

Clinton Courier

A Publication of the Clinton Parent Teacher Association
Issue 4, December 2009

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It is with great anticipation for 2010 that I bid you joyous holiday greetings. I am very excited for all of us in this wonderful Clinton community as we look forward to continuing our partnership to help every Clinton child become a 21st century learner. Our teachers are working very hard to ensure the academic, social, and emotional success of each student. We have an equally hard-working support staff that takes care of numerous Clinton details including caring for those who do not feel well, supporting teachers and assisting students with their work, ensuring that office and clerical needs are addressed, making sure that every student eats lunch and enjoys recess, and maintaining a clean, healthy environment for all of us.

We also have a student body second to none. They come to school excited, ready to learn, and put forth great effort in the process. Supporting our work and recognizing that learning doesn't stop in the classroom, our PTA tirelessly continues to keep our community busy with exciting, enriching, creative, and fun activities while raising funds for us to help move our school into the 21st century.

We have all the ingredients for success. Mixing them together as we continue creating our "little school that will" is certain to make this a very happy new year.

"...We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called 'Opportunity' and its first chapter is New Year's Day." —Edith Lovejoy Pierce

My best wishes to you for a holiday season filled with love, laughter, and peace,

Patty

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE

Each year the Parenting Center collects toys for needy children in the South Orange & Maplewood School District. Please drop off an *unwrapped* toy for children ages infant to 16. We usually get many more toys for little ones than teens, so if you can drop off something that would appeal to teenagers that would be great, but items for all ages are needed. The collection box is in the front hallway of Clinton School. The drive runs until **December 14**.

DECEMBER-AT-A-GLANCE

- 1-14TH PARENTING CENTER TOY DRIVE
- 10TH AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT ENDS
- CELEBRATING READING: AN EVENING WITH SHARON DENNIS WYETH, SOUTH MOUNTAIN SCHOOL, 6:30 – 8 PM
- 16TH PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM
- 21ST HOLIDAY COOKIE DISTRIBUTION FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF
- 23RD FOUR HOUR DAY, HOLIDAY RECESS BEGINS
- 24-31ST SCHOOL CLOSED, HOLIDAY RECESS
- 31ST HAPPY NEW YEAR!
- COMING IN JANUARY
- 1ST SCHOOL CLOSED, HOLIDAY RECESS



WE NEED DIRECTORS!

As the Beatles said, "Help!" We still need lots of it in order for us to get this year's musical about the '60s off the ground. We need at least **3 more directors** and **15 assistant directors**. Anyone who saw last year's show knows how fabulous it was and how much fun everyone involved had putting it together. Can you believe that most of last year's parent directors had zero experience in the theater? Yet they put together something truly marvelous. What does it require? Rehearsing once a week for 75 minutes for 8 weeks. Is it exhausting in the end? Heck, yes! Is it rewarding? Absolutely! Last year's show was an amazing experience for the kids, and we want them to have it again. If you think you can help, please contact Suzanne Roghanchi at haysooz@aol.com or Colleen Broderick at thebrodericks5@verizon.net.

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FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT

Dear Clinton Families,

In the midst of the holiday season I once again find myself in awe of our amazing Clinton community. For the past three months, the PTA has asked for volunteers, money, and your time to support our school and students. So many of you have volunteered your time and talent, which has been instrumental in making our school events so successful. Most importantly your financial contributions and participation in our many fundraisers have supported each and every student, and we are forever grateful for your continued support. Your generosity has ensured that every child has the opportunity to participate in all events at Clinton School.

Our country and community continue to navigate through uncertain economic times. During this holiday season we ask that you participate in the annual **Parenting Center Toy Drive**. The Toy Drive, which begins on **December 1 and ends on December 15th**, has been bringing toys and smiles to children and their families in our school district for many years. Toys are collected at all the elementary schools and throughout the community during those two weeks. Gifts are then gathered at the Parenting Center and selected for individual children based on their ages, interests, and wish lists. I am asking that you support this incredible program, which is needed this year more than ever. Please bring in unwrapped toys to school and put them in the Parenting Center collection box in our front hallway.

