



Princeton Regional Schools

A Place for Learning,
A Commitment to Excellence

Summer 2010

CELEBRATE!

Dear Princeton Community Members:

During the last weeks of school we hosted dozens of celebrations for Pre-K through 12th-grade students: concerts, art galleries, scholarship awards, field days and “moving on” ceremonies. It was impossible to be in a school and not be filled with the deep joy that comes with applauding students’ accomplishments and appreciating the talents of educators and support staff who shepherd the learning, nurture the curiosity and inspire the work behind each achievement. The Princeton Regional Schools community has countless reasons to celebrate every day of the full calendar year, in the spotlight and behind the scenes.

As I walked around town and through our schools’ classrooms this year, I often reminded myself (and others) to take nothing for granted and to truly appreciate the opportunities for exploration, self-discovery and growth that our students are provided. We are surrounded by the world’s leading institutions for study and research, are supported by an exceptional network of public institutions such as the Princeton Public Library and the Paul Robeson Arts Council, and have the energy and generosity of a small army of volunteers and philanthropists at our children’s side. The values and the spirit of our community provide daily lessons for our children and give reason for celebration every hour of every day.

Our newsletters and web site were filled with the awards and honors that have been bestowed upon PRS pupils and faculty members this year—one more remarkable than the next, and all to be lauded. There is also reason to celebrate the many small victories that do not always make headlines, but make successful schools and enable children to thrive: the child who writes his first story in English, the student who volunteers to tutor others, the graduate first in his/her family to receive a diploma. Behind each small victory is a teacher, or a team of educators, who have coached, cared, supported and believed. Our students and teachers give us great reasons for celebration.

As you move through your days, walk by schools, see neighborhood children or read the announcements of college decisions of our June grads, stop for a moment to reflect upon the beauty of our community and the overwhelming success of our schools. Know that the web of high expectations and support that you weave throughout the community is celebrated, also.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive summer!

Sincerely,

In the Schools ...

Princeton High School

Congratulations to Sadik Shahidain, PHS sophomore, who made the US Junior Math Olympiad team and will be spending this summer at the University of Nebraska to train with the US team. This is an all expense paid summer training camp for US Math Olympiad team members who will be representing USA in the upcoming International Math Olympiad. Sadik, was the highest scoring student in division 1 (1st year physics) student in our region (NJ and Pennsylvania).

On November 17th the International Club at Princeton High School held the first in a series of cultural programs. The series focused on the culture of Africa. Over 80 students listened as speakers from Princeton University highlighted different aspects of the diverse culture of Africa, including discussions of life in Uganda, Ethiopia and South Africa. The evening culminated with a dinner of traditional African food.

On November 19th the Spectacle Theatre Production, the Frogs opened. **The Frogs**, is a political satire by Aristophanes (404 BC). The play begins in Athens and then moves to Hades as the god Dionysus journeys in search of a poet who can end the war and bring positive change to the city-state. Along the way he encounters monsters, thieves, murderers, an abusive janitor, hip-hop frogs, a rapping Greek chorus, and more. The performances were well attended on all three nights.

On November 20th through November 23rd, the Princeton High School Model United Nations team competed at the annual Princeton University conference. Fifty-four PHS high school students attended the conference.

On December 4th Jackson Katz spoke to the audience at the Princeton High School Performing Arts Center. The program was sponsored by HiTops and the Jewish Family and Children Services. Katz is one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists. An educator, author and filmmaker, he is internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work in the field of gender violence prevention



Congratulations to the following 2009-2010 Gold Key recipients:

Seniors: Elektra Alivisatos, Haley Andres, Trevor Barsamian, April Birnie, Sasha Bonilla, Allen Bryant, Doug Bryant, Alexa Byrd, Elizabeth Carnevale, Victoria Cassidy, Russell Cavallaro, Swetha Chandrasekar, Ada Chen, Max Chen, Nathaniel Costin, Dan Deutsch, Danielle Dredger, Jackson Golden, Sarah Goodman, Ike Gutierrez, Corey Henderson, Nicolas Hinsch, Devon Holman, Syndey Krueger, Katherine Li, Tyler Liberty, Emily Lin, Rodger Liu, Rachel Mariman, Jordan Metro, Erika Neito-Fernandez, Mike Olentine, James Peretzman, Meg Reilly, Dillon Reisman, Elizabeth Sweemer, Emily Ullman, Carol Weiss.

