

# Clinton Courier

Issue 7, March 2011

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL



As we enter the long-awaited, warm, spring season, there remains a bit of a chill in the air with regard to the many budget concerns nationwide and the current state of our education system. As this chill looms and we face tough decisions, our priorities must not waiver.

We are committed to the safe, caring, and engaging education for every one of our Clinton kids and will continue to work together to achieve this goal. This work includes creating effective, structurally sound lessons that engage each child in rigorous learning. We also continue to make authentic literacy – reading, writing, and discussion – an integral part of every subject, not just language arts. Our commitment to our students’ successful progress in the arts and physical education also remains unchanged.

As I observe lessons both formally and informally, I learn so much about how your children learn and am thrilled when they share their knowledge to “teach” me what they are learning. The talent in this school is amazing – each child demonstrating who they are as a learner and working hard to demonstrate their learning and growth in a variety of ways. Their talent is fostered on a daily basis through the collaboration and dedication of our teachers and staff members. It is then reinforced through the love and care they receive from you.

Our priorities do not cost money. We are so fortunate to be members of this extraordinary Clinton community where together we will maintain our focus on what is most important – the success of each Clinton kid. And we hope the Leprechauns send us a pot of gold!

“May luck and laughter light your days....”

Slainté

Patty

## March-at-a-Glance

<b>1-31<sup>ST</sup></b>	<b>WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH</b>
<b>9<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM</b>
<b>15<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>PARENTING CENTER &amp; ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTAS PRESENT “ALWAYS CHANGING,” THE DISTRICT’S 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE HEALTH FILM, FOLLOWED BY A Q&amp;A WITH JUDY LOBIANCO, SUPERVISOR OF HEALTH, P.E. AND NURSING, 7:30 PM, JEFFERSON SCHOOL</b>
<b>17<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>HAPPY ST. PATRICK’S DAY!</b>
<b>22<sup>ND</sup></b>	<b>THE PARENTING CENTER PRESENTS “RACE TO NOWHERE,” 7 PM, COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM (TICKETS ARE \$10 IN ADVANCE, \$15 AT THE DOOR)</b>
<b>25<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES, 7 PM</b>
<b>26<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES, 11 AM &amp; 3 PM</b>
<b>31<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup></b>	<b>CULTURAL ARTS ASSEMBLY: HONEY BEES</b>
	<b>COMING IN APRIL</b>
<b>1-30<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>FAMILY HERITAGE MONTH</b>

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**FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT**

I LOVE that we live in such an artistic community! One visit to Clinton School, with its adorned hallways, beautiful display cases, and sounds of music, is all it takes to observe the creative presence of an artistic school. It is truly inspiring.

On Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, our visiting author, Pamela Swallow, captivated all grades with her assembly. Then, she spent time with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at a creative writing workshop, which was indeed creative! On the 18<sup>th</sup>, Lamont Dixon, our Artist in Residence, and the 4<sup>th</sup> graders performed with the Vibe Poetics in an AWESOME Poetry Slam. Our students expressed themselves through rhymes, beats, and song. It was an awe-inspiring performance that I will not forget!

During regular school hours, creativity flows thanks to our Related Arts teachers. Through the expert guidance of Mrs. Jacobson, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders gave a wonderful concert performance. Ms. Tischio continues to inspire Clinton kids and launched a terrific online connection, Artsonia, for parents to view artwork and support the art room! Mr. Lehman and Ms. Freede not only keep our kids active, they taught 2<sup>nd</sup> graders a fun Samoan dance!

If our students, teachers, and special guests aren't enough, our Clinton parents add richness and depth with their talent. After school hours, creativity continues to overflow in preparation for our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual All-School Musical Revue, "A Night at the Movies." The performances are on March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and they promise to be GREAT.

Speaking of talented parents, thanks to Kathleen Hong's artistry, I am happy to announce a new design for the *Courier*! She created beautiful graphics and a new format for our award-winning Clinton *Courier*. Sign up to receive the paperless version to see the exciting new changes in full color.

