

Clinton Courier

A Publication of the Clinton Parent Teacher Association
Issue 5, January 2008

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

January, the first month of the year, is named after Janus, the Roman god of doors, gates, and all beginnings. As we begin this New Year together, it's a great time to continue our commitment to opening the doors of learning for all our students as we prepare them for the future.

We will begin 2008 working with our students to continue their successes both academically and socially. It is important for all of us to encourage them to do their best and make the right choices. Resolving to continue our work together to have a "green," clean, peaceful, and caring school is also important to ensure that our students feel safe and cared for. When they feel safe and cared for, they are better able to learn. If the last three months are any indication of how committed we are as a community, we are well on our way to helping our students achieve their goals.

This new beginning of ours will include celebrating the message of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King's message includes the possibility that we will live in a world anchored in mutual respect. His message challenges us to recognize that our strength lies in its diversity of talents. I wonder if he wasn't thinking about a place like Clinton School.

Happy, Healthy, Peaceful, and Loving New Year to all!

Patty

CLINTON SCHOOL AWARDED NATIONAL PTA GRANT!

We are thrilled to report that the Clinton School PTA has been awarded a \$1,897 grant from the National PTA for their National Take Your Family to School Week. There were 340 schools across the U.S. that applied for the grant, and only 32 grants were awarded. Clinton is one of those 32, and only one of two schools in the northeast.

To get the grant, we had to come up with an event that represented and would involve/welcome our school community. We came up with an idea for an interactive evening event called "Walk Around the World." During this event, areas of our school will be set up as four or

JANUARY-AT-A-GLANCE

- 9TH PAC MEETING, 6:15 PM
PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7:15 PM
- 14TH BRIAN OSBORNE'S STATE OF THE SCHOOLS ADDRESS,
7 PM, COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
- 17TH STORYTELLING NIGHT, 6:30 PM
- 21ST SCHOOL CLOSED, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

COMING IN FEBRUARY

- 1^{ST-29TH} BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- 1ST SCHOOL PRIDE DAY
- 13TH "WALK AROUND THE WORLD" EVENT, 6:30 PM
- 15TH CULTURAL ARTS ASSEMBLY, NAT LOVE

five different countries. When families enter those areas they will experience the music, art, language, and food (among other things) of that particular country/culture. Participants will receive a map when they enter the building to navigate their way around the "world," and they'll also receive passports that will be stamped as they enter these countries.

This event must take place during the National PTA's Take Your Family to School Week, so it is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 13th, at 6:30 pm**. Planning efforts have just begun and we need a great deal of help to pull this off in four short weeks. We have plenty of money to spend on supplies and materials, but we need people to join this effort. If you're interested, please contact Cecelia Cancellaro at 973-763-1730 or ccancellaro@verizon.net.

We will open this event to the entire South Orange-Maplewood school district, and because we are among a select few to receive this grant, we expect to get a good deal of publicity for our wonderful school.

Please consider working with us to make this event a tremendous success for our school community. It's a great opportunity to show the rest of the district, and the National PTA, just how amazing Clinton School is!

—Cecelia Cancellaro

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FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT

Happy New Year Clinton School!

We're starting 2008 with lots of great news. We are extremely excited to report that the Clinton School PTA has been awarded a grant from the National PTA for their National Take Your Family to School Week. Three hundred and forty schools across the U.S. applied for the grant, and there were only 32 grants awarded. We are thrilled to be one of those 32 (and only one of two schools in the northeast). The grant, for \$1,897, is meant to cover the cost of a school event that represents and will attract our entire school community.

In order to get the grant, we came up with an idea for an evening event that represents our school's multicultural nature. The event will be called "**Walk Around the World**" and it will take place on the evening of **Wednesday, February 13th**. A huge thank you to **Cecelia Cancellaro** for her talented grant-writing skills. See page one of this issue for more details.

Speaking of grants, Clinton School is also the recipient of a number of SOMEF (South Orange Maplewood Education Foundation) grants. One of them is a grant to continue and build upon our recent translation efforts. We will continue to translate a bi-monthly update of news and events into Creole and Spanish, and we will translate a number of other important documents as well.