Juniors: Emefa Agawu, Rachel Bergman, Tom Borchert, Marcus Budline, Gregory Carroll, Leslie Castrejon, Christine Cha, David Dunlap, Stephen Goldsmith, Anna Grosshans, Nzinga Kambon, Pria Mahadevan, Margaret Mattes, Anjali Mehta, Catherine Price, Zaid Smart, Abby Stern, Daniel Taub.

John Witherspoon Middle School

The 2010 Counselor of the Year for Mercer County is John Witherspoon Middle School's John Cronin! Every year ONE counselor in all of Mercer County is recognized for his or her dedication to the counseling profession, and service to students and school communities. Counselors are nominated by colleagues and selected by a committee who honors the finalist at an award dinner. This year it is our very own John Cronin!

Enric Boix placed first nationally in the National French Contest. Enric, an 8th grader at JW, studies French at PHS. Le Grand Concours is a national exam for students of French in the US. Over 100,00 students take the exam each year.

Several students from JW was selected during Youth Art Month exhibition at the Arts Council of Princeton. The following students art work were on display during the Month of March Kelsey Schwimmer, Jeffrey Gleason, Tom Walker, Crystal Liu, Kath Sowa and Jane Roberson.

On Saturday April 17 the John Witherspoon 7th and 8th Grade Jazz Bands as well as the JW Studio Band participated in the PHS 3rd Annual Jazz Festival. All three bands put on superb performances receiving outstanding acclamations from all three adjudicators. The JW Studio Band earned a Superior Rating as well as the Best Trumpet Section Award and took home the Dr. Anthony Biancosino Sight-Reading Award. Eighth Grade Trombonist Dan Sturm was awarded one of only three Outstanding Soloist Award for the evening. The Band Students in all three jazz bands should be very proud of all their accomplishments this year.

Best wishes to retiring John Witherspoon Principal William Johnson after 34 years of service to students, parents, and the Princeton community.

The district welcomes Jason Burr, former assistant principal at Montgomery Upper Middle School to the principal ship of John Witherspoon in mid-august.

Congratulations to the John Witherspoon Middle School MathCounts team who placed third out of the eighteen teams that competed at the Mercer Region Chapter MathCounts Competition. MathCounts is a national enrichment, club and competition program that promotes middle school mathematics achievement through grassroots involvement in every U.S. state and territory.

The JW Basket Fundraiser was a huge success. Thanks you to everyone who contributed in making the baskets absolutely wonderful and to everyone who participated in the event. Together we raised \$4,000. Combined with the ribbons for Haiti and the World Language Sale, JW raised over \$7,000 for Haiti. All proceeds were donated to Shelter Box, Doctors without Borders and Red Cross.

Congratulations to the John Witherspoon Science Bowl Team who took fifth place at the National Science Bowl competition in Washington, D.C.! Their 7 and 2 record at the Nationals won a \$1000 prize for the school given to the team by Secretary of Energy Dr. Steven Chu in a ceremony with First Lady Michelle Obama. The team earned their berth at the national competition by taking first place in the Department of Energy's Regional Science Bowl at Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory held on March 5th, 2010. The second-string team tied for 6th place in the regionals in the hotly contested, double elimination, quiz-bowl science fact buzzer game. Photo courtesy of Dennis Brack/National Science Bowl.



Community Park

An added event to our Science Fair this year was the create-your-own TerraCycle project which was a trashing and also a smashing success! Over twenty students participated with ideas such as a poncho made out of grocery store bags, a jump rope made from Crayola markers, and a bib from old juice pouches.



CP students participated in the April School Election when they had the opportunity to vote for a CP picnic, Game Day or No Homework Day. Their choice for the picnic won by a landslide. Our first graders were treated with an ice cream party as their reward for having the largest student voter turnout at the CP polls.

