

Clinton Courier

A Publication of the Clinton Parent Teacher Association
Issue 1, September 2008

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Hello Clinton community and welcome to the 2008–2009 school year.

What a pleasure it is having our very eager staff and students back, all of whom are looking forward to a great year of learning. It was a little too quiet here over the summer, and it made me realize just how much the daily interaction of almost 500 Clinton kids with our Clinton staff creates such an exciting environment each and every day. This year will be even more exciting.

As you may have read in my PTA update, we do have some staff changes, all of which are welcome additions to our already proficient staff. We will be working together and in partnership with you to ensure the very best learning experiences for your children. This partnership is so very important and if it continues as it was last year our students are well on their way to a productive and fulfilling year.

Speaking of welcome additions, we have a new and charming one of the canine variety. Buddy Clinton will be visiting with us once in a while as our Clinton puppy in training. Buddy came from the South Orange Animal Coalition as one of three puppies abandoned in Virginia. His brothers were adopted and he was left alone until I saw him. He loves everything and everybody and looks forward to playing with you soon. He is enrolled in St. Hubert's puppy kindergarten and is proving to be quite the enchanting student!

As we begin our new year together, two themes will emerge: compassionate connections and fostering creativity. In order for all our students to achieve success we need to witness their struggles and compassionately connect with them to eliminate any barriers to learning. Fostering creativity will give them all a chance to showcase their talents and better prepare them for the future.

I want to thank you in advance for working with us to make Clinton Elementary School the little school that will!

Sincerely,

Patty

SEPTEMBER-AT-A-GLANCE

- 10TH ICE CREAM SOCIAL, 6:30 PM
- 15TH HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH BEGINS
NO FRILLS FUNDRAISER BEGINS
- 18TH GENERAL PTA MEETING, 7:15 PM
- 19TH TEACHERS' BOOK FAIR PREVIEW LUNCH
- 22-26TH FALL SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR
- 24&25TH BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS, 6:30 PM
- 30TH SCHOOL CLOSED, ROSH HASHANAH
- COMING IN OCTOBER
- 1ST SCHOOL CLOSED, ROSH HASHANAH
- 3RD SCHOOL PRIDE DAY
- 14TH AUTHOR SUSAN LINN SPEAKS AT CLINTON, 7:30 PM

A MESSAGE FROM BRIAN OSBORNE

As parents and guardians, you have always worked closely and diligently with staff and the community to make this a world-class school district. In the 2008-2009 school year, we look forward to your continued efforts.

We also welcome Ms. Rosetta Wilson, our new assistant superintendent of schools for curriculum and instruction, and Mr. Paul Roth who returns to the district as our chief information officer. Mr. Roth fills a new role in the district, added to ensure that technology is used as a key element in the learning process. We also welcome Mr. Terry Woolard, the new director of education media and technology, k-12, and Mr. Gary Pankiewicz, the new supervisor of English language arts, 6-12.

In addition, we are excited about the completion of Phase I of a full-day kindergarten program that ultimately will be for all children and the renovation of our Underhill Sports Complex, just a few of the things that this year brings. As the school year progresses, our work will continue with renewed energy as we meet the challenge to extend greatness to every child.

Brian Osborne, Superintendent of Schools

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FROM THE PTA PRESIDENT

On behalf of the PTA Executive Board, I would like to welcome you to the new school year. My name is Cecelia Cancellaro and I am the Clinton PTA President for 2008-09. I have two daughters, one entering fourth grade and one entering first. During my three years on the Board, I created our After School Enrichment Program, started a translation program to publish a bi-monthly newsletter for our Spanish and Haitian-Creole speaking families, and have secured several grants to support various school programs and activities. I work professionally as an editor/writer.

Although I never thought I'd be president of a PTA, I am excited and honored to serve in this position for Clinton. My work at Clinton has allowed me to become part of a dedicated, talented, and inviting school community, a community that is always willing to share ideas, energy, enthusiasm, and time to enhance our children's educational experience. If you are new to our school, you will soon witness this dynamic group in action and you will, no doubt, be inspired by the amazing collaboration that exists between our parents, teachers, staff, and administration. You will be moved by how much we care, how committed we are to every child in our building, and how much we manage to get done. This passion, I warn you, is contagious and you'll soon find yourself responding to emails and calls for help, eagerly sharing your special talents, performing tasks you'd never imagined, and having a great time in the process.