Our December Craft Fair was a great success, as always! Many thanks to the families who came and crafted as well as the craft fair volunteers: **Miranda Aaron, Mary Barber, Karen Bethel, Cecelia Cancellaro, Barbara Cokorinos, Tammy Dandino, Kim Kushmerick, Nancy Mattia, and Marina Stern**. Thanks, too, to **Heather Kern** for designing the flyer on short notice.

Thank you to all the bakers who sent in goodies for our teachers and staff for our annual Holiday Cookie Event. **Tammy Haynie**, once again, organized the event with great care, and we send a great round of applause to Tammy and the many volunteers who helped fill the bags, wrap the bags in tissue paper, tie the bags with bows (all color coordinated), and deliver the bags to our wonderful teachers and staff members.

Since the weather for our **Storytelling Night** in December was not very cooperative, we'll give it another try on **Thursday, January 17th at 6:30 pm!** Don't miss this great event. Wonderful stories will be read and free books will be raffled off throughout the evening. While you're there, be sure to notice the beautiful new sconces in the auditorium. These are the latest installment in the PTA's ongoing effort to update and beautify that lovely Art Deco space.

Happy New Year!

Leah Gomberg

CONGRATULATIONS, IMANI!

Imani Noble, a fifth grader in Mr. Drechsel's class, won a district-wide Red Ribbon Week poster contest. She is the first Clinton student ever to win this contest, which was sponsored by social work interns in the district and was open to all fifth graders. Ms. Noble was awarded a \$100 gift card and her poster was displayed at First Night at Columbia High School on New Year's Eve. Her winning design, which now hangs in the main hall near Mrs. Harrigan's office, features the headline "Drugs Are 4 Dorks" and uses collage to depict dreams and how drugs can destroy them. Be sure to stop by and have a look.

CLASSROOM NEWS

This feature provides a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the Clinton community to learn about all the innovative and inspiring activities that engage students during the school day. If you would like to have your child's classroom experiences and stories included in next month's *Courier*, please send an email to Bob Hugel at bhugel@scholastic.com.

KINDERGARTEN

The months of November and December have been busy for Ms. Cosmas' AM kindergarten class. In mid-November Aidan S.'s mom visited the class and gave students a glimpse of another part of the world when she told students about her native South Africa. Two days before Thanksgiving, students learned about reading recipes and mixing ingredients. Then the class baked pumpkin cookies with the help of Dana H.'s dad. In December, Aidan's mom returned to teach the class about Hanukkah and one week later, the class baked delicious gingerbread men with the help of Camryn H.'s mom. Also in December, Dana H.'s dad showed students the Japanese flag and had them practice picking up objects with chopsticks as part of his talk about Japan. Lance M.'s mom taught the class about Kwanza and right before the holiday break, students enjoyed a tea party with guest helper Asaad W.'s dad.

FIRST GRADE

Mrs. Cutrufello and Mrs. Aguirre's first grade class made gingerbread houses on December 14th. Alex H. and Isabelle H.'s moms assisted the kids as they used their vivid imaginations to create all sorts of wonderful candy cottages. There were licorice roofs, candy cane lanterns, mint windows, M&M doors, marshmallow pathways, and coconut snow. The first graders were especially excited when Ms. O'Neill snuck in and tried to abscond with some of the candy from their yummy works of art!

THIRD GRADE

On December 5th all three third grade classes trekked via bus to the Paper Mill Playhouse to see a production of *Charlotte's Web*. The students enjoyed seeing E.B. White's classic tale come to life on stage and were especially intrigued by the wonderful sets.

A TASTE OF CLINTON

Clinton School's wonderful International Dinner, A Taste of Clinton, will be held on **Thursday, March 27th**. So mark your calendar and start digging around for your favorite traditional family recipes. If you are interested in being part of the International Dinner Committee, please contact Robin Davenport (973-763-9165) or Anne Klein (973-762-5699.)