What more can I say about our wonderfully artistic and creative school except to say thanks to all who make it happen. Thank you to Ms. O'Neill, Ms. Bodnar, and all the teachers for your creative and inspiring work. Thank you to all the parents and children for your creative efforts and diligence. Thank you to Mrs. Latimer and Pamela Swallow for making creative writing and reading fun. Thank you Lamont Dixon, Josh Robinson, and the Vibe Poetics, and the 4<sup>th</sup> graders for making poetry SLAM.

Of course, many of these great events are possible thanks to the PTA and the incredible fundraising endeavors. Our GREATEST fundraiser, the Tricky Tray, raised nearly \$26,000!!! Thank you to all the Clinton teachers and parents, past and present, for your support. Thank you to the local businesses and corporations for your generous donations. Finally, big thanks to Cecelia Cancellaro, Leah Gomberg, and the Tricky Tray Committee for an INCREDIBLE, fun, and successful event. Clinton is truly AMAZING!

The PTA pledges to continue to support the arts and enrich the learning environment for all the children of Clinton School.

Here's to the arts!

Jung

## CLASSROOM NEWS



Classroom News can pretty much be defined as any and all things cool going on in each of the classrooms at Clinton School. Please send information about classroom activities to: [Bobhugel@gmail.com](mailto:Bobhugel@gmail.com) or drop a note with your contact information in the PTA mailbox folder labeled "Classroom News."—*Bob Hugel*

**Kindergarten:** The class themes in **Mrs. Shelffo's** class have been U.S. Presidents, Chinese New Year, shadows, penguins, and the importance of dental health. Students celebrated the 100th day of school with fabulous collections that they brought in from home. In class, the children made 100-day projects such as necklaces out of 100 pieces of pasta, 100-day hats, and 100-link paper chains. They also incorporated 100 into their writing. For example, answering the question, "What would you buy with 100 dollars?" Author Pam Swallow visited school and all kindergarten classes enjoyed her presentation. The class, along with the other kindergarten classes, helped to make a welcome sign in anticipation of her arrival. Students have been learning about the components of stories by writing stories about themselves. To celebrate Valentine's Day, students decorated cupcakes, listened to a book about love, and, under the generous guidance of a parent, made a "Love Bug" craft.

**First Grade:** **Ms. Marr's** class did a major arctic animal research project. Students also published the books they made about their arctic animals. They celebrated the 100th day of school with special activities and began making pot holders to coincide with their handwriting unit. In addition, students talked about why the values celebrated on Valentine's Day should be celebrated every day. Next, students will be working on a unit in geometry. Every day is a busy, fun day with Ms. Marr and her marvelous stars!

**Ms. Dadaian** and **Mrs. Muscarella's** class finished a unit on authors, including Mo Willems, and utilized features from the writers (ellipse, onomatopoeia, comeback lines, dialogue) in their own writing. Students are now beginning to write how-to stories while utilizing different non-fiction features (table of contents, warnings, facts in paragraph form and listed form, diagrams, labels, glossary). In math, students have been learning about geometric shapes and symmetry. In science, students are about to begin units on matter and magnets. In social studies, students have been learning about different American leaders and celebrating Black History Month and Women's History Month.

Students in **Mrs. Nolan's** class worked really hard this month, but had a great time too. They read about the legend of the groundhog predicting when winter will end. The class predicted an early spring. Students learned a lot about Chinese/Lunar New Year. They found out that in the Chinese calendar, each year is named after an animal. Mr. and Mrs. Yang and Mr. and Mrs. Zhang sent in treats for the class and they made dragons. Students celebrated the 100th day of school by making necklaces with 100 beads. In honor of Black History Month, students learned about some famous African Americans. Students started a non-fiction reading and writing unit. Students have been busy writing "How To" books and just started researching polar animals for their "All About Books" unit. Everyone enjoyed giving and receiving valentines on Valentine's Day and students made cards for the troops serving overseas. In math, students have been learning to write number stories.

**Mrs. Cutrufello's** class spent the month of February making predictions for Groundhog's Day, reading books, and talking about shadows. They celebrated Valentine's Day by wearing red, making Valentine bags, having red snacks, and reading books about the holiday. The 100th day of school found them making a 100-day book. They also discussed African American Heritage Month and learned about the famous and ordinary people who have shaped and influenced our lives.