On behalf of the Clinton PTA Executive Board, I wish all of you a wonderful holiday season filled with good health and happiness. May you all be surrounded by good family and friends in our wonderful Clinton community.

Karen Bethel

OUR SAY!

The 2009-2010 student government would like to thank you for electing us to work with you to improve Clinton School. Jack Kelly will serve as President, Josh Watson-Lewis as Vice President, E.J. Bankole as Treasurer, and Jamie Bethel as Secretary.

Our first line of business is to get our suggestion box up and running so that ideas that you may have will reach us. We will give you details during morning announcements. Also on the agenda is to begin planning for our February candy-gram fundraiser. Those proceeds will go to Heifer International, a charitable organization that helps families overseas.

CLINTON'S NEW SPECIAL ED PTO LIAISON

We are pleased to announce that Clinton parent Jenny Lindstrom is now the PTA's liaison to the South Orange Maplewood Special Education Parent Teacher Organization.

The Special Ed PTO provides parents with the tools and information they need to work collaboratively with the school district and to be effective advocates for their children. Jenny's role is to be a resource for all Clinton parents who want to know more about special education and to keep communication lines open between the Clinton School PTA and the Special Ed PTO.

Please check out our new Special Ed page on the Clinton website to learn more (www.clintonelementary.org/special-education/).

CLASSROOM NEWS

Classroom News provides a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the Clinton community to learn about all the different activities that engage students during the school day. Please send information about classroom activities to bobhugel@gmail.com.—*Bob Hugel*

Kindergarten

In November, **Mrs. Shelffo's** kindergartners baked pumpkin bread (with the help of parents) to coincide with lessons on the first Thanksgiving. The class also went on a field trip to the Turtle Back Zoo. This month, the youngsters are focusing on "gingerbread men."

First Grade

Mrs. Solas's first graders have been busy learning about Native Americans and practicing using pictures and symbols instead of letters. Students also performed a play about the first Thanksgiving.

Ms. Marr's class has been celebrating and learning about the different seasons and holidays. Recently, they baked pumpkin muffins, had a great Halloween party, and participated in the school's Halloween Parade. The class went on its first field trip to a farm in Chester, NJ, where students went on a hayride, picked pumpkins, saw bison, and learned about bees and honey. In November, students worked on disguising Tom the Turkey by creating a costume to hide his real identity—to keep him safe before Thanksgiving!

The first graders in **Ms. Zalinski** and **Mrs. Moskowitz's** classes prepared for Thanksgiving by making Pilgrim and Native American costumes, churning butter, singing Thanksgiving songs, and devising their own turkey recipes. Among the ingredients they suggested were candy, peas, broccoli, and hot sauce! The class had a terrific Thanksgiving celebration as they feasted on a delicious meal of turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, cornbread, pumpkin pie, and other delicacies. Students have also been practicing their math skills by using popped and unpopped corn kernels for weighing, measuring, and estimating. They have also been studying "greater than" and "less than".

Second Grade

November was a busy month for **Mrs. Poutre's** second-grade class. Students learned about elections, Thanksgiving, and poetry. Everyone also made fantastic leaf projects, which are now being proudly displayed in the hallway outside the classroom. In math, students have been busy studying addition facts. A big upcoming project for December is learning about family traditions, so parents should be prepared to answer questions from their inquisitive children about their family's respective background.

Mrs. Hall's second graders accomplished many exciting things in October. Students were introduced to learning centers to expand their cooperative skills across all subjects. Students had fun sharing their baby pictures for their Past, Present, and Future projects. There are many future teachers, wrestlers, and rock stars in the class! Students also learned how to create an acrostic poem for Halloween. The class Halloween festivities were enjoyed by everyone and students would like to thank the parents who organized a great party. Rachel L.'s dad came in to read *Bats at the Library* by Brian Lies, and then children made a Halloween mobile to take home. The party with students reciting Halloween poetry and singing a song called *The Thirteen Days of Halloween*.

CALLING COOKIE ELVES!

