

Clinton Courier

A Publication of the Clinton Parent Teacher Association
Issue 1, September 2009

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

"I came into this school year expecting, as well as fearing, a lot. A lot of everything. I guess because it's a new start so I can have a completely new experience..."

Whose words do you think these are? When you think about it, they could be from a student, a new teacher, a veteran teacher, school staff members, administrators, even parents. These words are applicable to all of us as we enter together into our 2009-2010 school year.

We are all expecting a lot. Each in our own way wants this to be a great year—the best year ever. We all want to be successful no matter what our role is in Clinton Elementary School. We come into this year trusting each other every day to be the very best at what we do and to help alleviate any barriers to our individual and school wide successes.

Our students, your children, come this month ready to learn and grow, and together we will do our best to help them on their journey. This is going to be an exciting year as our talented and very dedicated teachers and staff plan and work toward including every eligible student into regular education classes. Because of this inclusion, many of our classrooms now have two full-time teachers. Also, thanks to our ever-generous PTA and district technology department, we have new SMART Boards, MacBooks, and iPods that will help put our students on an equal playing field with their peers. Additionally, our new language arts curriculum will ensure that every student has what is necessary to be proficient in and enjoy reading and writing.

By the way, the above quotation came from a student describing her expectations at the beginning of a new year. So, let's keep this quote in mind as we plan together to calm any fears and engage, excite, and educate our Clinton kids.

Welcome back to our returning families and a heartfelt welcome to our new families. We look forward to an enriching year for all of us.

Sincerely,

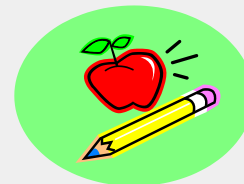
Patty

SEPTEMBER-AT-A-GLANCE

9 TH	ICE CREAM SOCIAL, 6:30 PM
14 TH	NO FRILLS FUNDRAISER BEGINS
15 TH	HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH BEGINS
16 TH	PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM
17 TH	GENERAL PTA MEETING, 7:15 PM
18 TH	TEACHERS' BOOK FAIR PREVIEW
21-25 TH	FALL SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR
22 ND & 24 TH	BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS, 7 PM
28 TH	SCHOOL CLOSED, YOM KIPPUR

COMING IN OCTOBER

1 ST	CULTURAL ARTS ASSEMBLY: SINGER/SONGWRITER PATRICIA SHIH
1-15 TH	SALLY FOSTER/GREENRAISING FUNDRAISERS
2 ND	SCHOOL PRIDE DAY



FIRST PTA MEETING OF THE YEAR

When: Thursday, September 17th, 7:15 pm

Where: Clinton School Cafeteria (enter through parking lot)

Meet our PTA Board members for 09-10, hear from Principal Patty O'Neill, and learn about plans for the year ahead. Our school webmaster Colleen Broderick will also be giving a brief tutorial on how to navigate the revamped school website (including how to use Twitter). And while you're at the meeting you can join the PTA or buy a Clinton T-shirt. Refreshments and babysitting for children 4 and older will be provided.

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FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT

On behalf of the PTA executive board, I would like to welcome you all to Clinton School, where we are looking forward to a wonderful new school year.

I have been a member of the Clinton community for five years now, and I am excited and honored to serve as your PTA President this year. The Clinton community consists of the most dedicated and talented group of teachers, staff, administrators, and parents, all working hard to enhance our children's educational experiences. Our partnership has resulted in a successful collaboration committed to supporting each and every child in our school.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to become involved in Clinton School. The Clinton PTA hosts many wonderful events that bring our families together and make our school a better place. You will have the opportunity to volunteer for many of these events, and we strongly encourage you to join in. I promise you will be inspired by the creativity of our parents. Every year our PTA community seems to grow exponentially. Our goal this year is to exceed 225 members, so we encourage you to join and help us reach our goal.

Some of the upcoming events not to be missed include our **Ice Cream Social on Wednesday, September 9th at 6:30 pm** and our **Scholastic Book Fair, which runs from September 21st-25th**. Please also mark your calendars for our **Back to School Nights, which take place on September 22nd and 24th**.

Each year brings new goals and exciting ideas for our community. Our PTA will continue to work together with our teachers and staff to create a rich and engaging learning environment for all our children. On behalf of the PTA executive board, we welcome you to become involved in the PTA and look forward to working with you in creating another fabulous year at Clinton School. We may have started out as the "little school that could," but we have grown into the "little school that does."