The Parenting Center and Elementary School PTA's will sponsor a presentation by social skills expert Jed Baker, Ph.D., on January 11th at 7:30 pm at Jefferson School.

They will also present "Understanding Your Child's IEP," a lecture by Dr. Patricia Barker, on January 30th at 7:30 pm at Seth Boyden School.

PICTURE RETAKE DAY

Those who missed or were unhappy with the results of Picture Day in November will have the opportunity to have their photographs retaken on **January 18th**. For more information, contact Maureen Davenport at 973-763-4257 or maur760@hotmail.com.

TARA TUTORING PROGRAM

GIVES STUDENTS A BOOST

At the beginning of the school year the South Orange-Maplewood School District (SOMSD) received a federal grant to start a tutoring program to help third-through-eighth-grade students who need extra help with language arts and/or math. The program, which is called TARA (Targeted At-Risk Aid), got off the ground at the end of October and will run for 20 weeks.

The goal is to give these students a boost. The groups are small—no more than eight students—and the focus is on differentiated instruction or teaching at the level of the child. "Many of the groups include fewer than eight students, which is great because it allows more individual attention from the teacher to meet each student's needs," says assistant principal Ann Bodnar.

The groups meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for one hour after school (from 3:15 to 4:15), and a healthy snack is provided to the students at the beginning of the hour.

The TARA program includes about 55 students whose selection was based on test scores and teacher recommendations. Those in Project Ahead were automatically included. Parents had to give their permission for their kids to participate.

Most of the teachers in the program are Clinton teachers including Ms. Bodnar, Meta Johnson, Mary Khan, Yolande Fleming, Natasha Pomaes, Shane Schwarz, and Deborah Marr. There are also two teachers from outside Clinton: Eve Kingsbury, a 6th grade language arts teacher at Maplewood Middle School, who happens to be a past Clinton PTA president, and Maura Bott, a first grade teacher at South Mountain Annex, who at one time taught at Clinton.

"The kids have been great," says Ms. Bodnar. "They try their best to stay focused. And parents have been really supportive of this program."

While progress can be slow, some days the teachers are amazed by the results. "They just keep plugging away," says Ms. Bodnar. "They never give up on the child. Sometimes it's just a matter of hearing the same thing over and over until it sinks in. Some of our classroom teachers have already noticed a difference."

—Liz Herring

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

School Superintendent Brian Osborne will present his **State of the Schools Address on January 14th at 7 pm** in the Columbia High School Library. In addition to discussing the current state of the district, Mr. Osborne will also talk about his plans for the future.

SUPPORT OUR TRICKY TRAY

This year's Tricky Tray and Auction will take place on **Saturday, March 8th at 6 pm**. Start making childcare arrangements so you can be sure to attend this fun-filled annual event. Once again wine, beer, soft drinks, coffee, and dessert will be provided and everyone is welcome to bring favorite foods to nosh on.

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year (**last year we raised over \$20,000!**) and without it we wouldn't have a brand new playground, the amazing rock-climbing wall in our gym, or the gorgeous stage curtains in our auditorium, so we need your help.

We already have some great prizes lined up for this year including a **charbroil grill (valued at \$400)**, a **case of fine wine, legal services, belly dancing lessons, books, DVDs, and oodles of fine perfumes and cosmetics**. But we are always looking for more great prizes.

If you, a friend, or any family members work for a company that would be willing to donate merchandise or a gift certificate, please let us know. Do you know someone at a nail salon that might be willing to donate a free manicure, a restaurant who will donate a gift certificate, or a big company that is willing to give us a pricey electronics item?

No gift is too big or too small. We have an official letter we can provide with all the details, so if you'd like a copy to submit to the relevant person in the company, let us know. If you'd rather have us do the contacting, then let us know the name of the company and the contact information and we'll follow up.

Once again we are raffling off chances to win a **Nintendo Wii** (in case you didn't find this must-have item under your tree) for \$10 apiece. Contact Claire Sinclair or other PTA board members to purchase raffle tickets. Raffle tickets will also be sold at PTA meetings and other school events. The winner will be announced at the Tricky Tray.