In June, former President Leah Gomberg and I were invited to present a workshop at the National PTA Convention in San Diego about Clinton's enormously successful Walk Around the World event that took place last February (and for which we received a National PTA grant). Sharing our experience and our school with this national audience of PTA leaders from across the country was incredibly gratifying. Walk Around the World represents the very essence of Clinton School, and as we watched the more than 100 workshop attendees revel in Clinton's remarkable collaboration, our astounding creativity, our beautifully diverse population, and the degree of participation we have from students, parents, teachers, and staff, we were tremendously proud of our extraordinarily unique and special school.

The new school year will bring new ideas, new goals, and new accomplishments. We'll continue to work together to educate, inspire, and nurture our students, and we'll continue to celebrate who we are and what we have managed to do.

I speak for the entire PTA Executive Board when I say that we are looking forward to working with you to create another fabulous year for our "little school that could."

Best,
Cecelia

COME TO OUR FIRST PTA MEETING OF THE YEAR!

When: Thursday, September 18th, 7:15 pm

Where: Clinton School Cafeteria (enter through parking lot)

Meet our PTA Board members for 08-09, hear from Principal Patty O'Neill, and learn about plans for the year ahead. Our PTA State Bylaws for the next three years will also be presented. Refreshments and babysitting for children 4 and older will be provided.

ICE CREAM THURSDAYS ARE BACK!

Don't forget to send a dollar in with your child! For the first six Thursdays of the year, weather permitting, the PTA will sell ice cream after school. This year all proceeds will go toward the purchase of a bike rack for fifth graders, an initiative successfully spearheaded by last year's student council president, Hannah Gibbons. To volunteer, please contact Leah Gomberg at 973-275-0927 or ldgomberg@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: bhugel@scholastic.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

TAKE A BOOK FAIR SAFARI

Watch out for wild animals as you trek on over to our fall Scholastic Book Fair and take a wild safari through a jungle of exciting books. The fair runs from **September 22nd-26th** and it promises to be a thrilling reading adventure. It's 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 24th and 25th)**.

Teachers, mark your calendars: There will be a special Teachers' Preview Lunch on **Friday, September 19th**. Teachers will again receive gift certificates to use to purchase books for their classroom libraries.

We can always use more explorers for this expedition, so if you can spare a few hours grab your pith helmet and sign up for a volunteer slot. For more information, contact Megan Young at 973-762-4741 or e-mail her at myea95@verizon.net.

A DAY AT THE MOVIES

Mark your calendars for **Friday, November 7th 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. More details to follow.

CLINTON GOES GREEN!

Under the guidance of Principal O'Neill, the Clinton community has been working to make the school as eco-friendly as possible. There are a lot of simple and easy ways to help lessen our carbon footprints and we'll present a couple each month in this column.

- It's important to recycle both at home and at school. Don't forget that we're still collecting drink pouches. Collection boxes are located in the cafeteria and the front entranceway. There are also receptacles for plastic bottles, cans, paper, and used cell phones and ink cartridges. The school actually earns money from some of these recycling initiatives so you can help the school and the environment at the same time.

- If you have plants collecting dust in your house or office think about donating them to the school. They improve the air quality, enhance the school's décor, and provide the students with a chance to work on their green thumbs.

CLINTON SCHOOL PROGRAM RECOGNIZED AT NATIONAL PTA FORUM

In June, Leah Gomberg and Cecelia Cancellaro, President and Vice President of the 07-08 Clinton School PTA, were invited to the National PTA Convention in San Diego and asked to give a workshop on Walk Around the World, the interactive multicultural event Clinton produced last winter (and for which they were awarded a National PTA grant). Their expenses were covered by the National PTA and the NJ PTA. Walk Around the World allowed children to "travel" to four different countries (China, Ghana, Haiti, and Spain) all within the walls of Clinton School. Children were given passports that were stamped at each entry, and they were able to experience the culture, language, art, and music of each country on their journey. The evening ended in the auditorium with wonderful performances from each culture. The workshop was presented to over 100 conference attendees (mainly state and national PTA leaders) from all over the country. The response was amazing and attendees reveled in the incredible collaborative work that made Walk Around the World so successful (more than 80 parents, teachers, and students worked together to make the event possible and more than 700 people attended). "It was extremely rewarding to see our remarkable collaboration, our school community's astounding creativity, and our wonderfully diverse school population celebrated and recognized on a national stage," says Cancellaro.

Cancellaro and Gomberg were the only local leaders invited to present a workshop at the convention, which was attended by more than 1600 people and whose keynote speaker was Maya Angelou. After attending the workshop, NJ PTA President, Diane Zierler, invited the pair to do a presentation on Walk Around the World for the NJ PTA Convention, which will take place in Atlantic City in November.

I SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!

Join us for our annual Ice Cream Social on **Wednesday, September 10th at 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.