Each year the PTA provides a gift of homemade holiday cookies for the teachers and staff as a way to say thank you for all they do for our kids. Whether you can bake a few dozen cookies or help package and distribute them, it's a great way to lend your support. Cookies can be dropped off between 8:30 and 9 am on **Monday, December 21st**, in the cafeteria. The cookie elves will then package and distribute them from 8:30 until approximately 10:30 am. So if you can help out by either baking or packaging, please contact Tammy Haynie at 973-275-1689 or email haynie04@verizon.com. It's a small gesture that goes a long way, so please volunteer today!

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Clinton's Annual Storytelling Night will be held on **Thursday, January 21st**, from **6:30 to 7:30 pm**. Admission is free. So put on your P.J.s, bring along your teddy bear, and join us in the auditorium for an evening of wonderful stories read by an energetic and talented group of Clinton parents. We'll see you there. For more information, contact Karen Betheil at 973-762-3474 or kbetheil@verizon.net.

CELEBRATE READING

The SOMSD Parenting Center and the Elementary School PTAs invite all parents, guardians, and children to a district-wide celebration of reading on Thursday, December 10th, at 6:30 pm at South Mountain Elementary School, 444 W. South Orange Avenue. Admission is free. Author Sharon Dennis Wyeth, whose books include *Something Beautiful* and *My America: Freedom's Wings*, will share her work and thoughts on reading, discuss the writing process, and lead a Family Story Circle where parents and children can share something beautiful about their lives.

CLASSROOM NEWS CONTINUED

Third Grade

Each third-grade class enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving feast that included turkey sandwiches (some actually shaped like turkeys!), macaroni & cheese, cranberry sauce, pumpkin bread, pumpkin pie, apple cider, and cookies. Thank you to parents for their contributions.

Students in **Mrs. Pomares's** class would like to welcome **Kristen Bradshaw** as their new student teacher. Kristen is a full-time student at Montclair State and is studying Family Child Studies with a concentration on Early Elementary Education. Kristen is excited to work with Mrs. Pomares's class and everyone in the class is happy to have her!

WE NEED FABULOUS PRIZES!

Our 6th Annual Tricky Tray/Silent and Live Auction will be held on **Saturday, March 13th** at the Maplewood Woman's Club. This is one of Clinton's most popular and profitable fundraisers. Last year's event brought in over \$23,000 for the school!

But for the event to be successful we need lots of great prizes. Some of the prizes we have collected so far for this year's event include an **Amazon Kindle**, a **BCBG Max Azria handbag**, **Giorgio Armani** and **Escada fragrances**, **Swarovski crystal earrings**, **Reidel wineglasses**, a **Waring martini maker**, and **Martha Stewart wedding favor boxes**. But we need lots more! So please take a moment to think about all the possible resources you may have for prizes. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Start With Your Employer

In recent years Clinton parents have donated items such as **EMI Music CDs**, a **Tiffany bracelet**, and **Dora the Explorer clothes and accessories**. Some companies offer their employees a sizable discount on merchandise. If this is the case, please let us know. In the past we have used a Clinton parent's employee discount at **Macy's** to purchase a slew of great prizes.

Do You Have a Special Talent or Skill?

Turn it into a prize! Some ideas: If you're an accomplished tennis player, offer a one-hour private lesson. If you can bake, a decorated birthday cake would be a fabulous prize.

Do You Like to Entertain?

How about throwing a theme party? You pick the date, time, and theme, and we'll auction off the invitations. Have you always wanted to host a **Mystery Dinner**? Mystery guests will make it all the more fun! Do you make a mean margarita? How about putting together a **Cinco de Mayo** party? The possibilities are endless for this prize—and oh so much fun!

There's no Shame in Re-Gifting

Did your child receive two of the same Wii games for his birthday? Instead of letting one collect dust, donate it to the Tricky Tray. Did someone give you a gift card you'll never use? *Someone* can use it.

Who Do You Know?

An autographed script or backstage tour is always a popular prize. Last year Clinton parents starring in Broadway productions of **Hair**, **Wicked**, and **The Little Mermaid** offered backstage tours. A **Sopranos** script signed by all the featured actors brought in big bucks the year before.