Please contact Claire Sinclair (973-763-0088 or hifromclaire@yahoo.com) if you have a prize donation or ideas for donations or if you have any questions.

SPRING ENRICHMENT

The spring session of the PTA After School Enrichment Program will begin on **Thursday, March 6th** and end on **Thursday, May 1st**. Registration materials will be sent home in early February, so check your child's backpack. Classes fill up quickly so please return your registration forms and payment as soon as possible and be sure to list a second choice class.

For more information contact Cecelia Cancellaro at ccancellaro@verizon.net or 973-763-1730.

JOIN THE CLUB

A NEW SESSION OF THE POPULAR NEW RECESS CLUBS IS SET TO BEGIN IN JANUARY

Kids are buzzing about the new recess clubs. Launched by the PTA at the end of October, the recess club program features enrichment classes taught by parent volunteers on Wednesdays and/or Fridays during each grade's recess. During the first four-week session, we offered classes in **dance, arts & crafts, sewing, drawing, and book clubs**. The second session featured classes in **jewelry making, arts & crafts, knitting, drawing, and book clubs**. Though each type of club is not offered to every grade, we have made sure that every grade has at least one club offering.

Here's how the recess clubs work: At the beginning of each session, students have the opportunity to sign up for a club. Since we've had an incredible response from the kids and can only take about 12 children per club, we often don't have enough room to accommodate everyone and have to put some kids on a wait list for the next session. There's been a bit of confusion as some children signed up and expected to be in a club, but were wait-listed instead. We're taking care to make sure that each child who wants to be in a club will get a chance during the year.

We owe tremendous thanks to our current crew of volunteers: **Alanna Munoz (dance, jewelry making), Lisa Howell (book club), Julie Doran-Vogt (book club), Jennifer Scheutz (drawing), Tricia Bloom (arts & crafts), Nancy Januzzi (drawing), Leah Gomberg (dance), Deidra McLaughlin (dance), Emni Audet (sewing), and Sandra Tomlinson (knitting)**. We'd also like to thank **Ann Bodnar** for all her help in organizing the kids, teachers, lunch aids, and clubs!

Of course, the more parent volunteers we have, the more opportunities there will be for the kids. We'd love to offer more clubs in January, so if you have some spare time during the day on Wednesdays or Fridays please consider volunteering to teach a class. If you are interested in teaching one of the classes mentioned above or have an idea for a new class that you would like to teach, please contact me at ltarkan@yahoo.com or 973-762-9399. The kids are very excited about this program and we'd love to expand it!

—Laurie Tarkan
Recess Clubs Coordinator

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Clinton's Annual Storytelling Night has been rescheduled for **Thursday, January 17th from 6:30 to 8:00 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. Many great books will be shared—even one in Spanish. Free books will be raffled off throughout the evening, and there is no charge to participate in the raffle. The Clinton kids *love* a good story and they *love* this night. We'll see you there. For more information please contact Leah Gomberg at 973-275-0927 or ldgomberg@verizon.net.

NEWS FROM SOMEF

Congratulations to **Patty O'Neill, Ann Bodnar, Yalonda Kirkland, Rebecca Antunes, and Dawn Gordon**, the recipients of eight SOMEF Teacher Grants for special projects to be carried out at Clinton School this Spring. (We will include more details about these grants in future issues of the *Courier*.)

SOMEF awarded a total of \$35,016 for 49 grants to be used in all nine schools this year. The Foundation received a total of 92 grant requests, but SOMEF could not afford to fund them all. You can help SOMEF to enable more teachers to complete their special projects by participating in the Late-Funding initiative. Go to www.SOMEF.org or call 973-378-2055 for a complete list of grants *already funded* and a list of approved grants which still need to be *funded*. Choose the *unfunded* grant that you like best, and make a donation to SOMEF to make it happen.