GET READY TO POSE

Be sure to mark your calendars because Clinton School Picture Day is coming on **Friday, October 17**. 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.

GETTING TO KNOW ASSISTANT TO THE PRINCIPAL ANN BODNAR

She's a local: Ann Bodnar grew up in Maplewood, attending Tuscan Elementary School, Maplewood Middle School, and Columbia High School. Back in 1997, she got her first job in the district when she became a 2nd grade classroom aide at South Mountain Elementary School. The following year she joined the staff at Clinton as a 5th grade teacher, a job she held for 10 years until becoming Assistant to the Principal last September. Recently, we gave her a fill-in-the-blank test and, not surprisingly, she did very well! Read her answers below.

Growing up, I wanted to be.... a teacher! My mom was a teacher (she's now a substitute in our district). I used to love helping her grade spelling papers at night.

I became a teacher because... I love working with children. There is nothing better than seeing kids learning something or hearing them laugh uncontrollably. Teachers have the ability to affect so many lives on a daily basis—I couldn't imagine myself doing anything but working in a school.

I became the Assistant to the Principal because... though I loved working with 5th graders, I felt I needed something new.

What I miss most about teaching is... having my own students and that special bond that a teacher has with them. I also miss working with my 5th grade team teachers. By the 10th year we had it all down pat!

My job is so eclectic that... I do everything from distributing supplies to the classrooms to overseeing our school's standardized testing. There are so many things that go into testing that I never knew—it's so stressful. On the last day of testing, you'll find me and the kids skipping out of school together!

My favorite part of my job is... being part of the Intervention Team, a group that includes teachers and our school social worker. We put our heads together to come up with individual action plans to help students who are struggling behaviorally, academically, or socially.

The part of my job I'd like to give to someone else is... doing the morning announcements. I am not one for public speaking, and I get a little anxious on those rare occasions when Patty O'Neill can't do them. Mrs. Allen has saved me so many times! The students, who take turns doing announcements, amaze me when they come into the office totally calm and ready to do their turn at the mike.

Working with Patty O'Neill is... an adventure! Patty and I created a wonderful bond last year, and we truly work as a team. We count on one another, and I feel her support daily. She even let me move into her office!

Sometimes at the end of a long stressful day... Patty pulls out a fondue pot, and we sit in her office eating chocolate-covered fruit!

When I boast about Clinton, the number one thing I say is... how everyone in the Clinton community—teachers, administration, students, parents—works extremely hard to make it better than the day before.

What I'm most proud of is... the relationships I've made with students over the years. My first students are finishing their sophomore year in college, and they still come back to visit!

If I wasn't a teacher, I'd probably... work in a garden center. Starting when I was in college, I worked for my aunt, who managed a greenhouse in Clifton. I did that for 8 years. I have a whole education in plants and flowers.

When I get home, I relax... by watching the Yankees on TV or being with my fiancé, family, and friends.

Something that you'd be surprised to know about me is... I coached girl's varsity softball at Columbia for 13 years.

When I became engaged last spring, I had no idea that... Patty would be part of the surprise proposal. My fiance, Rich Farrell, had asked Patty to keep me busy at school while he sneaked inside at 6:00 pm. It worked, and though he actually proposed later in a hot-air balloon, he couldn't have done it without her!

Every day at Clinton is... usually different from the one before. You never know what is going to happen.

—Nancy Mattia Hennegan

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Bienvenidos! Welcome back to a new year at Clinton School. Please join us as we begin our third annual cultural heritage month celebration. We start the year by commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept 15th-Oct 15th. Did you know that September 15 is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries? They are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico declared its independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.

Check out the display cases in the front hall and bulletin boards around the school to learn more. Students who borrow Spanish books from the library may enter a raffle for a prize, and Hispanic parents are invited to share their culture in Spanish class. Students and parents should contact their child's Spanish teacher for further details.

This year the school 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, please contact me at 973-763-1018. *Gracias!*

—Tricia Bloom
Cultural Heritage Month Coordinator

SAVE THE DATE

The Parenting Center and the Elementary School PTAs present **The Case for Make Believe: Why Children Need to Play, Who's Stopping Them, and What We Can Do About It, A Talk by Dr. Susan Linn, on Tuesday, October 14th, 7:30 pm in the Clinton School Auditorium.** Dr. Linn is Associate Director of the Media Center at Judge Baker Children's Center, Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and Co-founder and Director of the coalition Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. She is the author of *The Case for Make Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World* and *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*. For more information, contact Cecelia Cancellaro at ccancellaro@verizon.net or 973-763-1730.

Sept. Maplewood/South Orange community flyers can be viewed in the **Community Digital Backpack** on the district website: <http://www.somds.k12.nj.us/digital-backpack>.