Weekend Getaways

Do you have a time-share or vacation home that you can spare for a weekend? Is there a hotel you stay at frequently that might offer a sizable discount? Please let us know!

You can contact Cecelia Cancellaro (ccancellaro@verizon.net/973-763-1730 or Karen Bethel (kbethel@verizon.net/973-762-3474) if you have a prize to donate or if you have any questions.

THE CLINTON GREEN

'Tis the season to give, but this year, make it a time to reduce, reuse, and recycle as much as possible.

First, reduce. Get out those shopping totes! Please say "no" to any bag you do not need. For example, you don't really need a bag to cover a box; tape the receipt to the side. Bring your luggage cart, if need be; bring a rolling suitcase; bring your children!

Second, reuse. Reuse boxes, bubble wrap, peanuts, etc. After packing materials have been manufactured, the "damage is done." Pollution, energy use, and the stripping of natural resources have already occurred. It is a greener practice to use something until it is worn out, rather than to recycle it and then reach for a *new* product, even a product made from recycled, sustainable materials.

Reuse your gift boxes and tissue as well. A reused gift box may not be in pristine condition, but remember, the box is not the gift. Consider writing a note: "This box is reused with love—for you, our children, the planet." We love the recipient, but we love the the earth, too!

One way to brighten up a box is to turn it inside out and reassemble it, thus hiding the tape marks. Another is to place stickers on the spots (let your child decorate it). Store any leftover boxes by flattening and stacking them in your closet for next time. Reuse your damaged wrapping paper and tissue by running it through a paper shredder, and then use this as packing material. You can also use junk mail and newspapers. (Don't forget that comics and brown paper bags make great gift wrap.)

Third, recycle. Recycle your styrofoam at Foam Pack Industries in Springfield (973-376-3700). It's worth the local trip. Why? Styrofoam is a trade name for *polystyrene*, which is manufactured from petroleum. It's highly flammable and is produced using a chemical called *benzene*, which is a known human carcinogen. (Believe it or not, this is not the *bad* news; stay tuned for next month's column.)

Recycle your packing peanuts (also made from polystyrene) by dropping them off at RocketShip & Print (71 South Orange Avenue) or the Westfield UPS store. Or, call the Plastic Loosefill Council's Peanut Hotline at 1-800-828-2214 for other locations. Do use biodegradable packing "peanuts," which are made from a variety of plant-based starches (corn, wheat). Most dissolve down with water; a few are safe enough for the compost pile.

Of course, this recession is a great time to buy fewer, longer-lasting gifts, or to make your own. Better yet, give the gift of time itself. It costs nothing and guarantees fun. Happy Holidays!—*Clare Payton*

LOST AND FOUND

Please try to take a look at our Lost and Found area located in the hall in front of the cafeteria. Each class will do a “walk through” to identify lost items shortly before the holiday vacation. All items not claimed (after January) will go to Other Mothers, our local consignment shop, and will be credited toward our PTA account for families in need. If you need help with a lost item, please contact Deidra McLaughlin at 973.313.1760 or deidra.mclaughlin@yahoo.com. Please remember to label your child’s items (especially lunchboxes and jackets) for quick identification so we can return them to you.—*Deidra McLaughlin*

ENRICHMENT WRAP-UP

Our PTA Fall After School Enrichment Program ends on **Thursday, December 10th**. The session was a great success and accommodated more than 160 students for eight creative and fun-filled weeks. Many thanks to our amazing proctors, Lisa Gaffin-Howell, Liz Herring, and Jenny Tate, who kept things running so smoothly and to the parents who helped guide our youngest students during the first couple of weeks, Tracey George, Ilena Kasdan, Victoria Khazan, Maria Peralta, and Rosalene Perillo. After School Enrichment will be back again in the spring for another 8-week session beginning Thursday, March 25th (after our All-School Musical Revue), so look for registration materials in late February or early March.—*Cecelia Cancellaro*

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Thank you to all who participated in our most recent fundraisers. The shopping day at **Perch Home** was very successful, earning **\$400** for the school. **Clinton’s Day at the Movies** was once again lots of fun and also brought in \$400. And over \$750 was raised by the **Display My Art** fundraiser.