Community Park School proudly celebrates the arts. Our student musicians displayed their mastery of wind and string instruments as they performed in an assembly for friends, parents and guardians. CP's fourth and fifth grade choir shared music of their wonderful voices at an afternoon assembly for students and at an evening performance for family and friends. Our halls of the school became an art museum for our student's personal interpretation of the works of noted artists. We also enjoyed viewing the results of the children's experiences with clay, chalk, pencil, crayon color and many other art materials.

CP also celebrated Earth Day. CP children and staff created banners about ways to protect the earth and the communities where we live. These banners were proudly displayed in the front of our building.

Our annual Field Day is always fun for students, staff and parent volunteers. This event ended with a splash as all the students were also able to enjoy the pool.

CP students had a wonderful time as they participated in our third annual book swap. All classes attended the swap which provided every student with at least one new book to take home. The books for the swap resulted from the children donation books that they had read and were ready to share with others.

Community Park students care about the community near and far as they participated in a variety of fundraisers. Our students participated in a Jump-A-Thon to raise money for the American Heart Association. Our fifth grade students participated in a car wash, bake sale and garage sale as fundraisers for The Make-A-Wish Foundation and S.A.V.E. Another fundraiser that has become an annual event is the Teacher/Parent Basketball Game. Moms, dads and teachers raced back and forth on the full-size basketball court trying to gain the advantage. The very close score throughout the game kept our students, friends, staff and family on the edge of their seats until the final buzzer sounded.



Johnson Park

During the spring, JP pupils have participated in a range of activities that address the academic, artistic, athletic, social, and service-learning needs of our youngsters. These experiences have taken place at JP as well as in venues outside our school's walls.

All JP's children have continued to participate in science and environmental-education activities on our nature trail and along the Stony Brook to supplement their classroom learnings. At the end of April, five classes in grades 3-5 presented their findings from real-life science investigations they'd completed as part of our Student Investigative Project (SIP) initiative. Pupils posed research questions, e.g., "Do things that float or sink behave differently in salt of fresh water?", "What factors affect the mixing of salt water and fresh water in an estuary?", "Does litter decompose faster in still or running water?", and "Has the newly construction Rosedale Road bridge affected the water quality and aquatic life in the Stony Brook?"; developed hypotheses; conducted background research via the Internet; collected and analyzed data; drew conclusions; and shared their results, orally, in written form, and via PowerPoint and video presentations, at a public symposium. (About a month later, teachers involved in the project received an award from the Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association for their leadership in environmental education.)

In social studies, pupils have learned to use the Internet to do research projects to learn about their ancestors' countries of origin and have taken trips related to Princeton history and the American Civil War (the latter during an extended-day trip to Gettysburg). Our fourth graders celebrated their diversity via theatrical pieces with a Young Audiences dramatist and via break dancing with a Roxey Ballet specialist; a different dance instructor worked with our third graders to teach them the minuet for their colonial fair.

Monthly spirit days during which children could purchase popcorn raised over \$200 for our Koko Fund. Our pupils also donated their outgrown sports equipment to support young athletes in Trenton and Princeton, their gently used books to aid young readers, and funds to buy mosquito nets for a village in Africa and livestock for a village in a Third World country.

In physical education, JP's children have new PTO-purchased structures: a traverse climbing wall in the gym and a SpaceBall on the playground on which to exercise and practice new physical skills. After meeting class by class goals for collecting non-perishable foods for needy families for the holidays, JP students participated in the Third-Annual Turkey Trot, a one mile run around the school grounds.

JP fifth graders participated in another community-service effort besides the Turkey Trot. Following the school wide parade on Halloween, the students hiked to Elm Court, the assisted-living residence, where they engaged in a "reverse trick-or-treat," knocking on residents' doors and delivering goodie bags and gifts to them. JP kindergartners collected excess candy from children throughout the school to share with boys and girls in homeless shelters.



In social studies, fourth graders participated in an election night sleep over after presenting a concert of patriotic songs to families.