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. 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.

KEEP CLIPPING BOX TOPS!

Those little box tops labels on your child's favorite cereals and snacks earn Clinton School ten cents and they added up to a healthy sum for us last year. Cheerios, Chex Mix, Gogurts, and Nature Valley Granola Bars are just a few of the participating products. For a list, visit www.boxtops4education.com. And don't forget about Campbell's labels. Campbell's Soups, Pepperidge Farm Goldfish and Cookies, Prego Pasta Sauce, and V-8 Juices are just some of the eligible products. Make sure to include the UPC code when clipping these labels. For more information, visit www.labelsforeducation.com. Send box tops and Campbell's labels to school in an envelope or Ziploc bag with your child's name and teacher and your child will be mentioned in the Box Tops Clippers column featured in the *Courier* each month. Stephanie Mosé is once again heading up our box tops effort and you can contact her with any questions (stephdog45@yahoo.com).

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 15th**. 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.

A Gift Wrap for Everyone

This year's **Sally Foster Gift Wrap** sale will begin on **October 1st and run through the 15th**. At the same time we are premiering a fundraiser called **GreenRaising**, which offers alternative products such as recycled wrapping paper, reusable lunch sacks and water bottles, and green cleaning products. Between these two catalogs everyone should find some terrific products to suit their needs.

Monday Night is Village Trattoria Night

This year we continue our wonderful relationship with Maplewood Village favorite **Village Trattoria**, which has just opened a second location in South Orange. When you eat at or order take out from either location on Monday nights the restaurant will donate a portion of your bill to the Clinton PTA. Be sure to keep your receipts and send them in with your child in an envelope marked "PTA: Restaurant Receipt Program." You can earn money for our school while enjoying delicious pizza and pasta. Mangia!

For more information about fundraising or to volunteer, contact Rosanna McCrear at rosanna@mccrear.com.

Make Sure You Stay in the Loop

The Clinton PTA e-mail list is a great way to keep up with the latest school news and announcements. To be included, send an e-mail to Cecelia Cancellaro at ccancellaro@verizon.net.

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!

Join by **October 15th** and earn a chance to win one of several gift certificates donated by the following generous **Springfield Avenue** businesses: **Café Meow, Churrasco Portuguese BBQ & Steakhouse, DinnerSmith, the Parkwood Diner, Ricciardi Brothers, and Shakti Ma Yoga.**

And the **first 100** people to join the PTA will receive a 10 percent discount coupon from **Clain Pilates Studio**, which is owned by a generous Clinton parent.

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:

.....

.....

SAVE THE DATE!

Clinton school's annual **Tricky Tray/Silent and Live Auction** will be held this year on **Saturday, March 7th** at the Maplewood Woman's Club. Not only is this one of our most successful fundraisers—we raised over \$22,000 last year—it also happens to be one of the most fun. So mark your calendars and book your babysitters now.

We are already starting to collect merchandise for the auction and could use some assistance in our efforts. If you or someone you know works for a company that would be willing to donate merchandise or a gift certificate, please let us know. Perhaps your favorite nail salon would be willing to donate a free manicure or a family member works for big corporation that would be willing to donate an expensive 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 just let us know. Companies are usually quite generous about these kinds of donations if they are given enough notice, so don't be shy about asking. Please contact Cecelia Cancellaro (ccancellaro@verizon.net) or Karen Bethel (kbetheil@verizon.net) if you have a donation or if you would like to be part of the Tricky Tray Committee.

AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT BEGINS ON OCTOBER 16

The fall session of the PTA After School Enrichment session will begin on Thursday, October 16th and end on Thursday, December 18th. As always, classes will take place on Thursday afternoons for eight weeks, immediately following dismissal, and ending promptly at 4:15 pm. Registration materials will be sent home in your child's backpack by September 23 and registration will close on October 1st. Please be sure to register early and select second and third choice options, as classes fill quickly. We have a wonderful variety of classes on our fall roster and are looking forward to another great session. For more information, contact Cecelia Cancellaro at ccancellaro@verizon.net or 973-763-1730.

RUN A 5K TO SUPPORT SOMEF

The popular Newstead 5K Run/Walk returns on September 27th at 9 am to benefit the South Orange-Maplewood Education Foundation (SOMEF). Adults and children are welcome. For more information, go to www.newstead5K.com. SOMEF raises funds that are used to enhance the educational experience of students in all nine SO/M schools.

SHOW YOUR SCHOOL COLORS!

Celebrate Clinton School Pride Day on the first Friday of every month by wearing a Clinton School T-shirt (available through the PTA) or red and white clothing.