MANGIA—AND MAKE MONEY FOR CLINTON SCHOOL

So there are no fundraisers scheduled for January. But that doesn't mean you can't still support the school in other ways. We have several ongoing fundraisers, one of which, the popular **restaurant receipt program**, may be a good one to support during the long winter months. To help you remember which restaurant gives a portion of the tab to Clinton on which day we've come up with this song (to be sung to the tune of the Beatles' *Eight Days a Week*):

Four Days a Week
You can make money for **Clinton School**
Four Days a Week
It's an easy way to show you care

Who wants to cook on Monday?
To take out is oh so fine
Village Trattoria not only
Includes pizza but also pasta this time

Brick oven pizza on Tuesday
It's a great way to start the week
Arturo's is known for its thin crust
And its pasta just can't be beat

Hop on over to Bunny's on Wednesday
It gets you over the hump
You'll find a full menu to choose from
For food this good it's worth the jump

Eat lunch at The Goat on Friday
There are sandwiches and soups to eat
It's a relaxing place to unwind
Everyone deserves an end-of-week treat.

Four Days a Week
You can earn money for **Clinton School**
Four Days a Week
It's an easy way to show you care

BOX TOPS CLIPPERS

December was a pretty good month. We collected \$71.20. Good job! Campbell Soup Labels continue to come in at a good pace. Keep it up! **Please do not forget to write the name of your child, grade, and teacher on the envelope** (this is needed in order to credit them below). **Please also remember to cut out the UPC labels only from the back of Campbell's products.** This is a big help since it saves me from having to cut them out myself! To see a full list of eligible products, visit www.boxtops4education.com & www.labelsforeducation.com.

—Stephanie Mosé

Kindergarten:	Cosmas- Lance M. Shelffo- Brian J., Alexander K., Caroline L. Swan- Ethan M., Lila Z.
1st Grade:	Cutrufello- Isabelle H. Johnson-Ceci M., Nick W. Motz- Juliet A., Joshua R. Wittig- Mary A., Amiri G., Jack K., Miranda L.
2nd Grade:	Frascella, Christina R. Hall- Jason B., Daniel F., Bailey T. Poutre- Miles T.
3rd Grade:	Banks-Brian E., Asma M., Scott M. Gordon- Lauren L. Kent- Matthew H., Lyric P., Jordan S. Pomares- Campbell Z., Ruby Z.
4th Grade:	Johnson-Alaina B., Dalila R., Scott M. Khan- Andre F., Ellie K., Alexander M. Power- Shannon A.
5th Grade:	Drechsel-Kayla T. Fleming- Whitney A.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OTHER MOTHERS

The PTA has been working with Other Mothers, a consignment store in South Orange, to maintain an ongoing account that can be used by members of the Clinton School community who are in need of clothing and other necessary items for their families. This account is especially helpful to ensure that families have appropriate winter gear, but it also allows us to assist families in need on an ongoing basis. We have provided close to \$500 in gift certificates to families in the past two years.

If your children are in need of winter coats or clothing, please contact Lindy Rollo, School Social Worker, or Patricia O'Neill, Principal, at 973-378-7686. They will arrange for you to receive a gift certificate that will allow you to shop at Other Mothers for the items you need.

If you would like to contribute to this account to help other members of the Clinton community, please bring your gently used, quality children's clothing (sizes preemie through child's 16), maternity clothes, baby items, and toys into Other Mothers and they will put a percentage of the total resale value into a store credit account for Clinton. Note that a trade-in checklist must accompany your items, and you can find this on the store's website (www.othermothersnj.com) by clicking on the link titled "Bring Us Your Best." Other Mothers is located at 461 Irvington Avenue in South Orange. They are open Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 7 pm.

NEWS FROM PAC (DECEMBER '07)

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) provides a forum for interaction between the principal and parents. Every meeting will have a set agenda comprised of items submitted by committee members. Parents not on the committee may submit items for discussion through any committee member. A list of members and any actions taken by the PAC will be published in the *Courier*. PAC meetings are intended to focus on Clinton School issues, as this is where the most impact can be made. District-wide issues, though certainly relevant to the school, are generally beyond the scope of the PAC. The goal is to develop action plans to address concerns of the Clinton community when necessary. Each month, the *Courier* will run a summary of the PAC meeting agenda and discussion.