Other arts residencies that our PTO sponsored touched the educational lives of others of our boys and girls, from K's and 2's working with collagist and children's author Dar Hosta, through 1's working with drummer Mary Knysh. And, in May, we rejoiced in the display of our pupils' talents via our annual art exhibit, a second-grade recorder concert, a third-grade choral concert, and performances by our young brass, strings, and winds instrumentalists. In addition, we unveiled three mosaic-tile murals to which all our pupils and most of our staff members contributed: children's views of Princeton, of Johnson Park School, and of the Stony Brook.

Field days allowed our children to engage in healthful, wholesome physical activity and fun, while our spring picnic brought together JP families for an evening of community building. Our pupils earned a school-wide recognition by meeting our behavioral expectations for them, resulting in a morning with live, exotic animals.

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Littlebrook

The second half of the school year continued to be exciting and inspiring for the students and staff. A series of Family Math Nights for first grade students and Family Art Nights for third graders were held during the winter months. Led by Littlebrook teachers, these evening events allowed parents and students to explore creatively in music, movement, and mathematics and provided parents with ideas and strategies to use at home. These programs enhanced the home-school connection and strengthened the teacher-parent partnership.



In March, our PTO sponsored school play, *Peter Pan and Wendy*, featuring more than one hundred students, delighted both parents and children. Our annual evening Art Show featured the work of every Littlebrook student, beautifully displayed by art teacher Mrs. Beverly Mills. The artwork will grace the halls through June. Also in March, the staff, inspired by the students' projects to raise money for the Haiti earthquake-relief fund, performed a benefit concert. John Paul Velez's, Steve Kramer's, and Bryan McKenna's bands performed superbly, and the newly-formed Littlebrook Staff Choir sang *We are the World*. These efforts – both students' and staff's – raised over \$5000 for the Red Cross.

This year's Book Week brought author and illustrator Floyd Cooper to Littlebrook in April. His experiences as an illustrator with a unique art technique left the children impressed and inspired. Throughout Book Week, the students were engaged in activities that celebrated the importance and pleasure of reading.

Our mid-winter residency with poet Janet Wong focused on generating writing topics and revision. For two weeks, Ms. Wong shared her poems, encouraged students to learn their own family stories, and guided students as they wrote in poetic form.

This May, thanks to parents Ann Marciano and Brigitte Delaney and our science/technology teacher, Martha Kirby, we held our first Science Expo. Parent and community scientists presented an aspect of their work to K-5 students, encouraging students to think critically and creatively in science and mathematics.

Scientists, authors, illustrators, and performers enrich and enhance our school curriculum as a result of a strong parent-teacher relationship and the generosity of the PTO.

Special end of the year events in May and June included the fifth grade overnight trip to Gettysburg, the Granpals' Luncheon, the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Luncheon, Field Day, the Kindergarten Play, our annual Service Learning Celebration, and the fifth grade Moving-On Ceremony.

Littlebrook School strives to develop the minds, hearts, and healthy attitudes of students.

Riverside

Spring signaled yet another rush of Riverside parent and community support for educational programs. During the spring we held a Pennies for Peace Rally. The school collected 8,778 pennies which will make a difference in the lives of children in Central Asia.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION – The results of our friendly race for the ice cream treats are in! Mr. McGovern's class finished in first place with 1428 box tops. Ms. Tuliszewski's class took second place with 1060 box tops, and Ms. Tolin's class took third place with 1030 box tops. Hooray for the last ditch effort made by Ms. Bazin's Kindergarteners who collected 269 box tops this month, making them the Top Collector for the month of May! The money from the redemption of these box tops goes to fund various Riverside programs, so Riverside was the real winner. Remember to keep saving those box tops throughout the summer to get a leap on next year's fundraising efforts. Spread the word to family and friends you meet to save these for you for next year as well.

The fifth-grade car wash was a huge success raising \$475 toward the fifth-grade trip to Gettysburg. Many thanks to everyone who contributed their time, elbow grease and supplies. The Gettysburg trip provided closure to an intense study of the civil war. All this and more had Riverside jumping during 2009-2010.