**Second Grade:** February was a busy month for students in **Mrs. Leach** and **Mrs. Ortiz's** class. They performed a science experiment by putting white carnations in red dye and then observing how the dye traveled up the stems and colored the petals. Students studied arrays and learned to tell time. They wrote "all about" books in which they researched and described an animal. Finally, students celebrated Valentine's Day by making valentines for members of the U.S. armed forces.

**Mrs. Frascella's** class celebrated Chinese New Year, (which ushered in the Year of the Rabbit) with yummy egg rolls (for wealth) and noodles (for long life). The class also made their own lion to ring in the new year and to scare away any bad spirits.

**Fourth Grade:** **Ms. Froelich's** class was busy last month. Besides working on their mythology enrichment projects and documenting the phases of the moon, students have also begun the Battle of the Books. And this year instead of the usual Valentine Party, the class, with the help of parent and artist extraordinaire Heather Kern, made valentine cards to send overseas to the troops enclosed with the books collected for Operation Paperback.

**Mrs. Fleming/Mr. Ferriero/Ms. Sullivan's** class has been preparing for the Battle of the Books competition in March by delving into books from both the school library and public libraries. A guest poet visited the class in February and helped prepare the students to perform their own poetry.

**Fifth Grade:** **Mrs. Ceccacci's** class has been participating in the Battle of the Books, a program designed to spark enthusiasm for reading; the class is divided into teams, each tasked with reading and discussing books. The competition is against other classroom teams as well as a grade-level battle. The class has implemented "Habits of Mind," a program to develop better study habits and community behaviors amongst the class. In language arts, the students are working on personal essays. The next science unit is the study of energy and motion including a study of simple machines. Students will learn how to record and chart data and write a lab report.

## SPRING PLANT SALE

As spring planting season and Mother's Day approach, the Clinton PTA is delighted to announce a fundraising opportunity that will allow you to buy flowers and plants while supporting our school. The flowers and plants will make great gifts as well as great garden annuals for your back and front yards. Not only is this fundraiser ecologically friendly, it is also neighborhood friendly since it is being coordinated with the local Maplewood nursery.

Materials will be sent home in March (through backpacks and via email) and the flowers and plants will be ready for pick up (at Clinton School) in early May. We're expecting to allocate three days for pick-up and we will need the help of volunteers to coordinate that effort and to process the orders.

Please contact Elizabeth Deutsch at [Edeutsch2001@verizon.net](mailto:Edeutsch2001@verizon.net) if you have questions or if you can volunteer to help. As with all of our efforts, this program will only succeed with your help, so please consider volunteering some of your time.

## NOTES FROM THE NURSE

March is Nutrition Month. How many times have we all heard that "breakfast is the most important meal of the day"? Research actually supports this notion. Breakfast provides the nutrients and energy needed to concentrate in school. Students who eat breakfast get better grades, pay more attention in class, and even behave better. So how do we fit time in for breakfast?

- \* Set the alarm 10-15 minutes earlier
- \* Decide what to have for breakfast the night before
- \* Make it healthy and kid friendly

Here are a couple of fun breakfast and snack ideas:

**Egg in a basket:** Coat a frying pan with non-fat cooking spray, make a hole in a piece of whole wheat bread, put the bread in the pan and crack an egg into the hole. Cook two minutes, flip, and cook until the egg is set and slightly browned.

**Smoothie time:** Take 4 strawberries, 1 banana, 1 container of low-fat vanilla yogurt, 1 cup of orange juice and blend with a few ice cubes. Enjoy!

It's also important to make dinnertime family time. Here are some ways to enjoy meal time together:

- \* Talk about the events of the day or weekend plans
- \* Have each person share one interesting thing that he/she learned
- \* Play a name game

Spending relaxing time together during meals will help to build healthy nutrition habits.

**Important Dates:** March 20-26 is National Poison Prevention Week. Use this time to talk about household safety. Make sure all household chemicals and cleaners are properly and safely stored.

On Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, St. Barnabas Hospital is holding a "Playing it Safe" program. They are offering free cardiac screening for young athletes ages 6 to 18, and free concussion screening for young athletes ages 12 and older. Appointments are necessary, so please call 1-888-724-7123, prompt 4.

Stay healthy and here's looking forward to spring!

Your Nurse, Joann Harrigan

## TRICKY TRAY BREAKS RECORD

Our 8th Annual Tricky Tray/Auction was record-breaking! Thanks to the generosity of our amazing school community, we raised **just shy of \$26K for Clinton School!** Thank you so much for supporting this event with your prize donations, your attendance, your help, and your enthusiastic response to our raffles and auctions. It takes a special kind of community to pull this off and the Clinton School community definitely rocks! Not only were there many current Clinton families in attendance, but there were many families of children who've already graduated, as well as families whose children still have a year or two to go before they attend Clinton. Many, many people need to be thanked. In addition, you'll notice that many local businesses and many parents who own local businesses supported the event. Please thank them the next time you visit their shops or use their services. We are very grateful for their generosity. And also thank these people:

- \* **Patty O'Neill** and **Ann Bodnar**, for donating fabulous prizes and for their consistent willingness to partner with the Clinton PTA so that we can make Clinton School as incredible as it is. Their leadership makes Clinton a very special place

- \* **Clinton teachers and staff**, who donated many extremely popular teacher prizes, raised money to donate a Kindle to our silent auction, and came out to support the event on Saturday in big numbers.

- \* Our PTA President and Vice President, **Jung Lee Masters** and **Elizabeth Aaron**, for working very closely with us to organize and run the event. They, too, are great leaders and work tirelessly on behalf of our students.

- \* Our Tricky Tray Committee. Thanks to this fabulous team, our biggest Tricky Tray ever (306 guests) ran very smoothly. From soliciting prizes to buying supplies to transporting prizes to setting up and decorating the space, to working their butts off the night of the event, to cleaning up, they did it all and they did it all excellently! Many thanks to **Jung Lee Masters, Elizabeth Aaron, Patty O'Connell, Karen Bethel, Sharon Geraghty, Tammy Dandino, Janet Trzaska, Amy Janay, Nancy Friedman, Barbara Cokorinos, Mary Barber, Liz Herring, Jackie Lahey, Tammy Haynie, Sue Lunde, Shanta Gyan, Alanna Munoz, Laurie Tarkan, Keli Tianga, and Rosanna McCrear.**

- \* **Heather Kern**, who has been taking on the huge task of program design for many years (in addition to the many, many other things she does for Clinton) and who is always calm, organized, and wildly creative.

- \* **Derek Romanaux** and **Jeremy Moss** for their many years of emceeing and DJing. Derek has an exhausting job at TT and he is always wonderful. This year, he also emceed the event on his birthday! Happy Birthday, Derek! Jeremy always knows how to set the right mood and everyone is always thrilled with his selections.

- \* **Kathleen Hong** stepped in, with little notice, and designed gorgeous live-auction posters for us.

*Continued on page six*

## WHO IS YOUR "SHERO"?

For Women's History Month in March, the display case will celebrate the extraordinary achievements and contributions of women around the globe. The display case will highlight the contributions of women throughout history. It will feature a section on "Who is My Shero?" Since the month is observed during St. Patrick's Day, the display will also include famous Irish and Irish American women.

A special thanks is extended to Heather Kern, who created an amazing mural of a jazz bassist and helped to design and put together the display case for African American Heritage Month. And I'd also like to thank Clinton families who shared records and other jazz memorabilia, photos, and stories of family members who are legendary jazz greats.

— Shanta Gyan, Cultural Heritage Month Coordinator



## HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Don't forget to dress your kids in green on March 17<sup>th</sup>! And be sure to get to school a little early in order to catch bagpiper Lou Johnson piping the kids into the building. Stick around—you may even catch Principal O'Neill demonstrating some Irish step dancing!

## AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT

The PTA is busy planning our spring After School Enrichment program. The session will once again take place on Thursdays from 2:35-3:45 pm. The spring session will begin on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Look for registration materials to come home in backpacks later this month.