Karen Bethel

REVAMPED CLINTON WEBSITE

This summer Clinton parent Colleen Broderick donated a lot of time to rejuvenating the Clinton School website (www.clintonelementary.org). With the help of last year's PTA president Cecelia Cancellaro, current president Karen Bethel, and Principal Patty O'Neill, Broderick managed to transform the website into a virtual command central for the school, putting the latest news and information at parents' fingertips.

Some of the improvements include: a completely updated school calendar, detailed information about the history of the school, up-to-the-minute information about current PTA fundraisers, a FAQ section featuring answers to commonly asked questions about the school, recent PTA flyers and forms, a section devoted to the school's green initiatives, the complete Clinton Handbook (for easy reference), and links to lots of useful sites including the SOMSD website, Community Digital Backpack, Mealpay Lunch Accounts, District 5-K Curriculum, the school's report card (from the New Jersey *Star-Ledger*), and all sorts of community sites that may be of interest to parents. You can also click on the Clinton *Courier* and the Clinton *Kids Connection* student newspaper and read them online. There are also links to class websites including those of the second and third grades and Spanish teacher Señora Seltzer.

One of the most impressive new additions is the instant translation feature, which enables the user to read the site in over 34 different languages! You can now also follow Clinton on Twitter. Sign up and you can receive tweets about the school throughout the day—great for reminders and emergency information such as school closings. Colleen Broderick will do a quick Twitter tutorial at the next PTA meeting. She will also answer any questions parents may have about the website.

The website makeover will continue this fall with a few cosmetic changes. So keep checking in to see the progress and make sure to add the site to your favorites list so you can stay in the Clinton School loop. If you have any ideas or input on how to further grow the website, please contact Colleen Broderick at colleen.broderick@verizon.net.

CLASSROOM NEWS

Good News! **Classroom News** will return in the next edition of the *Courier*. This column will report on activities, ideas, events, and projects taking place in Clinton classrooms. It's a great way for everyone in the Clinton community to share and discover all of the creative and interesting ways students are learning in our school. Your help in this endeavor, however, is essential; it's only "news" if it's reported! No news is too big or too small. Please send information about classroom activities to: bobhugel@gmail.com or drop a note with your contact information in the PTA mailbox folder labeled: "Classroom News." Thanks in advance for your help in bringing classroom news back to the *Courier*!—*Bob Hugel*

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Bienvenidos! Welcome back to returning students and families and for those new to Clinton—welcome to a school that is bursting with cultural diversity and enthusiasm. Along with a range of special programs throughout the year, the display case across from the main office is dedicated to celebrating our shared cultural heritage, with changing displays each month.

We start the year by commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs from September 15th through October 15th. Teachers, please encourage your students to visit the display and to fill out the monthly 'raffle questionnaire' forms (there is a drawing at the end of each month with prize winners from each participating grade.) For Hispanic Heritage month, students who borrow Spanish books from the library may enter a separate raffle; and family members of Hispanic heritage are invited to share their cultural traditions in Spanish classes. Students and parents should contact their child's Spanish teacher for details.

As in past years we will celebrate Native American Heritage Month in November, African American Heritage Month in February, Women's History Month in March, Asian Heritage Month in May, and Caribbean Heritage Month in June. If anyone has any donations for the display case for any of the heritage months, or if you would like to get involved with planning for a particular month, please contact me at 973-763-1018 or rubybloom@earthlink.net.

—*Tricia Bloom, Cultural Heritage Month Coordinator*

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT BEGINS OCTOBER 1ST

The Clinton PTA Fall After School Enrichment Program will begin on **Thursday, October 1st** and end on **Thursday, December 10th**. There are eight classes in the session. As always, your child will have a large selection of classes from which to choose, and there are classes available for every age. Due to our new opening and dismissal schedules, enrichment classes will begin immediately after school (2:35) and end promptly at 3:45. Registration materials will be sent home (and posted on our website at www.clintonelementary.org) by September 11th and the registration deadline is Wednesday, September 23rd. Classes fill up quickly so if you're interested send in your completed registration forms and payment right away. If you have questions, please contact Cecelia Cancellaro at ccancellaro@verizon.net or 973-763-1730.