The following topics were discussed at the December meeting:

1. Cafeteria Staff: A comment about cafeteria staff protocol regarding students was raised. Ms. O'Neill will discuss with Ms. Bennett, who supervises staff. Also mentioned was a recent PTA-sponsored "Appreciation Luncheon" for the custodial and cafeteria staff to thank them for their work and foster a community spirit.

2. Feedback Survey: Ms. O'Neill discussed a desire to devise a survey instrument to elicit feedback and measure overall satisfaction in a number of areas. One of the first surveys will be designed to poll incoming kindergarten parents about the kindergarten orientation process. These surveys will be distributed in English, Spanish, and Creole. A draft is in the works, with the goal of finalizing the tool early in the new year.

3. Class Parents and PAC: The utilization of class parents to facilitate the communication of PAC issues and agenda items was discussed, the goal of which is to extrapolate ideas and to increase participation of parents as stakeholders in the development of PAC agendas and action plans.

4. New Family Orientation/Buddy System: The idea of creating an orientation/welcome for new families to the Clinton Community was discussed. When a new student enters our school, they will receive a welcome from the school and the PTA. A buddy system may also be devised, especially for kindergarten parents.

The PAC Membership for the 2007-08 school year is as follows:

Kindergarten: Claire Sinclair (hifromclaire@yahoo.com)

1st Grade: Keli Anthony-Tianga (thetiargas@comcast.net) and Tammy Dandino (tdandino@gmail.com)

2nd Grade: Chrishan Trojian, Secretary (ctrojian@yahoo.com) and Ruth Lowenkron (RLowenkron@edlawcenter.org)

3rd Grade: OPEN

4th Grade: Sharon McHale (sjkmchale@verizon.net) and Laura Whitmire (gregandlaura@verizon.net)

5th Grade: Stephanie Williams-Jenkins (stephanie.a.williamsjenkins@citi.com)

Member at Large: Nancy Friedman (nancyfriedman@verizon.net)

Principal: Patty O'Neill

Asst. to Principal: Ann Bodnar

PTA President: Leah Gomberg

PTA Vice-President: Cecelia Cancellaro

Please remember that the PAC members are your representatives; if you have any issues you would like discussed, please contact one of them.

Dates for the 2007-08 PAC meetings are: January 9th, February 13th, March 12th, April 9th, May 14th, and June 4th.

WE'RE SO CLOSE!

Thanks to all of you who have shown your support in joining the Clinton School PTA. **We are now 175 members strong! We only need 25 more members to make it to our goal of 200!**

If you have not yet joined please take a moment to fill out the membership application below and return it to school 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. For more information, contact Erica Dussman at 973-763-1717 or solutionstosavor@earthlink.com.

Become a part of the organization that has provided so many things for our children—including wonderful cultural art assemblies, new playground equipment, and school supplies for every classroom. Remember, when the PTA gets involved, children benefit. When you get involved with the PTA, the child who benefits most is yours!

CLINTON PTA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Parent/Guardian:

Address:

Phone: E-mail:>....

Names of Children:

Grades/Teachers:

FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC

The Columbia High School Music Parents' Association will be hosting its second annual "For the Love of Music" benefit on **Sunday, February 10th**, at **7:30 pm** at the **Maplewood Woman's Club**. The goal of this year's gala is to raise funds for a capital campaign to renovate the Music Suite at Columbia High School. Tickets are \$50 per person and are on sale at Mona Lisa Gallery & Framing and 165 in Maplewood Village, NetNomads on Springfield Avenue, and RocketShip & Print on South Orange Avenue.

Local jazz artists Bill Charlap, Darmon Meador, and Sarah Partridge, among others, are tentatively scheduled to appear. So treat your valentine to a great evening featuring live music, a silent auction, hors d'oeuvres, and dessert.

For more information, visit www.CHSMAPA.org.

NOW YOU CAN READ
THE *COURIER* ONLINE:
WWW.CLINTONELEMENTARY.ORG