## A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

We're counting down the days until the opening of the Clinton School Theatre's 3<sup>rd</sup> all-school musical review, "A Night at the Movies". Showtimes are **Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm** and **Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 11 am and 3 pm**. The cast party will follow the last performance. Reservation forms will be going home in backpacks soon.

Here are some important dates to remember: There will be a run-through rehearsal after school on **Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>**, a tech rehearsal on **Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**, and a dress rehearsal on **Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**.

## GET YOUR APPETITES READY!

Our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual "Taste of Clinton" International Dinner is scheduled for **Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm**. This hugely popular, fun, and delicious event represents the beautiful richness of diversity that make up Clinton school. The buffet will include a variety of wonderful cultural dishes all made by our own Clinton families. This is a terrific opportunity to try a new dish while socializing with old and new friends.

This event gets better and better every year, and this year it will be co-chaired by Deidra McLaughlin and Sharon Hargrove. Stay tuned for more details about making your reservation, contributing a dish, and/or volunteering. For more information, email Deidra:

[deidra.mclaughlin@yahoo.com](mailto:deidra.mclaughlin@yahoo.com) or Sharon: [sfreese@iuoe825.org](mailto:sfreese@iuoe825.org).

## LIBRARY NEWS



March begins with Read Across America Week and a celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday. Every day brings new excitement to the library as we celebrate the magic of reading. Dr. Seuss also calls me to be a kid again, and in honor of that, I will bring music into the library so that we can really make books come alive. In honor of the 4th grade poetry slam, I will be focusing extra attention on our many books of poetry. Our usual display will expand and travel around the library to encourage all students to be inspired by words.



Lastly, I want to thank the students for welcoming Pamela Curtis Swallow to our school. She was a great presenter and encouraged the students to write about what they know and what they love. The 3rd grade really shone in their writing workshop! This served as a wonderful kick-off to our annual Read-A-Thon fundraiser. Your support is appreciated.

Mrs. Latimer



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**HELP US MAKE OUR GOAL**

Have you joined the Clinton PTA this year? The \$12 membership fee will make you part of an incredibly proactive, dedicated, and creative group of people at Clinton School. We set a membership goal of 250 this year and we are only 14 members away from that number. Please help us get there. The membership form is on the flyers and forms page of our website and it is per person (not per family). The link is:

<http://www.clintonelementary.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/Clinton-PTA-membership-2010-2011.pdf>

Please join the Clinton PTA and help us to break another record this year!

*Tricky Tray continued from page three*

\* **Barbara Cokorinos** and **Karen Bethel**, who baked (along with **Leah Gomberg**) the delicious desserts served that evening.

\* **Gregg Bethel** and **Mike Aaron** who provided important keg pick-up and set-up and who were a tremendous help with clean-up.

\* **St. James’s Gate** donated beer, **Maplewood Stationers** gave us balloons (and a \$50 Lottery Tree), and **Alex and Deidre Silberman** of **Great NJ Properties** subsidized the cost of the wine for the evening.

\* Clinton School families...we have the most generous, supportive, committed, talented, and creative families on the planet. Thanks for all of your support and for making it possible to do as much as we do on a regular basis for our students. No other school in our district has an auction every year and still manages to have an All-School Musical Revue, an After School Enrichment Program, build a parade float, and host a School Fair, a Storytelling Night, a Pumpkin Patch, a Craft Fair, book fairs, and an International Dinner.

—*Cecelia Cancellaro and Leah Gomberg*

**ANNIE AT SOMS**

On the weekend following the Clinton School’s wonderful all-school review, the South Orange Middle School will present its production of Annie. This promises to be a great show featuring lots of Clinton alumni and it’s a great opportunity to get your kids excited about the theater opportunities that await them in middle school. Show times are Friday and Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm and Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2 pm.

**GOING PAPERLESS IN 2011**

Let’s see how much paper we can save. If you are interested in opting out of receiving the print version of the *Courier* in your child’s backpack, please fill out the form below and return it in an envelope marked “Opt Out” or email the information to Liz Herring ([echerring@verizon.net](mailto:echerring@verizon.net)).

**Opt-Out Form**

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Oldest Child’s Name &Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_