READ AROUND THE WORLD

There's plenty of fun to be had at the fall Scholastic Book Fair, which boasts a theme this year that is sure to strike a chord with the Clinton Community—

Destination Book Fair: Read Around the World. The fair runs from **September 21st-25th** and it promises to be a thrilling reading adventure. Books are passports to places near and far—a wonderful way to explore the world, meet interesting new people, and discover amazing new places. The Scholastic Book Fair is a wonderful opportunity to purchase quality books at affordable prices, and proceeds benefit the Clinton PTA. For your convenience the Book Fair will stay open on both **Back-to-School Nights (September 22nd and 24th)**.

Teachers, mark your calendars: There will be a special **Teachers' Preview** featuring **dessert and coffee** on **Friday, September 18th**. Teachers will again receive gift certificates to use to purchase books for their classroom libraries.

We can always use more help, so if you can spare a few hours please sign up for a volunteer slot. For more information, contact Jennifer Latimer at 973-763-5935 or jswen@73@aol.com.

A DAY AT THE MOVIES

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, November 5th at 10 am**. There will be a private screening of a recently released film at the SOPAC Clearview Cinema in South Orange. While teachers attend the NJEA Convention, kids can catch a fun flick with their friends. The \$10 entrance fee includes a drink and popcorn. More details to follow in backpacks soon.

I SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!

Join us for our annual Ice Cream Social on **Wednesday, September 9th from 6:30-8 pm** on the Clinton front lawn. This is a fantastic way to see old friends, meet new ones, and enjoy delicious ice cream scooped by your favorite teachers and sprinkled with your choice of yummy toppings for just \$2 a bowl.

STRIKE A POSE

Be sure to mark your calendars because Clinton School Picture Day is coming on **Friday, October 23rd**. The retake day is scheduled for Friday, December 4th. Every student and class at Clinton will be photographed so we will need some helping hands. If you would like to volunteer to help on picture day or if you have any questions, please contact Patty O'Connell at poconnell@e-p-s.com.

RUN A 5K TO SUPPORT SOMEF

The 7th annual Newstead 5K Race will take place on **Saturday, September 26 at 9 am**. This popular event benefits the South Orange-Maplewood Education Foundation (SOMEF), an organization that raises money to enhance the educational experience of all district students. Adults and children are invited to participate in the race. Entry fees are \$15 before September 18th and \$20 after that date. For more information, go to www.newstead5k.com.

JOIN THE CLINTON SCHOOL PTA

The Clinton School PTA is a committed, proactive, and creative force in our school community. We work rigorously to provide valuable resources and services to Clinton students, parents, and staff, and we take our role seriously. Whether we are volunteering in classrooms, coordinating school events, creating enriching programs for our students, maintaining a stellar cultural arts assembly program, or purchasing items—both big and small, our work has a major impact on many aspects of the Clinton School experience.

Over the past years we have purchased a climbing wall for our gym, brand-new playground equipment for our schoolyard, and recently a state-of-the-art sound and projection system to complete the renovation of our auditorium. We've spent tens of thousands of dollars on school trips, cultural arts assemblies, indoor and outdoor school beautification, and character education efforts.

We can't do this without you, so please join or renew your membership now and become part of a local and national organization that greatly enhances our children's school experience.

As a national PTA member, you'll also be entitled to shopping discounts at Barnes and Noble, Sharp Electronics, and Southwest Vacations, among others, and you may even be able to reduce the cost of your auto or home insurance!

With your help last year we managed to surpass our goal of 200 members. We're hoping to top that this year. Our 2009-10 goal is to exceed 225 members.

Join by **October 16th** and earn a chance to win one of several gift certificates donated by local businesses.

To join or renew your membership to the Clinton PTA, just fill out the form below and return it with your dues (**\$12 per person**) in an envelope marked **PTA Membership**. Checks should be made payable to "**Clinton PTA**" and should include your phone number.

Clinton PTA Membership Form

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian:

Address:

.....

Phone: E-mail:

Names of Children/Grades/Teachers:

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THE PARENTING CENTER & ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA 2009-10 SPEAKER SERIES

Every year the SOMSD's Parenting Center teams with the district's elementary school PTAs to provide great programming open to parents throughout the district. Following you'll find a list of what's on tap for this year so you can mark your calendar now.