If you plan to shop at **Target** this holiday season (or if you shop there any time during the year), be sure to visit the Target website and link your card to Clinton School. **Target will donate 1% of your Target REDcard purchases or 1/2% of your Target Visa purchases to Clinton School.** Encourage grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and friends to designate Clinton as well. Designating the card is easy. Just visit target.com/tcoe. **Clinton’s ID # is 74069.** It’s an effortless and effective way to earn money for the school.

And if you need a change of pace from holiday roasts (or just need a break from cooking), why not pop over to **Village Trattoria in Maplewood or South Orange**. On Monday nights, both locations will donate a portion of your bill to the Clinton PTA. Send receipts in with your child in an envelope marked “PTA: Restaurant Receipt.”

GAMES TO SUPPORT MIDNIGHT MADNESS

We are pleased to announce that the board games **Maplewoodopoly** and **South Orangeopoly** will be available for purchase at several locations around our two towns. The games are \$20 each and all monies go to support CHS Midnight Madness/Project Graduation, which is an all-night drug- and alcohol-free graduation party for our seniors. Based on the popular Monopoly game, the games make great birthday, holiday, and housewarming gifts! —*Rivka Nelson and Amy Klein, Co-Chairs, Midnight Madness/Project Graduation*



Miss Liz, center, surrounded by the lunchroom staff.

THE LUNCH BUNCH

Everyone knows that pizza is the most popular food served in the cafeteria. But most probably don’t know that the least favorite is the pizza bagel. And most parents probably have little idea about the lunch aides who manage to usher their kids through lunch and recess every day.

Those days start early for Elizabeth Robinson, affectionately known as Miss Liz, the head of Food Services at Clinton School. Arriving at 7:15 am to set up for the breakfast program, Miss Liz has only a few hours to catch her breath before the first lunch period at 10:30.

Miss Liz and her staff of eleven lunch aides finish their day at 1:45 pm, at which time many of them go on to second jobs. Miss Liz herself journeys to Beth-Israel Hospital in Newark where she works as a secretary in the Intensive Care Unit. Her day there ends at 11 pm! “I’ve always worked at least two jobs, sometimes even three,” says Miss Liz, who raised her three sons by herself. She has four grandchildren, two of whom go to Tuscan School.

“One of my priorities is to make sure the kids get to know their lunch aides,” says Miss Liz, who began working at Clinton four years ago and became the head of the program last year. “I assign each lunch aide to specific classes. That way the kids and the lunch aides feel more comfortable with each other.”

Miss Liz is proud of her staff and wants to make sure their names are known to the Clinton community. Lunch aides are Tameeka Arnold, Annette Davis, Latifa Dean, Josefina Doyle, Brandon Everson, Jeanie Hagans, Nellie Johnson, Nafeesah McLorn, Claritza Ramos, Sharon Riley, and Phyllis Williams. Gladys Joseph is the cashier and Arusa Siraj is the server and custodians Yolanda Spann and Diego Diaz play an important role in keeping the cafeteria clean (no mean feat after nearly 500 students have eaten there!).

Miss Liz is also pleased with the rapport she and her staff have with Ms. O’Neill, Ms. Bodnar, and the rest of the Clinton faculty. “We all feel very fortunate to work at this school,” says Miss Liz. “It’s a group effort, and we’re lucky to have a really great team.”

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BAKE SALE THANKS

Thanks to all of our Clinton School parents who generously donated their time and cooking skills to make our Election Day Bake Sale another successful event for our PTA. Whether you prepared cakes, cookies, dinners to go or volunteered the day of the sale, your help was greatly appreciated.

After 12 wonderful years at Clinton School I will finally “graduate” this year, so this was my last Bake Sale. It’s been an amazing experience to have seen both my children and Clinton School grow so much during this time. I am proud to have been a Clinton parent. Thanks for the great memories. —Rita Dadaian

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