standardized testing it is suggested that your child(ren) enjoy a combination of carbohydrates (whole grains, fruit/vegetables) and proteins to start their day. Even a grilled cheese, tomato and egg sandwich made with the right foods will go a long way to ensure optimum brain function. Breakfast improves learning and attendance, and reduces behavior problems and tardiness. Children who eat breakfast closer to test-taking time do perform better on standardized tests than those who skip breakfast or eat the wrong foods. Breakfast eaters are healthier, have fewer visits to the school nurse, improve their diets, reduce their absenteeism and are on the road to building healthy eating habits. After all, breakfast is the most important meal of the day!

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse, Judith D. Bristol, R.N., C.S.N., M.S. at 973-584-3994.

PTA Officer Positions & Elections

Our elections were held in April - The 2011/2012 Board of Officers are:

President - Kerry Seminara
Vice-President - Erin Ronchetta
Treasurer - Valerie Dolan
Recording Secretary - Ann Mauro
Corresponding Secretary - Stephanie Kooyenga

Our thanks to the Nominating Committee for coordinating the nominations and election.



"Night with the Masters"

Mr. Kuplin's popular night of art fun is back and he needs our help!

The "Night with the Masters" will take place on Thursday, May 26. Ten (10) people are needed to help out that night, and 6 - 8 people are needed to help prepare art work on 5/18 (afternoon only) as well as anytime on 5/19 and 5/20.

If you can help out at all, please contact Lesa Wracher at wracher@optonline.net



From Kennedy School's Guidance Counselor

The NJ Ask test will be administered to Roxbury third and fourth grade students from May 9th through the 13th. This test measures your child's performance against state standards and is used to evaluate how well Kennedy School and the Roxbury School District are educating its students. Although the content of this test cannot be studied for like a weekly spelling test, there are things that can be done to ensure optimal student performance. Here are some helpful suggestions to assist your child during testing week.

Review some common words with your child to clarify meaning and understanding such as evaluate or predict. Practice evaluating and predicting by reading a story together. Have your child evaluate what he read and predict what might happen next in the story. Also, review what your student already knows about the test. Teachers prepare students weeks prior so that they can be familiar with the format, with the time restraints, with test/behavior expectations and with overall do's and don'ts.

Remind your child to pace himself. Explain that all the questions are not going to be easy as the test is purposely design with some level of difficulty. Mention that he may not be able to answer all of the questions, and that is expected and okay. Emphasize that during the test, your child should read each question carefully, twice if necessary. He should not spend too much time on one question as each section of this test is timed. Suggest he read the questions prior to reading a passage. This will help your child know what he is looking for when reading. This also helps in saving time not having to go back and re-read a passage. Your child should first answer the questions he is sure of, skipping the more difficult ones, and coming back to them later. Sometimes reading further down a list of questions will give you a clue about the answer to a previous question.

Keep in mind that it is normal for children to get nervous before a test. It is not uncommon for this anxiety to be heightened when taking the NJ Ask since many students describe this as a "big" and "important" test. Help minimize anxiety by putting the test into perspective. Explain that test scores are looked at along with many other pieces of information in determining your child's academic achievement. Grades and progress over time are also very important. The NJ Ask may be a big test, but it is still just one test. Discuss how your child need not worry too much and how mild anxiety is actually a good thing. The perfect level of nervousness can help motivate and focus a student assisting him in doing well.

If your child is overly worried or usually a very nervous test-taker, try teaching him deep breathing. It will help bring oxygen to his brain as well as decrease heart rate and blood pressure, relaxing him in the process. Coach him in breathing in fully through his nose, filling his entire lung cavity, and exhaling fully through his mouth. Practice this strategy with your child several times prior to testing week. Also, remind your child to use this technique prior to the test as well as in between sections.

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep before each test day. Have everything that is needed for school organized and ready to go the night before. Being prepared will decrease any additional stress by making the exit from home run smoothly.

Eating a healthy breakfast which includes more protein then carbohydrates will provide lasting energy and brain power. A light breakfast is preferable over a heavier one as the latter will make your student sluggish. When packing a snack, make sure it is light and nutritious.

Have you child select comfortable clothing to wear each day of the test. Have these clothes picked out and ready to wear the night before. Again, this will help to eliminate any additional stress during testing week. Moreover, each student should bring something to read when finished with the test.

During testing week, your child will be required to go above and beyond his normal school routine. Much effort will be put forth and should be acknowledged. Expect that some children my show signs of fatigue and overload by acting out during this week. Normalize your child's feelings and stress level and provide plenty of down time after school to relax and have fun. More importantly, communicate to your child that all he can do is try his very best. Let him know you are proud of him not only for his smarts but for his tenacity and his effort.

Ms. Gina La Capra