October 21

Bully-Proofing Your Child for Life – with Joel Haber, Ph.D., Psychologist, Speaker, and Author of *The Bully Coach*
Clinton School, 7:30 - 9 pm

November 11

Town Hall Meeting – with Brian Osborne
Superintendent of Schools
Marshall School, 7:30 - 9 pm

December 10

Celebrating Reading – An Evening with Sharon Dennis Wyeth, Children's Author
K-5 Children & Parents Invited
South Mountain School, 6:30 – 8 pm

January 14

Curriculum Overview – with Rosetta Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and Panel
Seth Boyden School, 7:30 - 9 pm

February 18

No More Melt Downs: Positive Strategies for Managing and Preventing Out-of-Control Behavior – with Jed Baker, Ph.D., Psychologist, Speaker, and Author
Tuscan School, 7:30 – 9 pm

DENIM DRIVE A SUCCESS

Last spring's denim drive was a huge success. Two hundred pieces of denim were collected (more than 100 pieces more than expected)! The denim will be recycled into environmentally friendly cotton insulation and donated to Habitat for Humanity affiliates to build houses in places that have been damaged by hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. **Clinton School collected enough denim to insulate half a house!** The denim we collected helped *National Geographic Kids* set a world record (33,088 pieces). For more details, see <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Stories/MoreStories/Guinness-clothes>. Thanks to Elizabeth King and Sophie for sponsoring this wonderful green initiative, to all those who donated denim, and to the students (now middle schoolers) who helped: Sophie, Aly, Lexie, Patty, and Allie.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

The special fundraising efforts made each year by the Clinton community help provide monetary support for many of the important activities and initiatives that make our school such a special place. Once again, we have a slew of great fundraising opportunities—some old favorites and some new ones, too.

No Frills Is Back

Our popular No Frills Fundraiser kicks off on **September 14th**. This is a great opportunity for those who prefer to make a monetary tax-deductible donation to the school in lieu of (or in addition to in many cases) participating in our other fundraisers. From the 15th through October 13th you can make a one-time cash donation to the Clinton PTA that will go directly to funding many important events and projects at Clinton School. So if you're looking for a way to make a difference at Clinton and you don't have the time to sell gift wrap, then this is the fundraiser for you. The best part is that 100 percent of the proceeds benefit our children. You'll receive a flyer in your child's backpack with details soon.

Gift Wrap and Gifts and Products

This year's **Sally Foster Gift Wrap** and **GreenRaising** fundraiser will begin on **October 1st** and run through the **15th**. Between these two catalogs everyone should find some terrific gifts and products to suit their needs.

Keep Clipping Those Box Tops!

Those little box top labels on your child's favorite cereals and snacks earn Clinton School ten cents each, which can add up to a hefty sum. Please continue to clip and send box tops and Campbell's labels to school in an envelope marked "Box Tops" or drop them in the front hall receptacle. Remember to include your child's name and teacher. Julie Chapman-Greene is our new box tops coordinator. Though we will no longer be posting the box tops collectors' names in the *Courier*, we will be awarding a prize in June to the student in each grade who collected the most box tops during the school year. For a list of participating products check out www.boxtops4education.com and www.labelsforeducation.com.

FIRST CULTURAL ARTS ASSEMBLY

On **Thursday, October 1**, we will welcome award-winning singer/songwriter Patricia Shih to Clinton. She will perform her concert, "Big Ideas About Disabilities!," a delicate and sensitive, yet fun, rendering of the topic that teaches understanding and compassion for those differently-abled, using sign language, movement, theatre, and more.

Patricia Shih has been performing for audiences of all ages since 1968. During this time she has appeared solo and with others in thousands of venues all over North America. We look forward to this unique and inspiring assembly!

There will be two assemblies, one at 1 pm and one at 2 pm. Additional seating is available in the balcony for parents who wish to attend. Thanks to the PTA for funding a great experience for our kids. —*Jackie Lahey*

LET NO CAP GO TO WASTE

Did you know that most plastic bottle caps do not get recycled? Well, now Clinton School can help recycle many types of plastic bottle caps through Aveda's cap recycling program. Aveda partners with schools to collect bottle caps, and then they send the caps to their recycler and use the recycled caps to make the bottles and caps for their products. The program accepts **rigid** plastic bottle caps **with threads for twisting** on and off. The program does **not** accept non-rigid lids, including lids with threads that are bendable. **If you can bend or break it, it cannot be recycled.** Look for containers in the front hall and the cafeteria.

We **can** accept: caps for shampoo bottles, water, soda, milk, and other beverage bottles, flip-tops for ketchup and mayonnaise, lids for peanut butter, and laundry detergent. We **cannot** accept: lids for prescription bottles, lids for yogurt cups, margarine tubs, some milk containers.

THE CLINTON GREEN

As our school moves forward in embracing environmentally-safe practices, make sure your child's lunchbox is a part of that effort. According to the New York State Department of Conservation, parents who pack one child's lunch in disposable bags or containers generate 45 to 90 pounds of garbage every year. That equates to 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for just one average-size elementary school! Greener options not only bring down the carbon footprint, but they also reduce (and, even, remove) your child's exposure to harmful chemicals. Here follow some suggestions for packing a lunchbox that is safe for your kids and for the environment.

Lunchbox There is a wide range of green choices, from organic cotton string bags to linen pouches to stainless steel tins and aluminum boxes. You can also buy boxes made from "green" plastics. Green plastics are those that do not contain phthalates, or lead, or BPA (bisphenol A).

Food The same materials work very well for the reusable containers used to tote prepared foods from home. For sandwiches and dry snacks, buy a set of Wrap-n-Mats, which fold over and seal with Velcro. They wipe clean and come in red gingham (too cute).

Drinks The simplest, cheapest lunch solution is to have your child drink tap water from a reusable cup, and visit the water fountain as needed. The second best solution is to bring your own container. Aluminum water bottles are durable and lightweight and make great solutions—as long as they are free of BPA. SIGG has just announced that prior to August 2008, their bottles were lined with BPA. Investigate aluminum bottles carefully. The superhero in drink containers remains stainless steel. Dent-resistant, lightweight, non-corrosive, a brand named Green Bottles has received rave reviews. Urban Canteen is another popular company.

Utensils Currently available on the market are several types of green utensils, stainless steel being an obvious choice. Organically-grown bamboo has also been used to make flatware. Kids-size forks, knives, and spoons can be part of your lunchboxes for a reasonable price (kits are less than \$10). There's even a two-ended combo utensil called a "spork."

Napkins Don't forget to use cloth napkins. For high end, go for the organic, non-bleached napkins available in bundles at eco-conscious retail stores. For low end, grab a bundle of bandanas at the dollar store. Buy enough to get through the week, and just toss into any load of laundry.

—*Clare Payton*

BECOME AN ACHIEVE TUTOR

The ACHIEVE Volunteer Tutor Program is a popular community service initiative that organizes and trains volunteers to help students in the South Orange and Maplewood public schools. ACHIEVE trains adults and high school and college students to work with students K-12 on a weekly basis during the school year. To become an ACHIEVE tutor, volunteers must complete an application process, attend required training sessions, and make a commitment to meet with a student for one hour per week for 10 weeks or more during the school year. Training workshops are held several times during the year, beginning in October. For further information, contact Program Coordinator, Lindsay Scott at 973-762-5600, ext. 1847 or e-mail her at achieveprogram@yahoo.com.

Thank you to Leah Gomberg and Cecelia Cancellaro for painting and sprucing up Ann Bodnar's office over the summer. The materials were a gift from the Clinton PTA.

CLASS OF 2009 LEGACY

Many thanks to last year's fifth grade class for their generous "Leafing a Legacy" project for which they raised more than \$500.

With this money (and matching funds from the PTA) three beautiful trees have been planted in the field behind the portables at the site of what will become our Butterfly Garden. Two Crepe Myrtles and a Kousa Dogwood now grace that space and there will soon be a plaque placed in front of them that reads "Class of 2009."

Thanks to all the students who worked so hard to make this happen, to Emni and Shannon Audet for spearheading this wonderful project, to all the parents who donated goodies to sell, and to Jeremy Moss for selecting and planting the trees.

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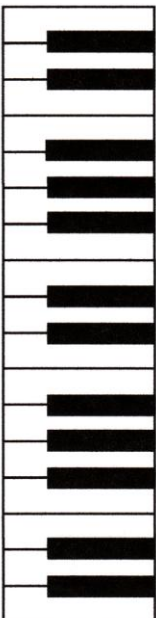
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